Full Steam Ahead
LEVERAGING OUR WINS TO FUEL SYSTEM CHANGE
NISTS 2024 | St. Louis, Missouri • February 21-23

Solutions Showcase

3342 - University Systems Using Small Tests of Change for Big Wins. Beware, No Pilot Programs Allowed!

Leading and Advocating for Change, Maximizing Credits and Streamlining Pathways

This session will explore how four state university systems embarked on a joint effort to improve transfer student outcomes. Joined by their improvement science coach, the leads for each system will discuss their experience of utilizing this new-to-higher education approach to tackle the more difficult problems around transfer. The tests of change occurring on the campuses within these systems are purposely adaptable to other community college-university partnerships and systems and get at the core issues embedded in the transfer matriculation process. Most importantly, anyone can apply these problem-solving approaches.

Isaiah Vance, *Assistant Vice Chancellor*
The Texas A&M University System

William Bajor, *Senior Director Administration & Special Projects*
Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE)

Holly Pflum, *Transfer Initiative Coordinator*
University of Illinois System

Beth Collins, *Associate Director*
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University Systems Using Small Test of Change for Big Wins.

Beware, No Pilot Programs Allowed!

February 21, 2024

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NASH and Improvement Science

Isaiah Vance, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Advising
The Texas A&M University System

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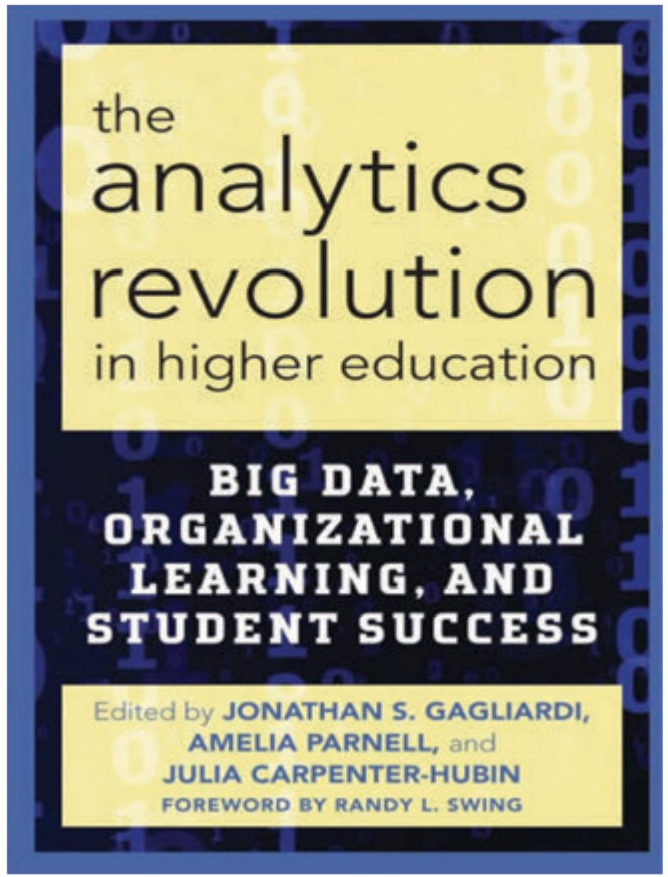

Colleges and universities have tried to reassess and reconfigure their business models in hopes of better serving students… These efforts to improve… have primarily focused on the large-scale adoption of programs, practices, and services designed to optimize remediation, shorten time to degree, reduce excess credits, and streamline credit transfer, all while enhancing teaching, learning and advising in a cost-effective manner.

-Gagliardi et al., 2018, p.2

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Education reform is characterized by:

"Miracle goals and no methods"

- W. Edwards Deming

The Networked Improvement Paradigm

From Evidence-Based Practice to Practice-Based Evidence

Implement Fast and Scale Wide	Learn Fast to Implement Well
Focus on Standard Effect Size	Focus on Sources of Variability in Performance
What Works!	How to Make It Work! Replicability as the New Gold Standard
"Script it" vs "Every Situation is Unique"	Develop Quality Processes to Support Complex Work
Individual Autonomy as Most Prized Norm	Working Together We Can Accomplish More
Researchers vs Users / Knowers vs Doers	All Improvers

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for the Advancement of Teaching

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NICs are scientific learning communities distinguished by four essential characteristics:

- Focused on a well specified common aim,
- Guided by a deep understanding of the problem, the system that produces it, and a theory of improvement,
- Disciplined by the rigor of improvement science, and,
- Coordinated to accelerate the development, testing, and refinement of interventions and their effective integration into varied educational contexts.

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Networked Improvement Communities:

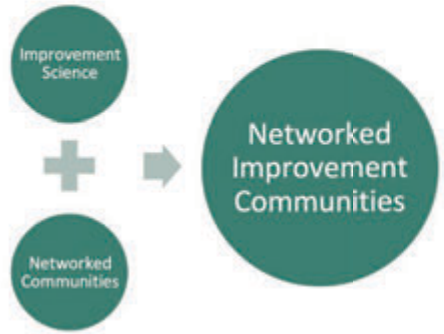
What are they?

Integrating Two Big Ideas:

The tools and technologies of Improvement Science

Joined to

The Power of Networks



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The Big Idea

NASH Improvement Communities

In partnership with the Carnegie Foundation, NASH launched three NICs in 2022 to address the following topics identified as priorities by NASH stakeholders:

1. **Increasing the number of transfer students who complete degrees**
2. Increasing curricular flexibility, with flexible pathways, credentials, and shared degrees
3. Closing equity gaps through student success interventions.

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Leading the way

NASH selected four systems as the inaugural cohort:

- University of Illinois System
- Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
- Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education
- The Texas A&M University System

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Holly Pflum, University of Illinois System

Summary - Selected 'Test of Change' Themes: University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, University of Illinois Chicago, and University of Illinois Springfield

- Year 1 - Cycle I
  - 1:1 Advising Appointments for Prospective Transfers
  - Pre-Advising Point of Contact
  - Re-engaging First-Year Admits who instead enroll at IL community colleges
- Year 1 - Cycle II
  - Improve efficiency of 1:1 Advising Appointments for Prospective Transfers
  - Shrinking the gap between admissions and advising
  - Re-engaging denied transfer students only missing 1-2 requirements
  - Continued re-engagement of first-year admits

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University of Illinois System - UIUC, UIC, & UIS

- Year 1 - Cycle III
  - Prospective Student Information Exchange with a community college
  - Shrinking the gap of time between admission letter and advising appointment
  - Clarity in transfer application requirements
- Year 1 - Cycle IV
  - Continued Prospective Student Information Exchange
  - Continued re-engagement with denied transfers
  - Continued efforts to shrink the gap in time between admission letter and advising appointment

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University of Illinois System - UIUC, UIC, & UIS

- Year 2 - Cycle I
  - Prospective Student Information Exchange with a community college
  - Early outreach to high school juniors and seniors encouraging transfer pathways
  - Building a case to shift orientation dates for transfer students
  - Early Alert for at-risk students
  - Helping students to complete
- Year 2 - Cycle II
  - Continued Prospective Student Information Exchange - MOU
  - 1:1 admissions advising appointments
  - Onboarding new students - continued
  - Targeted advising for students in online programs
  - Increasing transfer course-to-course articulations

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Dr. Beth Collins, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

Summary - Selected 'Test of Change' Themes: Western Kentucky University and Southcentral Community and Technical College

- Year 1 - Cycle I
  - Onboarding Specialist
  - Advisor Update Training
  - Earlier connection with 4-year advisor
- Year 1 - Cycle II
  - Earlier connection with 4-year advisor beyond the top 5 transfer pathways
  - Pathway enhancement tool
  - Second major for unsuccessful Allied Health (Nursing) intending students

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Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

- Year 1- Cycle III
  - Expanded Onboarding Specialist
  - Joint Admission of SKYCTC Business students at WKU
    - Unforeseen circumstance led to a failed test of change;
  - Official in-progress transcript of students indicating transfer to WKU sent prior to graduation for course articulation and enrollment.
  - Reverse transfer as partnership building

- Year 1- Cycle IV
  - Official in-progress transcript of students indicating transfer to WKU sent prior to graduation for course articulation and enrollment
    - Repeat from Cycle III as results were inclusive-
    - Outcome data available after the fall registration period closes on August 23
  - Joint Admission of SKYCTC Business students at WKU
    - Error from Cycle III corrected;
  - Reverse transfer as partnership building
  - Expanded Onboarding Specialist

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Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

Year 2 - Cycle I

- Increase enrollment in the College of Education and the Gordon Ford College of Business
- More efficient use of the WKU transfer advisors' time and expertise to increase efficacy of transfer advising appointments
- Joint admission of SKYCTC Associate of Arts and associate of Science students at WKU.

Year 2 - Cycle 2

- WKU only transfer fair
- Admission of SKYCTC Associate of Arts or Associate of Science student at WKU
- More efficient use of the WKU transfer advisors' time and expertise to increase efficacy of transfer advising appointments

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Dr. William Bajor, Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE)

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Summary – Selected 'Test of Change' Themes: Commonwealth University, Kutztown University and Shippensburg University

- Year 1 - Cycle I
  - Program articulation guides
  - Reduce time to advising appointment
  - Increase yield of deposited students (from the admitted student pool)
  - Automated early alert system
  - Incorporate more members of the faculty in transfer orientation.
- Year 1 - Cycle II
  - Transcript audit of students having entered with 30-59 credits
  - Degree completion maps
  - Pre-matriculation advising
  - Create faculty transfer liaisons
  - Connection between reverse transfer and transfer student success.

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Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE)

- Year 1 - Cycle III
  - Increase efficiency of admissions to advising handoff
  - Increase registration of continuing transfers
  - Refreshed application of the 30-credit general education framework (Transcript Audit 2.0)
  - (Pre)Advisement prior to admission
- Year 2 - Cycle I
  - Manage incoming transfer melt
  - Transferring in of D grades
  - Student success coordinator intervention for late orientation registrants
  - Consistent communication with transfers in the enrollment funnel across three campuses
- Year 1 - Cycle IV
  - Develop student success plan in Starfish.
  - Satisfying general education requirements without an associate's degree
  - Outreach to confirm associate degree completion (that FINAL CC transcript)
  - Faster registration of confirmed transfers
  - Scholarships and other incentives for associate degree completers
- Year 2 - Cycle II
  - Enhanced dual admission
  - 48 hours from deposit to contact with academic faculty advisor (NOW up to 19 academic depts.)
  - Student success coordinator intervention with candidates for reverse transfer
  - Standardizing processes and procedures to increase the rate of continuing transfer student success.

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Isaiah D Vance, The Texas A&M University System

Summary - Selected ‘Test of Change’ Themes: Texas A&M University, Texas A&M University-Christi, Prairie View A&M University, The RELLIS Campus [added yr 2]

- Year 1 - Cycle I
  - Peer-to-Peer Admission Advising
  - Centralized Admission Decisions
  - Alternative Pathways for Denied Students
  - Call campaign to unregistered (admitted) transfers
- Year 1 - Cycle II
  - Peer-to-Peer Admission Advising [adapted]
  - Auto-Admit Bar for Selective Institution
  - Transfer Student Orientation
  - Community college on-site (immediate) admissions

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The Texas A&M University System

- Year 1 - Cycle III
  - Peer-to-Peer Mentoring
  - Stop Outs Redirected to Other Programs
  - Auto-Admit Bar [adapted]
  - Community college on-site (immediate) admissions [adapted]
  - Graduation planning

- Year 1 - Cycle IV
  - Graduation planning
  - Auto-Admit Bar [adapted]
  - Transfer Maps Developed
  - Graduation planning [adapted]

- Year 2 - Cycle I
  - Auto-Admit Bar [adopted]
  - Admission decision time reduction
  - Intervention for enrolled-not-attending
  - Increase “sense of belonging”

- Year 2 - Cycle II
  - Admission decision time reduction [adapted]
  - Early graduation audit (for continuing transfer students)
  - Multiple orientation options
  - Pre-Orientation Advising

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Why Improvement Science?

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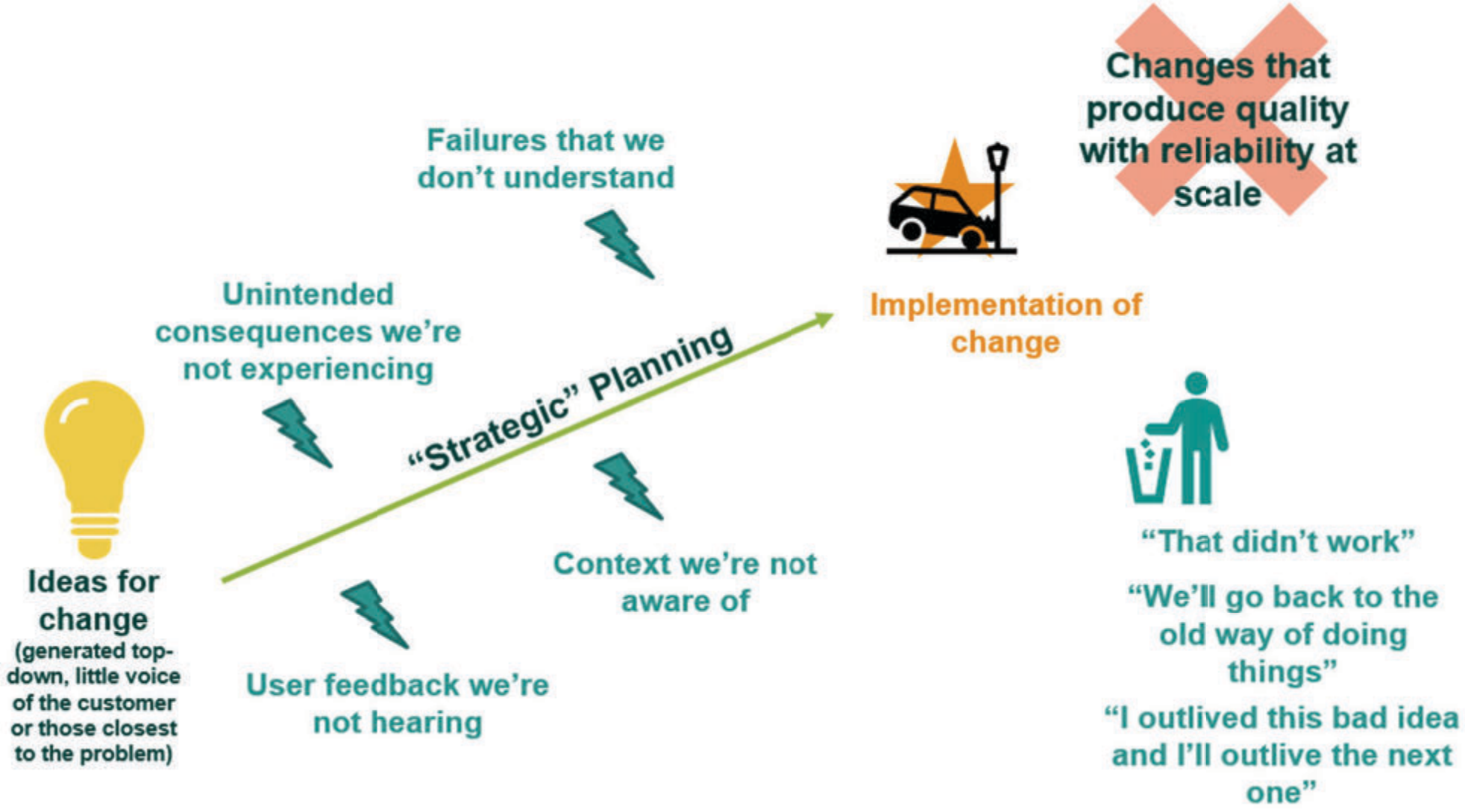
Current Approach to Change



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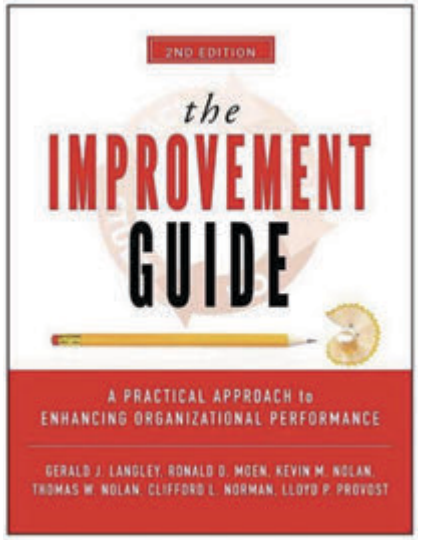
Changing the way we manage change



"The Model for Improvement is based on an iterative, trial-and-learning approach to improvement. We advocate the testing of changes on a small scale initially to reduce risk and then, from the learning, use of subsequent cycles to scale up the changes. Even trials that are not successful can add to the learning if they are thoughtfully reviewed. Although the use of small-scale, sequential cycles for the design or redesign of large or complex systems is counterintuitive, it is an effective approach. The bigger the system, the more uncertainties there will be. In our experience, spending time in a conference room trying to perfect a change then trying to "install" it is not an effective way to make improvements.

-Langley et al., 2014, p.102

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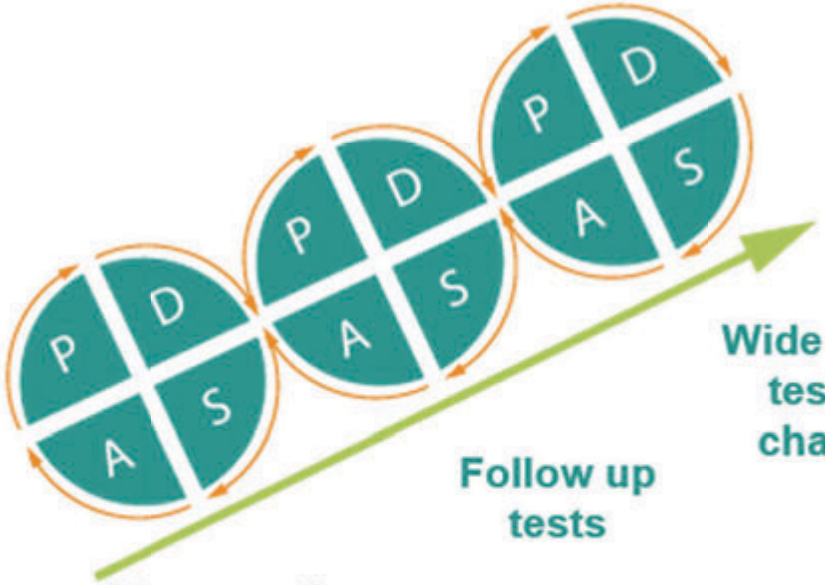
Improvement Science Approach to Change

Changes that produce quality with reliability at scale

Implementation of change idea at scale without failure



Wide scale test of change

Follow up tests

Very small test of change

Ideas for change
(generated bottom-up and by using best available knowledge of what works)

"Let's do that again"

"What other problems can we solve?"

"I'd like to lead the next round"

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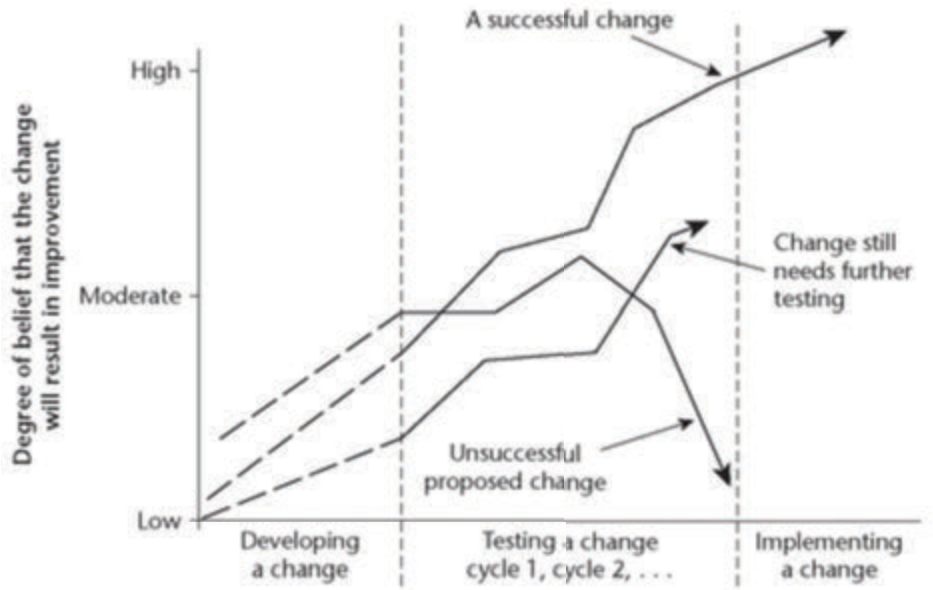

The work of improvement & improvement science is to bridge the divide that exists between the knowledge that something can work and the knowledge of how to make it work reliably across diverse contexts and populations.

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Understanding Improvement Science

What it is:

- Solves organizational paralysis.
- Eliminates solutionitis.
- Reduces fear.

What it is not:

- A quick fix for complex problems.
- A silver bullet.

The Caveat:

- Failure is celebrated as part of the process.
- Fail fast, learn fast.
- Fail before you scale!

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Moving Away From

- The “Perfect Project,” spanning multiple weeks.
- Thinking, “We must follow the plan!”
- Leadership-driven efforts.

Moving Toward

- Nimble, rapid action cycle continuous improvement.
- Using data collected during rapid action.
- Bottom-up generation of ideas for change.

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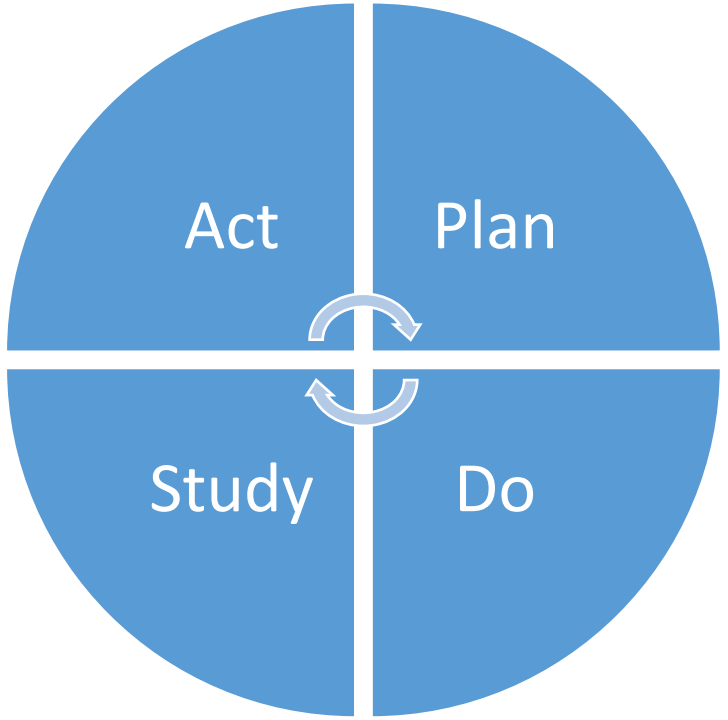
Model for Improvement

What are we trying to accomplish?

How will we know a change is an improvement?

What change can we make that will result in improvement?



Langley, Moen, Nolan, Nolan, Norman, Provost (also known as "Associates in Process Improvement").
The Improvement Guide: A Practical Approach to Enhancing Organizational Performance

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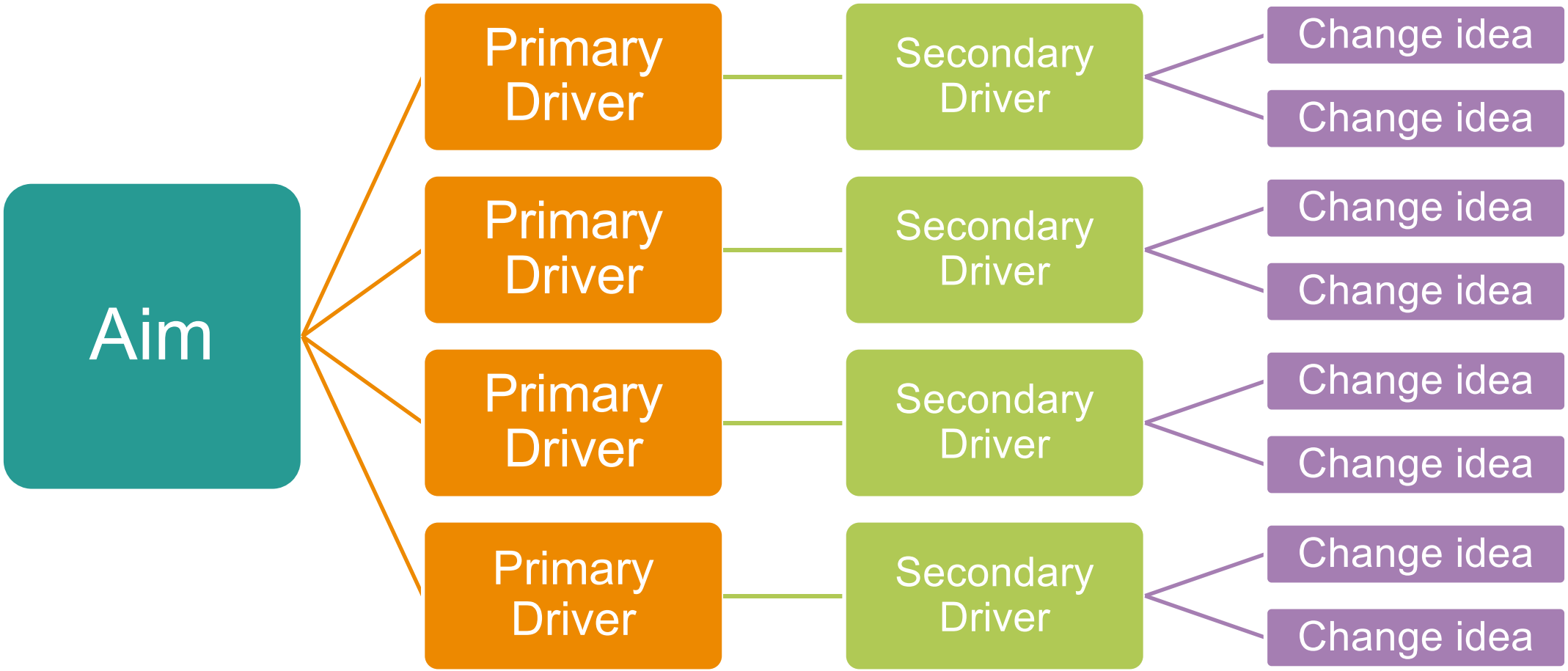

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How NICs (NASH/Network Improvement Communities) Change the Game -

1) Speed – Strategic, Methodical, Calculated
2) Culture of Trust – Fear No Failure!
3) Networked Learning – Share, Spread, Scale

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TRANSFER NIC

Learning | Talent | Equity | Investment | Systemness

PASSHE: Commonwealth University [Previously Bloomsburg, Mansfield, Lock Haven Universities]

NASH AIM STATEMENT

By May 2030, the percentage of in-state students enrolling at two-year institutions who transfer and complete baccalaureate degrees within six years will increase by 7%.

SYSTEM AIM STATEMENT

Decrease the average number of credits completed at bachelor's degree completion for in-state, vertical transfer students.

DRIVERS

Primary Driver

Transfer-In Success Rate
(i.e., How many students who vertically transfer Into a 4-year institution complete their degree in 2 years and/or without extraneous credits at the time of degree completion.)

Secondary Driver

Implementing more student friendly and updated transfer policies and procedures.

TEST OF CHANGE

Shortly after the start of the Fall 2022 semester, the 3 campuses of Commonwealth University conducted an audit on all transfer students to examine how their transfer credit pathways are currently working under an updated system-wide student transfer policy and to determine if any additional credits could be recovered.

DATA & OUTCOMES

The process of auditing the transcripts had a significant positive impact and resulted in decreasing time to degree completion for numerous (n= 456) Commonwealth University students through the recovery of 2,414 credits.

Impact Breakdown by Campus

Bloomsburg University	392 students	2,223 credits
Mansfield University	42 students	99 credits
Lock Haven University	22 students	92 credits

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University of Illinois System - UIUC, UIC, & UIS

- ➔ Since March 2023, the U of I System has received 2,700+ new prospective transfers from one IL community college as a result of our new data exchange agreement (all in their first semester at the community college!)
- ➔ Yield % is up 9% at one U of I location from Spring 2023 to Spring 2024 after work to complete more applications (94%) and intentional pre-advising appointments
- ➔ 96% of students who were contacted before orientation took immediate action and registered for courses and avoided excess (or elective) credit in their first semester on campus

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So,
What's Next?

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