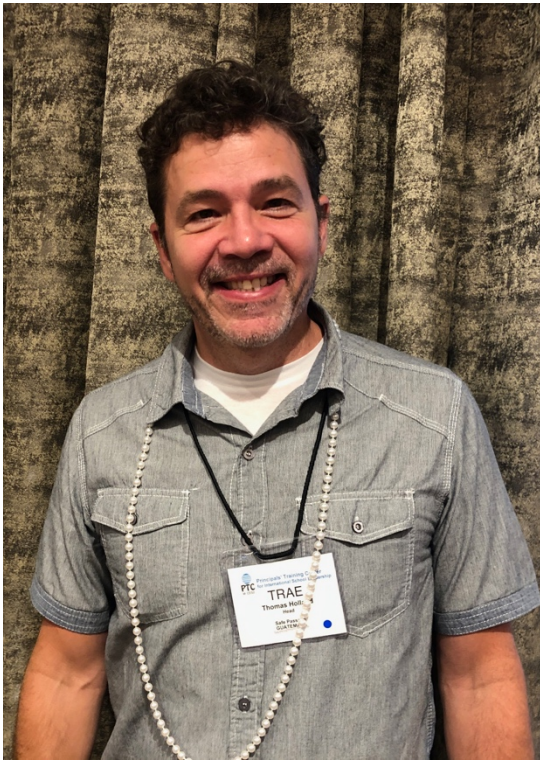


Trae Holland, Director- Participant of PTC Creating Effective Schools 2019



“ I trust that you had an amazing week, in both courses. I know you did. I was thinking last night about this and I said, okay, what's the hook? What's that? What's the idea? What's the unifying theme? Uh, even for both courses. And there are many, but I would like to throw out change, as something that's come up inordinately a lot, uh, where there's changing ourselves as leaders or changing our institutions and how we're going to enrich ourselves to have, to do a better job, being change agents, which is the reason we're educators to begin with.

Right? So, here's change. It's there. It's baked into the DNA of our courses. It's baked in the DNA of who we are. Uh, but I'd like to make an odd case this morning. I'd like to make a case for continuity to kind of go along with change as well. I'll explain what I mean. I brought this today cause this is a piece of Guatemalan fabric. The weaving in Guatemala has a very rich history. It's done by women. It's a fulsome expression of family culture and the culture as a whole. This piece of fabric represents a lot to me and what we do at our school. Our school serves a particular type of population.

They're dislocated families from the countryside in many cases, speaking different dialects. They're escaping violence, effects of climate change on their traditional life. So here they come to the city looking for new life. Farmers generally, and you come to the see with no other skill harvesting is the only thing that you know. And where do you go? You go to the garbage dump where you harvest plastic. And recyclables. So our, environment or community is based on seismic violent change, right? So we do a lot of expeditions and our curriculum, they're embedded. And what it's about is we take the kids on expeditions, but we build in and out of these project based learning, we do a particular activity where the kids are taught about the history of myan fabric making and weaving the point. We want to get their hands on it.

And they think about the continuity of their culture. Even after the last 30, 40 years where you had the very government eating its own children, disrupting everything and the society on purpose purposefully, intentionally to destroy any competition,



Principals' Training Center

quality training for international educators

or any threat to their authority, right? So to give the kids a sense of longstanding continuity, you know, endures, in the midst of this absolute violent and discombobulating change, which leads me to us. The idea of how we see change and how it affects our lives. You think about personally in our own lives, how change fits within continuity. We're international educators. We're used to it. Personal life, professional life. All of it up and just up in the air, we're moving to a new country. We're kind of built for that. But most people, they find the research shows that you can't really change everything at the same time. And a healthy man, right? Like if you're going to change jobs, that's not the time to change your personal relationships. Examples, right? Why is it fine?

Using my own? And then you think about the international schools, right? I was really gratified working a number of international schools around the world. Think about change and volatility be being part of the package, right? Students, teachers from multiple countries coming in, coming out. So it's already there. So here's the point I want to make. Change is a deeply profound and personal experience, personal, right? You know, we as leaders well intentioned, get those pieces across that board, right? Even as much as we try, it's so easy to forget that there is no one change. Every single individual in the community is seen differently, feeling it differently. And I know I'm stating the obvious here, but we forget it at our peril, right? Um, you know, and I think about my own school for example, I came in and of course as a new director, the board, the community is like, ah, new director, let's fix all the problems.

It's all about change. And I don't know why they had this innate sense that what, endures here, what's sacred. And in short order, for example, talking to teachers and parents and students, one of the things about the community that they adored was the one on one relationships, which we teachers, the students, the students who were traumatized or going through their relationships with teachers. The time, the effort that was put into those relationships. Now here I come DD bopping along like, Hey, we're going to change the structure. What if I had not known that? What if I had inadvertently undermine the sacred nature of that community? So I just ask that as we talk about change, rightfully so, a building, cultures of change, can we not find space to celebrate continuity as well? Right. And use it as the tether by which we enact real change.

And the last thing I'll say is, I talked to Nikki. These are actually real pearls. So the metaphor, but I don't know why I felt like the



Principals' Training Center

quality training for international educators

Pearl itself was a good metaphor as we end this Pearl. And do you think about where real Pearl comes from? We all know it starts with an irritant, right? And irritant and the organism hates it, but instead of rejecting it or ignoring it, it uses it, and then starts to build this layering, right? Consistent, methodical, predictable, layering of calcium and creating something beautiful at what was originally an irritant. Right? Um, but it's the, it's that predictability and the calmness of that change that I find really, really adorable. So, thank you guys. Uh, have a wonderful day."