

## **There's Nothing as Practical as Good Theory: Applying Change Constructs to PT3 Initiatives**

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In this paper we propose to address issues of implementing PT3 initiatives in the light of the work on educational change by key theorists--Fullan (2001), Hall and Hord (2001), and Rogers (1995).

UNLV's PT3 initiative, Project THREAD has been informed by change theories since its inception (Strudler et al., 2003). We believe that applying various constructs from well-established change theory has contributed to the success of our project. In recognition of the project's accomplishments, UNLV's College of Education was named the winner of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education's (AACTE) 2002 Best Practice Award for the Innovative Use of Technology and ISTE's NETS Distinguished Achievement Award for 2003.

In general, what has worked nicely for us has been our efforts to balance pressure and support in our work with faculty. As Fullan (2001) stated, "Pressure without support leads to resistance and alienation; support without pressure leads to drift or waste of resources" (p. 91-92). Our sense is that while many PT3 grants have been very supportive of faculty, a good number do not provide clear expectations for faculty and hold them accountable for doing what they propose.

In alignment with the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (Hall & Hord, 2001), we of course found that faculty are at different *stages of concern* with regard to technology integration. Similarly, we found that on the individual level, our faculty demonstrated a range of *levels of use* of technology initiatives in the College of Education. Awareness of *stages of concern* and *levels of use* of faculty whom are expected to implement change helped us to effectively promote Project THREAD. Designing professional development workshops to address individual concerns, as well as having a team always available for ongoing support have proven to be an effective practice.

In order for change to have lasting success, it must move from the individual to the system. We found Roger's diffusion model to inform our efforts toward adoption of various technology-based practices and expectations. As *change agents* with the help of *opinion leaders* (Rogers, 1995) we have seen a steady increase in the amount of faculty interest and implementation of technology in preparation and presentation of curriculum. Offering stipends for mini-grant recipients, focusing on a limited number of change initiatives at a time, and having support of *opinion leaders*, integration specialists, and technical assistants, we have been able to impact the beliefs and practices of faculty and the overall culture of the college.

In this paper, we will discuss the change theories of Fullan (2001), Hall and Hord (2001), and Rogers (1995). To illustrate key tenets of these authors, particularly those that relate to faculty development and standards-based planning, we will draw from our experience of implementing PT3 initiatives at UNLV, including our current efforts to pilot the use of e-portfolios in our teacher education program. In addition, using components of these theoretical frameworks, we will analyze transcripts of semi-structured interviews recently administered to university faculty,

administrators, and school district personnel (n=22). While one goal of this analysis will be to generate insights that inform the implementation of our project, we see the conference presentation as an opportunity to highlight key change constructs that may inform the change efforts of others.

### References

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