

Transformative Change

Describing the Innovation

The purpose of this tool is to guide a group in specifically describing the characteristics of the innovation that has been targeted for scaling. The ability to fully describe the innovation can assist the group planning to disseminate the innovation in reaching a collective understanding of the characteristics of the innovation, as well as preparing their tools to engage with stakeholders at the sites to adopt the innovation. This tool is associated with the following guiding principle:

*Scaling of transformative change will occur if **dissemination** is led by individuals with deep knowledge of their settings.*

Jeanne Century, a leading researcher on scaling innovation in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education, defines characteristics of an innovation that are important to understand when considering undertaking an educational innovation: complexity; specificity; scope; adaptability; empirical effectiveness; age (Century, 2013).*

Activity I: In a meeting of stakeholders, describe the specific characteristics of the innovation. This tool can be used both with stakeholders at the home of the innovation and stakeholders at the target of the innovation.

Being as specific as possible, describe the innovation targeted for scaling	
Describe the Complexity of the Innovation	
Describe the Adaptability of the Innovation	
Describe the Scope of the Innovation	



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Describe the Empirical Effectiveness of the Innovation (results that the innovation works)	
What is the Age of the Innovation?	

What are the 3-4 essential core elements of the innovation that must be present?
1.
2.
3.
4.

Activity II: In a meeting of stakeholders, describe the specific characteristics of the innovation that are essential to be retained in the innovative process. This tool can be used both with stakeholders at the home of the innovation and stakeholders at the target of the innovation.

Activity III: Using the description of the characteristics of the innovation, along with the essential core elements list, develop a paragraph that answers the question “What is the innovation that your group has identified to scale?”



*Jeanne Century is Director of Science Education and Outlier Research & Evaluation at the Center for Elementary Mathematics and Science Education (CEMSE) at the University of Chicago. Her research focuses on measuring implementation, spread, and sustainability of innovations. For more information on Century and her research, see <http://cemse.uchicago.edu/staff/jeanne-century/>



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