



SISEP

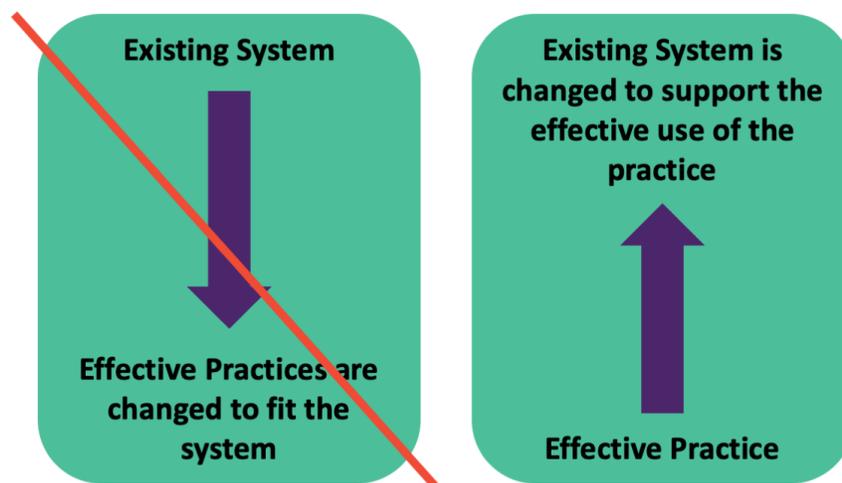
State Implementation and Scaling-up
of Evidence-based Practices

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SISEP eNote

Leadership

"To lead is to live dangerously because when leadership counts, when you lead people through difficult change, you challenge what people hold dear – their daily habits, tools, loyalties and ways of thinking – with nothing more to offer, perhaps, than a possibility."

-Heifetz & Linsky (2002, p. 12)



Equity in Implementation

The existing system is designed to support the effective use of a practice by district and school leadership in partnership with teachers, school staff, families and community partners, where rich dimensions of diversity are honored through active inclusion.

Equity in Outcomes

Effective use of a practice is accomplished when teachers and school staff are supported to use the practice with a high level of fidelity so that they can meet the unique needs of each and every student. Thus, the variation in the system is removed (e.g., provide equitable resource allocation based on need) to remove the discrepancy in the supports school staff and teachers receive (e.g., on-going training and coaching), so they have the competency and confidence to improve outcomes and close long-standing disparities for our students.



Leadership behaviors are visible

Leaders at every level of the system are actively engaged in developing and using strategies that facilitate and support use of the effective innovation, and that make the work of educators easier.

Leaders:

- Secure and allocate resources
- Visibly promote use of the innovation
- Recognize staff contributions to implementation
- Problem-solve using data for improvement purposes
- Make and support changes to organizational process and procedures
- Provide and respond to information with staff and stakeholders
- Collaborate with partners such as boards, community partners, and others in their system to develop shared understanding of the need for change and design solutions together (e.g. use [practice-policy feedback loops](#))

Leadership can use data from [capacity assessments](#) to align systems horizontally across each agency (state, region, district) and vertically from the school to the State Education Agency (bottom up change with top down support). This requires attention to the challenge of [cross-silo leadership](#).

“Though most executives recognize the importance of breaking down silos to help people collaborate across boundaries, they struggle to make it happen. That’s understandable: It is devilishly difficult.”

-Casciaro, Edmondson, & Jang (2019, pg. 1)

Leadership is foundational to supporting the implementation infrastructure

It is necessary to focus on providing the right leadership strategies for different types of challenges encountered (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). These leadership challenges often emerge as part of the change management process needed to make decisions, provide guidance, and support organization functioning.



Technical challenges are those characterized by pretty clear agreement on a definition of the dimensions of the problem at hand.

Technical strategies are a more traditional management approach where problems are defined, solutions are generated, resources are garnered, and tasks are assigned, managed, and monitored. A leader guides the overall process and is more “in charge.”

Adaptive challenges are those characterized by problems less clear, as are the perspectives among stakeholders on the “issue.”

Adaptive strategies go much deeper. They require you to challenge people's familiar reality; it can be difficult, dangerous work. Whatever the context, many will feel threatened as you push through major changes. But as a leader, you need to find a way to make it work (Heifetz, Linsky & Grashow, 2009).

1. Getting on the balcony - Stepping out of the fray to see the key patterns and the bigger picture.
2. Identifying the adaptive challenge - Putting the unspoken issues out on the table.
3. Regulating distress - Creating a safe environment for challenges to be discussed, and creating a space for diversity of opinion, experiences, and values as well as the opportunity to challenge assumptions.
4. Maintaining disciplined attention - Being aware of patterns of behavior that indicate that there is a purposeful or unconscious attempt to avoid disturbing or difficult issues.
5. Giving the work world back - Creating conditions that help people take greater responsibility for the work of change, including defining and solving the problems.
6. Protecting all voices - Relying on others to raise questions about adaptive challenges and provide support and protection for employees who identify internal conflicts in the organization.

Learn More:

- [Leadership and Innovation](#)
- [Leadership and Implementation Teams](#)
- [Technical and Adaptive Leadership](#)

References:

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- Heifetz, R.A., & Laurie, D. L. (1997). The work of leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, 75(1), 124-134.
- Heifetz, R. A., Linsky, M. & Grashow, A. (2009) *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Harvard Business Press. Retrieved from <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/publications/practice-adaptive-leadership->



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