

## BOOK REVIEW

### How Colleges Change: Understanding, Leading, and Enacting Change

Edited by ADRIANA KEZAR

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In the book, *How colleges Change: Understanding, Leading, and Enacting Change*, Kezar unveils problematic assumptions that *change agents* typically possess and provides research based principles for approaching change. In this book Kezar examines the importance of understanding the complete change process, not just the direction or vision. With this book, the author provides comprehensive findings from her decades of research, conducted on complex phenomenon of change in higher education. This book offers fresh insights into understanding, leading and enacting change. Kezar does not just presents theories but she explains a practical framework that can be applied to any organisational challenge and context.

Adriana Kezar is a Professor of Higher Education at the University of Southern California, USA. Dr. Kezar is a national expert of change and leadership in higher education and her research agenda explores the change process in institution of higher education and the role of leadership in creating change. She is also a well-known qualitative researcher and has written several texts and articles about ways to improve qualitative research in education. She is well published with 14 books, over 75 journal articles, and over a hundred book chapters and reports.

Kezar sets the context for the rest of the book at the very outset, by explaining the reasons for change in the current context as

well as how the current context shapes *change processes*. In general, a change has been perceived as a theoretical and complex phenomenon. This book explains how *change agents* (an individual who moves changes forward) often try to achieve the assumed result of the change but most of the times they deviate from the desired result. This happens because there is a lack of coordination between theory and practice. With this book, Kezar tries to fill the gap between theory and practice. She tries to cover the whole essence of change in higher education in an organised format. She does not only give a theoretical background but she moves further and provides an extensive research based case studies to defend her findings.

This book is meticulously divided into three parts. Each part has its own significance and caters to the needs of any individual who wants to understand the application of change strategies in their own institutions.

The higher education sector is fast growing and dynamic in nature. In the present scenario, higher education plays crucial role in deciding the future of the global economy. Today, the higher education system is not only confined to the involvement of local communities but it comprises the students from diversified background across the world. This sector is changing its shape due to the influence of new technologies, modernisation, marketisation and corporatisation in higher education. Therefore, a traditional approach to change

is not sufficient to meet the goals of *change agents*. The author has highlighted the necessity to possess complete knowledge of the change process.

The author explains various types of change theories based on six schools of thoughts and their related theories in detail. The author describes how the same type of change in two different contexts leads to success and failure respectively and how it can be avoided. The author has provided a macro framework to integrate the various theories to make a meaningful change. This framework helps leaders/*change agents* to design a change strategy suited to their planned initiative and context and it helps leaders/*change agents* to consider the challenges of deep change and scaling up innovations, and by examining the ethical underpinning of change processes that often lead to failure.

The author presents several case studies with a variety of contexts and methodologies. She has explained each of the change theories with a case study. All the case studies are based on real life situations and it helps readers to relate their problems with the given case studies and helps them to discover the right approach to change. The author emphasises the institutionalisation of the change framework. Any change processes go through three phases such as *Mobilisation*, *Implementation*, and *Institutionalisation* to achieve the goal. Kezar warns that a weak step in any phase of the change process can lead to failure.

This book could be conducive to the *Indian context* as the higher education sector in India is evolving and hence, it needs a very precise and research based approach for designing the framework to achieve the desired goals of higher education. In India, there are many burning issues related to change in higher education.

The author has outlined that bad faith created through unethical change processes creates a context unfavourable to true or authentic change.

Kezar presents the six main theories of change as: *scientific management theory*; *evolutionary theory*; *social cognition theory*; *cultural theory*; *political theory*; and *institutional theory*. Knowledge of these theories would provide the readers, an insight depending on their assumptions about change, they will look to different foci, concepts and aspects of the process. When considered together, it adds more insight and *change agents* can integrate these various theories meaningfully to create change, which is very different from the conventional approach. She investigates that the changes may not always be projected by the *change agents*, sometimes they are a result of events in the external environment, the action of other stakeholders, or even institutional declension.

Finally, Kezar raises challenges for *change agents* today, provides the ways to explore some of the perennial struggles of *change agents* such as scaling up change and ethics of change.

The resources and ideas in this book can prepare one to create change from *bottom up*, *top-down*, or *through a shared process*. In addition to providing a broad understanding of leadership and change, this book could be used as a resource for creating specific types of change. Overall, this book is an excellent resource and is very useful for leaders/*change agents*, administrators, stakeholders and students as well. The language of this book is simple and easy to understand. Relevant examples at each stage of this book make it more helpful for beginners. This book is also very helpful in developing an insight to understand, analyse, plan and execute change in higher education.

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