Transformation Design Deep Dive Guide

Move Forward, Learning from Setbacks

The extent to which staff, students, and stakeholders adapt to challenges, learn from mistakes, and incorporate responses to pushback from members of the district community.

Transformation Design Core Practice

Activate change agents

Build an inclusive environment

Embed a culture of innovation

Transformation Design

a shared purpose
Activate

the learning experience
ReBuild

an aligned infrastructure
Embed

This Deep Dive Guide is an extension of the Transformation Design District Self-Assessment to help district communities move from reflection to action. For guidance on using this tool, visit www. transformation-design.org and download the District Self-Assessment Guide.

Why Move Forward, Learning from Setbacks?
Move Forward, Learning from Setbacks is one action district communities can take to ReBuild the Learning Experience: Trying new approaches to learning that are based on our district's shared purpose, often by small groups changing the learning experience in classrooms and schools, inviting the district community to learn as we go.

Reflections from the Transformation Design District Self-Assessment (Discuss as a team.)

Reflect on the self-assessment findings about this action.

What did your team discover about this action? What are your district's strengths, assets, and resources that support this action?

Questions to Consider
(Reflect as a team.)

Use these questions to identify how this action shows up in your district community.

- *What real or perceived barriers, setbacks, and challenges have occurred during your learning transformation? What meaning have staff, students, and stakeholders made of these experiences?*

- *How does your district community handle differing opinions about how to move the learning transformation forward? How might systemic inequities influence how differing opinions are resolved?*

- *How does your district understand staff, students, and stakeholders' changing perceptions of the learning transformation over time?*

- *How does your district community address concerns or disillusionment when the learning transformation is not smooth, does not yet achieve the vision, or leads to confusion or dissent?*

- *In what ways has your district community used setbacks and challenges as opportunities for real change to occur? Can you provide an example?*

Notes from the team discussion about these questions:

The Big Idea
(Complete independently.)

Review the following resources to better understand this action and why it is important.

- **The Movement Action Plan**, Bill Moyer et al. (2001). Most change management frameworks assume success, but this developmental framework of social change movements accounts for inevitable setbacks like dwindling participation, waning media attention, and powerholders discrediting and repressing the movement (see Stage 5). To achieve success, change agents must persevere through setbacks and set achievable objectives.

- **Strategies of Learning from Failure**, Amy C. Edmonson in *Harvard Business Review* (2011). To effectively detect and analyze failures requires specific attitudes and activities and context-specific learning strategies. This article recaps a spectrum of reasons for failure and ways to build a learning culture and promote experimentation.

- **Spiral for Regenerating Communities**, NewStories (2019). In this framework to co-create collective impact, the Illuminate New Stories stage (page 7) makes what's happening visible through stories, developmental evaluation processes, and critical questioning. It creates a context for even more listening as a community takes another journey through the spiral.

- **Slow Ideas**, Atul Gawande in *The New Yorker* (2013). The piece explores why some innovations spread fast and how to speed the ones that don't. The examples provided are from the medical field but the concepts may be applied to education.

What new ideas from these resources seem most exciting for your community? What strengths do they reveal about your district? What opportunities would you like to explore more deeply?

District Artifacts
(Complete independently.)

Review the following artifacts from leading districts to benchmark the Transformation Design action in your own district and to spark new ideas.

St. Vrain Valley Schools
- Embracing Public Participation: A Whole Systems Approach to Organizational Change, SVVSD for the International Association for Public Participation (2015). This document identifies the challenges the school district faced after years of exclusionary decision-making, lack of transparency, and a financial crisis. The district initiated a systematic and sustained shift in practice to rebuild trust and embed the values of public participation into the district's operational and organizational culture.

Henry County Schools
- Challenges and Lessons Learned, pages 43-48 in *Journeys to Personalized Learning: Henry County Schools*, FSG (2018). This section of the case study tracing the district's learning transformation documents how the district persevered despite challenges.

Pike County Schools
- How to Survive the First Year of Learner-Centered Transformation (Hint: It's All About the People), Suzanne Freeman on the Education Reimagined Blog (2019). The former superintendent reflects on her time leading transformation at Pike County Schools, including the valleys that were a part of their journey and how they overcame obstacles.

Arcadia Unified School District
- Focusing on Values to Rebuild Trust, David Vannasdall (2018). In this one-page interview excerpt, the superintendent of AUSD describes a setback that occurred when he skipped a step in communication about personalized learning. He explains how he has worked to repair relationships and rebuild trust in the organization.

Which artifacts inspired you? Why?

What strategies did district communities use to learn from setbacks in their learning transformation, repair trust within their community, and move forward?

What do these examples illuminate about your own district's work?

A Common Understanding
(Discuss as a team.)

Gather as a team to develop a common understanding about this action and why it is important. Share insights and inspirations gained from your independent study of Big Idea resources and District Artifacts. Challenge yourselves to think big and be bold as you take on this action in your district.

What are the key takeaways to keep in mind as you plan?

Action Planning
(Complete as a team.)

Developing this Transformation Design action into common practice across your district community can advance your learning transformation and help you better serve your students, families, and local community. Use the structure below to create a plan to strengthen use of this action by your district community.

What has your district already done? (Refer to your responses to Questions to Consider *earlier.)*

What needs further development? Which of these are key levers that, if they were strengthened, would significantly advance your district's learning transformation?

What is your goal for moving forward? What do you want to accomplish?

Assign people to take action with clear deadlines and deliverables (e.g., by the end of the month, the communications director and a parent representative on the core team will create a prototype of a community newsletter). These Action Steps are an opportunity to "walk the talk" of the change you are trying to create in your district: consider how team members will own these steps and how to invite stakeholders to participate!!

Action Steps	Timeline	People Responsible	Communication Plan (Listen & Share)	Success Criteria

Progress Tracking

Set a date to reconvene to review progress on the Action Steps. Use a project management tool or another way to collectively track progress between meetings.

Date to review progress:

Other Notes: