

Teacher Driven

Strength-Based Change

Description of Terms

AFFIRMATIVE FOCUS – The change process begins by reframing problems, obstacles, and challenges as affirmative statements. The strength-based approach does not negate nor ignore problems. Rather, it shifts the lens and/or frame of reference that is used to define what is happening. Instead of looking for “what’s wrong” or “needs fixing” the focus is on “what’s right” or “what’s working” and seeks to do more of it. Affirmative statements are based on current successes within the system. The criteria for writing an affirmative statement include:

- Topics are stated in the positive.
- Topics are desirable. They identify the objectives people want.
- Individuals are genuinely curious about them and want to learn more.
- The topics move in the direction people want to go

Affirmative statements should evoke energizing and relevant conversations among constituency stakeholders.

INTERNALLY DRIVEN - Based on the theory of local of control, individuals that are internally driven, meaning a person controls their own life, tend to exhibit initiating behaviors and are an influencing force for change. Individuals with a high internal locus of control believe that events result primarily from their own behavior and actions. Those with a high external locus of control believe that powerful others, fate, or chance primarily determine events. Individuals with a high internal locus of control are more likely to assume that their efforts will be successful. They are more active in seeking information and knowledge concerning their situation and are not content with the status quo.

PERSONAL STRENGTHS & POSITIVE EXPERIENCES - The Strength-Based Approach is a way of thinking and behaving based on the assumption that people have strengths and positive experiences that increase their empowerment and capacity to act. In its broadest sense, focusing on what works, is a systematic discovery of the requisite strengths required to overcome challenges. By discovering what works, we apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. By focusing on strengths and positive experiences we are able to move beyond simple problem-solving to create and invent new options and possibilities for change.

CAPACITY TO ACT - Individuals are rational decision-makers and make systematic use of the information available to them. Individuals are likely to have a strong intention to act if they believe they have the requisite support, resources, and opportunities to carry out a specific behavior.

ORCHESTRATED CHANGE - Teachers do not direct but orchestrate the change process by including the personal strengths and positive experiences of school-community stakeholders. Teacher Driven Strength-Based Change (TDSBC) is both a metaphor and a practical guide for improving all schools for all children. All CTA members are teachers and are essential to the teaching and learning process regardless of the role they play in the school system. Parents and school-community stakeholders also are critical to insuring a successful learning environment. To increase sustainability, it is essential that the entire system be involved in the change process. From a strength-based perspective, the more diverse the stakeholder population, the greater the positive resources available to the change process.