Book Review of *Surviving Change: A Survey of Educational Change Models*
Kim Roberts


**Book Description and My Impression**

Dr. Rice allowed me to read this book as my chair recommended it to strengthen the framework of my dissertation. My dissertation topic is the efficacy of e-textbooks, which are being rolled out in a new e-textbook initiative at the research institution. This initiative is an example of educational change technology and it is important to understand the change process. A new technology might be efficacious, but fail if not implemented properly with consideration of all stakeholders and the environment.

*Surviving Change* is a review of educational change literature. It provides a description of eight theoretical frameworks that researchers or practitioners could use. The assumptions of each framework are presented, along with related studies.

**Major Points**

1. Change Communication Model – Ellsworth uses Rogers’ (1995) Change Communication Model as the connection for the educational change frameworks presented in the literature review. The generic communication model involves a sender sending a message via a medium to a receiver. In this process there is interference in the environment to consider. In the educational change context, Ellsworth (2000) draws an analogy with

   a *change agent* who wishes to communicate an *innovation* to an *intended adopter*. This is accomplished using a *change process* that establishes a channel through the *change environment* between the two communicants. However, this environment also contains *resistance* that can disrupt the change process… (p.23).

2. Rogers’ (1995) Diffusion of Innovations is a framework for *innovation attributes* and their effect on adoption rate. The five innovation attributes are relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability.
3. Ely’s (1990a) Conditions of Change is a framework for environmental or social conditions and how receptive these are to change. He identifies eight conditions that facilitate an innovation’s diffusion and adoption.

4. In The New Meaning of Educational Change, Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) focus on the change agent and the need to build coalitions with other change agents. They identify six local stakeholders-as-change-agents and two outside the local community.


6. Hall, Wallace, and Dossett (1973) developed the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) which identifies six Stages of Concern for adopters, eight Levels of Use of an innovation by the adopters, and an Innovation Configuration Component Checklist which describes what use of the innovation looks like.

7. In Strategies for Planned Change, Zaltman and Duncan (1977) examine eighteen factors in four major categories for resistance to change.

8. While the previous frameworks looked at one component of the Change Communication Model, Reigeluth and Garfinkle (1994b) examine change from a systemic (big picture) point of view in Systemic Change in Education.

Feelings About the Book

This book is an excellent resource if you are scanning the literature for frameworks or research ideas. It is also an excellent resource if you are a practitioner and are responsible for implementation of changes. The book can be read chronologically, but you can also jump around to the different models as needed. Each chapter is independent. For example, if you are more interested in the change environment, you might want to focus on chapter 4 (Ely’s Conditions of Change). If you are more interested in the perceptions of the adopters, you could focus on chapter 7 (Hall’s Concerns-Based Adoption Model).

Learnings

I had read about the general communication model and Rogers’ diffusion of innovations model in previous business courses I’ve taken. However, I had not read about the other frameworks discussed so this was something new I learned. Something else I learned that the author points out in the conclusion is the benefit of a cross-discipline approach to problem solving. For example, many concepts such as implementing change or rolling out a new innovation occur in both education and the business field. Another example is the overlap between education and human resource development or human performance training. Rather than work in isolation, these communities can collaborate to improve education and learning.
Frameworks for our instructional technology research can very well come from different disciplines.

**Why You Should Consider Reading This Book**

If you do not already have a dissertation topic, you might get some ideas after reading this book. If you do have a topic but are struggling with a theoretical framework, this survey of the literature might help you. Because these frameworks and instruments have been researched for decades in most cases, the reliability and validity are established.