
CHAPTER 1

IMPLEMENTING CHANGE
Patterns, Principles, and Lessons Learned

Learning means you are adjusting to change.
—Art Laskiester on the Larry King Show, July 20, 2002.

Change means you are adjusting your learning.
—Director of professional learning

We know from past experience that it is important to stay the course. It takes time to institutionalize new practices.
—High school principal

After all this research on classrooms, the inescapable conclusion is that school-based leadership makes a big difference.
—Assistant superintendent, urban district

When everything comes together right, change is an energizing and very satisfying experience.
—Sales manager, a real estate company

Here we go again. You know how change is. It is like a pendulum, swinging back and forth.
—Teacher, middle school history department

WHY A BOOK ON “IMPLEMENTING CHANGE?”

Are you a teacher, an assistant principal, an inner-city district superintendent, a state-level director of traffic or highways, a campus-based school principal, a college dean, or the dad in a family? Regardless of your role, chances are you have had experiences in suggesting or introducing changes of some sort in your organization. How many times have you been successful in accomplishing those changes, most especially if the changes were not readily agreeable to your constituents?
not be nearly as much fun to study, facilitate, and experience. So let's begin our journey of bringing order to change by introducing a set of principles about change that each of us has understood implicitly but probably not verbalized. Interestingly, we predict that you will be able to describe personal change experiences in which each of these principles has been ignored or violated. Certainly, your future change efforts can be more successful if these principles are acknowledged.

Change Principle 1: Change Is Learning—It's as Simple and Complicated as That

To improve the speed of transportation from one place to another, one might decide to make a change and use a bicycle; to become a skillful bicycle rider requires learning about the pedals, handlebars, balance, the rules of the road, and laws governing the conduct of persons using public highways and neighborhood paths and sidewalks. This is an example easy to understand and to visualize. It is also easy to understand that having a caring dad or big brother to guide the learning, to provide feedback about how to sit astride the vehicle, how to rotate the pedals so that the wheels turn efficiently can add measurably to the quality and time required of the learning.

In the marketplace, matters are not quite so simple. A shoe store manager, noting that the quality of her merchandise and the appeal of the salesroom equaled those of her nearest competitor, which was besting her in shoe sales, wondered if her sales staff lacked in their approach to customers. She engaged a colleague to check this and discovered that the competing store's staff expressed a warmer attitude toward customers and expressed and conveyed more knowledge about the merchandise to customers. It was obvious to this manager that something must be done to improve staff/customer relations.

Her first attempt to change her staff's knowledge and skills was to bring them together for coffee before the store opened and share a report from the Business League about research that had been done that identified how sales personnel should act to make successful sales. The staff appreciated the fine coffee and rolls but expressed a lack of knowing what to do to behave as the research findings indicated. Well, the manager contemplated, I guess they will need to learn how to act in these new ways.

In three successive meetings, the staff met to study new behaviors, to see them demonstrated, to practice them on each other, and to receive feedback from the business consultant who was instructing them. Everyone was delighted when shoe sales increased, as did the commissions of the staff.

To make things better (improved) in the family setting, in the marketplace, and in the classroom, change is introduced and learning makes it possible to make the change (see Figure 1.1). In the two examples provided, the changes and their learning needs are fairly easy to understand and to accomplish. But let's visit a mathematics classroom and a school improvement effort—one expected to enable students to increase their abilities in critical thinking, in problem solving, and in teamwork. Before these new outcomes (changes) can be realized in the students, the instructional staff must change their teaching. Changing to a new way of teaching mathematics is not an easy effort.

One of the authors vividly recalls a long-ago classroom teaching experience. The district mathematics curriculum coordinator introduced and expected that all teachers would implement and use a new inquiry-oriented math curriculum that provided students with a large degree of self-guided instruction. To support the teachers in this new approach to teaching math, teacher's guides for the curriculum were distributed, and teachers were directed to access staff development/learning about how to teach the new program by sitting alone in front of their residential televisions—not a very powerful learning strategy.

Subsequently, this teacher's mathematics guide became permanently affixed to her left arm. Following this "teacher-proof" set of teaching directions worked okay when the students responded with understanding and the correct answers. However, when students didn't understand or respond correctly, the teacher did not know what to do for she had little depth of understanding of the process for this kind of instruction. Fortunately for all in this classroom, one of the intellectually gifted sixth-grade students understood the situation and the curriculum and taught the teacher. Learning enabled the teacher to change her practices and to use the improved and more effective program with students. (As a side note, in this same vignette, many teachers did not have access to the learning that enabled them to use the program. After trials and frustration with the program, they reverted to their old practices—a common result in such scenarios.)

Professional learning is a critical component embedded in the change process. Research focused on change process and on professional development reveals parallel findings, both of
individual aspect to organizational change. Even when the change is introduced to every member of the organization at the same time, the rate of learning to make the change and of developing skill and competence in using it will vary individually. Some people will grasp the new way immediately, although most will need some additional time, and a few will avoid making the change for a very long time. Rogers (2003) has called this third group "laggards." Even when the change is mandated, some individuals will delay implementation. One implication of this principle is that leaders of organizational change processes need to devise ways to anticipate and facilitate change at the individual level.

This principle does not mean that all of the interventions (e.g., on-site coaching or a telephone hotline to address specific questions) in a change process must be addressed at the individual level. Nor does it mean that every individual will be at a different point in the process. People respond to and implement change in typical patterns that will be described in the following chapters. Change process leaders can and should anticipate many of these patterns. Many interventions should be targeted toward subgroups (e.g., principals training in what the change entails), and many others should be aimed at the organization as a whole. Still, since there is an individual element to how the change process unfolds, many of the interventions must be done with and for individuals, for there can be no change in outcomes until each individual implements the new practice.

Organizations are under heavy pressure to increase performance. In business, the press is to increase productivity, quality, and sales. In schools, the bottom line is the expectation to have over-increasing student scores on standardized tests. To improve performance, many policymakers and executives are placing heavy emphasis on evaluating the end results. For schools, this is seen in the widespread focus on high-stakes testing. Annual testing of students has been mandated, and NCLB mandates negative consequences for schools that do not show adequate increases in test scores. An implicit assumption with this approach to change seems to be that schools will incorporate the necessary changes to make test scores go up. However, little support is being made available to schools to implement those changes.

Figure 1.2 illustrates this problem. Imagine a setting where there is a very large and deep chasm with schools engaged in current practice located on the left cliff. On the right side of the chasm are the increases in student outcomes that are desired. Strategies that focus only on the right side fail to acknowledge several implementing change realities. First, if there are no changes in practice, there is little reason to expect a change in outcomes. As principals often observe, "If you always do what you have always done, you will continue to get what you always have gotten." The second failure is in relation to Change Principle 2: Change is a process, not an event. If it takes three to five years to implement new practices to a high level, then it is highly unlikely that positive increases in outcomes will occur during the first or second year of implementation. In the scene shown in Figure 1.2, practitioners are being asked to make a Giant Leap. They are being directed to improve outcomes without any support for learning how to change their current practices, and thus improve.

In order for change to be successful, an Implementation Bridge is necessary. Each member of the organization has to move across the Implementation Bridge. As they learn to change their practices, there can be changes in outcomes. Without an Implementation Bridge, there is little reason to expect positive change in outcomes. Instead, there are likely to be casualties as attempts to make the giant leap fail. Individuals and whole organizations may fall into the chasm.

Each chapter in this book will present research-based constructs and tools that can be used to facilitate individuals and organizations in moving across the bridge. The constructs and tools also can be used to measure the extent to which they have moved across the bridge. These implementation assessment data can then be correlated with outcome measures. Ideally, outcomes should be higher for those individuals and organizations that have moved further across the bridge. This was the case in one large study of implementation of standards-based teaching of mathematics (George, Hall, & Uchiyama, 2000). Students in classrooms with teachers who had moved further along with implementation had higher test scores.

**Reflection Questions**

Why would you wish for your children (or grandchildren) to be assigned to a teacher who is a continuous learner, one who is consistently updating his/her knowledge base? In what ways might it be useful if the school supplied the resources for this learning?

**Change Principle 5: Interventions Are Key to the Success of the Change Process**

As individuals plan and lead change processes, they tend to be preoccupied with the innovation and its use. They often do not think about the various actions and events that they and others could take to influence the process; these actions are known as interventions. Training workshops are perhaps the most obvious type of intervention. Although workshops are
As faculty, we were at the proverbial bottom of the organization. As long as we had the energy, we were able to work collaboratively to develop and implement our innovation bundle. Although that bundle turned out to be successful, over time our faculty colleagues in the regular programs and the administration of the university did not actively support the continuation of the bundle, nor the implementation of any of the specific innovations into the regular programs. Without their direct support, it was the bottom innovation initiative was forgotten.

The point here is not to analyze what we might have done to garner more administrator support (which we will do in other chapters). Rather, our goal is to use a firsthand experience to show that although the "bottom" may be able to launch and sustain an innovative effort for several years, if administrators do not engage in ongoing active support, it is more than likely that the change effort will die.

In many ways Change Principle 7 is a corollary of Change Principle 8, since everyone along the policy-to-practice continuum has a role to play if change is going to be successful. Yes, teachers and professors can create, share with others, and implement new practices. Yes, administrators have to do things on a day-to-day basis that are supportive and provide continuous learning about the innovation opportunities. (Remember those one-legged-interviews?) Administrators also have to secure the necessary infrastructure changes and long-term resource supports if use of an innovation is to continue indefinitely. And finally, yes, policymakers need to design policies that legitimize infrastructure changes and innovative practices and encourage continued use of the innovation.

**Change Principle 8: Facilitating Change Is a Team Effort**

In this book we will emphasize repeatedly the importance of facilitating the change process, which means that leadership must be ongoing for change to be successful. In Chapter 6 we will describe different change facilitator styles and the significance of each. Embedded in all of this and in many of the principles presented here is the core belief that change is a team effort. Just as in Change Principle 3 we stress that no school is an island, we argue here that collaboration is also necessary among those responsible for leading change efforts.

Although in Change Principle 7 we describe the crucial role of the school principal, we want to emphasize that many others also have a responsibility to help change processes be successful. Indeed, other administrators play important roles, as do front-line users and nonusers of the innovation. Teachers, for example, play a critical leadership role in whether or not change is successful. We really are in this phenomenon together, and all must help to facilitate the process.

Team leadership for change extends far beyond the school site. In many ways all of the actors across the Policy-to-Practice Continuum (see Table 1.1) are contributors to change success. Each of these role groups has the potential to strongly influence what happens at the local site and

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<th><strong>TABLE 1.1</strong> The Policy-to-Practice Continuum</th>
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with individual users. State and federal executives and policymakers obviously have the potential to affect change in schools. Each time there is an election, voters hear about the "education" governor/president. Administrators and staff in the school district office can make important contributions to efforts to move across the Implementation Bridge. Each of these "external" roles can, and do, make significant differences in the degree of success of change. Colleagues in a school make a difference, too, as they learn about the changes together. When teachers and others inside the organization share successes and challenges, implementation efforts can be more successful.

**Reflection Questions**

Consider a change project in which you were part of the team supporting and facilitating the effort. Who/what roles did you and the other team members represent? What support and assistance did you they offer that contributed to the success of the project?

**Change Principle 9: Mandates Can Work**

Change Principle 5 introduced the concept of interventions and gave special attention to a category of small interventions called one-legged interviews. Among the number of other types of interventions that will be described in later chapters, one of the more common is known as a strategy. A mandate is one kind of strategy that is used widely. Although mandates are continually criticized as being ineffective because of their top-down orientation, they can work quite well. With a mandate the priority is clear, and there is an expectation that the innovation will be implemented. The mandate strategy fails when the only time the change process is supported is at the initial announcement of the mandate. When a mandate is accompanied by ongoing communication, ongoing learning, on-site coaching, and time for implementation, it can work. As with many change strategies, the mandate has garnered a bad name—but not because the strategy itself is flawed but because it is not supported with the other necessary interventions.

**Change Principle 10: The Context Influences the Process of Learning and Change**

In considering the school as the unit of change, we can think of it as having two important dimensions that affect the change efforts of the individual and the organization:

1. The **physical features**, such as the size and arrangement of the facility, and the resources, policies, structures, and schedules that shape the staff's work
2. The **people factors**, which include the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the individuals involved as well as the relationships and norms that guide behavior

An increasing body of literature on the influence of workplace culture has evolved from both educational writers who study school improvement and from members of the corporate sector who are concerned with quality and its relationship to profits. Interestingly, these two rather disparate worlds share common views about desirable organizational conditions that result in effective staff performance and customer satisfaction/high-level learner outcomes (in the school setting).
SUMMARY

The main reason for writing this book is to describe what has been learned about facilitating the process of change. This knowledge, if used well, can reduce, if not avoid altogether, the apprehension and dread associated with change and can lead to successful results. Nearly all of the ideas and suggestions made are derived from research. In this chapter we have created the foundation by summarizing a set of change principles that represent some of the predictable patterns of change in organizational settings. The metaphor of the implementation bridge should help in visualizing many of the change principles.

A very important next step is to develop an understanding and appreciation of the personal side of change, which we will address with the concept of Stages of Concern. The fact that leaders do make a difference in supporting participants in learning how to use new programs and processes will be addressed through our research on Change Facilitator Style. The leaders' actions, known as interventions, will be reviewed as well. Don't forget that the change process we describe is taking place inside an organizational setting. Individuals in organizations construct an organizational culture based on values and norms. Understanding the importance of an organization culture is the beginning step for achieving long-term change success. Consideration of this culture will be explored in Chapter 2.

We will be consistently asking you to think about situations that you are experiencing and about how you can facilitate change. This is done throughout to help you tie the various ideas together, to relate them to your context, and to learn how to make them useful in your setting.

We are living in a time of change. Rather than viewing change as a painful course of action, let's develop an understanding of how it works, how to facilitate the process, and how to learn from our experiences. To accomplish these outcomes, the following chapters will be organized around key change process concepts. Each chapter will include research findings and examples of how a research-verified construct can be used to facilitate change and to monitor how well it is going. Each chapter includes a number of features, such as Pothole Warnings, that can be of help in anticipating things that can go wrong. Occasionally we point out areas where more research is needed. The primary purpose, though, is to increase your understanding about how the change process works and how to be most effective in influencing, facilitating, and monitoring that process.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. With which of the change principles presented in this chapter do you strongly agree? Are there any with which you strongly disagree? Why?
2. Can change be successful? Explain your answer.
3. Change Principle 6 addresses resistance to change. Is resistance present in every change effort? Is resistance ever appropriate?
4. Describe a change process that you have had or are experiencing. Point out where the different principles fit. Do any of them explain why certain things have gone well and what is, or was, problematic?