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### **Achieving Transformational Change in the School Library Program**

#### **Introduction:**

Much of our professional conversations revolve around the concept of change—changing the way books are organized in a library or changing policy on checkouts and fines. These changes are exciting and oftentimes come with quick recognition and praise. But when we discuss changes in the way we collaborate with teachers or the way the school library program situates itself in the daily life of a school, frustrations mount, and our desire for silver-bullet solutions becomes evident. Differentiating the types of change we seek may help us understand how to frame our expectations and set our professional goals.

According to *Organizational Transformation: Approaches, Strategies, Theories*, a foundational text on institutional change by Amir Levy and Uri Merry, organizational changes occur in two orders. First-order changes are "those minor improvements and adjustments that do not change the system's core, and occur as the system naturally grows and develops." Second-order changes are deep and meaningful changes in "underlying values or mission, culture, functioning processes, and structure of the organization" (1986, p. 5). By sticking to first-order changes, we implement co-optative change strategies. These strategies are "a rational-bureaucratic approach, that is managerial in nature, planned low-level change" (Aguirre & Martinez 2006, p. 56). Why is this a problem? If co-optative changes are the only changes implemented, they can actually hurt an organization's ability to transform. Adalberto Aguirre and Rubén Martinez warn us co-optative changes act "as buffers to protect organizational culture rather than to change it" (p. 56).

#### **Objectives of Presentation:**

Research on Organizational Development Intervention (ODI) has been applied by international corporations since the mid-1980s. Recently, the principles of ODI found a new home in efforts by colleges and universities pursuing systemic, meaningful, and long-lasting change in their organizational culture – especially in areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion (Adserias, Charleston, & Jackson, 2016). Today these principles can guide school librarians who strive to bring transformational change to their school library programs, the type of change that requires large faculty and administrative buy-in (e.g. hybrid or flexible scheduling, removal of leveled reading, collaborative teaching).

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Building on the IASL 2020 conference's goal "to explore and discuss ideas for transforming school library programs," the objective of this presentation is to introduce attendees to Organizational Development Intervention (ODI) theory as it applies to K-12 settings. Session participants will investigate how ODI can help school librarians explore their school's current culture, categorize the types of changes that need to take place, and identify the existing barriers and challenges to those changes. This session will also delve into the ways ODI defines and differentiates between first- and second-order changes. A highly interactive approach will be used to introduce participants to guidelines for appropriately framing their change expectations, and setting achievable goals that lead to transformational change in school library programs.

**References:**

Adserias, R.P., Charleston, L. J., & Jackson, J.F. (2016). What style of leadership is best suited to direct organizational change to fuel institutional diversity in higher education? *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 20(3), 315-331.

Aguirre Jr., A., & Martinez, R. (2002) Leadership practices and diversity in higher education: Transitional and transformational frameworks. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 8(3), 53–62.

Levy, A., & Merry, U. (1986). *Organizational Transformation: Approaches, Strategies, Theories*. Praeger: New York.