

**FAST TRACK TO ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE  
FOR SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES:  
MONTEREY COUNTY'S USE OF IMAGINE 21 FOR PERSONAL GROWTH  
Dennis Bozanich, Linda Clifford and Carl Pascual\*  
Executive Summary**

In the comprehensive survey on recent developments in employee training, "The Science of Training: A Decade of Progress," published in the *Annual Review of Psychology* (2001), Eduardo Salas identifies the concept of self-efficacy (SE) as a key antecedent training condition that has been widely studied in the last ten years. The results of these recent studies have clearly demonstrated that SE in individuals leads to better learning and performance and mediates variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to quit the job, the relationship between training and adjustment in newcomers, and the relationship between conscientiousness and learning. Salas also identifies the need to examine SE as a learning objective itself:

"It might be useful to consider the use of SE as a deliberate training intervention (i.e. developing training targeted at raising SE), as well as a desirable outcome of training (i.e. as an indicator of training success)."<sup>1</sup>

Imagine 21: Fast Track to Change from the Pacific Institute in Seattle, Washington has been implemented in Monterey County's Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide its employees with self-efficacy development.

Using video delivered content, reflective exercises and small group inter-actions, Imagine 21 has provided a set of tools for DSS staff to incorporate personal and workplace change processes on an ongoing basis.

Our team participated in the five day Imagine 21 training, spoke with department leadership about the role Imagine 21 is playing in their agency, surveyed staff and sought to understand the impacts that this unique personal development process would have in each of our agencies. The enthusiasm in DSS for this program is quite apparent from every conversation we had with staff in Monterey County.

In this case study, we have also endeavored to connect Imagine 21 with current research in change management, learning organizational theory, managerial effectiveness research and social cognitive theory. We have also documented the goals, themes and session titles for the Imagine 21 curriculum. Additionally, we have listed the resources a county would need to dedicate toward a similar initiative in its own agency. We conclude with a multi-faceted evaluation summary of DSS staff of the impacts of Imagine 21.

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<sup>1</sup> Salas, E. (2001). The Science of Training: A Decade of Progress. *Annual Review of Psychology*. Annual, 2001, Page 8.

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# **A FAST TRACK TO ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE FOR SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES: MONTEREY COUNTY'S USE OF IMAGINE 21 FOR PERSONAL GROWTH**

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## **ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AS THE NEW CONTEXT FOR HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES**

Three factors have significantly changed the delivery of human services over the last quarter century: (1) welfare reform in the 1990s, transforming an entitlement-based benefits safety net to a time-limited self-sufficiency system with a work requirement; (2) evolution from a locallycentered manufacturing, product-based economy to a global information, service-based economy; and (3) increased diversity of both human service workers and client communities. The impacts of these factors have forced our agencies to adapt to meet the demands of federal and state regulations, unions, the marketplace and local communities. How can we build capacity--on the organizational, unit and individual level--to anticipate and react to future changes in the next quarter century? The answer may lie in how the workforces of human service agencies are trained to manage and lead change. This is the new job expectation of every human service agency.

If the amount of resources a modern organization invests in recruiting, developing and retaining employees is an indicator of the value they place on them, there are few things that are more important to an organization than well prepared employees. According to one report (Lachnit, 2001)<sup>2</sup>, between 1998 and 2001, leading Dow Jones Industrial and Fortune 500 companies increased their training spending by fifteen percent (15%); during the same period, corporations have enjoyed unprecedented output and growth. If we assume that employee training has a direct and measurable effect on promoting successful organizational outcomes, then human service agencies must consider the content and manner of the training in question: "What and how are we training?" and "what results do we want?"

## **THE CONCEPT OF SELF-EFFICACY IN EMPLOYMENT TRAINING**

In the social psychology literature, Albert Bandura has written the most extensively on the concept of SE. In terms of theoretical frameworks for analyzing behavior in organizations, Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory has gained widespread acceptance. In short, social cognitive theory views behavior as a result of reciprocal causality where personal characteristics, environmental factors, and behavior operate as interacting determinants of each other. In his most recently published article, "Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective," (2001), Bandura outlines the core features of human agency, the "essence of humanness" defined as "the capacity to exercise control over the nature and quality of one's life." These features include intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness. Intentionality is the power to originate actions for a given purpose, regardless of the outcome. Forethought is the planning and goal setting that is represented cognitively in the present to promote motivation and regulation towards the desired successful outcome. Self-reactiveness includes the processes of self-monitoring, performance self-guidance via personal standards, and self-corrective reactions

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<sup>2</sup> Lachnit, C. (2001). Training proves its worth. *Workforce*. September 2001.

towards the self-regulation of motivation, affect and action. Finally, self-reflectiveness is the self-examination of the adequacy of one's thoughts and actions in achieving one's desired outcomes, ultimately determining one's SE level. As a component of self-reflectiveness, Bandura sums up the importance of SE to human agency:

Efficacy beliefs are the foundation of human agency. Unless people believe they can produce desired results and forestall detrimental ones by their actions, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties. Whatever other factors may operate as guides and motivators, they are rooted in the core believe that one has the power to produce effects by one's actions.<sup>3</sup>

One's SE affects whether one thinks optimistically or pessimistically, resulting in self-enhancing or self-hindering behavior. It also affects what challenges individuals choose to take on and how one copes with stress and adversity. Finally, SE influences the types of activities and environments people get into which has the effect of promoting and sustaining certain competencies, values and interests.

Bandura (2001) points out that self-efficacy is a key factor in the modern workplace with the advent of rapid change in organizations and the need for a workforce that can adapt to and anticipate change in order to be effective:

In the past, employees learned a given trade and performed it much the same way and in the same organization throughout their lifetime. With the fast pace of change, knowledge and technical skills are quickly outmoded unless they are updated to fit the new technologies. In the modern workplace, workers have to take charge of their self-development for a variety of positions and careers over the full course of their work life. They have to cultivate multiple competencies to meet the ever-changing occupational demands and roles. Collective agentic adaptability applies at the organizational level as well as at the workforce level. Organizations have to be fast learners and continuously innovative to survive and prosper under rapidly changing technologies and global marketplaces.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, promoting SE becomes critical to the success of the individual in their personal and work life, and collectively in organizations in adapting to changing environments. Training designed to raise the SE of an individual in order to increase job performance is valuable because this training can help employees frame their current performance within the present work context as a pretext to improved performance in a changing work context. The value of this SE training is also in how it can be used to promote high levels of self-efficacy amongst new employees or employees with a history of low-performance.

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<sup>3</sup> Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: an Agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*. Annual, 2001, page 9.

<sup>4</sup> Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: an Agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*. Annual, 2001, page 10.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN MONTEREY COUNTY AND THE PACIFIC INSTITUTE**

In 1995, the Monterey County Private Industry Council (PIC) was awarded an \$800,000 federal grant to address self-esteem issues of thousands of dislocated workers from the local Fort Ord Army Base closure. After researching several programs, the Monterey County PIC decided to contract with the Seattle-based, Pacific Institute to implement their curriculum, "Investment in Excellence," which focused on understanding the thinking process and self-image, building self-esteem and increasing motivation for pursuing goals. The program became the most successful ever used by the Monterey County PIC for dislocated workers. Over the next seven years, nearly 800 individuals enrolled in the program, resulting in a 10% increase in the job placement rate over the previous time period. Participants reported increased motivation to find work. During that same period, the Monterey County PIC moved from a mid-25th ranking to a 14<sup>th</sup> ranking in dislocated worker placement rate in the state.

The implementation phase of the Workforce Investment Act in 1997 brought tremendous challenges to the various local business and community stakeholders in the formation of the Workforce Investment Board. Local businesses and public agencies, such as the Department of Social Services, the Employment Development Department, the County Department of Education, and Veterans Affairs, that had no previous framework to work collaboratively with one another on employment issues. Suddenly they were mandated to form an employment consortium and a Workforce Investment Board. In an effort to promote more communication and cooperation when the formation process dead-locked, Joseph Werner, the PIC Director, decided to use "Investment in Excellence" with the WIA collaborators themselves including all staff from the Office of Employment & Training. The Pacific Institute, with the Stanford University Psychological Studies Department, conducted interviews of One-Stop consortium staff to measure their confidence in the success of the WIA implementation process before and after completing the "Investment in Excellence" curriculum. Before taking the curriculum, only 35% of participants believed that the WIA implementation would be successful; this increased to 85% after the curriculum. Werner attributes this remarkable change to how the Pacific Institute's program increased the change readiness of the staff and their belief that it could be successful.

Ultimately, the role of the Pacific Institute curriculum in the success of the implementation of the WIA mandates was noticed by Bob Farnquist, the Organizational Development consultant to the Monterey County CAO, who thought it may be effective with other County staff engaged in various organizational changes. As a result, the Monterey County department heads, including Sally Reed, the CAO, Jeff Campen, the Assistant CAO, County Agency Directors and Helen Shaw, the interim Director of the Department of Social Services at the time, participated in "Investment in Excellence" together. Realizing the value of the curriculum for the staff of the Department of Social Services, Shaw arranged to pilot the program with senior management at DSS with the intention of offering the curriculum to entire staff. With the support of the CAO, Shaw secured an initial budget to enroll up to 300 of the 700 DSS staff in the curriculum for the first year and train executive staff to be "facilitators" for the training sessions. At the time of this report, a total of 19 managers have been certified as "facilitators" with 190 staff representing a cross-section of DSS having completed the program.

## IMAGINE 21 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Imagine 21 was developed to teach people how to manage change, set and achieve goals, lead more effectively and think in ways that create success. As a learning organization, Monterey County has stated that it values life long learning and professional growth for all of its employees. The DSS chose to operationalize this value by bringing Imagine 21 to all staff to promote personal and professional growth and to provide individuals with an opportunity to develop enhanced skills in managing change.

The Department's goal was to enroll 300 staff, one half of the total departmental staff, in Imagine 21 in the first year. All DSS staff was invited to enroll in Imagine 21 sessions. Participants for five-day series of sessions were chosen to represent all classifications, programs and divisions. Managers and supervisors were strongly encouraged to promote participation and provide coverage for their staff to attend. The level of support given to individual attendance has contributed significantly to the acceptance of Imagine 21.

## IMAGINE 21 CONTENT THEMES

Imagine 21 is the newer version of the "Investment in Excellence" curriculum. The Pacific Institute bases its curriculum on the work of modern cognitive psychologists and directly sites Bandura's work on SE. The Pacific Institute (2002) holds that SE "is not the actual skills a human being possesses, but rather, to what extent a person believes about what can be accomplished with those skills."<sup>5</sup> The Pacific Institute assumes that many of the participants of "Imagine 21" have many of the skills required to be successful, but may need help to change their belief in how those skills can be used success-fully to achieve personal and professional goals. The curriculum does this by teaching participants about how the mind works and focusing on building the following skills:<sup>6</sup>

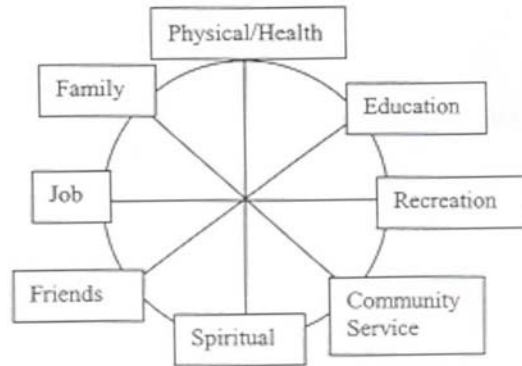
**Potential** - Understanding what our potential is and how to access and develop it was the beginning and thrust of the program.

**Balance** – One effective tool to get balance in one's life is the Balance Wheel. It can be used to focus on important areas, chosen from but not limited to some of the following: Family, Personal, Community Service, Education, Health/Physical, Health/Mental, Recreation/Leisure, Spiritual, Relationships/Friends, Career/Job/Vocation, Sports, Social, and Other. The Balance Wheel (below) can be used to identify areas in our lives that are working or are not working for us.

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<sup>5</sup> Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: an Agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*. Annual, 2001, page 2

<sup>6</sup> **IMAGINE 21: Fast Track to Change**, Video, Resource Guide, Tice, Lou. The Pacific Institute, MCMXCIX



Marking the spokes of the Balance Wheel illustrates visually where the lack of balance is and as the Wheel is reviewed, the goal is to shift the attention to the areas which need more attention, thus bringing about more balance in life.

**Goals** - Goals come from creativity. The concept of creativity-producing goals and goals producing energy is introduced by the curriculum.

**Self-Talk** - The course teaches us that it is critical to control our self-talk. For example, when you make a mistake, you can focus on the mistake and how miserable you are or you can focus on what you have learned and what you intend to do the next time.

**Thoughts** - "When you lead and manage people, you need to be very cognizant that the more you describe what's wrong with them, the more they accept it, and the more they behave like it. The more I describe to you what's wrong with you and the more you think about it, the more you become like it."

**Self Esteem** - There is a direct relationship between self-esteem and performance. Our self-estimate is our estimate of our worth and part of our self-image. In Imagine 21, you learn the relationship of self-esteem and performance and see how to use these self-esteem/performance relationships to help others grow.

**Affirmations** - Following are a few sample affirmations given in the curriculum:

- I am accountable for the results of my decisions and actions
- I develop feelings of respect and self-esteem in myself and others
- I have pride in my performance and positive expectations of my future.
- I thrive on my daily jogging because
- I feel healthy, strong and energetic.

As you change the inner image, the behavior follows.

**Comfort Zone** - Your subconscious is comfortable with the familiar and draws you to stay within your comfort zone, to stay with the familiar - whether it is job, level, or place. In other

words, change your inner image of how you want your life, your self to be. This is a particular powerful aspect of the curriculum and ties in to the material throughout.

**Examine** - Examining yourself and the people around you in relationship to comfort zones, effectiveness zones and self-image helps us to better understand why we hold ourselves back. These insights are needed to grow and to rise to the next level of effectiveness.

**Order** - Whenever you perceive disorder, it creates anxiety or tension in you as a person and in the organization. As human beings, we are always seeking order. Encourage tension if you want to grow - the creative subconscious stimulates drive when it perceives disorder and stimulates ideas.

**End-Result Thinking** - Tice encourages us as coaches or mentors to be end-result thinkers. Avoid allowing yourself to get trapped in your present circumstance, to be stuck in knowing what you already know how to do.

**Awareness** - Know your filter system, how to set goals, see how accountability fits into goal setting. Tice tells us that setting goals indicates importance, that it opens awareness to resources, information and people you may not have been aware of prior to setting the goal.

**Release Your Potential** - Just realizing or being reminded that we do what we choose to do is enlightening. When we are fully accountable for ourselves, the choices are ours.

**The Need for Goals** - When you have an idea of what kind of future, family, business you want, the idea becomes your goal. Reluctance to make a mistake can hold you back. Knowing what your goal is the only way to attain it.

**Energy** - High-performance people talk about the future in the present tense.

**Resistance to Change**- "You can't impose change. You have to help others change from the inside, visualize the next plateau, the changes that are coming, and help them see themselves as part of a broader spectrum," Tice says.

**Imagination** - How to make dreams come true? Envision yourself already there.

**Inner Strength** - You will move toward what you "see" most clearly in your mind. The correct use of forethought helps to guide you.

**Summary** - Change your belief and your performance follows. Successful affirmations require repetition to become integrated.

## **SESSION SCHEDULE FOR IMAGINE 21**

Imagine 21 is a 33-unit core curriculum that provides a step-by-step approach to growth and success. Each learner receives a written transcript of all 33 video presentations by Lou Tice, reflection questions for each session, a set of audiotapes that re-enforce the lessons and skills

taught after the video seminar and an Audio Assimilation Journal to self-facilitate the use of the tapes.

The session titles listed in the curriculum design provides a basic overview of the curriculum. The sessions organized as they were presented follow:

### **Day One**

Overview: How to Change Beyond Pretense  
Change Beliefs and Improve Performance  
Self-fulfilling Prophecy & Its Effect on Success  
Mental Technology - Understanding How the Mind Works - part one  
Mental Technology - Understanding How the Mind Works - part two  
The Effects of Emotion on the Release of Your Potential  
The Power in How You Think

### **Day Two**

How Acquired Beliefs Control Your Effectiveness  
The Self-Talk Cycle: Becoming a Head Coach  
You Move Toward What you Think About  
Increasing Your Worth for Greater Rewards  
Affirmations: The Fast Track to Success  
Improving the Inside for More Effective Results  
The Key to Personal Power: Controlling Your Forethought

### **Day Three**

Suggested Thought Patterns for Effective Performance  
Goal Setting: By Intent or Neglect?  
Unconscious Regulation of Your Effectiveness  
The Key to Overcoming the Natural Deterrent to Growth  
Activating Subconscious Creativity and Energy for Results  
Quality Standards: By Intent or Neglect?  
Becoming an Options Thinker for Greater Results

### **Day Four**

Stimulating Awareness to Achieve Your Ideas  
How to Invent Your Future  
An Inner Method for Releasing Your Potential  
Gaining Control of Your Moods  
Creating a Life with Meaning and Depth  
Targeting Pursuits: The Need for Goals



## **Day Five**

Creating a Sustaining Energy for Successful Results

Fitting In: At the Next Level

Understanding How to Overcome Resistance to Change

The Proper Use of Your Imagination in Assisting Change

Inner Strength for Greater Results

Taking Accountability for a Greater You

### **SESSION FORMAT**

Each session is formatted around the use of a video presentation by Tice. The facilitator for the presentation utilized appropriate adult learning and training techniques by beginning with a clearly defined session overview and objectives. These were found in the Imagine 21 video resource guide notebook. The general practice used by the facilitator was to ask for volunteers from the participants to read aloud to the group the overview and the objectives. The overview and objectives were clear articulations of what was being presented. Following the overview, the video was presented.

The videotape is of Tice presenting the session content to a small group of approximately eight participants in a studio. The production is well done with shots of both Tice and audience reactions to keep the video component as interactive as is possible. The length of the video was from 10 to 15 minutes. This is very much in keeping with the average attention span of most adults. An additional resource found in the participant material was a transcript of the video presentation. This allows participants a way to "follow along" and to capture key concepts by simply highlighting points in the transcript rather than having to take notes. This would allow for a greater freedom to listen to points being made without worrying about writing interpretive notes while the video is playing.

At the conclusion of the tape, the facilitator used a variety of processes to actively engage the participants with the material just presented in the video. Most often, participants were asked to use one or two reflection questions as a written response to the presentation. This is particularly advantageous in this type of program in that it allows everyone an opportunity to immediately respond to the material and begins the process of integration or interpretation for the learner. Occasionally, the presenter would use the questions in a large group discussion without the quiet time to reflect and write. It seemed as though this was used most often when the facilitators felt a need to add some variety to the process that can become rather redundant of watching the video then writing reflections.

After five to ten minutes of reflective writing or large group process, the group was broken up into small groups of five or six. The size of the small groups seemed fine for the level of content and the response requested of the group. Generally the group was asked to produce a response to how they had seen or could envision the content of the video being a reality in their personal or professional lives. Often these small group activities were taken out of the video resource notebook, but on occasion they were created by the Monterey County DSS facilitators and presented to the participants through a PowerPoint slide. This was evidence of a willingness on

the part of the local Imagine 21 leadership to "customize" the curriculum for their audience. The customization was a valuable way for participants to respond to the content of the Imagine 21 program within their particular organizational culture. This is of critical importance for those that may fear that a "canned" program would have little impact on their organization or agency. This allows issues or concerns of the agency to become the vehicle for understanding and integrating the content into the agency and for individuals within that agency.

Between sessions, a break was offered in the morning and in the afternoon. Simple snacks were available at each of the breaks. Lunch was catered. This allowed participants to stay together and continue the conversation about the content, build upon personal relationships and to learn about other parts of the agency from one another. This informal time is of great value in breaking down some of the artificial barriers that exist in organizations as complex as most social service agencies are.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMAGINE 21**

As implemented by DSS, Imagine 21 utilizes some specific roles and responsibilities in the execution of each five-day series. The roles include:

- Facilitator/Presenter
- Master of Ceremonies (MC/Host)
- AV Coordinator

These roles are held by a variety of staff throughout the five days. Some specific tasks for each role:

**Facilitator/Presenter** - Primarily responsible for introducing each video segment through the use of the Session Overview and Session Objectives, facilitates reflection questions after each 10minute video segment, facilitates small group discussion or exercise.

**MC/Host** - Primarily responsible for creating a comfortable learning environment for the participants by taking into account temperature, lighting, sound and incorporating appropriate icebreakers and warm up activities to re-engage the large group and to facilitate greater relationship building amongst the diverse participants.

**AV Coordinator** -Sets up AV equipment, operates video player, laptop computer with PowerPoint presentation of discussion questions and small group exercise activity directions, operates LCD projector and PA system for video presentation, and cues up videos for each presentation by using an additional TV/VCR combo unit. The Facilitators and MCs generally worked about half a day each. This allows a greater number of people to demonstrate their leadership ability, reconnect with their own Imagine 21 experiences and it allowed them to continue their regular job duties with minimal interruptions. The facilitators were required to know the content objectives for the sessions they presented, to have basic group facilitation skills, to have an ability to connect the session theme with personal examples, and to understand the sessions' contribution to the over-all program design of Imagine 21.

The AV Coordinator generally worked all day at operating the equipment. This role required knowledge of the program design and curriculum flow as well a solid understanding of the equipment used. This role was critically important to "keeping things moving" and allowed the facilitators to engage the participants fully.

## **SPACE AND EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS**

A proper learning environment and sufficient resources are critical to the success of any staff development initiative. Imagine 21 requires intensive use of space and equipment. The room needs to be large enough to handle a group of 25 -40 participants comfortably, in a seating arrangement that allows for large group interaction. This would necessitate that people be seated in a Ushape, not the traditional classroom setup of everyone facing forward. The notebooks, and the need to do some writing, requires tables and chairs for all participants. Additionally, space for small groups work is required. Unfortunately, the large group U-shape table and chair configuration makes using those tables and chairs rather difficult without a lot of moving of chairs for the small group interaction. The DSS staff successfully used five additional tables in the back of the room for both small group areas and lunch.

The Imagine 21 schedule also constitutes a rather intensive use of room space. Five full days over a thirty-day period, perhaps with two or three days in a row, can be rather difficult to schedule in our busy facilities. Careful attention to room scheduling would be required to maintain a consistent training space that would prevent unnecessary participant movement and additional equipment setup time.

A video program such as Imagine 21 requires some audiovisual equipment. A video player and TV or Video projection unit (e.g., LCD projector) are required. The video image needs to be large enough for the group to see comfortably. Presentation guidelines would say that for less than ten participants a minimum of a 27-inch television monitor would be required. For a group of ten to fifteen, a minimum of a 45-inch monitor would be needed. For any group larger than fifteen, projection of the video image to at least 60 inches would be required. Most video projection requires the ability to control the room lighting. It would not be desirable to have either full task lighting or no lighting at all in the room utilized for Imagine 21.

Sound is also of importance in video learning: amplification of the audio track of the video would be needed for any group larger than fifteen. This can be handled with a modest single speaker public address system connected to the audio output of the video player or the LCD projector. The sound amplification system can also be used to play instrumental music during breaks and during reflection question writing. By connecting a portable CD or cassette player to the PA system or using it by itself, the music provides an additional environment setting component. Optional equipment might also be considered. A nine to fifteen inch TV/VCR combo was used in Monterey to cue tapes for the next video segment. This tool for the AV coordinator prevents the need to scroll to the beginning of the next video segment on the same monitor or projection screen that everyone in the room is focused on for content. The use of this small TV/VCR unit for setting up each video segment demonstrates an attention to providing a quality experience for the participants. Also optional would be the use of a PC or laptop to present through an LCD projector the session overviews, session objectives and small group

process instructions to the entire group. The objectives are available in the participant's video resource notebook so the projection of them for the large group is not required. Other methods of displaying instructions for the small group process could be used so the use of the computer and projector would be optional for most groups.

## **FINANCIAL RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS**

Financial resources necessary to support a personal development program are an important consideration. The costs of facilitator training, purchase of the video resources and the participant notebooks can be significant. Consideration of the fixed costs, those that are not affected by the number of participants, and the variable costs, those directly attributable to the number of participants have different impacts depending on the scope of the implementation within an organization.

In Monterey County DSS the following costs have been identified:

### **Fixed Costs**

Facilitator Training (2 days)	\$3,000
Video Purchase (1 set)	\$1,000

### **Variable Costs** (per person)

Participant Notebooks	\$180
Facilitator kits	\$150
Food for five days	\$70

Additional financial resources related to staff time would also need to be considered. All Monterey County DSS staff that attends the Imagine 21 program is able to time study to their program's generic code for claiming purposes.

## **HUMAN RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS**

Any intensive training initiative within our agencies has an impact on the human resources. Vacancies, large caseloads and mandated timelines for action by workers can contribute to exception time management demands on staff. The five-day Imagine 21 program does have an impact. Participants are required to block out three full days one month and two full days the next month from their work schedule. Balancing the demands of clients with the program does take some effort. One participant noted that they had put off coming until this spring's series because they hadn't been able to figure out a way they could keep up with their caseload and be away for the five days. Another participant was quick to point out that they returned from the first three days of Imagine 21 and felt so much more productive that they caught up on their caseload more quickly than they had imagined or been able to after similar time off for vacation. Fellow workers picking up simple tasks for participants while they are attending Imagine 21 have demonstrated the level of support within DSS for Imagine 21 by management and past participants. One participant noted that another member of their unit was willing to answer the workers' phone calls and assisted a couple of clients with simple questions. This saved the

Imagine 21 participant from having to return the phone messages upon their return to work and making the task of catching up much easier. These informal methods of providing coverage while attending the program seemed quite effective at allowing the work of the agency to continue while fostering a level of support among coworkers to attend the program.

The facilitators work out coverage issues on an individual basis to be a part of the Imagine 21 team. They receive no additional compensation or tangible benefit for the time commitment they make to training in the program. It has been noted by DSS staff that an informal benefit for facilitators is the increased visibility and the enhanced presentation skills. This has led to three staff promotions in the last year among the twenty facilitators. The commitment of time is a significant factor for all but the most skilled and experienced facilitators. The majority of the facilitators were with us from three to nine hours. Typical training statistics would say that an additional ten to forty hours of planning and preparation would be needed to facilitate that number of hours, even with a fully written facilitators guide.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACTS**

Imagine 21 is about change. It is directly targeted to affect individual change as a vehicle to organizational change. Typically, external forces dictate changes within public sector human service agencies. A talent for flexibility and openness to change in this dynamic work place including the development of new skills, understandings and attitudes are extremely desirable. Imagine 21 provides an organization with participants that understand their ability to change themselves, have gained skills in goal setting and affirming themselves and have a renewed appreciation for their own potential.

## **ROLES OF LEADERS IN CHANGE PROCESSES**

Daryl Conner of O. D. Resources, Inc. notes three critical roles in any change process:

- Change Sponsor - Their role is to legitimize the change through organizational power;
- Change Agent - Their role is to implement the change, and Change Target - Their role is to actually change something about their knowledge, skills, behavior or attitudes.<sup>7</sup>

The relationship between these roles is essential to note:

- Sponsor and Agent - Sponsor delegates to the Agent the responsibility for designing the change process. In return, Agents gain Sponsor approval of the process for introducing the change.
- Agent and Target - Agent enlists the support of Targets in the change process. Targets contribute to the implementation through analysis and strategy development.
- Sponsor and Target - Sponsors seek feedback and discussion with Targets prior to final implementation. Targets contribute input that may provide influence to timing, cost or direction of the changes.

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<sup>7</sup> Ramey, David. *Empowering Leaders*, Sheed and Ward, 1996

The diversity of roles and responsibilities within an organizational change effort is important and complex. Knowing how and why changes are necessary is important throughout an organization. Imagine 21 provides skills for individuals to master the craft of change focused on them. Those participants that master the skill of changing themselves by recognizing their own potential and ability to set goals becoming a valuable asset to an organization - as a Sponsor, as an Agent and as a Target of change.

## **ROLES OF AGENCY STAFF**

Imagine 21 is a change for Monterey County and its Department of Social Services. Typical staff development in human service agencies is targeted at providing workers and supervisors with specific skills, knowledge and attitudes to perform their job effectively. New laws, procedure changes and funding sources result in an ongoing need for staff development in response to those changes. Imagine 21 takes an additional approach. It recognizes that individuals need to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes that allow them to work well within our dynamic organizations. Implementation of Imagine 21 has become a task for all levels of DSS. Initially, Helen Shaw and now, Elliott Robinson have given their clear support to Imagine 21. In their roles as sponsors, they have used their organizational power to legitimize Imagine 21. They have delegated to Janie McPherson, OD Manager and her volunteer facilitators from the DSS staff, the responsibility for implementing Imagine 21. The Imagine 21 agents have used evaluation feedback from participants (targets) to continue improving the implementation of Imagine 21 within DSS. They have also made it possible for past participants of Imagine 21 to become agents by encouraging their colleagues to attend. Finally, the targets of the Imagine 21 change process, the entire DSS staff, have provided their feedback and input to assist the current Director in his promotion of Imagine 21.

## **IMAGINE 21 AND THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION**

The concept of building a "learning organization" has surfaced in popular business writing over the last several years. Peter Senge's book, *The Fifth Discipline*, presents the clear challenge that learning organizations possess a shared vision, encourage personal mastery, incorporates systems thinking, utilizes mental models of how the world works and engages in team learning. To better understand the possible implications for our agencies, the BASSC Directors asked their Human Resource Committee to provide some written guidance. In January 1999, the document, *Management and Human Resources as Partners in Creating a Learning Organization* was presented to the BAS SC Directors. This document laid out the key components of a learning organization and an evaluation of its impacts on social service agencies. Finally it concluded with some specific proposals for various roles with our agencies to create learning organizations. Among the components that characterize a healthy learning organization:

- The organizational mission is shared by all staff;
- Change is viewed as a challenge and the organization has a place to analyze and embrace changes;
- Ease of information sharing and communication are key;
- Learning is the responsibility of all;
- The organization needs flexibility to respond to new demands;

- A process of continual improvement exists, and
- Accountability is valued and supported at every level of the organization.

The following table illustrates possible correlations between components of a learning organization and Imagine 21:

<i>Learning Organization</i>	<i>Imagine 21</i>
Mission	Imagination
Change	Need for Goals
Communication	Awareness
Learning by all	Potential
Flexibility	Balance
Continual Improvement	End-Result Thinking
Accountability	Self-Esteem

## **EVALUATIONS OF IMAGINE 21**

For our evaluation of the effectiveness of Imagine 21 we used three methodologies: a focus group with selected staff, a series of interviews with DSS staff and a department-wide survey. Each methodology captured various elements of Imagine 21's positive impact on the department.

**Focus Group** - A focus group was arranged for discussion and the six members were volunteer staff from the Employment and Training One-Stop. The One-Stop was a good target for a focus group because since all the staff had been through the Pacific Institute, the criterion for being in the focus group (that each member worked for someone who had attended Imagine 21 or Investment in Excellence) was automatically met by each volunteer. The six participants included a Management Analyst, two E&T Supervisors, a Secretary, an E&T Coordinator and a Sr. Employment Coordinator. Among the positive results reported by members of this focus group were:

- The eye opener for the need to change and grow as individuals;
- The openness to accept change;
- The curriculum was seen as a change agent, helping people to not be resistant to change;
- The awareness that change has to come from within;
- The program teaches you to look at options and to make your own choices; (Some alumni of the course found social services not to be a good match, retired or moved up or moved on.)
- The fact that customers and staff and management are using the program is appreciated;
- All the stakeholders understand the language of the curriculum.
- Being accountable and having a process to achieve that is acknowledged;

- People who take the course need to put into action what they have learned, to practice what they preach and not just talk about the concepts.
- They were more engaged in dialogue and discussion and had common interests and were less territorial;
- The tools help alleviate stress and energize staff to be creative to streamline and work together to get as much done as they can with the resources available.
- It is difficult to give perks to employees, so having the opportunity to work on their own personal and professional growth was acknowledged and appreciated.
- The consensus was that more communication up and down as well as peer to peer was a result of participation in the program.
- Having all levels in training together was beneficial.

Asked to imagine the future, looking back at 2000-2001 at what the participants thought their organization will say about Imagine 21, the focus group participants commented that they hoped it was ongoing, they believed they would be on the cutting edge in the Department of Social Services and CalWORKS, and that there would be recognition for internal achievements by line staff.

**Executive and Facilitator Assessments** - At the Employment and Training One Stop, we talked with Joseph Werner, Executive Director, Monterey County Workforce Investment Board and Jeff Campen, Chief Assistant County Administrative Officer for Monterey County. Both of them were extremely happy with the courses from Pacific Institute and enthusiastically support the implementation and continuation of the curriculum. Both of these executives work to keep the personal development fresh and alive in their own lives as well. All staff at the Workforce Investment Board are invited to attend the course. Some results of the course noted in these interviews were:

- The ability to look at why a person would hold on to things that make them unhappy.
- All levels of employees had really good experiences and the course served as a common theme to solve larger issues.
- One executive has been through the course three times.
- It helps some employees who are not satisfied on the job to move on or move out.
- A version of the course is being used by youth council of the WEB and has had a resoundingly positive affect, which we witnessed by team-painted murals and by observations that the youth who have completed the curriculum are self-confident enough to be mistaken for staff.

All of the DSS Executive Team members have attended the curriculum with the exception of the director, who is new to the organization. We heard many testimonials that the curriculum was a lifeenhancing opportunity if not life changing, as it was for many. People said that they learned a great deal from attending the sessions and learning the tools, and that they continue to use it today and plan to continue to use the tools into the future. We heard many say that each time they review the materials, or listen to the tapes or review and revise their Balance Wheel, their lives and/or jobs improve. They feel that communication is improved at work and at home and many feel fortunate to have had such a personal/professional opportunity. Many see it as a gift, a reward, and an outward expression of appreciation from the agency to the individual or



employee. People said they felt lucky to be on an Executive Team such as they had with people who are all forward thinking and open to change. Some life experience indicated changes that was also improved health, such as taking vacation time occasionally and taking time to take care of one's health. Overall, a resounding endorsement was received about Pacific Institute and its programs for achieving potential and fulfillment in life, personal and on the job.

All the facilitators were very positive as well. Many had been promoted or were seeking promotional opportunities that the curriculum will or has helped them to achieve.

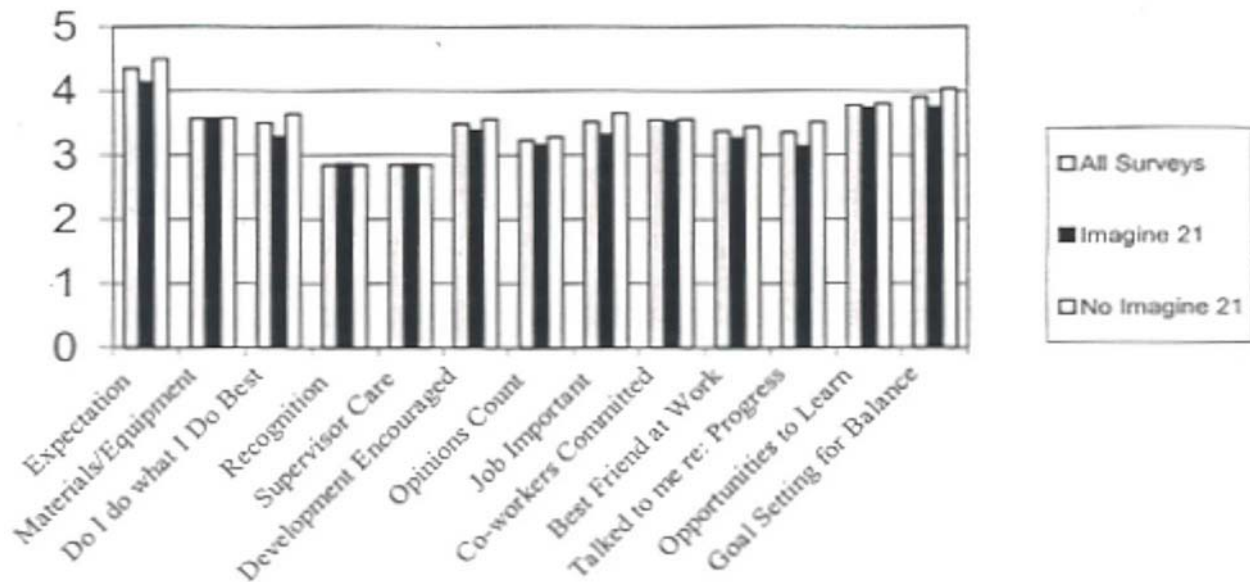
## **SURVEY OF DSS STAFF**

Our team discussed a way to measure how Imagine 21 had impacted the workplace at DSS. Our hypothesis was that employees who enrolled in Imagine 21 would have greater job satisfaction because of the curriculum's emphasis on personal development, specifically in goal setting, managing self assessment, and visualizing success. We used the following questions developed by Gallup Organization to determine job satisfaction and managerial effectiveness. The questions are from *First, Break all the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently* by Marcus Buckingham & Curt Coffman. We believed that using the 12 questions developed by Gallup would give us some quantitative data to support the positive responses given to us by DSS staff. From Gallup's work with hundreds of thousands of employees over the last two decades, high-scoring answers to these 12 questions were directly correlated to high performance organizations. The staff was asked to respond by selecting from a five-point scale. If they strongly agreed with the question they selected "five"; if they strongly disagreed, they selected "one." Additionally, we added a question asking whether or not they set goals for balance in their personal and work life. We also asked them to indicate whether or not they had attended Imagine 21. The 13 questions we asked were:

- Do I know what is expected of me at work?
- Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
- At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
- In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?
- Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
- Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
- At work, do my opinions seem to count? Does the mission/purpose of my company make me feel my job is important?
- Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?
- Do I have a best friend at work?
- In the last six months, has someone at work talked to me about my progress?
- This last year, have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow?

The survey results can be found in the following graph:

## Q12+ Survey Results from DSS



In a short, one-week turnaround, 275 out of a possible 704 DSS staff completed and returned this survey. Of the 275 responses, 109 indicated that they had enrolled in the Imagine 21 curriculum; these 109 represent a little more than half of the total number of employees who have completed Imagine 21.

While it is clear from the survey that DSS management is doing very well in setting job expectations, providing the necessary materials and equipment and providing opportunities for employees to learn, the results are somewhat ambiguous regarding the impact of Imagine 21. Our original hypothesis--that the respondents who completed Imagine 21 would score higher on the survey than others--did not bear out.

There was no significant difference between scores for Imagine 21 participants and nonImagine 21 participants. There are several possible explanations for this: (1) the Imagine 21 curriculum was introduced within DSS only a year ago and more time may be needed for managers and supervisors to implement the curriculum and positively impact employees' perceptions of the workplace; (2) Imagine 21 employees may have developed higher standards of what defines a supportive workplace and therefore rated the questions more critically; or (3) as an employee satisfaction survey, the Gallup survey may not effectively measure the increase in self-efficacy in individual employees. What this survey does provide is a baseline data set to compare with future surveys to learn whether or not Imagine 21 has a positive effect on job satisfaction over time. Future impacts on employee satisfaction by managers and supervisors who have completed Imagine 21 and have had adequate time to utilize the tools, skills and strategies in the workplace may provide more conclusive quantitative data.

While feedback from Imagine 21 alumni was overwhelmingly positive, even glowing in some instances, there may be other ways to obtain similar results that are less expensive and less time intensive.

### **GENERAL IMPLICATIONS FOR ALAMEDA, CONTRA COSTA AND SONOMA COUNTIES:**

- **Imagine 21 can be a gift to staff.** Assisting our staff to become self-efficacious or empowered would be an enormous gift to them as individuals. Its impacts on their work relationships and their personal relationships would be dramatically positive. This is an opportunity to recognize the value and contribution of each of our employees.
- **Imagine 21 can break down program and classification related barriers.** This process is designed for participation by all staff. Executive Team, managers, supervisors, analysts, line workers and clerical attend together. Implementation would result in a healthy process of inter-program relationship building and appreciation. We don't currently offer any program that allows for this level of interaction.
- **Imagine 21 can assist staff in visualizing change.** CalWlhl, the Family-to-Family Initiative, TANF reauthorization and ongoing changes in IHSS and APS are current issues for the Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD). These program changes are occurring in the context of the significant changes already experienced in the last five years. Imagine 21 would provide staff with tools, strategies and even a language that would allow them to see changes in their work life as manageable, necessary and positive.
- **Imagine 21 is consistent with our departmental values and would provide staff with a skill set to further their implementation.** By building self-efficacy in our staff, we create an environment where customer service is not a perceived "something else to do." Customer services become what you do. Empowering staff to make things happen, for clients, participants and coworkers, is a powerful example of our values in action.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMAGINE 21 FOR ALAMEDA COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY:**

I have four specific recommendations to be completed in the following order:

- First, immediately administer the Gallup job satisfaction survey to all SSA staff to develop a baseline for the Agency. The Senior Management Team can discuss the results and develop specific strategies to increase employee satisfaction. The survey can be administered every year to track whether the implemented strategies are effective.
- Second, commission a review of all existing "soft skills" training offered to employees by the Agency and/or the Alameda County Conference Center: analyze costs and evaluate the outcomes. Compare this to projected costs and expected outcomes of implementation of Imagine 21 curriculum.
- Third, leverage Monterey County's existing relationship with the Pacific Institute to negotiate a pilot course for the Agency Director and the SSA Executive Management Team in Alameda County. This team's experience with the course may generate the necessary sponsorship for wider implementation in the agency should the Agency decide to move forward.

- Finally, when appropriate, enroll more senior management staff in Imagine 21 and train these staff as facilitators to prepare the Agency for broad implementation of program. Establish an initial goal of enrolling 500 staff per year in the curriculum.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMAGINE 21 FOR CONTRA COSTA COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT:**

- Perform job satisfaction survey from this case study by April 1, 2003.
- Consider organizational interventions to improve overall employee job satisfaction in keeping with Executive Team priorities and current organizational needs.
- Encourage senior management to attend Imagine 21 to determine appropriateness for Contra Costa County by June 30, 2003.
- Make implementation decisions for FY 2003/2004.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMAGINE 21 FOR SONOMA COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT:**

Aware of the current political climate and the resulting concerns of budget and expenditures at this time, my recommendation is somewhat modified. If money were no object, I would recommend the curriculum without reservation. This or a similar program seen as a gift to employees in a sector which is looking for ways to reflect employee appreciation would also help employees accept the changing environment we are all facing. Programs such as Imagine 21 are effective as a tool to nurture our employees, to help employees grow, and to contribute to the overall mission of the Agency. Due to the current slow economic climate it may be prudent to look for less expensive ways of showing employee appreciation. However, the opportunity to have the time and curriculum to work on one's life, to determine whether one perceives to have balance in life and work, and to obtain skills with which to obtain that balance and goals, both at work and at home is a great benefit to both individual and employee. The Pacific Institute curriculum seems to be more about providing the tools and skills for self learning and understanding, as opposed to other programs, which are more about time management and goal setting. As self-understanding is needed to lead fulfilling lives, the opportunity to look at one's life and to have the time to use the affirmation and other skill sets taught in Imagine 21 as well as the theory to see things as others do, is very energizing. While I would recommend the Imagine 21 curriculum, I would choose the timing carefully, after the budget crisis has passed and after other huge projects (such as implementation of CalWIN, SEIU negotiations, etc.) have been completed. On the other hand, isn't this the perfect time to give people a respite from the frenetic schedule, to be able to review what they can do, as opposed to what constraints may come into play? The time required to really benefit from the curriculum is not to be under-estimated. It was a gift for which I am most grateful and would like to see the Department be able to offer to its employees in the not too distant future.

- Step One: Send the survey to Department staff to get a base-line reading on the current employee satisfaction. This would be a first step in the understanding of where the department strengths and weaknesses are with respect to our employees' satisfaction.
- Step Two: Assess financial situation post-budget revision.

- Step Three: Set up a workgroup or task force to look at other possible means to help employees reach their potential and to help them be flexible with the coming changes.
- Step Four: If funding becomes available, perhaps the Executive Team can experience the program to evaluate the value for themselves. Step Five: Look at the possibility of bringing it to CWDA or to develop an in-house version of a similar training.

#### References

The Pacific Institute. (2002). *A curriculum based on the foundations of modern cognitive science*. The Pacific Institute website: [www.loutice.com](http://www.loutice.com).