

# STEM Teachers and Heads of Education as partners in change of Teaching and Learning

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**ABSTRACT:** Academics use different strategies and approaches to create change (Kezar 2018). This study explores critical factors and strategies for how Heads of Education can support and work with teachers working to create change in teaching and learning. Many teachers engage in educational development without a formal role or mandate, as informal change agents or grassroots leaders (Clavert et al. 2015; Kezar 2018). Research on change in higher education tend to emphasize the importance of formal leaders compared to other change agents (Kezar 2018).

We interviewed departmental Heads of Education and local change agents. From the interviews, we learned that informal change agents use a range of strategies to initiate change and promote student active learning and teaching. They are self-motivated and focused on change within their local context, however they are aware of the larger institutional expectations and policies. For formal leaders to be able to support and work with change agents and grassroots leaders to create meaningful change, they must be able to identify them. Heads of Education must also manage the balancing act of realizing the potential of the change agents, without comprising their motivation, autonomy, and time.

We will present Kezar's (2018) framework of grassroots leaders' strategies as a useful tool to identify change agents and create opportunities for meaningful interaction. We will suggest leadership actions to create informal local arenas to facilitate informed conversations and discussions about teaching and learning to increase the impact and reach of change agents and potentially inspire more teachers to engage.

**KEYWORDS:** change agents, grassroots leaders, educational leadership

## REFERENCES

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