

BOOK REVIEW

IMPLEMENTING CHANGE THROUGH LEARNING: CONCERNS-BASED CONCEPTS, TOOLS, AND STRATEGIES FOR GUIDING CHANGE

Authored by Shirley M. Hord and James L. Roussin, Sage I AdvantEDGE, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, etc, 2013, pp.143. Rs. 750, ISBN 978-93-860-6227-7 (Paperback).

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As a teacher and teacher-educator with a focus on qualitative change in schools and training colleges, I am fortunate enough to get hold of a book by Shirley Hord and James Roussin on school leadership or, to be more precise, change leadership based on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). As many of us know, CBAM is a conceptual framework that describes, explains, and predicts probable teacher concerns and behaviours throughout the school change process. It has three principal diagnostic dimensions: i) Stages of Concern—Seven different stages of feelings and perceptions that educators experience when they implement a new programme or practice (SoC); ii) Levels of Use—Eight behavioural profiles that describe a different set of actions and behaviours that educators engage in as they become more familiar with and more skilled in using an innovation or adopting a change (LoU); and iii) Innovation Configurations—In different ways an innovation may be implemented, shown along a continuum from ideal implementation or practice to least desirable practice (IC). CBAM is a perspective for understanding change that was first proposed as a framework by Hall, Wallace, and Dossett in 1973. Instead of beginning with viewing change at the level of system, CBAM starts with understanding of how change is experienced by individual implementers, i.e. Headmasters/Headmistresses (school leaders), Assistant teachers, etc. Their perceptions, feelings and emotions (Stages of Concern), their gradual development of expertise (Levels of Use), and the extent to which they use innovation with strong belief (Innovation Configurations) are the three primary constructs for assessing implementation. From this foundation, the CBAM perspectives set off to address the importance of leadership and system.

The book begins with a foreword by Gene E. Hall who is one of the exponents of the said

CBAM beside Shirley Hord (CBAM: Hall & Hord, 2011). At the outset he conjectures the reasons of picking up the unusual and special book by the readers. He clearly states: those who are engaged with a programme implementation, innovation, system change or facilitating change processes by using research verified constructs and tools will find this book very useful. In his preface, Gene goes on to explain the primary purpose of the authors, i.e. making an awareness of the professional learning community (PLC) among the school leaders throughout the globe. As a matter of fact, the success of employing CBAM depends on construction of an ideal PLC for which the present writers have started a movement called “PLC Movement” in the West. To put in simple terms, PLC means a particular configuration of organization culture; and this culture is not shaped as a result of the policy makers, principals or headmasters but how the participants of the organization (i.e. school) give meaning to the actions and policy of the organizational leaders. It entails a construction of a community of adult learners (i.e. teachers) where they exchange their ideas, concepts, practices and beliefs; and lastly reflect on what they are learning and also what their students are learning. PLC, in the words of Peter Senge (1990), is a ‘learning organization’ where ideas are exchanged, openly discussed, and disagreements are not taken personally.

After a brief discussion on PLC, Gene has written elaborately about ‘the author team’ consisting of Shirley Hord and James Roussin. He has mentioned that Shirley has been working over a long period of time on CBAM and crisscrossing the globe as a champion of the PLC Movement. James too is a longtime collaborator of CBAM project and he provides ample examples and innovative suggestions for CBAM construction and tools to facilitate implementation. This section ends with the two cents of Gene; whose career-long focus of scholarship happens to be CBAM. According to him, the content of the book can be best expressed with the help of a symbol of “Implementation Bridge”. Change, for Gene, is a process, not an event. It has to be sustained. More often than not, once something is implemented, the leadership tends to lose interest in it; and top level leaders have already shifted their attention to ‘what comes next’. If the attention and supports for implementation move away from the emerging change, it is likely that the movement will decline and die down soon. It is for this reason he reminds us: “Sustaining use of the new way requires that there be ongoing built-in system and leader supports.”

In the Preface (sub-titled as: What you will find in this book) the authors first state the purpose of this book in clear terms, i.e. “to guide educational change leaders through a concise, step-by-step process of change implementation over time in order to ensure success and, as a

result, build professional capacity through that effort” (p. xi). They explicate at the very outset that this book is not about new theories (of change) or recent researches (on the theory of change). It identifies the available, tested, research-based best practices in bringing forth any endeavour of change toward an end that is result-oriented and guided by human interaction and vision. We know a lot about change but that knowledge is not applied in many, if not most, change initiatives. Answering to the most pertinent question of “why change in education system?” they reiterate “Our current education system has been built around learning conducted mostly in classrooms, from textbooks, and from individual teachers. The future will look much different... The challenge for our [American] education system is to leverage technology to create relevant learning experiences that mirror students’ daily lives and the reality of their futures. We live in a highly mobile, globally connected society... Learning can no longer be confined to the years we spend in school or the hours we spend in the classroom. It must be life-long, life-wide, and available on demand. All of this change is going to require that educational leaders at every level become highly proficient and savvy as change leaders!” (p.xi).

Having discussed the rationale of the book in Chapter 1, the authors give the theory in a nutshell, specially highlighting the components of CBAM. Following chapters appended with “Learning Maps” are just extensions and applications of their stated model. For example, Chapter 2 focusses on the six strategies that are important parts of the CBAM to be implemented. These strategies are needed in order to move from “Adoption” to “full implementation”. It will not be out of context or useless to mention these six strategies. They are as follows:

1. Creating a shared vision of the change;
2. Planning and identifying resources necessary for the change;
3. Investing in professional development/ professional learning;
4. Checking or assessing progress;
5. Providing assistance;
6. Creating a context conducive to change.

The Learning Maps in Chapter 2 show what the strategies are for change and how to use them productively. Chapter 3 describes the tools for consideration of change implementation. It is here the authors take up “Innovation Configurations” as the first of the tools for change initiative. CBAM

provides significant tools that inform us about the implementing individual and how he or she constructs and conducts the strategic works of the change drive. The Learning Maps in Chapter 3 help us understand how to create a vision of the change. Additionally, this chapter presents “Interviewer Protocol”, “Reports of three teachers”, and a detailed discussion on PLC with its history, attributes of PLC, and outcomes of PLC for staff and students. Chapter 4 is devoted to discuss the “Stages of Concern” (SoC) meant for “understanding individuals”. The authors believe that: when individuals feel that their reaction and feelings are seen and heard, and that individual is valued, their enthusiasm and energy committed to implementation escalates (p.83). The contention of the authors regarding perceptions of individuals are further supported by the results of Kennedy (2012), and *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* (2011). They refer to Daniel Pink’s (2010) three key elements of motivation that address internal drive and increased job satisfaction are: i) Autonomy (Individuals want control over their work), ii) Mastery (Individuals want to improve at what they do), and iii) Purpose (Individuals want to be part of something bigger than they are). This chapter also deals with the Open-Ended Statement Process for collecting data when planning for professional learning sessions about innovation.

Chapter 5 takes up “Levels of Use” (LoU) that observes profiles of behavior exhibited by implementers. This is a second concept and tool for understanding the individuals in the process of change. Like other Learning Maps, the ones given in Chapter 5 focus on helping the change leaders understand more precisely how the implementer is interacting with the innovation. Appropriate support based on this understanding enhances the possibility of its success. In this chapter there is a mention of the guiding beliefs during a change. I cannot resist the temptation to repeat the list here for the benefits of the readers as the book is not easily available:

1. All change is based on learning, and improvement is based on change.
2. Implementing a change has greater success when it is guided through social interaction.
3. Individuals have to change before the school can change.
4. Change has an effect on the emotional and behavioural dimensions of humans.
5. People will more readily choose to change when they foresee how an innovation will enhance their work.

6. A role of change leaders is to facilitate the conversations that invite others in owning the

desired change. (p.127)

In a separate section of the 5th Chapter entitled “Finale” the authors bring forth an obvious dichotomous concept: Implementing vs. Sustaining (p.130). In this context, the authors explain how to follow the three principal diagnostic dimensions of CBAM, i.e. SoC, LoU, and IC in order to sustain the change initiative to success. In conclusion, they re-state their overall purpose of writing this book: to offer constructs, tools, and strategies that can be used to increase the likelihood of reaching implementation success.

Following the Chapter-wise discussion, references, additional resources for CBAM and lastly index are presented which are very helpful for the ones who are not quite aware of the CBAM before. The book features a number of elements that add to the overall quality of the book and the reading experience: an attractive cover and its design, appropriate foreword, acknowledgements by authors and publisher, authors’ bios with pictures, a series of effective charts, diagrams, graphs, research results, and embedded hints, footnotes, disclaimer from the authors, etc. The book is written in a simple yet engaging style, with occasional light humour adding to its appeal. The text is without typographical and grammatical errors; but it contains some phrases and idiomatic expressions typical in American English which some Indian readers may find a little difficult to understand the text. Overall, *Implementing Change through Learning* is an excellent book full of profound insights regarding change leadership. It is my firm belief : this is a very authoritative research-based resource book on educational leadership and management. It will definitely serve well as a guide for any reader to be acquainted with the change leadership concept, especially the CBAM and apply it in his or her organization.

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