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**ALIGNING DISPARATE PRACTICAL THEORIES
FOR PEDAGOGIC CHANGE**

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ABSTRACT

Amidst intensifying demands for simultaneous improvement of current performance, adoption of priorities relinquished by other community organizations, and innovation to meet future educational challenges, schools are being urged into a paradigm shift in pedagogy. Despite the rich resource of the literature of educational change, deep and sustained change remains partial and scattered.

This research examines whether it is the existing individual practical theories about learning, teaching and managing change, and the collective codes held by participants in pedagogic change, that facilitate or block innovation and, if so, what factors shape the outcome.

In a qualitative study, participants in structured programs of pedagogic change at the secondary level have described their own experiences. A total of 183 trainee teachers provided reflective written comments on their intensive one-year course, and 36 established teachers and 10 groups of students from two secondary schools were interviewed. The responses have been matched with principles asserted in the literature.

Memoirs and transcripts displayed practical theories and collective codes that were firmly grounded in early experiences, prior training and embedded values. They clearly facilitated pedagogic change for some, but blocked it for others. Change, if it occurred at all, was a process of learning to do familiar tasks in a different way. Participants preserved compatible practices, or assimilated new pedagogic knowledge and skills easily, or struggled to accommodate, or resisted strenuously, according to the practical theories and collective codes that were determining their current practices. Regular and sustained mentoring in an accepted alternative theory within a proximate group brought partial implementation, but contradictory theories amongst participants created serious time barriers and resource poverty.

Aligning the disparate theories is the first priority of any plan for innovation.