1

Introduction

Just Imagine . . . schools in the future where the drivers of change are those who are truly committed to their students' success and who are regularly monitoring the learning challenges and achievement of their students. Educators meet regularly in collaborative teams to discuss student data and reflect on what the data indicate about student results, and from their reflections, they carefully determine what actions can have the greatest impact to improve student learning. All improvements are conducted through the day-to-day flow of teaching and learning experiences, insights, and action research. Throughout the school there is the belief that everyone's perspective and understanding is valued, embraced, and considered in shaping a collective future for student success. These educators create their future and that of their students through social interactions and a shared collective vision.

Just Imagine . . . educators in the 21st century who *respect and embrace* change. They see each reform initiative as an opportunity for their own reflection, renewal, and growth. The pathway of change is their primary means to engage continuous learning and to increase professional capacity. There is diminished resistance to change. Multiple and continuous feedback loops inform everyone on a daily basis how the innovation (new practice) is moving forward and having an impact on adult and student learning. And these educators consider opposing ideas or perspectives as an opportunity to stretch thinking and provide different points of view.

They believe that real change is synonymous with learning. Just as Peter Senge (1990) has stated,

> Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human. Through learning we re-create ourselves. Through learning we become able to do something we never were able to do. Through learning we re-perceive the world and our relationship to it. Through learning we extend our capacity to create, to be part of the generative process of life. (p. 14)

Just Imagine . . . the role of educational leaders in the 21st century (principal, district office personnel, etc.) as conveners of change rather than the drivers. These positional leaders tend to the collegial, social fabric of school life and invite transformation through conversation, the exploration of new questions, and thoughtful action. They do this because they know change is not a static event. It is a dynamic process that emerges over time through meaningful interactions and the behaviors that follow the interactions. As conveners, leaders hold the understanding that for any change initiative to be successful, it cannot be seen as only a logistical process or an organizational mandate; it requires an understanding of human dynamics and how to engage individuals in social/relational space. The task, then, of these positional leaders is to create the social structures and opportunities that bring people together in order to deepen personal and collective meaning and find shared accountability for student learning. In many ways, these leaders are the social architects who engage what Kouzes and Posner (1995) call "the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations" (p. 30).

Just Imagine . . . the implementation of all change is guided by professional conversation and coaching. Using the concepts of Stages of Concern, Levels of Use, and Innovation Configuration, and their associated strategies and tools, each person contributes by shaping a meaningful picture of the change and identifying appropriate adaptive strategies. Throughout the organization there is a culture of freedom that allows and works with ambivalence, dissonance, and uncertainty so everyone has the necessary time to evolve new understandings and capabilities related to the change. Coaching is widely available to support each staff member in reflection, thinking, and finding insights in order to move into greater competencies around the change. It is now well accepted that because we are fundamentally social beings, communication is the lubricant that makes the implementation sustainable and successful.

How we perceive changes is clearly impacted by our values and the beliefs from which they derive. We think it is important to share the following significant beliefs that we hold for change.

SIX BELIEFS ABOUT CHANGE

The "Imagine" scenario above is grounded in six beliefs we hold about successful change. These beliefs are the foundation for our thinking about how the implementation of change happens in its best possible way. We believe that . . .

All change is based on learning, and improvement is based on change. Learning is a critical component embedded in the change process. Learning enables people to discard past practices and find new behaviors appropriate for the innovation. At the center of all successful implementation of a change is the opportunity for adults to come together and learn. Unfortunately, there has been much change in the past driven by mundane data and hierarchal processes that often leave people feeling used and dispirited by the effort.

Implementing a change has greater success when it is guided through social interaction. Humans create meaning through interactions with each other and their environment—change is more sustainable when it is driven by conditions that invite people to engage in social learning. It is through our interactions with others that we not only create the future, but also make sense of the present and find new ways to take action. That is why . . .

Individuals have to change before the school can change. The starting point for implementing any innovation is the individual. Each person will have his or her own concerns around a change and can be at a different stage of readiness for adopting an innovation. Bandura (1997) reminds us that, for learning and development to take place (critical factors for any change), individuals have to exercise their own personal agency, the ability to influence oneself and his or her environment. That is why Stages of Concern, the foundational concept of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), is so important in facilitating successful implementation.

Change has an effect on the emotional and behavioral dimensions of humans. Change can be stressful and often leads people to feeling disoriented and confused. William Bridges (2009), in his book *Managing Transitions,* reminds us about the emotional dimension of change, and that by not addressing that aspect, many change initiatives fail. It is this dimension that is addressed by Stages of Concern, that identifies implementers' feelings and attitudes. It is important to understand also that when people are learning to use an innovation, they tend to move along a spectrum that ranges from no use to full use of the new practice, or program. The research-based concept of Levels of Use provides the change facilitator eight behavioral profiles to consider as individuals adopt and become more familiar with and more skilled in using an innovation. The Levels of Use, in concert with Stages of Concern, can be employed to lessen stress, support individuals, and provide authentic assistance to them.

People will more readily choose to change when they foresee how an innovation will enhance their work. If there were no relevant reason to change, why would a person choose to do something differently? When it comes to implementing an innovation, individuals should be able to envision how it will affect their day-to-day work and how the results of their work will become different and better. The Innovation Configuration Map invites a mental image of what the change will look like as it previews new behaviors.

A change leader's role is to facilitate the conversations that invite others to own the desired change. Successful implementation of a change will depend on the quality of conversations that invite personal and social investment. It is imperative that change leaders facilitate collegial interactions throughout the change process because we are fundamentally social beings. Conversations are not the end, but rather the means to gain action and envision new behaviors of the innovation. The CBAM was conceptualized and created with that end in mind. It gives direction to thoughtful and sensitive change

facilitators as they engage in the challenging tasks of supporting others in adopting and implementing new practices for a desired change.

CRITICAL UNDERSTANDINGS

Many individuals equate the CBAM with Stages of Concern (SoC), one of the components of the CBAM, and its foundational concept. SoC, with the concepts of Levels of Use (LoU) and Innovation Configurations (IC) all noted modestly above, are typically used as a means for understanding what is occurring with an individual in the process of change and, subsequently, as the basis for creating appropriate support and assistance to the individual.

Change Process Strategies

What is not so well known is an additional, powerful component of the CBAM—a set of research-based strategies or activities, found as a result of rigorous, longitudinal studies, which guide and direct the necessary *actions* required for successful change. These strategies serve as the imperative for conducting change in an organization, and they enable us to see the big picture of a change effort. These strategies may be thought of as a game plan. Their purposes reflect the necessities for the success of change endeavors, and we share what we have learned about them through long-term observation and participation, and from intensive study and research.

Expanding the Change Leadership Roster

We make a point about collaborative leadership, for we see it as the appropriate model for today's ever-learning educational leader and a model for the staff as a continuous learner. Most certainly, a thoughtful, sensitive, and strong guide is necessary at the outset of a plan for change, but the wise and inclusive leader plans for and engages participants in continuous learning about the innovation and how to use it productively. This model of principal as "collegial facilitator" shares discussions of the following ideas:

- How are we doing?
- What is working and what is not?
- How do we do the challenging exploratory work of identifying needs for change and finding potential solutions?
- How can we support each other in learning about and implementing new practices/programs so that our teaching quality is increased and students learn more successfully?

We think this spells out the collegial facilitator's role, and guides and supports the development of the staff's collective efficacy. To that end, we expect to be your "whisper coach" who sits at your side, or on your shoulder, calling your attention to useful actions and strategies for moving your organization's change effort to its successful end, through the challenging efforts of the entire

staff that is using analyzed CBAM data to ascertain the progress of implementation and to support its improvement.

AN INFORMAL INTRODUCTION

Although you will find our "scholarly" bios or vitae in the front pages of this book, we would like to say a word and introduce ourselves to you in this authors' note, in a much more informal manner.

Individually, we are blessed to have this remarkable team to share information, insights, and wisdom with you as a result of our participation with CBAM; we write in a rather familiar style, endeavoring to be straightforward and clear, but helpful. This is who we are:

- Jim, who is relatively new to writing about this topic, is a longtime user of CBAM in his work as a professional developer in colleges and schools. He is a voracious reader and is deeply thoughtful about the reading and always sensitive about his work with administrators and teachers in districts and schools. He is a fresh voice committed to the work that we all do to support educators to be the best that they can be. We are so pleased that he has encouraged this volume.
- Shirley has "been around for a long time," involved in the original studies and dedicated to adult learning as a means to increase the effectiveness of instruction and, subsequently, the successful learning of all students. She has been labeled as the "vigilante of PLCs" (professional learning communities), to which she responds, you're absolutely right! She discovered PLCs initially while working with Gene on the research work on CBAM.
- Gene, the wise and prophetic creator and architect of the CBAM, was director of the original research in a national research center, and champion of its results for schools. He maintains this role as an educational leader at the university level, while flying around the globe to continue dissemination of CBAM. He has been a mentor and friend and foremost a model of a collaborative leader, inviting staff's voice into the discussion and decision making about the research.

We have learned, through our experiences and the continuous study of what we do, that all change is based on learning, and improvement is based on change. Interestingly, we have learned also that for an individual (teacher, administrator, or other organizational member) to move from one SoC to the next, or from one LoU to a higher one, or to move closer to ideal practice on the IC Map, requires learning. This we will point out in the text—as a vital challenge to the adult learner, especially in schools.

To set the stage, we will introduce you to EveryWhere School District and Bob Yurself, whose actions will serve as the thread that pulls the material and its applications into stories and text that provide sense-making and understanding so you can use the ideas and constructs in your own change and improvement efforts.

EVERYWHERE SCHOOL DISTRICT

EveryWhere School District is located in a suburb not far from a large metropolitan center. In the last few years the district has experienced significant demographic changes with a large increase in English language learners and greater disparity in socioeconomic backgrounds of students across the district. And recently there has been a large turnover in staff due to retirements. A lot has changed in EveryWhere in the last decade.

For a long time, staff at EveryWhere considered themselves above average in serving children and preparing them to become successful, lifelong learners. However, recent data have painted a very different story. Principals have noted a significant increase in school suspensions, district data reveal that there is a larger number of dropouts than in the past, and recent state tests show that many students are struggling with basic mathematics skills compared to neighboring school districts. The staff at EveryWhere was surprised by these results and unsure what to do.

In order to resolve these challenges, the superintendent requested meetings with small groups of district and school staff members over a 1-month period to dialogue about what might be done to increase student success. At the end of the month, the most common suggestion by EveryWhere staff was to focus on one area for improvement. They suggested that the best place to begin was to identify needed changes in the district mathematics program and to commit to this effort for the next 3 to 5 years. The superintendent and school board agreed, knowing that educational research advocates for districtwide improvement goals that occur over time.

For the remainder of that year, staff members, parents, and students were invited to participate in small teams at various grade levels to gather math data, examine results, and determine where math learning was successful and where it was falling short. Some teams were asked to visit neighboring school districts to better understand what was accounting for their math success. Each month the board listened to what the teams were learning. To understand EveryWhere's challenges, and to find the right solutions, became a districtwide venture.

At the end of the year, EveryWhere staff could see specific changes that needed to occur in order to bring more success to their students. For example, the elementary mathematics textbook was not rigorous enough to prepare students for what they needed to know when entering the middle school. And the recently adopted math program in Grades 6–9 required students to be engaged in collaborative problem solving around algebraic concepts. This type of instruction was unfamiliar to what most of the math teachers had experienced in their professional careers. And at the high school level, math courses were now requiring the use of sophisticated technology instruments that teachers were not comfortable in using. EveryWhere staff could identify specific changes that would make a difference in teaching practices and, subsequently, for their students in learning mathematics.

EveryWhere was now emerging from the exploration and adoption stages of change to the implementation phase. It was agreed by everyone that the identified district changes would be implemented over the next three school

years. In their reading about school change, the teams learned that successful implementation of change is a critical factor for seeing improved performance in student learning. EveryWhere staff wanted to do this change right. So it was decided to assign someone from the district as a change coach to facilitate and guide the implementation process. The superintendent asked Bob Yurself if he would serve in this role for the district.

Bob was the principal at the most successful school in the district and was highly respected by his staff. He had recently guided a curriculum adoption that made significant gains in reading at his school. Bob often believed that his success came because his staff was change savvy. Prior to the curriculum adoption, Bob facilitated a book study on change with the hope that his faculty would become more adaptive and resilient to change. They chose the book *Implementing Change: Patterns, Principles, and Potholes* (Hall & Hord, 2011). The staff went away from that learning opportunity understanding how critical implementation is for the success of any change process. Bob was excited to now be the district's change coach. He hoped to develop across the district the same change "savviness" that had been accomplished in his school.

We invite you to join Bob Yurself as he prepares EveryWhere School District for being change savvy in preparing to implement the new identified math innovations. You, along with Bob, will learn about successful implementation practices by using the set of change concepts and measures that is the CBAM. These concepts provide a systemic approach that describes, explains, and predicts teacher concerns and behaviors throughout any school change effort, in addition to identifying important strategies to be undertaken by a change coach.