8-23-2017

Elements of Change

Charles E. Myers
Columbus State University, myers_charles@columbustate.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://csuepress.columbusstate.edu/pil

Part of the Educational Leadership Commons, and the Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons

Recommended Citation

Elements of Change

Charles E. Myers
Columbus State University

Abstract

Historically there have been many models of change introduced to attempt to improve student achievement. The purpose of this paper was to explore some of the elements of the change process. The researcher conducted a literature review of several of the leading theorists whose research suggests different factors contribute to the success or failure of adopting change. The research suggests the success or failure of adopting change starts with the leader. The research could assist other scholars to understand the many elements of the change process and the possibility of using a combination of those elements for successful implementation of change.

Historically, there have been many models of change introduced to respond to student needs and increase achievement. One of the change models was introduced in Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations (1995). His theory stresses the importance of communication between stakeholders and he developed five factors which can contribute to the success or failure of adopting change. Those five factors include:

• Relative advantage: Is this an improvement to what is currently in place?

• Compatibility: Does it comply with the stakeholder's needs and ability to practice?

• Complexity: Is it too difficult to use or understand where it discourages implementation by the stakeholders?

•Trialability: Is it too difficult to implement by the stakeholders and what is the risk of resorting to prior methods if failure occurs?

•Observability: Can I see a model in action prior to implementation and what are the factors of success or failure?

Rogers' method appears to use a technique in which he "sells" the idea for change, which is an important element when designing a common theme and shared vision on the implementation of change.

Building upon Rogers' theory (1995), Donald Ely (1990) suggested there are environmental conditions which can aid in promoting change. Ely recommends eight conditions which need to be met to facilitate positive change. These eight conditions include:

1. Dissatisfaction with the status quo: Is what we are doing really the best way?

2. Sufficient knowledge and skills exist: To what extent do the stakeholders have knowledge about the change? What type of training can supplement their knowledge?

3. Availability of resources: Do we have the resources (money, tools) for successful implementation of change?

4. Availability of time: Can we manage our time so that change is priority and we can learn and reflect upon what we are doing?

5. Rewards or incentives: How can we use intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to promote

change? Improving student success should be sufficient, but is often not enough.

6. Participation: How can we involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process and enable them to develop a sense of ownership of the change?

7. Commitment: Are all stakeholders committed to the change?

8. Leadership: Do we have support from one another and those in management?

Ely suggests each of these conditions should be met during implementation; however, one should expect and prepare for resistance using this model. The probability for success will be much greater if each of the stakeholders has voluntarily committed to the change.

Perhaps the most useful theory related to educational change rests within Michael Fullan's book, *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (1991). Fullan's theory suggests stakeholders play a significant role in the change process. Fullan identifies six types of stakeholders:

1. The teacher: "Educational change depends on what teachers do and think."

2. The principal: The principal is held accountable for the success or failure of the change and must be prepared to meet the demands of his duties. Principals share their leadership with the stakeholders.

3. The student: Students should be encouraged to take an active role in the change; however, their input should not be viewed as a "giving in" by stakeholders where students "run the school".

4. The district administrator: These administrators, according to Fullan, are subjected to the most risk when implementing change since the perceived failure of a program could result in termination of employment.

5. The consultant: Consultants can be the most influential facilitators of change, however, Fullan suggests they often fail to communicate with stakeholders and rarely collaborate with the other agents of change.

6. The community: Fullan suggests, when the community is actively involved with the change process, there is no guarantee of positive results; however, when the stakeholders are actively included within the process (rather than doing it themselves), the likelihood of positive results increases.

Fullan's model for change also stresses the importance of communication among all stakeholders. With an open line of communication, relationships strengthen and develop into an accord to meet the goal of increasing student performance.

An additional model of change was developed by Eric Havelock and published in his book, *The Change Agent's Guide to Innovation in Education* (1995). Havelock developed a change wheel containing six aspects, which concentrate on the resistance to change experienced by many. In addition to the six aspects, Havelock includes the aspect of "care", and much like Mark Sanborn in his book, *The Fred Factor* (2004), care is the driving force behind great leadership and change. The six aspects of Havelock's model include:

1. Relationship: A relationship must be developed between all stakeholders where communication is two-way and honest.

2. Diagnosis: There must be a decision as to whether or not change is needed and how to proceed with the change.

3. Acquire resources for change: Gathering information and data needed for the change process.

4. Selecting a pathway: Choose the path of change and begin implementation.

5. Establish and accept change: Change must be accepted and become part of the new behavior.

6. Maintenance and separation: Monitor the change and continue the cycle.

Planning is an important element of Havelock's theory on change. Like many other theories, Havelock suggests continuous monitoring of the change once it takes place so the process does not revert back to its original state before the change occurs.

Very similar to Havelock's (1995) change model, Dossett, Hall, and Wallace (1973) developed the Concerns-Based Adoption Model for change. While Havelock's model is aimed at developing change within the school system, the Concerns-Based Adoption Model is aimed at changes within the individual. The model has seven stages of concern which include:

1. Level 0: The individual has little or no knowledge about the change and is not concerned with it.

2. Level 1: The individual has some knowledge of the change and would like to know more about it.

3. Level 2: The individual is concerned with the effects the change will have on them.

4. Level 3: The individual is worried other duties are not being carried out due to the focus of the change project.

5. Level 4: The individual in concerned with the success of the change project with the students and considers revisions to have a greater impact.

6. Level 5: The individual ponders whether others can benefit from the change project.

7. Level 6: The individual reflects upon the change and makes revisions and modifications to improve the project.

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model for change allows teachers to communicate with one another and discuss areas of concern before attempting to initiate a change model to increase student performance.

Although there are many other change models, the last one I will mention is creating an immunity map developed by Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey (2009). In their book, *Immunity to Change*, Kegan and Lahey discuss three adult meaning systems – the socialized mind, self-authoring mind, and self-transforming mind. Until the mind reaches the self-transforming stage, individuals and organizations tend to have the previous two mindsets which often prevent them from making the changes they desire. Using a five-step approach to design an immunity map to help facilitate change, individuals and organizations develop an "immunity map" to guide them through the process of overcoming immunities and implement change. These five processes are:

1. Identify your individual or collective improvement goal.

2. Take a fearless inventory (of behaviors contrary to the improvement goal).

3. Uncover your individual or collective column 3 (from the immunity map) competing commitments.

4. Uncover your individual or collective big assumption.

5. Prepare to test your big assumptions.

Kegan and Lacey's theory suggests those who successfully implement change by overcoming individual and organizational immunities will become dominate leaders, which will have loyal and committed colleagues. Their approach to change has many similarities to those approaches suggested by Dossett et al. (1973) in their Concerns-Based Adoption Model.

This paper has explored elements of the change process and how leaders can utilize these strategies to lead through the change process. There are many ways to implement change. The approaches mentioned within this paper are meant to encourage leaders to step back from their initial impulse to respond and to reflect upon these strategies before implementing changes within the organization. The success or failure of adopting change starts with the leader. Leaders must also realize there will be both individual and organizational resistance to change. Understanding the mindset of both and being transparent will hopefully increase the leader's ability to implement change. By recognizing the many approaches to change and understanding self-inflicted immunity, leaders are encouraged to use any combination of these approaches to implement successful change.

References

Collinson, D., & Tournish, D. (2015). Teaching leadership critically: New directions for leadership pedagogy. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 14*(4), 576-594.

Covey, S. R. (2014). *The leader in me.* New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Dossett, W., Hall, G., & Wallace, R. (1973). *A developmental conception of the adoption process with educational institutions* (Report No. 3006). Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Research and Development Center for Teacher Education.

Ely, D. P. (1990). Conditions that facilitate the implementation of educational technology innovations. *Journal of Research on Computing in Education*, *23*(2), 298.

Fullan, M. G. (2006). Change theory: A force for school improvement. *Centre for Strategic Education, 157*, 1-14.

Fullan, M. G., & Stiegelbauer, S. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Havelock, R. G., & Zlotolow, S. (1995). *The change agent's guide,* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications, Inc.

Kegan, R., & Lahey, L. L. (2009). *Immunity to change: How to overcome it and unlock the potential in yourself and your organization.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business School.

Rogers, E. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations,* (4th ed.). New York, NY: The Free Press.

Sanborn, M. (2004). *The Fred factor: How passion in your work and life can turn the ordinary into the extraordinary* (1st Currency ed.). New York, NY: Currency/Doubleday.

CHARLES E. MYERS is a doctoral student at Columbus State University. His research interests include organizational change and the perspectives of teachers of the roles of school administrators regarding student achievement.