



Stakeholders together adapting ideas to readjust
local systems to promote inclusive education

CHANGE MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT

Managing change

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2. Managing change

2.1 Principles

When people and organisations are engaged in change, several patterns have been observed repeatedly, and some have developed into major themes, or basic principles, according to Hall & Hord (2015). For those authors, these principles are no longer debatable points, for they summarise predictable aspects of change. Acknowledging that these principles are foundational to the way of thinking about change. Understanding them should help agents of change in predicting key aspects of change efforts.

First, **“change is learning”**, as stressed above (cf. p.7). Second, **“change is a process, not an event”**. Change is a process through which people and organisations move as they gradually learn, come to understand, and become skilled and competent in the use of the new patterns. There are very few shortcuts. The press to make change quickly means that there is limited time to learn and understand the newly introduced path. The strategic plan for change will look very different depending on whether it is assumed that change is a process or an event. If the assumption is that change is a process, then the plan for change will be strategic in nature. It will allow at least three to five years for full implementation and will budget the resources needed to support formal learning. Third, **“the school is the primary organisational unit for change”**, as written above (cf.p.8). Fourth, **“organisations adopt change, individuals implement change”** (cf. p.9). So, this CMT emphasises the need to focus on people and carrying about them. Lastly, it is necessary to keep the **“focus”**. Multiple change efforts require multiple resources, and multiple amounts of attention and energy with multiple actions, to utilise formative and summative evaluations of the efforts to assure successful implementation. These elements require consistent, enduring, and uninterrupted attention to the goals and intended results of each change initiative. Along the way it is very important to keep the focus on the primary goal to be achieved.

2.2 Strategies, Tactics, and Incidents

Over time to accomplish specific change process objectives demands strategies, which are an accumulation of smaller interventions (tactics). Strategies impact many implementers and take long periods of time. Tactic is a set of small, interrelated actions. A day-long workshop would be a „tactic” as a part of the „strategy” of a “training program” for the first year of implementation. Other examples of „tactics” are visiting each implementer in his or her classroom over a three-day period to solicit concerns about training sessions and scheduling a consultant to be in the school for a week to provide technical assistance to any teacher who indicates interest. „Incidents” are small and more individualised interventions. They are short in duration, focus typically on one or just a few implementers, and mostly occur informally. For they are so powerful, they should be on the mind of every facilitator and be planned. Incident interventions can be of significantly greater implementation success due to this personalised help and support.

It is our conviction that change is facilitated if we understand and prioritise the care to be taken with people's beliefs and convictions, the greatest obstacle or greatest facilitator of change, therefore Tools 3, 7, 8 and 9 are suggested as well as starting with Tool 3, the “empathy maps” the management of the change process. It is very important to start by working on the state of concern of the people involved in the change process.

3.2.1. *Managing concerns*

Feelings and perceptions about an innovation and/or a change process can help or disrupt. When people are excited about a promising change, they will try it. But if they perceive threat or loss, people

will hold back from engaging with the process. These feelings and perceptions can be categorised into what we call „concerns“. In fact, everyone involved in change exhibits the same dynamics in terms of feelings and perceptions (see Tools 3 and 8).

The agreed-upon definition of the term „concern“ is, according to Hall & Hord (2015), the composite representation of the feelings, preoccupation, thought, and consideration given to a particular issue or task is called „concern“. Depending on our personal make-up, knowledge, and experiences, each person perceives and mentally contends with a given issue differently; thus, there are different kinds of „concerns“.

In response to the demand, our minds explore ways, means, potential barriers, possible actions, risks, and rewards in relation to the demand. All in all, the mental activity composed of questioning, analysing, and reanalysing, considering alternative actions and reactions, and anticipating consequences is concern. To be concerned means to be in a mentally aroused state about something. The intensity of the arousal will depend on the person’s past experiences and associations with the subject of the arousal.

In Hall & Hord (2015), Hall presents seven stages of concerns about innovation: 0) “unconcerned”, concern about other thing(s) is more intense; 1) “informational”, a general awareness of the innovation and interest in learning more detail about it is indicated; 2) “personal”, individual is uncertain about the demands of the innovation, his/her inadequacy to meet those demands, and his/her role with the innovation; 3) “management”, attention is focused on the processes and tasks of using the innovation and the best use of information and resources; 4) “consequence”, attention focuses on impact of the innovation on students; 5) “collaboration”, the focus is on coordination and cooperation with others regarding use of the innovation; 6) “refocusing”, the focus is on the exploration of more universal benefits from the innovation, including the possibility of major changes or replacement with a more powerful alternative.

The ideal flow of concerns is not always guaranteed, nor does it always move in one direction. If the innovation is appropriate, if there is sufficient time, if the leaders are initiating, and if the change process is carefully facilitated, then implementers will move from early „personal-concerns“ (stage 2) to „management concerns“ (stage 3), during the first years of use and, ultimately, to „impact concerns“ (stage 4), after 3 to 5 years.

Often, the support needed for the change process over time is not forthcoming, or the leaders fail to facilitate effectively, or, in the case of schools, the district, and state governments annually add more innovations to the point where none can be fully implemented. However, facing a challenge of a change many combinations of concerns can be imagined, but once the profile of concerns has been identified, the important work can begin. Attempting to change humans in an organisational context is a very complex, dynamic, and, in many ways, subtle enterprise for which we dare to provide the Tool 8.

3.2.2. Managing communication

In case the change be recommended in the NAPs to policy makers, schools/school leaders or other stakeholders, a first step in moving toward an improved future is the development of a shared dream or vision of what will be a vision of the future that increases inclusion in education (Tool 2). The goal of increased all students’ outcomes/inclusion could result from specific changes or innovations that are selected for adoption and implementation (Tools 1, 4 and 5). Many change efforts fail because the participants do not share mental images or pictures of what classroom and/or school practice will look

like when an identified change is implemented to a high quality. Picturing the change in operation provides the target for beginning the change journey (Tool 2).

The elements of the shared vision of change must be as clearly defined as possible, and facilitators must continuously communicate this vision to enable implementers to move toward high-quality implementation. When implementers have a shared vision, facilitators can be consistent in supporting individuals and groups.

Efforts to share information about the new program or practice, and to let others know of its value and positive impact with the intention of persuading them to adopt the program, are dissemination interventions (see Tool 2 and 9). These interventions are important first steps in “going to scale.” In broadcasting the virtues of the innovation, broader support and influence may be gained as well, but in this category the primary intent is to inform prospective adopters from other sites.

3.2.3. Managing the change process – planning

When an initial vision for change has been established (the vision can certainly evolve and change as the school staff experiences, learns, and gains more expertise), planning for its realisation is both possible and necessary (see Tools 5, 6 and 7). All logistical factors and resource allocations, along with policy implications, must be considered. Although it seems obvious, the planning and provision of resources represent an important means by which implementers are enabled to initiate implementation and sustain the change process. Sometimes change efforts lacked necessary resources, which forestalled the expected beginning of the change process and in the end doomed the entire effort. Planning is not a one-time event. Like a holiday trip, destinations sometimes change, and unexpected additions frequently may be made for increased effectiveness and/or satisfaction. Thus, although a plan is essential for understanding where the change journey begins, it should never be considered as cast in concrete. Likewise, the resource requirements for a change are altered across time as implementers become more expert in the use of an innovation and as the configuration of use may make differing demands. Not to be forgotten is the regular depletion of program materials and equipment and the need for updating supplies to teachers and students. Other types of resources also require planning. One of the most important and most typically lacking is time: time for planning, time for professional development, time for sharing, and projecting the time (years) it will take to achieve high levels of use. Scheduling time for implementers to meet to discuss successes and share solutions to problems has proven to be valuable, also. Establishing rules and guidelines by which implementation progress will be assessed and monitored, staffing new roles and/or realigning existing ones, scheduling meetings and other regular and nonregular events, seeking and acquiring materials and equipment, providing space, and accessing funds needed for the new program or practice (see Tools 9 and 10).

3.2.4. Managing the change process – professional learning

Change means developing new understandings and doing things in new ways. Thus, learning is the basis of and the corollary to change (cf. principle 1). Formal training and other forms of professional and personal development, then, are essential to preparing implementers for the change. And, when change is viewed as a process, learning opportunities for implementers should be ongoing as they develop more expertise in using the innovation. All too frequently, training workshops are scheduled only at the beginning of a change effort. We know that „task concerns” do not become intense until after use begins. Therefore, „stages of concern” can be used to design and shape the development and learning sessions in the pre-implementation period of preparation as well as during implementation, when implementers are changing from novices to mature users of the new practices.

Leaders of the change effort will need to consider the following interventions, and others, in the learning and development category: scheduling learning and development sessions across time as the implementers move from novice to expert; identifying and contracting with consultants (internal and

external); providing information about the change; teaching the skills required of the innovation; developing positive attitudes about use of the new program; holding workshops; modelling and demonstrating innovation use; and clarifying misconceptions about the program or practice. At this point, the interventions are formal, organized, and scheduled, that is, provided as large group learning sessions.

It is important that learning and development be concerns-based and focused on the vision for the change (see Tools 2, 3, and 6). When implementers' current concerns are addressed, implementers gain the information and learn the skills necessary to use the new way well. Too often, professional development has been vague and off-target in relation to the current concerns of those out on the bridge. With a focus on the staff's concerns about its new program and practices, and on the vision of what the change will look like in operation, investing in professional learning will pay large dividends.

3.2.5. Managing the change process – checking progress

Because change does not happen overnight, the process must be continuously assessed and monitored (Tool 10). Even though a clear articulation of the change has been expressed and material and human resources have been provided, the change journey is not without its bumps and detours. A significant set of facilitator interventions should focus on keeping a hand on the pulse of change. „Empathy maps” (Tool 3) are an excellent way to check with implementers to identify emerging needs, clarify questions, and solve small problems, by applying also Tool 6. Not only does this enable the facilitator to assess progress, it also signals continuing interest to the implementers that their efforts are worthy of notice and support. Decision makers and regulatory agencies have always known that what is measured or monitored is given more attention (Tool 10 and 9). A change effort will be given more attention if facilitators continually check on how implementation is progressing. More often than not, the change effort is lost when the leaders fail to routinely check on progress. Important checking actions include gathering data about the concerns of each implementer (Tools 3 and 6); collecting information about the developing knowledge and skills of implementers; collecting feedback at the end of workshops and providing feedback on the feedback (Tool 9); talking informally with users about their progress; and, at regular intervals, systematically measuring (Tool 10), analysing, and interpreting „empathy maps” (Tool 3 and 6). It is important that data collected about implementation be analysed, carefully interpreted, and used to guide subsequent interventions.

3.2.6. Managing the process – continuous assistance

Assisting is directly coupled with assessing. When concerns, needs, and problems are identified, a response is required that resolves the issue. Assistance may take the form of supplying additional materials that address a mechanical use of the problem, providing formal or informal learning activities that address „impact concerns”, teaming with implementers to demonstrate refinements, and peer observations. It makes sense to assess progress to identify needs and then to aid respond to the needs. This coupling of assessing and assisting is labelled coaching, consulting, or follow-up and typically occurs with individuals or very small groups of implementers. These are crucial interventions.

A very important assisting action is to stop by and simply ask, “How's it going?” (see Tool 9). Additional actions include responding to individuals' questions and confusions, encouraging individuals in their use of the innovation, assisting single and small-group implementers in problem solving, providing follow-up and technical assistance, conducting quick conversations about the implementers' use and reinforcing what they are doing, and celebrating successes both small and large, publicly and privately. The importance of the coaching role should not be underemphasized.

3.2.7. Managing the change process – context supportive of change

Increased attention is currently being paid to the context, climate, and/or culture of the school and district and how these factors influence the workplace and, subsequently, how professionals respond

to change initiatives. Context supports or inhibits change. One of the components of context that inhibits change is the „physical” one, or nonorganic, aspects of an organisation: its building facilities, schedules, policies, and the like. The second component is the „people element”: the beliefs and values held by the members and the norms that guide their behaviour, relationships, attitudes, and so on. Although the context is identified by its two parts, the parts are interactive and influence each other. For example, a small institution in a small facility (but one with an available meeting space) will find it much easier to come together to interact and build trust than would a much larger institution spread over multiple buildings. A supportive context decreases the isolation of the staff; provides for the continuing increase of its capabilities; nurtures positive relationships among all the staff, students, and parents/ community members; and urges the unceasing quest for increased effectiveness so that students benefit. In such a context the participants value change as a means for improving their effectiveness and seek changes to improve their practice.

Such a context should already have been a permanent part of the climate/culture of the schools and district. If such a context does not exist, a few ideas for generating this positive climate are to use actions that allow for relationship building, such as making clear to the implementers that they are doing important work; developing trust between and among all the individuals doing the implementation; and recognising and applauding the efforts of each person who is giving time, attention, and energy to the school’s efforts to improve (Tool 9). When things fail or go wrong, help individuals to see it as an opportunity for learning, changing, and trying again.