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## ABSTRACT

As Pacific educational leaders strive to make their educational systems meaningful for their own island people, lessons can be learned from the research on change. This is the second in a series of three papers on the broad phases of educational change: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization and renewal. The Concerns Based Adoption Model identifies in seven stages the primary concerns of individuals in the process of change, and these can be grouped into three main concerns: (1) concern for self; (2) concern for task; and (3) concern for impact. Interventions exist that are appropriate for each stage of concern. Factors that support implementation are identified as orchestration, shared responsibility, pressure and support, technical assistance, and rewards. Another factor to consider is the "implementation dip," where individuals have given up ineffective practices but have not yet mastered the new strategies. By recognizing that it may take up to 18 months for staff members to incorporate new practices, leaders can create a climate that encourages teachers to risk imperfect early implementation. Throughout the change process, implementers also benefit from the support of external facilitators and an internal facilitator. (Contains 9 references.) (MLF)

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# Synthesis of the Research on Educational Change: Implementation Phase

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## Implementing Educational Change

As Pacific educational leaders strive to make their educational systems meaningful for their own island people--both systemwide and at the individual school level--lessons can be learned from the research on change. This is the second in a series of three papers on the broad phases of educational change: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization and renewal.

The first synthesis in this series focused on key questions to be answered from within as changes are initiated in Pacific education. During the initiation phase a **high priority need** is identified, **key people** are engaged and **actively advocate the change**, and the focus is on **what** needs to be changed. This paper asks additional key questions to guide educators and their partners as they move into action. During the implementation phase, the energy and enthusiasm that often accompany the initiation of change begin to be tempered by the realities of the **tasks** as well as the reactions and concerns of the people involved.

The Pacific region is participating in the discussion taking place throughout the world on ways to provide the highest quality of education. Too often, innovations have faded away as financial support diminished. High student interest and even positive student outcomes have been attributed to exciting--but short-lived--projects. Why weren't such innovations more enduring? Perhaps greater knowledge of the process of implementing change can help Pacific educators at all levels to preserve positive innovations.

## What Research Tells Us About People Implementing Change

In the Pacific region, school/community-based management is being implemented in Chuuk, Hawaii, and parts of the Marshall Islands, and the roles of parents and community members are being redefined. Looking at systematic school improvement efforts now underway in Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Yap, and American Samoa, we see the very real human dimensions of change. Throughout the region, change in education interacts with cultural, economic, political, and social change as well. The stresses of multiple changes add complexity to the implementation of innovations in education.

Educators in the process of change may be asking themselves: How will I need to change? What will I need to do differently? How will the new practices affect me...my students...our culture? How can I manage the changes? What are some examples of the practices in use? How can I assess growth and progress? What do I need to do to make it work? Who can help? Where will the time come from?

Documenting the stages that individuals go through as they change, researchers at the University of Texas at Austin developed the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (1984, 1987). The researchers offer implementers insights into the sometimes painful personal growth that precedes significant change in practices. To change **something**, they suggest, requires that **someone** has to change first. Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, and Hall's work is particularly useful because it suggests that anticipating people's concerns can enable

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innovators to focus on appropriate forms of support. Their work also reassures us that it is possible to anticipate much that will occur during a change process.

The primary concerns of individuals in the process of change are identified in these seven stages:

0. Awareness. At this stage, individuals are not concerned about the innovation.
1. Information. Individuals would like to know more about the innovation before they adopt the change and undertake new practices.
2. Personal. People at this stage are beginning to think about how the change will affect them.
3. Management. Concerns about how to make the change work characterize this stage.
4. Consequence. Individuals are beginning to make the new practices their own and now are concerned about how the change is affecting students.
5. Collaboration. People at this stage are trying to connect their work to what others are doing.
6. Refocusing. Individuals now have integrated the practices into their professional lives and are examining ways to improve these practices.

Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, and Hall group the seven stages into three main concerns. Typical comments from those involved reflect the concerns. For example, stages 0-2 can be seen as **concern for self**: I am not concerned about the innovation; I would like to know more about it; how will using it affect me? Stage 3 is a **concern for task**: I seem to be spending all my time getting materials ready; keeping track of progress is difficult; I am still not sure how to do this. Stages 4 to 6 are **concern for impact**: I am looking at the effects of the innovation on my students; I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what other instructors are doing; I have some ideas about something that would work even better.

In a document that summarizes CBAM, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Rural Education Program (1990) outlines interventions that are appropriate for each stage of concern. For example, people who are at Stage 0 can be supported through involvement in discussion and decision making about the innovation and its implementation. People who are concerned about their own role and the impact of the innovation on their work will be encouraged by support that recognizes their concerns and provides step-by-step information about how to implement new practices.

In the Pacific, as schools struggle with their school improvement plans, there is a great need to recognize individuals and their concerns. If school leadership values the ultimate outcomes of envisioned priorities and innovations, there must be better understanding of how individuals move from Stage 0 to Stage 6. Further dialog and actual training on the change process are needed if Pacific education initiatives are to move beyond the initial stage of discussion. Educational leaders must seek to understand concerns of all individuals involved in the process of change. They must design strategies to address concerns, to ease tensions, and to pave the way for successful innovations.

### Key Factors During the Implementation Phase

Michael Fullan's work on education change synthesizes his own research and the work of many others. Describing the complex relationship between key implementation factors and successful educational change, he suggests that "the more factors supporting implementation, the more change in practice will be accomplished." Fullan's (1989) research on successful educational change identified five major implementation factors: **Orchestration, Shared [Responsibility], Pressure and Support, Technical Assistance, and Rewards**. (Note: Although Fullan uses the term "Shared Control," the usage "Shared Responsibility" is more appropriate in the Pacific context.) Each factor contributes to success during implementation, and each has unique characteristics that reflect the visions and cultures of those involved in change. For example, the leaders who orchestrate change may differ from place to place. In many Pacific cultures, traditional leaders are crucial to ultimate success and their role in orchestrating the resources and participation of others must not be underestimated. Key questions linked to **orchestration** include: Is there clear leadership to bring together the various people and activities into a coherent whole? Is there someone in charge? Does the leadership consciously make connections between this change effort and the ultimate outcomes?

Shared responsibility and ownership by those involved is absolutely necessary for the success of any implementation plan. Ownership has to take precedence in the process of change. If the process is perceived to be owned by one or a few, resistance is likely from other affected individuals. For a smooth transition to effective implementation, all key partners are vital to the process. It is imperative that everyone involved has a shared understanding and commitment to the change process, knowledge of the strategies necessary to effect change, and the commitment to implement changes. Key questions that center on **shared responsibility** include: Is the change based on a need deeply felt by those who will be asked to change their practices? Who is involved? How are they involved? Is it clear how different partners can significantly contribute to the changes underway? Are there opportunities for people to make choices and to influence the decisions that they themselves will carry out?

Fullan notes that both **pressure and support** are essential during this phase. Pressure without support leads to conflict; support without pressure can limit results. Expectations, such as time lines for the completion of actions and products, are important to assure continued forward movement. Questions about pressure include: What forces must be considered? Which forms of pressure are appropriate (e.g., deadlines, meetings at which people report progress, required written summaries)? How about visits from facilitators?

Key questions about support include: What kinds of support are needed and where do they come from? For example, is there an adequate allocation of resources to fully support the initiative? Where there is pressure to do things better, support must also be readily available. Financial allocations are necessary but are by no means the only resource that can

make or break the implementation. Often times, implementers must rethink priorities and use resources in the most meaningful and fruitful ways. Marian Liebowitz (1991) suggests that people involved in significant change (such as restructuring) need to assume that there may not be large amounts of additional money or additional time, but rather that they need to decide what can be done by reallocating existing resources.

Implementation will not take place and be effective if it has to be accomplished within competing priorities. This does not mean that everything else that is happening must be dropped to accommodate the intended change. What needs to be done is some serious group rethinking and consensus building--shared responsibility--in prioritizing needs and the allocation of essential resources. Funding often is a major determinant in whether an initiative will be deemed high priority by those who are being asked to change. But funding in and of itself does not necessarily achieve positive implementation results. Along with money, another essential resource that must be prioritized and allocated is time and effort. For any implementation to be effective, there must be "protected time" allocated, a form of support that is essential in helping to establish a sound basis for long-term growth.

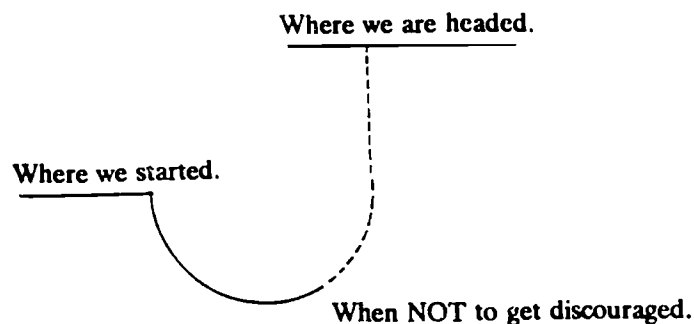
Fullan and others also document the importance of ongoing **technical assistance**. Significant change in education involves significant commitment to rethinking and relearning. Key questions include: Will training/technical assistance be provided to individual schools, clusters of schools, or system-wide? What training/technical assistance can be supported from within the school or the department? Will external facilitators be used? How can time be provided for training/technical assistance? What kinds of assistance and/or training are needed? Who should be involved?

Fullan's final implementation factor is **rewards**. Researchers identify this factor as crucial to success, and recommend that innovators carefully incorporate early rewards into their planning. But what does it look like in Pacific terms? Questions that must be answered include: What forms of recognition are appropriate in the Pacific? Who can reward? Are direct rewards appropriate? What are indirect ways to recognize improvement? Rewards in the Pacific island context relate to how communities and school leaders support ongoing efforts. Acknowledging the effort of individuals from time to time is an acceptable reward, given limited resources. Rewards and acknowledgement contribute to a climate that supports growth and encourages persistence rather than emphasizing deficiencies. In addition to the principal or school leadership team, acknowledgment can come from school board members, district level leaders, administrators, and community partners.

### The Implementation Dip

Innovators should not expect instant success. By recognizing that it may take up to 18 months for staff members to incorporate new practices, leaders can create a climate that encourages teachers to risk imperfect early implementation.

Fullan again provides valuable insight. He documents what he calls the "implementation dip." Again and again, in his study of effective and successful change initiatives, he identified a period where individuals have given up ineffective practices but have not yet mastered the new strategies. During this period (which can vary significantly in length) things actually get worse. Student performance may go down; teacher morale and test scores may decline; parent dissatisfaction may increase. This is normal! Leaders, change facilitators, and others who advocate change must recognize this pattern and be aware that it is characteristic of the early stages of implementation. This figure shows the implementation dip:



Many educational innovations, initiated with high expectations and enthusiasm, flounder and die in the face of the implementation dip. Persistence, patience, and--especially--the time element are critical for sustaining the implementation. Leadership is also critical in maintaining the vision for change. Leadership encompasses the highest level of the system, central office resource people, school level administrators, and local school facilitators. Clear leadership throughout the system is essential for the success of any implementation plan. Leaders must share a collective vision on the implementation of a practice or policy. They are key players in helping to keep the priority focused and the vision clear, especially when times are difficult. Leadership's role is critical in moving the process out of the implementation dip and toward more positive growth and change.

### The Roles of Facilitators During Implementation

The importance of leadership, especially when times are difficult, has been emphasized. Throughout the change process, implementers also benefit from the support of external facilitators and an internal facilitator. External facilitators contribute to the implementation stage by providing pressure and support as well as technical assistance. They support local efforts, but do not assume a leadership role. Oftentimes, outside facilitators will be required to provide training or technical assistance on specific implementation processes or identified needs to support effective change. Other times, outside facilitators are used informally to assess progress and provide feedback--to lend a sympathetic ear when necessary. Implementers often feel less threatened by outside facilitators because their role is to support and provide honest assess-

ment of implementation activities. They bring the issues out in the open for an objective review by everyone involved. School improvement facilitators encourage schools to measure their growth from where they began, not in relation to or in competition with other schools. External facilitators also bring a perspective that incorporates experience with many other schools and projects; they contribute new ideas that focus on the vision of the group.

The internal facilitator plays both supporting and leading roles in the change process. The internal facilitator is someone within the system or the school whose role is to be the bridge between innovation and the implementers. Within the Pacific region, strategies for maintaining the skills of local facilitators have been provided through development of leadership groups whose work is assisted by the Pacific Region Educational Laboratory (PREL). These leaders serve as resource people to support the planned change process at home and to link home to outside resources in a number of ways. Outside resources include experts on specific goal areas and needs that cannot be addressed readily at home. Part of the local facilitators' role includes identifying resources closer to home--people with rich experience, knowledge of culture, subject area expertise--people with great knowledge of the uniquenesses of the school community.

Significant change in education takes place in fits and starts, ups and downs. People in the process of change range from those who are uninterested to those who are out front, ready to fly. Local facilitators are essential; their knowledge of the implementers' concerns and needs cannot be matched by external facilitators. Facilitation is therefore a partnership, with complementary knowledge and skills provided by external and internal facilitators.

The implementation phase of change is exhilarating, exhausting, frustrating, and filled with uncertainty. People must give up what they know well and begin the struggle to master new skills and knowledge, to try out and manage new practices, and, ultimately, to shift their belief structure so that the envisioned changes become a part of their everyday behavior. When that happens, they have entered the next phase of change: institutionalization and renewal. This final phase will be the subject of a future research synthesis from PREL.

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