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ABSTRACT

To study the actions that can be used to manage and support change in high schools, two researchers made two-day visits to two high schools in each of nine districts in various geographic areas of the nation, where they interviewed students, staff, and central office personnel. In each district, researchers selected one school they judged to be changing a great deal and another school they considered to be typical. The focus of the visits was to explore the following questions: What are the types, sources, and purposes of change? What are the key units of change? What are the key situational factors that influence the change process? and, How is the change process managed? The purpose of two-thirds of the interventions was found to be developing supportive or organizational arrangements and resources, and an analysis of these actions suggested that much initiating of change occurred in the schools, but little facilitation was provided to support change. Several of the current high school change myths were challenged by the examples of effective interventions reported, leading to a set of tentative guidelines for change managers. These guidelines include: (1) seek forgiveness rather than prior approval; (2) ignore the disenfranchised department status and forge ahead; (3) use staff development to cure terminal stagnation of instructional practice; (4) create a new policy or position and rally the troops around; and (5) sneak up on the blind side and employ persuasive incrementalism. A review of current literature indicates that more investigation is needed to provide illumination about the management of high school change and improvement efforts. (DCS)

FACILITATING CHANGE IN HIGH SCHOOLS

MYTHS AND MANAGEMENT

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The University of Texas at Austin

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MYTHS AND MANAGEMENT[1,2]

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We talked with many individuals in Wellington, a big city, urban high school. They reported that over the course of several years, the school had been changing - its building and grounds, its climate, its image. The result is a work place where teachers, students and administrators now say they look forward to coming. The social studies department chair explained how change was being managed in their school.

High School Change as Hotel Restaurant Management

The high school, according to the department chair, is a more democratic society than the elementary school. There are more cooks in the kitchen and they are organized around head chefs. One department head is a pastry chef checking the crusts and color of the butterhorns and croissants as they leave the kitchen. Another department head is a salad chef monitoring the trays of salads that go out. The deans in this system deal with the trays that don't pass inspection, shaping them up or scraping the plates clean. The principal is the hotel atelier, managing all of the parts so that they work well and in

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[1]The research described herein was conducted under contract with the National Institute of Education. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the National Institute of Education. No endorsement by the National Institute of Education should be inferred.

[2]Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, April, 1984.

coordination. In contrast, elementary schools are more like boarding houses with one person, the principal, preparing the whole meal and cleaning up also.

The explanation is that there are many cooks stirring the broth in the high school and that the feast is served up in a complex manner. Thinking in this way about high school management of change, its actors and actions, is useful. The actors, the individuals who deliver the salad and the sauce and provide leadership for change in high schools, are discussed in another paper by Hall and Guzman (1984). This paper will focus on the actions, the critical interventions, that can be used to manage and support change.

In the paper the study which provided the data about interventions made during high school change efforts will be briefly explained and the intervention data which are examined for this paper will be described. A second part of the paper, a discussion of currently popular myths regarding the management of change in high schools, will be explored and will include mini-cases from the study schools in order to consider the veracity of the myths. The paper concludes with implications for the change manager, and suggestions for further research that is needed.

Parachute Drops Into High Schools

Two researchers made two-day visits to two high schools in districts geographically dispersed across the nation. These visits were part of a study of how change occurs in high school settings conducted by the Research on the Improvement Process program at the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, University of Texas at Austin.

Dynamics of High School Change Study

Phase II of the three year Dynamics Study has been affectionately called "Parachute Drops." This study phase was designed as a descriptive

investigation of a national sample of schools. The focus of the parachute drops in the high schools is to explore four large questions related to change in the schools: what are the types, sources and purposes of change; what are the key units of change; what are the key situational factors that influence the change process; how is the change process managed. The sample of nine school districts in nine states includes a range of community sizes and types - urban, suburban, mid-size city, rural.

Two schools were selected in each district by central office persons. One school was judged to be changing a great deal, while the other was considered to be typical of high schools in that district. During the two-day visit the researchers worked together and independently to interview a wide array of persons in the school. Role specific interviews focused on the four study questions were made with the principal, assistant principals, department chairpersons, teachers, students, counselors, student activities director, athletic and music directors, and school secretary. Also interviewed were central office personnel, such as the director of secondary education and a curriculum specialist.

After data collection, a data reduction process completed by the researchers yielded reports whose sections correlate with the four study questions. This procedure provided documentation of the two researchers' perspectives about the four questions relative to each school, and perspectives from four researchers about each district. See Huling (1984) for a complete explication of the study procedures and methodology.

Intervention Data

For this paper the interventions from four data reduction sets representing four school districts in four states have been examined. Each of the four

sets represents two high schools from each community type in the study - one urban district, one suburban, one mid-size city district and one rural.

In the reduction process, each researcher referred back to the taped interviews and listed five critical interventions identified from their data. The researchers had asked interviewees in the schools what had been done during the past two years to make particular changes occur in the schools. These actions, or interventions,* were nominated by teachers and others out of the time referenced by the interview question. From the responses solicited and collected from every person interviewed, the researchers triangulated the data, and bringing their experience and clinical judgement as change researchers to bear, identified "critical interventions" for each school. The researchers characterized these interventions as being "significant, important and critical for the implementation of a particular innovation." The processes of solicitation and subsequent selection of the critical interventions by the researchers would not bear rigorous quantitative scrutiny. Quantitative measures to establish reliability and validity were not deemed appropriate for the exploratory, descriptive investigation. The objective was to gain a sense of what was being done to support change and to make it happen. Thus, the more qualitative data collection and reduction procedures were employed.

Using a framework developed out of earlier change research (Hord, Hall, Zigarmi, 1980) the interventions were then coded by the researchers to classify several of their internal dimensions. These dimensions were the source, target, and function of each intervention. To understand what these

*An intervention is an action or event or a set of actions or events that influences use of the innovation (Hall & Hord, 1984, p. 283).

critical interventions looked like and how they represent the management of high school change, the function codes of the interventions have been scrutinized. The function of an intervention is defined as the purpose(s) of the intervention and represents what the intervention was intended to accomplish. Eight function classifications are included in the framework and can be used to capture the purposes of the critical interventions that were identified. These functions are:

1000) Developing supportive or organizational arrangements and resources includes planning, managing, providing materials, resources, space, etc.

2000) Training refers to the teaching of new knowledge and skills, reviewing, clarifying.

3000) Providing consultation and reinforcement translates as promoting innovation use, problem solving.

4000) Monitoring and evaluation represents data collection, analysis, reporting and transferring data.

5000) External communication refers to informing outsiders.

6000) Dissemination means gaining support of outsiders and promoting use of the innovation by outsiders.

7000) Impeding includes discouraging or interrupting use.

8000) Expressing and responding to concerns includes complimenting, praising, acknowledging, complaining, reprimanding, etc. (Hord, Huling & Stiegelbauer, 1983).

A preliminary analysis of these data, using the coding schema suggests several findings.

Intervention Findings

The interventions under examination are those identified by researchers as "critical," from the pool of those nominated by interviewees. In short, in the pool are those that were in the memory of the school people within a two

year boundary: What did they remember? What kinds of interventions were nominated (see Figure 1)?

Two thirds of the critical interventions had a 1000 function, Developing supportive organizational arrangements. Not only was this the case for all the schools as a whole (53 of 75), but the ratio also holds true for each pair of schools in the four districts: urban 14 of 18, suburban 11 of 19, rural 12 of 18, mid-size city 16 of 20. One-tenth (7 of 75) of the functions occurred in Training, the 2000 function. Six percent (5 of 75) were found in the 3000 function, Providing consultation and reinforcement. Four percent (3 of 75) occurred in 4000, Monitoring and evaluation, in 7000 Impeding, and in 8000 Expressing and responding to concerns. There was only one intervention in 5000, External communication and none at all in 6000, Dissemination. It is rather interesting that so few individuals cited training as important. Perhaps formal workshops to support change were not typically done, or were of limited value, or simply weren't remembered. Or, perhaps this is explained by Rutherford and Huling-Austin (1984), who report in another paper in this document on the types of changes occurring in high schools, that a relatively small amount of changes are being directed at influencing teacher's instructional procedures or the way teachers teach. This being the case, there is little need for staff development for the teachers.

What were reported were the 1000, Developing supportive organizational arrangement function activities. Perhaps the large number of these interventions to support change relates to the kinds of changes being implemented. Rutherford and Huling-Austin (1984) report in more detail about the types of changes that were occurring in the study schools. One third of these were in the Administrative/organizational changes category, which could reasonably be expected to require supportive organizational arrangement kinds

Figure 1

FUNCTIONS OF CRITICAL INTERVENTIONS

(n = 75)

Function	Urban District	Suburban District	Rural District	Mid-Size City District	Total
1000	14	11	12	16	53
2000	1	2	4		7
3000	1	3	1		5
4000		1		2	3
5000			1		1
6000					0
7000	2	1			3
8000		1		2	3
Total	18	19	18	20	75

of interventions. Because these organizational arrangement interventions were so frequently reported and identified, they were submitted to a more refined coding procedure (Hord & Hall, 1982) in order to understand more precisely what the action was (see Figure 2). The interventions most frequently done were those focused on three areas of Developing supportive organizational arrangements. These were policy making/rule making/major decision making; staffing or restructuring roles; and seeking or providing materials, information, space, other resources. These are the kinds of interventions that are needed to initiate and introduce change. At the initiating stage, making decisions and new policies would be typical actions for preparing for the change. Staffing for the change and procuring the needed materials and other resources would also accompany the introduction of the change. These interventions for initiating change apparently were done in the schools and thus reported. What may not have occurred were the two other areas of the Developing supportive organizational arrangements 1000 function, planning and managing (such as scheduling). Planning and managing are actions more likely to be taken to facilitate changes. These were the object of only a few of the nominated interventions. This analysis reinforces the hypothesis of Hall and Guzman that much initiating of change occurred in the schools but little facilitation was provided to support change.

In terms of content, what were some of these actions that the individuals in the schools remember as being effective and as contributing significantly to change? They will be described in the next section of the paper and discussed in light of some popular beliefs about high schools that are currently being espoused.

Figure 2

DEVELOPING SUPPORTIVE OR ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND RESOURCES INTERVENTIONS

(n = 53)

A Policy/global rule/ major decision making	17
B Planning	2
C Managing (e.g. scheduling)	3
D Staffing or restructuring roles	15
E Seeking or providing materials, information, space, other resources	15
F Other	1
	53

A Mythology of High School Change

Myths, as a genre of story, were tales that ancient man used to explain non-understandable phenomena. Similarly, myths can be characterized as a figment of the imagination. In the popular and professional press, it appears that a number of high school change myths exist which may be explanations of what is not well documented or understood about life in high schools. Based on our preliminary analysis and impressions of the data, we think there may be cracks in some of the myths. Examples of effective interventions that were reported by the school people as affecting change efforts, and that challenge several of the current myths, are examined in this section.

Myth: High schools can't make significant change because they are constrained by bureaucratic district policies - or - a case for creative insubordination.

Picture a large, and once quite magnificent, high school building. Its interior hallways are bright with ceiling high murals on all the walls. The images of natural wonders, epic scenes of historical and folk heroes, or imaginative abstract representations contribute to the overall energy and appeal emanating from the walls. The color beckons and the shapes communicate warmth and caring and creativity. Not always was this so, and the wonder of the new vitality and climate that permeates the school, originating from the walls, is the paint. How did they come by it - gallons and gallons - and how did they get it on the walls? Interventions reported by teachers and administrators clearly hint that reinterpretation of district policies and guidelines made it possible.

To explain more, there was an urban summer recreational program on the school campus. The funds for the summer program mentioned nothing about expensive paint, although the walls of the school were in sad disrepair and "marked" with an accumulation of graffiti. A severe period of retraction did

not permit bright paint to be budgeted for walls. But the summer funds provided the stimulus for reinterpreting the summer program activities guide. It seemed, after all, that the critical paint purchasing intervention was thinkable in order that students and principal, some assistant principals and a few teachers could cooperatively engage in a summer community project that made good sense. Feverishly they transformed their first few yards of wall - designing and painting twelve to fifteen feet high murals isn't done in a moment - they proved what could be done. This was only the beginning of a long range project to change the campus and the climate of the school. It required the continuing resourceful interventions of procurement of a great deal of paint and other such stuff, scheduling and organizing for kids to climb on ladders on Saturdays and summers, rearranging resource allocations to make it possible.

And the effect of these "paint parties?" The faculty and students were charmed and a pride of place began to grow. The school and its climate were changing remarkably. But, still the community thought of the school as it was in its pre-change days. More reinterpretation was needed.

A critical request for supplemental resources was submitted. Of course, mention was not made that the resources were being sought for public relations purposes. Happily the request was granted and the role of a school public relations person was created and a teacher was reassigned to this role. Seeking the resources and assigning the teacher were supportive organizational arrangements interventions. These formed the basis for a significant public relations campaign in the local media, in which the school covered its own success stories and provided them to the press. Before this imaginative scheme was discovered the following year, it had the desired effect and the school was beginning to be seen in its new light, as a satisfying, secure and safe school place.

Should the school district's policies be violated and resourceful insubordination be applauded? This story is not meant to recommend, without careful consideration, such practice. A successful superintendent whom we know well has been heard to say, "If it's 'right,' take the risk and do it - but you sure as thunder better make it work, or you're a dead duck." It appears that the end may justify the means. It also appears that some degree of strangling district policy may be winked at, if the reason for so doing is sufficiently powerful.

Is central office policy an albatross that rides the shoulders of school administrators, blocking the "good works" that could be done? Or is it a myth that some school managers wear as a mantle to cloak their reluctance to take action? The constraints of bureaucratic district policies seem to exist especially where school leaders want to believe in them.

Myth: High school is a complex, complicated, loosely joined system which cannot be integrated into a comprehensive change effort - or - pulling and pushing it all together.

Everyone had a part in the action when they moved the freshman class to the high school campus. Everyone. And it was mainly a series of managing new arrangements interventions, and each one important to do. Department chairpersons in the high school arranged to meet and work with junior high ninth grade teachers to develop a ninth grade program of instruction. They worked out courses and classes. Concerted interventions were made to acquire the already seasoned ninth grade teachers to come along and help make the change, and teach the "new" high school classes. Space in the high school had to be restructured and assigned to accommodate 33 new teachers for the 700 new freshmen.

Integrating the new faculty was done through arranging and scheduling a party for old and new teachers. Meetings were organized by departments to

incorporate new teachers into the school at the department level. Department heads were responsible for translating the school's philosophy, mode of operating, priorities, and such to the new faculty. Parents were scheduled for a meeting and information provided to them regarding the change. These open forum meetings were designed also to gain parent support.

Counselors spent time with each feeder junior high helping students with schedules and providing an orientation to high school to make transition easier. High school student clubs went along to tell how it would be in the high school and to answer questions. New students came to the high school ahead of time to take tours of the building and get acquainted with the campus and administrators. High school student "buddies" helped new students find their lockers and their way around.

The budget was finessed and the school's teacher allocation redesigned to create the role of Ninth Grade Coordinator, a person who would visit in the eighth grades ahead of transition time, who would make himself known and familiar to students. He would assist the new ninth graders to become integrated into the student body by helping them find classrooms, operate their locks, and explain cafeteria procedures with the cafeteria manager during tours of the cafeteria. He visited classes, talked to students, observed lessons, checked on grades, dealt with attendance and students' personal problems, visited in students homes. He acted in all regards as someone the new students could come to.

The orchestration of all these elements requiring a multiplicity of interventions resulted in effective and efficient change. In this case, policy was not reinvented nor manipulated at the school level; in fact, the change was made in response to newly made district policy accompanied by a number of district interventions on the school to encourage it to get into

gear with the change. The interventions made in the school to implement the ninth grade focused on several of the types of Developing supportive or organizational arrangements and resources interventions (see Figure 2): planning; managing; staffing and restructuring roles; seeking and providing information, space and other resources that appear to be so crucial for successful change.

It's probably understating the case, but teacher after teacher expressed some astonishment that the change had gone, contrary to their expectations; exceedingly well. Anyone who had a view of the big picture was not really surprised. And yet there are those who maintain that an effort that must touch every teacher and every student in a sizeable (in this case, 2272 students) high school is not feasible. The proof of the chef's pudding is in the eating, as it were.

Myth: Departmental change can't be implemented because department heads have no real leadership ~~base or influence~~ - or - the power of persuasion or the power of a worthy program, or the combination thereof.

"As department head I can encourage, teach, lead, foster, but I cannot demand." Having thus stated the case, that's exactly what was done - leading, fostering, teaching, encouraging, in that order - preceded by recognizing students' difficulties in reading and by analyzing the secondary school reading program. Thus, because one of the department head's responsibility is to be The Source for the department, research findings and new and different approaches to teaching are typically sought and shared. Of all places, the "experience story approach" at the elementary school was looked at for another way to help high school youngsters read better. A second, and equally surprising, source was the local university professor of curriculum theory. Collaboratively a writing program was built on the assumption that writing

and reading are inextricably linked and the one would impact the other.

"A difficulty that speaks to how high schools work is I cannot now say, you will teach this." Having exercised leadership, the push now was to foster, teach, encourage. Half the teachers were persuaded to volunteer the first year and they were provided ten weeks of after school, hour long inservice in how to teach the program. "You can't give one three-hour shot and think you've done it. Training must be incremental and spread out and taught like you would teach anyone anything. Staff development is crucial." An experimental/control group study was done, with pre/post reading and writing scores of students as the dependent variable. The substantial differences in scores of the treatment group was celebrated and all but a couple of the remainder of the faculty received training and began use of the program. Now it's old hat and not new; it's an institutionalized part of the English program.

In Figure 1 can be found the function 2000 Training intervention that "made these teachers more competent and confident and the kids got more." Around the training were many other interventions that resulted in the provision of information, and material and resources. In this particular scenario, training was essential to help teachers in the department change their teaching practice.

Around the issue of departmental change, two myths are in contradiction. Much is heard, from individuals other than department heads, about the control of change by the authoritative, autocratic department heads, where change is conceived, born and spawned. The idea is that the locus of power resides in department heads and all change happens there. From the department heads' view, departmentwide change cannot really occur because the heads typically

don't have a power base. For those department heads who are able to implement change, they say they use the Patience and Persuasion approach. Here the power is in the value or goodness of the change being introduced and in the carefully designed interventions that are supplied to facilitate and support its implementation.

Where Are the Myths, Where is the Reality

It would appear that there are interventions, supporting change and contributing to management of the process, that are critical and sometimes surprising. Critical in terms of their significance and effect. Surprising in view of some of the popular beliefs about the prospects for change in high schools. How salient or potent are the exceptions to the myths? Or are the myths outworn and outdated? Or are there simply contradictory myths? A review of the current literature does not provide useful illumination to the questions.

Glimpses of The Current Literature

The period of time since 1982 is somewhat arbitrarily selected to define "current" in the current literature. In 1982 a number of scholars began to air reports and opinions about the prospects for high school change and its management. These authors share the common theme of disenchantment, while holding out hope and making suggestions for how change might be facilitated. Ducharme (1982) made a case based on four reasons why the high school would not be disposed to change. Firestone and Herriott (1982) maintained that instructional change at the high school level cannot occur through a management strategy of focused leadership at the principal level. They suggest that, even if the school is open to instructional change, because of the larger staff size, departmentalization, and diverse goals, the management

of such an enterprise cannot be engineered by the secondary principal. Berman et. al (1982) conclude that others such as department heads may possibly take the lead to provide management. A policy, then, for high school change suggested by Purkey and Smith (1983) is to develop management strategies based on leadership for change from a variety of sources. For certain, a great deal more investigation is needed to provide illumination about the management of high school change and improvement efforts and how it may be done most effectively. We believe, unlike Ducharme, that there is already a positive climate for improvement and change, and that quite a lot is being done to facilitate its effectiveness in high schools. It is clear, in our data, that the principal can develop a menu, don the apron, and deliver a successful instructional change repast. What are the ingredients and who has to be in the kitchen? Perhaps, as Berman et al. (1982) suggest, department heads can play a more frequent key role.

Immediate Research Needs

From the recent literature and from high school change mythology come numerous explanations of why change is difficult and unlikely to occur as a comprehensive planned strategy in high schools. Indeed, can the hotel restaurant management model work for many or all high schools? Can some be managed as boarding houses or is this practical only in elementary schools? The data from our descriptive "drop in" study provide intriguing glimpses about what might be possible in managing high school change. Much begs to be learned. More understanding is needed regarding management strategies and how they are affected by school size, community type, faculty factors, student population, and how other contextual factors such as district size, and basis of and level of funding impact change management (Stiegelbauer, 1984). Many of these variables require longitudinal investigation in order to provide new insights

that will make the effective management of high school change a stronger possibility. Phase III of our High School Change Dynamics Study will be an intensive year-long investigation of the change process and how it is managed in a small number of selected high schools. We hope to shed more light on what is real and what is mythological. A question to be answered.

Tentative Suggestions for Consideration

In any case, the interventions reported in this paper that were employed to manage change are quite real and their implications may be summarized as a set of tentative guidelines or operating principles that change managers may wish to consider. Ideas about these follow, accompanied by brief discussion.

Seek forgiveness rather than prior approval. This principle can be useful if there is a great deal of bureaucratic red tape and restrictive guidelines that strangle change efforts. Those managers who find themselves entrapped in policies and procedures that tend to stifle action may wish to try this approach. Most certainly, do not tip your hand ahead of time, or ask questions that make it possible to be bound by the answers. Some risk is required.

Damn the disenfranchised department status and forge ahead. Of course, not quite that stridently, as the idea just may be overstated. In reality, it appears to us that in few cases is there any clout or real power to be wielded at the department level. What is equally clear is that some of the powerless people in the departments manage to make change in more subtle ways. Thus, change can be wrought at this level, but under such circumstances will require more time and perseverance. Keep trying.

Use staff development to cure terminal stagnation of instructional practice. Inservice training to support the introduction of new curriculum and other programs and practices is a typical strategy in the elementary

school. Seldom is staff development used in this way in the high school. Even though secondary teachers are subject centered experts, well developed and effectively delivered inservice can be a viable way to support change in classroom teaching practice. Of course, it must be relevant and seen as responding to needs - of teachers and subsequently, their students.

Create a new policy or position and rally the troops around. The idea is to get everyone attending to a common issue or concern. In several high schools we saw a focus being placed on litter and care of the building and grounds. When this campaign has been successful, use the constituency and communication channels that were built to focus on another dilemma that needs attention. Once the system is developed, making change happen again becomes easier.

Sneak upon the blind side and employ persuasive incrementalism. The guideline here is to start small with an agreeable, attractive proposal. After the school people buy into and own the initial change project, add to it as the effort progresses. Phasing in change prevents the participants from being overwhelmed at the outset. Important small changes can add up to a significant large change.

In Conclusion

No matter what approach is used, attention to the interventions for managing the change is vital. There is a host of options and an array of possibilities. The careful design or selection of interventions to support school faculty and staff as they change is an important responsibility of the change manager. These change management interventions can win or lose the effort.

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