



*“We all know it is possible to change without learning ... . however, it is not possible to learn without changing in some way.” Peter Senge*

## Transformational Change with the CLI Model

As an educator, you are often called upon to lead change efforts within your district. Even if you have not implemented the CLI Model, you know that all educators can be change agents and you have most likely already determined that in education, change is sometimes the only constant as you attempt to find new ways to reach students, manage buildings, and serve communities.

The research on how to make change in organizations is abundant. There are many “types” of change by definition; but, for simplicity, we have narrowed it down to the two basic types: first-order and second-order.

First-order change is typically less traumatic in terms of individual reaction and is sometimes referred to as developmental change. It may mean simple adjustments to what you are already doing while still staying on the same path. It is simply improving upon what you already have. First-order change is reversible, meaning if it doesn't work out of the gate you can stop doing it, which also makes it reactionary change. These types of changes do not necessarily require new learning to take place and staff members are usually open to trying them because of these factors. However, there is danger when districts start and stop changes

frequently—staff may think “this, too, will pass,” and they will not fully commit to making the change work. This can also lead to teacher confusion about which “thing” they should really be doing.

On the other hand, second-order change requires shifting to a new way of seeing things. This type of change is typically referred to as transformational change and is viewed as more radical. It is fundamentally different than what you have done in the past and it is irreversible, meaning once you start down the path, you can never return to what you have done previously. New learning is required and some staff members may be hesitant to support the change because there is no “safety net” as with a first-order change. During a second-order change, it is vitally important for the district's top leaders to be on board and supportive of both the change itself and the staff they work with. For example, in a school district that has only one of four administrators on board, the change will be very difficult to realize. Transformational change is difficult even when all leaders are on board; so taking the time to build capacity and educate leaders on the benefits and possible challenges of the change is an important initial step.

Although the adoption of a detailed school improvement process like the CLI Model is most likely a transformational change for a significant portion of a professional staff, keep in mind that a first-order change to one person may be a second-order change to another. Knowing your staff is key to understanding what the reaction to either type of change may be and preparing for success of change. If an educator's fundamental beliefs are not challenged (first-order change), they may show more cooperation and less resistance than educators who must adapt to new ideas about teaching practices and their roles in the classroom. Deep philosophical changes (second-order) can produce resistance initially; however, with a safe, structured process in place that includes good communication, teachers and administrators eventually align their beliefs and practices to the reform effort, or they move on. In terms of resistance within groups of people, research from renowned

education author and scholar, Everett Rogers, shows that:

- 8% will be innovators.
- 17% will be leaders.
- 29% will be early adopters.
- 29% will be late adopters.
- 17% will be resisters.

In other words, it isn't natural for 100% of your staff to be on board with a second-order change immediately. Although some will jump on board as leaders and early adopters and see the value of a change such as using the CLI Model, in many cases, much legwork must be done in order to lead the majority of your people to believe in it. The key is providing ongoing two-way communication opportunities, appropriate staff development, and an empathetic ear coupled with a firm belief in moving forward with the change.