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Obstacles & strategies in spreading innovation

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION GUIDE
By Lois Brown Easton

Contents

Using this guide

This discussion guide is intended to assist *Kappan* readers who want to use articles in staff meetings or university classroom discussions.

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Going Beyond

Work with colleagues to think about what innovation looks like from the article "The latest twist on spreading innovation: One school at a time" by Carlos Moreno, Dana Luria, and Charlie Mojkowski. Consider some examples from other articles on spreading innovations in this issue of the *Kappan*:

- "Harnessing the power of teacher networks," by Elizabeth Farley-Ripple and Joan L. Buttram;

- "Today's lesson: Self-directed learning for teachers," by William M. Ferriter and Nicholas Provenzano; and

- "Best practice for spreading innovation: Let the practitioners do it," by Cathy Gassenheimer

Then, primed by their ideas, imagine what your own school could do to innovate. How could you GO BEYOND and become innovative and entrepreneurial in your own school? Once you have engaged in dialogue about the possibilities, make a first-steps plan, using the template on p. 6 of this guide.

What does innovation look like? (from Moreno, Luria, & Mojkowski)	Farley-Ripple & Buttram	Ferriter & Provenzano	Gassenheimer	Your school
Beyond timid and tepid changes.	Mapping and using educator interactions to support data change.	Possibility of significant changes once educators connect with each other so dynamically. Edcamps are hardly "timid" or "tepid." Exploring boundaries through social networks.	Listening to the dreams of practitioners in 16 schools and honoring them. The expectation of writing about innovation and sharing the writing publically guards against timid and tepid changes.	
Beyond compliance.	Not just compliance with data-analysis requirements.	Asking peers through social networking how to do something is likely to lead to going beyond compliance. Ownership of learning and teaching.	Letting the networks decide how they would do things. Understanding that networks could make things happen. Authentic dialogue and reflection mitigate against simple compliance.	
Beyond "gold standard" researched ideas.	Using a networking strategy that has not been proven to work in educational settings, though relationship mapping is common in sociology as "social network analysis."	Social networks have not been thoroughly researched in terms of their effect on professional learning. Timely answers to questions and access to new information. Research-proven? No, but subject to individual's contextual use of ideas. Need to be a critical consumer.	Networks have been shown through research to be effective (Firestone & Pennell, 1997; Dede & Knox, 2009). Formation of the Powerful Conversations network highlighted teachers' ideas. "Staying abreast of research and best practices" is part of being innovative.	

What does innovation look like? (from Moreno, Luria, & Mojkowski) *(Continued)*	Farley-Ripple & Buttram *(Continued)*	Ferriter & Provenzano *(Continued)*	Gassenheimer *(Continued)*	Your school *(Continued)*
Beyond the basics (and getting them fully implemented FIRST), simply adopting something, or fine-tuning what's in place.	Not just engaging in the basics of data analysis but figuring out a way to improve the process.	Not about professional development delivered to educators but about professional learning they can engage in by themselves and with peers. "The adjacent possible" (Johnson).	Learning from practitioners about what works — basic or not — and then implementing what works	
Beyond management leadership.	Leaders realized the importance of strong professional relationships. Leaders "pushed the envelope" by mapping those relationships.	Leadership taken by teachers who want to discover what works. Edcamps foster leadership on the ground.	About relationships. About powerful conversations rather than management. Key Leaders Network and Superintendent Leaders Network opened leaders to possibilities.	
Beyond "experts from outside" to experts as helpers.	A variety of experts from within. "Brokers" connect those seeking advice with others who have expertise.	Experts within a user's school or in other schools. Getting together in some way and sharing great ideas.	Began with teachers in schools and led to work with principals and superintendents as experts within their environments. The educators received help, not sermons about what to do.	
Beyond "one size fits all."	Teachers within the school sought advice from and offered advice to different people.	The plethora of blogs, tweets, and responses to these ensures that one size will not fit all. Personalized learning.	Listening to what educators want and what they can offer opens up the possibilities.	
Beyond "outside in" reform of a intervention "owned" by someone else.	School ownership of an improved process of data use.	Within school leadership of reform.	Clearly, the networks wanted to "learn from and inspire each other."	
Beyond mere implementation to design.	A design for data use that fits school needs.	Educators link with each other to understand an innovation and design effective, customized use.	Conversations led to "improved teaching and learning across all the participating schools," which might not have happened during implementation.	

What does innovation look like? (from Moreno, Luria, & Mojkowski) *(Continued)*	Farley-Ripple & Buttram *(Continued)*	Ferriter & Provenzano *(Continued)*	Gassenheimer *(Continued)*	Your school *(Continued)*
Beyond "10 steps" to whatever it takes.	A rich set of relationships to inform the process of data use.	"Much more than a simple tool for sharing . . . a sounding board for learning and teaching."	Relationships are challenging to build but they are key to "deep and sustained" change.	
Beyond absolute fidelity to flexibility.	Flexibility and customization of data use to the school.	Leads to situated and contextual application of ideas.	No one program emerged as the answer to needs in schools and districts, so flexibility was inherent in this process.	
Beyond partnerships that don't work side-by-side with school-level entrepreneurs.	Partnerships that occur within the school; unlikely partnerships, such as those with people who are not inclined to interact. Use of "brokers."	Symbiotic relationships.	The author describe an intricate process of partnership with teachers and administrators, a "side-by-side" relationship. The role of "networker, bringing people together is key to innovation.	
Beyond being satisfied with mere tweaking of what is to taking bold steps to improve.	The possibility of a revolutionary type of data use within the school.	Interaction through social media means receiving some "push-back" through comments, critical questions, and further ideas.	Implementing the Common Core, engaging in instructional coaching, and initiating a high-poverty school network are far from "tweaking."	

YOUR OWN SCHOOL: FIRST STEPS

As a result of working through some ideas related to innovation as well as some examples of how people have innovated, what are your thoughts about innovation in your school?

What would you do first to make yourself a more innovating community? Use this template to think of **First Steps** only:

TASK **What are we going to do?**	TALENT **Who will be responsible for doing what?**	TIME **When will we do it?**	RESULTS **What results do we want to achieve?**
Example: Listen to practitioners.	*Example:* Shirley & Brad	*Example:* Focus groups	*Example:* As a result of talking with practitioners, we know more about what we might do.

References

Dede, C. & Knox, A. (2009). Using technology to scale up innovations. *T.H.E. Journal*. http://bit.ly/16cGq42

Firestone, W.A. & Pennell, J.R. (1997, Summer). Designing state-sponsored teacher networks: A comparison of two cases, *American Educational Research Journal, 34* (2), 237-266.

Applications

This Professional Development Guide was created with the characteristics of adult learners in mind (Tallerico, 2005):

- Active engagement
- Integration of experience
- Choice and self-direction
- Relevance to current challenges
- Learning style variation

As you think about sharing this article with other adults, how could you fulfill the adult learning needs above?

This Professional Development Guide was created so that readers could apply what they have learned to work in classrooms (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001):

- Identifying Similarities and Differences
- Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition
- Nonlinguistic Representations
- Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback
- Cues, Questions, and Advance Organizers
- Summarizing and Note-Taking
- Homework and Practice
- Cooperative Learning
- Generating and Testing Hypotheses

As you think about sharing this article with classroom teachers, how could you use these strategies with them?

References

Marzano, R.J., Pickering, D., & Pollock, J.E. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievemen*t. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Tallerico, M. (2005). *Supporting and sustaining teachers' professional development: A principal's guide* (pp. 54-63). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

About the Author

Lois Brown Easton is a consultant, coach, and author with a particular interest in learning designs — for adults and for students. She retired as director of professional development at Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center, Estes Park, Colo. From 1992 to 1994, she was director of Re:Learning Systems at the Education Commission of the States (ECS). Re:Learning was a partnership between the Coalition of Essential Schools and ECS. Before that, she served in the Arizona Department of Education in a variety of positions: English/language arts coordinator, director of curriculum and instruction, and director of curriculum and assessment planning.

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She was editor and contributor to *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning* (NSDC, 2004 & 2008). Her other books include:

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- *Protocols for Professional Learning* (ASCD, 2009); and
- *Professional Learning Communities by Design: Putting the Learning Back Into PLCs* (Learning Forward and Corwin, 2011).

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