Overcoming Resistance to Change: Strategies for Leaders

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Today’s Agenda

• Relationship between resistance and rejection

• Four strategies for overcoming resistance

• Starting the change process

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THINK......

➢ What issues are you facing concerning resistance?

➢ Record...then share......

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Our Resistance Example

Effective instructional strategies that have been discussed in professional development are not being implemented.

Situation:
You are a mathematics coach, coordinator, or supervisor. You have provided training and follow-up meetings concerning more engaging classrooms.

• Engaging and interesting problems
• Grouping strategies
• Questioning strategies
• Student discourse

Mr. T's Classroom

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Students, last week we were Evaluating Expressions like....

3X + 2 when X is 2

This week we are Solving Equations like...

2X - 5 = 15
Examples provided
Independent seat work assigned

Discuss....

➢ Is this resistance to change?
➢ If yes, please explain.
➢ If no, justify your thinking.
Your thinking is invaluable. However, you need to categorize your thoughts.

Fact or Assumption?

In a real classroom, you would have many more cues on which to form opinions.

What if you checked lesson plans, and Mr. T had Wednesday designated as “group work” day? Facts? Assumptions?

What if you checked lesson plans, and every day Mr. T had some form of activity listed? Facts? Assumptions?
Background Information

We need to set the stage with some themes that work to block change.

- Insufficient Time
- Evaluation mindset
- Defensive Barrier of Teachers

Overcoming Resistance is Related to Time

Time is...

...a precious commodity for educators.
A dear friend story.....

Is time an issue for you?

If time is an issue...

Stop wasting time doing things that you know do not work.

The expression....

If you continue to do what you have always done...
Why do people persist in doing things that don’t work?

Because......no one is immune to change processes.

Without time and effort, we fall back upon old habits.

The 1st thing that wastes time is...

... the belief in resistance as a huge problem and nothing can be done about it.

Rejection is a greater factor...

Rejection is a result of teachers returning to their classrooms....
Strategies for Overcoming Resistance

#1 Foster adoption and fix rejection.
#2 Focus on student success.
#3 Face the challenge of transporting people.
#4 Forge collegial relationships and support.

Instructional changes have one purpose – improve student learning.
STRATEGY # 1: 

Fostering adoption and fixing rejection

Fostering Adoption and Fixing Rejection

Monitoring program or strategy implementation over teacher evaluation

Monitor through data
Monitor through classroom presence
List some things you are able to learn from a classroom visit of under 10 minutes?

Evaluation is the default mindset. When coordinators and coaches actions resemble those of evaluation, teachers assume they are being evaluated.

Think about this:

After more than 30 years of formal teacher evaluations, if evaluations were going to work, they would have done so by now.
OR Strategy #2:  
Focus On Student Success

The only significance of teachers’ actions is in how students react to the actions.

Defensive Barrier of Teachers

- When the word “you” is used, teachers defenses go up.
- Avoid these barriers by asking about and discussing the students.
Tell me about the students in third period.
What did the students learn today?
How did the students demonstrate their learning?
What are the students ready to learn tomorrow?

Illogical Logic

In working to promote change, leaders sometimes focus on issues that sound correct, but are actually flawed.
(conditional and converse statements)
➤ If a school is effective, then the school has a vision and mission statement. (True)
➤ If a school has a vision and mission statement, then the school is effective. (False)

➤ If a teacher is effective, then he or she works hard. True
➤ If a teacher works hard, then he or she is effective. False
Can you think of a situation where...

- illogical logic impacted your job?
- Have you made assumptions that you now believe are fact?
- Has someone in higher authority made assumptions that are accepted as fact?

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Here is an example that causes a great deal of difficulty

- If every student is learning, then teachers are using effective instructional strategies. True
- If teachers are using effective instructional strategies, then every student is learning. False

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Change has focused on what teachers are doing.

The converse statement is true only when strategies are used that engage students in the learning process.

There is an enormous difference between using an effective strategy, and using a strategy effectively.

(Seventy?)

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OR Strategy 3: Face the Challenge of Transporting People

Initiators, Early Adopters, Later Adopters

Maintaining Positive Pressure

Starting Change from Where Teachers Are.

Developmental Strategies
Remember Mr. T? What if he is a later adopter?

How can you locate your initiators?

How can you locate your earlier adopters?

Think of transporting people like driving a car....

- Who do I take first?
- What do they do when they get to B?
- Who can take their own car? Can they take others?
- How will I know they arrived?
Stages of Personal Concern

6) Refocusing
5) Collaboration
4) Consequence
3) Management
2) Personal
1) Information
0) Awareness

HALL & HORD, 2001

Even though you drive someone to point B, does not mean they will stay at point B. Some may have been moved too early.
Return to Mr. T

What would you suggest be done?

Critical Point

“Change is a process, not an event.”

Hall & Hord
2001

Strategy # 4: Forging Collegial Relationships and Rapport

- Lesson co-planning
- Lesson co-teaching
- Lesson reflection
Group Work....

- Listen to the scenario.
- Determine how you would work with this person.

What really happened....

Instructional Strategies Sequence of Inclusion
Pair/Share
Sharing Thinking In Classrooms
Wait Time and Questioning
Grouping/Engaging Problems
Questions and Prompts
Struggle
Reasoning

Group Problems Sometimes Fail Because The Problem Is Not a Group Worthy Problem.
Why is it important to think about an instructional strategy implementation sequence?

How does this information about collegial relationships and strategy sequence, help you overcome resistance and rejection?

How can this strategy of forging collegial relationships and building rapport save you time?

**Critical Point**

It is far more difficult to resist a colleague than to resist an outsider.  
“They” are easier to resist than “us.”
Return to your issues.

Strategy 1

Foster Adoption and Fix Resistance

Strategy 2

Focus on Student Success
Strategy 3

Face the Challenge of Transporting People

Strategy 4

Forge Collegial Relationships and Rapport

Change

Change is strategic persistence over time.
Comments

NCSM: please join

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Closing.....

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