

INNOVATION

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The Concept

Although, the words change and innovation are frequently used interchangeably but there is clear distinction between the two. Numerous conflicting definitions are available in the literature describing the attributes of the term innovation. Some of the characteristics which are useful to us in planning and implementation of innovation are as follows:-

- An innovation is an idea, practice or object perceived as a new by an individual or individuals.
- Innovation is deliberate and planned. It is a novel specific change in accomplishing the goals of the system. The element of novelty also implies recombination of parts or a qualitative difference from existing forms.
- Innovation is fundamental in nature. It implies change in environment or culture so that the authority relationship, communication networks, status groupings and even friendship cliques are forced to change, if the innovation is to survive.
- In innovation, there is an intention of improvement. It is aimed to improve practice in relation to certain desired objectives.
- Innovation is consciously and purposefully directed with the aim of improving the present system.
- Educational innovation frequently require teachers to change attitudes, relationship and roles.

Taking into consideration the above points, the term innovation can be defined as follow. This definition will be helpful to us for creating and implementing innovation.

"An innovation is an idea, object or practice perceived as new by an individual or individuals, which is intended to bring about improvement in relation to desired objective which is fundamental in nature and which is planned and deliberate".

FACTORS AFFECTING ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATIONS OF INNOVATIONS:

"Like beauty, innovations exist only in eyes of beholder". Rogers and Shoemaker.

It is the perception of potential users about innovations which is more important than perception of experts or change agents. User's perceptions affect the fate of the innovations. According to Rogers, it is the beholder's perceptions which influence the beholder's behaviour.

There are five characteristics of innovation which user's should perceive properly.

1. Relative Advantage :

Relative advantage is the extent to which an innovation is seen to be better than the idea or practice it supercedes. The advantages may be in terms of reduction in cost, saving of time or efforts, a decrease in discomfort or greater rewards. The rewards may be financial but more predominantly

improvement in students learning. These advantages require demonstrations which is a difficult task specially showing in advance the improvement of students learning.

It has been observed that innovations perceived to have these characteristics tend to have a high adoption rate.

2. Compatibility :

This is the extent to which an innovation is perceived by potential user's as being consistent with their existing values, past experiences and present needs.

Compatibility is more likely to engender feelings of security and involves less risk and makes the idea more meaningful to the users.

The implications of this characteristics for the managers of innovation is that they need to be aware of education philosophy and the abilities of those who are involved. Some preparatory work would be necessary before an innovation can be introduced with any chance of successful implementation.

3. Complexity :

Complexity is defined as the degree to which an innovation is perceived as relatively difficult to understand and use. Some innovations are clear in their meaning and some are not. Difficulty of understanding might occur because the innovation is indeed highly complex or because it is not sufficiently well explained or because education jargon is used, or because the person describing or advocator of the innovation does not himself have a clear or thorough understanding of it.

The proposers of the innovation should then explain it, as accurately as possible to those who are involved. They should check

that their messages have been understood. If the innovation is difficult to use, the task is one of support, retraining and reassurance.

4. Trialability :

This characteristic is the extent to which an innovation can be tried out on a limited basis. The innovations that can be tried out are likely to be accepted more readily, since there is less risk involved. There are many innovations which can not be tried out on a part basis. It has to be on an all-or-nothing basis. This characteristic is helpful in many instances if the teachers are ready to try out innovations on a small scale and carefully monitor and evaluate them before proceeding further. Once a commitment to an innovation has been made and much time, energy and effort expended in its development and implementation, there is less possibility to discontinue it.

5. Observability :

This is the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others. It has been experienced that results of some ideas are easily observed and communicated to others, while some innovations are difficult to describe. Thus, the observability is positively related to the adoption of an innovation.

Problems Associated with Innovation :

- Lack of knowledge regarding planning process on the part innovator.
- Innovations necessitate considerable changes in teacher attitude and their traditional roles. It also sometimes demands to bring about new kinds of relationship both among teachers and between teachers and their students.
- An innovation frequently requires teachers to give up practices in which

they feel secure and display high level of competence and to adopt new practices in which at least temporarily, they feel less secure and in which they might possibly be less competent.

- Extra work that innovation requires in terms of managing and implementation.

- The cost of innovation, sometimes is a difficulty.
- Demonstration that innovation will be more successful than present practice.

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