



Scaling Transformative Change

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP

Leadership

Adoption and
Adaptation

Evidence

Storytelling

Networks

Dissemination

Technology

Spread and
Endurance

Transformative Change Initiative Overview

The Transformative Change Initiative (TCI) is dedicated to assisting community colleges to scale-up innovations that improve student outcomes and program, organization, and system performance.

Guiding Principle for Technology: Scaling of transformative change will occur when effective and appropriate technology is used to strengthen resources and expertise.

Technology is a critical element in creating an environment of innovation, as well as for sustaining and scaling innovation. When thinking about innovation, it is important to recognize that environments that lead to innovation are collaborative. Innovation does not happen when a program, college, or any other entity works alone. Rather, when working with others and sharing successes and failures, innovations happen. Ideas need to be connected, not protected. Johnson (2010) calls an environment that leads to innovation a “liquid network”—where many different ideas, coming from different people with different backgrounds and interests, are all bouncing off each other.

Technology provides the tools for sharing, connecting, and collaboration. Education options are expanding with online learning, blended learning, open education resources (OER), online professional development (OPD), and a variety of new tools for curriculum delivery and professional development. Communication options are multiplying with video chat, instant message, text, collaborative online meetings, email, and social media. Technology is connecting change leaders with other people, resources, data, and ideas at the touch of a screen. Rich environments for innovation are proliferating, creating the necessary supports for sustaining and scaling change, giving everyone a chance to look at access and equity in ways that we haven’t been seen before.

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New technologies offer a way for people to easily and rapidly communicate with their networks, find or strengthen resources and technical assistance, and work in a collaborative environment that fosters innovation and facilitates transformative change. For these and other reasons, Scarce, Kasper, and Grant (2010) suggest that technology tools help facilitate progress on complex social and environmental challenges, providing access to a diversity of perspectives, accelerating information sharing, and often reducing the costs of coordination and participation.

For many networks face-to-face contact may limit innovation, so finding alternate ways to communicate is crucial. An example of advancements in communications is the Innovation Learning Network of healthcare systems, health foundations, tech companies, and other healthcare related organizations. The stated goal of the network is to make healthcare better through good design. The people in this network meet face-to-face only every 18 months but the virtual network uses technology to meet continuously throughout the year, bringing in experts twice a month for “Virtual Thursdays” webinars and other activities (Holley, 2012). The goals of virtual activities and in-person meetings are the same: to connect, to share knowledge, and to be inspired.

The technology tools and resources available today enable, energize, and support the professional development and technical assistance needed for sustaining and scaling change. Connected learning communities promote collaborative problem solving, knowledge building, and reflection. They also serve as an emotional support system as educators implement, sustain, and scale educational innovations. Looking at the research on technology applications for innovation, Yang and Liu (2004) found participants in online professional development benefited emotionally and intellectually from using telecommunications networks for professional development and support. O'Dwyer et al. (2010) found strong evidence that participation in a coordinated series of online professional development workshops has positive effects on practices and content knowledge.



At its core, technology connects change leaders in ways they haven't been connected before—to other people, resources, ideas, or data—and it provides a new way to look at innovations, including their impact on access and equity that are crucial to transformative change. Technology can, and must, be used intentionally to scale innovations that address student equity gaps, by connecting practitioners and students with better information to target innovation and promising interventions that have the potential to close equity gaps. Technology applied by transformative leaders ensures that the benefits of change reach all students and produce equitable outcomes.

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New tools and technologies are developed every day, and it is important for organizations to always be learning and to take advantage of those technologies. Choosing the right technology to accomplish transformative change is challenging, but begins with awareness. One of the first steps in integrating technology into a change process is to think about what it will take for an innovation to be successful in a larger context than which it exists. The technologies, tools, and platforms that are needed to provide the collaborative support and structure to bring about transformative change need to be considered, and if they are, the opportunities for transformative change are heightened.

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