

Gary Gunderson

Objective

To have a clear sense of the main arguments Gunderson makes in his book *Boundary Leaders: Leadership Skills for People of Faith*.

To prepare well for our class discussion.

Reading questions

1. Please match the kind of challenge to its definition: technical / adaptive
 - a problem for which we expect someone to provide a definitive solution
 - a problem that arises when our deeply held beliefs are challenged, when the values that made us successful become less relevant, and when legitimate yet competing perspectives emerge
2. Complete this statement: “The most powerful function of boundary leadership is to:
 - reframe our definition of particular systems
 - change the foundations of specific systems
 - change the relationship between humans involved in systems
3. Gunderson argues that boundary leaders have or cultivate which of the following strengths:
 - (a) comfort with using power
 - (b) broad relationships
 - (c) resilience
 - (d) focus and determination
 - (e) imagination
 - (f) organizational intelligence
 - (g) marginality
 - (h) ability to move people rhetorically
4. Gunderson suggests that boundary leaders need to exhibit the capability to:
 - be about one’s own journey of faith and service
 - nurture capacity for surprise
 - develop rituals of passage, growth, lament, memory and encouragement
 - illuminate and support movement from self to social (and back)
 - trust the visions born in lament

- challenge the tyranny of externalities, superficial measures, and short term outcomes
- appreciate the literature and practices of faith traditions
- appreciate the transformational potential of one's faith tradition and share open appreciation for others'

(a) What do you think about this list? Which items do you agree with (if any?), and which do you disagree with (if any)?

(b) Compare and contrast this list to the set of *attitudinal* competencies found in the Educational Leadership competencies list.

5. Gunderson notes the following about boundary leadership:

- "Boundary leadership focuses on what is outside, beyond, across, between; on the opportunities that arise at the thin membrane of juncture; on the moments where one way, one vision, one idea, one value meets another way, vision, idea, value."
- "Boundary leadership thinks globally and locally... Boundaries are where things come together, where the fields of relationship engage. A boundary is exactly not where things separate, but the edge of where things join..."

In what ways do you think that either Parker Palmer, Maria Harris, or the authors of the Bass book would see their definitions of religious education reflected in Gunderson's descriptions of boundary leadership?