

Scaling Transformative Change

Guiding Principle for Partnerships and Networking: Individuals create and use partnerships and networks to access expertise, maximize resources, and form the backbone to drive and support transformative change.

Transformative Leadership

Equity and Outcomes

Strategic Capacity Building

Policy Change

Partnerships and Networking

Data Utilization

Intentional Communications

Transformative Change Initiative Overview

The Transformative Change Initiative (TCI) is dedicated to sustaining and scaling change that closes equity gaps and improves student outcomes in the community college education context.

Partnerships and networks are important parts of the transformative change process. They provide the structure to connect people with different perspectives and areas of expertise, creating opportunities for new insights that can facilitate and accelerate transformation and learning. Effective partnerships and networks encourage peer relationships, provide an environment for leadership, and involve all key stakeholders in creating and scaling innovation. They also provide the diversity and flexibility needed in tackling complex problems that require innovation, experimentation, and processes for scaling success (Holley, 2012).

There are subtle yet critical differences between partnerships and networks; both are needed to share, organize, and communicate information, build trusting relationships, and accomplish needed change. Partnerships are comprised of diverse groups of people and organizations with common interests and goals; they rely on one another to coordinate their resources and skills to improve their collective chances of success. In the educational context, partnerships often include members outside of education, and their successful collaboration depends on all members understanding the organizational cultures and nomenclature unique to each. Partnerships are task oriented, often with well-defined objectives, specific roles and responsibilities for each member or organization, and a clear timeline to reach milestones that are jointly established. Partnerships should be frequently evaluated to determine their success in accomplishing goals, identifying new opportunities, and addressing restructuring to anticipate or meet changing needs. While some partnerships endure for years as a structure to guide ongoing activities, others are formed for a specific task that once accomplished, the partnership dissolves (Nicholson-Tosh & Kirby, 2013).

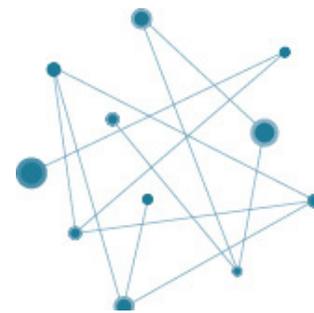
To engage in transformative change means attending not only to formal structures and sound evidence, but also to the informal social bonds that comprise partnerships and networks through which transformative vision, influence, and knowledge are distributed.

Networks are also groups of people and organizations with common interests, and they too rely on members with different points of view in order to examine issues from multiple perspectives and address complex problems. Networks tend to be more informal and more loosely connected than partnerships (Kezar, 2014). Members of networks collaborate with others to effect change, and in recent years, have been used to influence educational reform (Kezar, 2014). The strategic use of networks as a purposeful alliance contributes to two interrelated powerful change forces: (a) knowledge of ideas or practices, and (b) identity or allegiance (Fullan, 2011). Most individuals are a part of myriad professional and personal networks; most organizations partner with many other entities. What might not be so apparent is how they contribute to change and spreading innovations. Scaling an innovation works best “when local settings are connected to a network of other individuals and groups involved in projects to scale reform” (Kezar, 2011, p. 240). Often, networks are divided into subgroups, sometimes called learning communities, communities of practice, or affinity groups that tackle specific issues within the broader agenda of the network. One advantage of subgroups is that they are able to capture the “tacit knowledge that organizations typically have no way of systematically [gathering] and thus, have a knowledge management function” (Kezar, 2014, p. 192). Networks provide access to professional development, exposing leaders to information outside their current organizational structure and norms. Having access to a network of people and organizations offers the potential for a broader perspective and deeper knowledge base from which to make decisions. Additionally, networks can provide moral support, helping individuals feel less isolated during the change process and providing the encouragement necessary to lessen the impact or perceptions of risk often associated with leading change (Kezar, 2014).

Guiding Principles for Scaling Transformative Change

Three features of networks that promote transformative change follow:

- There is a high-level of transparency in the sharing of practitioners' knowledge and expertise within their networks (Baker-Doyle & Yoon, 2010). Collaborative projects and interpersonal interactions that span disciplines and divisions facilitate transparency.
- There is a shared vision and sense of collective responsibility for improving student achievement (Fullan, 2011). Strong identification with the organization that is undergoing reform and motivation to embrace innovation and align resources and actions with goals promote shared vision and responsibility (Penuel, Frank, & Krause, 2010).
- There is interpersonal and intergroup trust that allows leaders and practitioners to influence and be influenced to use their resources (financial, time, or human) for a common purpose (Daly, 2010). Social capital is built on interpersonal and intergroup relationships, trust in colleagues' and leaders' expertise and intentions, and belief in a shared purpose.



Education leaders often expect the change processes to diffuse rationally—that is, if leaders provide evidence from an expert as to how a change or reform should take place, then educators will engage in that change. However, in practice, evidence-based innovations often fail to spread and endure, becoming “yet another layer of sediment in the sea of change” (Daly, 2010, p. 2). The rational perspective does not take into account the powerful role of partnership and network infrastructures—intra- and inter-organizational relationships, trust among colleagues, and a shared vision for student success—on the successful diffusion of change. Leaders who know and understand how partnerships and networks can be used during a change process often use them to cultivate support among influential individuals and groups (Frank, Kim, & Belman, 2010). To engage in transformative change means attending not only to formal structures and sound evidence, but also to the informal social bonds that comprise partnerships and networks. Together, they form the backbone that nurtures, supports and shares transformative vision, influence, and knowledge.

Improving policy, practices and processes at community colleges is complex, with many inter-related variables, competing initiatives, and multiple stakeholders scattered across institutions, communities, and states. As long as communication and participation remain local and siloed, innovation and solutions will most likely remain elusive and ordinary. Those institutions will struggle to serve the increasingly diverse students who rely on community colleges to prepare them for a successful future. Transformative change that leads to innovative practices, processes, and policies can be accelerated by purposefully developing and maximizing partnerships and networks to foster the collective effort needed to solve complex problems and create environments where all learners can achieve their full potential.

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