

Opportunities and Dilemmas of Partnering for Continuous Improvement

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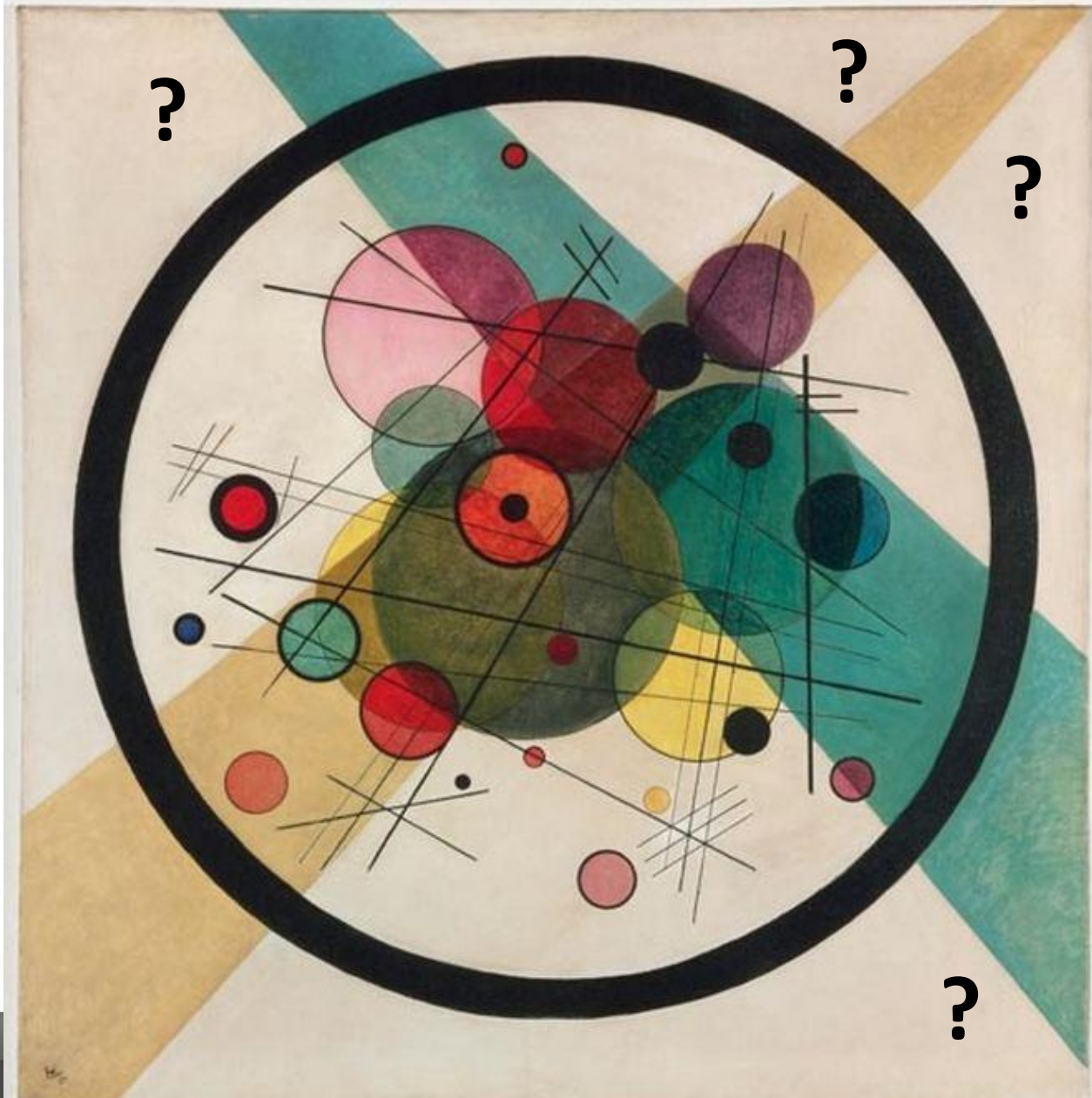
Opportunities and Dilemmas of Partnering for **Continuous Improvement**

Opportunities and Dilemmas of **Partnering** for Continuous Improvement

Partnership - a researcher-practitioner partnership operating at the school district level and manifested deliberately in an improvement community we call the DIDT, the district innovation design team.

Opportunities and Dilemmas of Partnering for **Continuous Improvement**

An approach that involves multiple tests of small changes that cumulatively result in larger, *system* change.



Core Principles

- Innovation reflects core elements of practices shown to be effective in the district where the improvement work is occurring.
- Continuous improvement relies on rapid-cycle testing.
- Partnership model includes researchers and practitioners as equals in the work.

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Grounding the Innovation Design in Local Success

- Leveraging the Wisdom of Practice
- Safeguarding Relevance and Fit
- Building Legitimacy and Trust of Researchers

Leveraging the Wisdom of Practice

- Helped ensure that the NCSU leveraged the wisdom of our practitioner partners from the start.

- Helped practitioner members of our design teams to more quickly bridge the gap between “what should be” and “what can be.”

Safeguarding Relevance and Fit

- Eased the testing and implementation of the prototype by ensuring that the practices emphasized by our research fit within the tapestry of competing initiatives, priorities, and mandates under which our partner schools operate.

Building Legitimacy/Trust of Researchers



- Helped to build the improvement teams

- Eased researchers' access to schools as the prototype was tested and scaled to new sites.

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Why Improvement Communities?

- Mechanism to build collective knowledge around complex problems and potential solutions.
 - Organizational learning, not just individual learning
- Diverse forms of expertise come together around shared problems

Opportunities of RPPs for Continuous Improvement

- Build collective ownership;
- Help educators to feel they are not alone in the work ;
- Shift work towards problems of practice;
- Better ensure that innovations/tools are practically useful;
- Provide increased access to school sites for researchers;
- Build increased capacity among district and school partners to use data systematically;
- Expand leadership opportunities for school actors

Dilemmas of RPPs for Continuous Improvement

Unlike problems that are presumed to be solvable, dilemmas

reveal deeper, fundamental dichotomies..... [They] refer to the paradox of confronting conflicting positions, both of which are, or can be, “true.”

(Ogawa, Crowson, Goldring, 1999, p. 278)

Dilemma of Differing Organizational Incentives

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Is this the formula for success?

$$y_{ti} = \mathbf{X}_i \boldsymbol{\beta} + \sum_{r=1}^L y_{t-r,i} \gamma_{t-r} + \sum_{q=1}^Q \mathbf{z}_{qi} \boldsymbol{\theta}_q + e_i$$

 Actual VAM formula

Dilemma of Objectivity

By situating projects in real educational contexts and by working within the DIDT, partnerships for continuous improvement provides researchers a source of validity while also inserting possible biases as they get intimately involved in the conceptualization, design, development, and implementation of an innovation they are also testing

Dilemma of Hierarchy

- Partnerships between different types of organizations – school districts and research universities, for example – exist outside of the hierarchy in which the organizations – as stand-alone institutions – typically operate.
- So, who owns decision-making in a partnership for continuous improvement?