



# An Investigation into State-Level Paradigm Change and Politics in Education: Ohio's Transformational Dialogue for Public Education

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**Abstract**

Most American educational systems have failed to respond to the societal transformation from the Industrial to the Information Age (Banathy, 1991; Duffy FM and Reigeluth CM, *Educ Technol*:41–49, 2008; Jenlink PM (ed), *Systemic change: Touchstones for the future school*. Arlington Heights: IRI/Skylight Training and Publishing, 1995; Reigeluth CM, *The imperative for systemic change*. Educational Technology Publications, Englewood Cliffs, 1994). In recognition of knowledge work as today's predominant kind of work, educational institutions should respond to such changed societal demands and endeavor to foster skill sets for solving complex problems. Considering that many education reform efforts failed to achieve desired goals, scholars started developing design theories for high-level leaders. As such, Kim (Transformational dialogue for public education: 50-State Strategy. Knowledge Works Foundation, Cincinnati, 2008) introduced a state-level paradigm change process called the Transformational Dialogue for Public Education (TDPE), which was implemented in the state of Ohio from 2007 to 2012. The TDPE is intended to promote long-term dialogues and avenues of collaboration to help state leaders foster the transformation of their state's public education systems. After analyzing extensive data, we found that the TDPE initiative in Ohio was heavily rooted in politics. Considering its significance, we identified three sub-themes related to politics that affected the dialogues: (1) polarized political parties, (2) lack of communication during the political transition, and (3) selective agenda on topics. In addition, this report describes the TDPE process in Ohio, addressing the context, process, and outcomes of the paradigm change initiative.

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**Keywords**

Paradigm change in education · Systemic change · Education reform · Leadership team · Ohio State

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**Introduction**

Just as the transformation to the Industrial Age made the one-room schoolhouse obsolete, entering the knowledge-work era has made the factory model of schools obsolete (Banathy, 1991; Duffy & Reigeluth, 2008; Jenlink, 1995; Reigeluth, 1994). In response to educational shortcomings, there have been many waves of school-based reform efforts in education. Despite consistent efforts, most of the reform strategies have failed to make a significant improvement in educational performance. Since the vast majority of change efforts have failed, scholars have long proposed the need for paradigm change in public school systems in the United States in order to better meet the dramatically changing needs of our children and communities (Banathy, 1991, 1992; Caine & Caine, 1997; Duffy, Rogerson, & Blick, 2000; Jenlink, 1995; Reigeluth, 1994; Schlechty, 1990).

Paradigm change influences the interrelations of subsystems, bringing substantial changes in all aspects of an educational system such as government policy, board of education, district office, schools, classroom practices, curriculum, and assessment (Reigeluth, 1994). Paradigm change is a comprehensive process that recognizes the interconnectedness of system components such that a fundamental change in one aspect of a system requires fundamental changes in other aspects. Taking this into account in education, the change must be imbued on all levels of the system and with all its stakeholders and must also affect the nature of the learning experiences, the instructional systems that implement those experiences, the administrative system that supports the instructional systems, and the governance system that monitors and governs the whole educational system (Banathy, 1991). Although many paradigm-change advocates have developed promising process guidelines for facilitating such change on the school and district levels, no research is yet available for state-level paradigm change processes.

However, interest in whole-system paradigm change has recently been piqued for powerful leaders in the state of Ohio, leading to the initiation of the first state-level paradigm change initiative in education. In this chapter, we report on an investigation into the Transformational Dialogue for Public Education (TDPE), a state-level paradigm change program initiated in Ohio in 2007. Specifically, we describe and interpret the context in which the Ohio initiative operated, the way it was implemented, its effectiveness to achieve desired outcomes, and the extent to which the initiative followed the TDPE model developed by Kim (2008). The study also sought ways to improve the TDPE process.

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## Literature Review

### The Need for Paradigm Change in Education

Scholars have long proposed a strong need for paradigm change in public school systems in the United States (Banathy, 1991, 1992; Caine & Caine, 1997; Duffy et al., 2000; Jenlink, 1995; Reigeluth, 1994; Schlechty, 1990; Carr-Chellman, 1999). As various societies once shifted from the Agrarian Age to the Industrial Age, so society in the United States and many other countries is now shifting to the Information Age (Reigeluth, 1992; Toffler, 1980). With the advent of new technologies, all of society's systems, such as transportation, communications, business, and other workplaces, have tended to undergo massive structural changes from the Industrial Age (Bell, 1973; Reigeluth, 1992, 1993; Toffler, 1980, 1981). One of the key markers of the transition from the Industrial Age to the Information Age is that knowledge work has replaced manual labor as the prevailing paradigm of work, due largely to the advancement of information technologies that change the nature of work as society becomes much more complex (Wetzel, 1992). Consequently, there has been high demand to educate far more students to far higher levels of learning. Table 1 presents some key markers that distinguish the Information age from the Industrial Age.

**Table 1** Key markers of the Industrial Age and the Information Age (Reigeluth, 1999)

<b>Industrial age</b>	<b>Information age</b>
Standardization	Customization
Bureaucratic organization	Team-based organization
Centralized control	Autonomy with accountability
Adversarial relationships	Cooperative relationships
Autocratic decision making	Shared decision making
Compliance	Initiative
Conformity	Diversity
One-way communications	Networking
Compartmentalization	Holism
Parts-oriented	Process-oriented
Planned obsolescence	Total quality
CEO or boss as “king”	Customer as “king”

Since the dawn of the Information Age in the 1960s, there has been increasing recognition that fundamental change is needed in education, as it has been needed in business, communications, transportation, health care, and other sectors of society (Reigeluth, 1993). In fact, the shift from the Agrarian Age to the Industrial Age was the only time in the history of the United States that the educational system experienced paradigm change – from the one-room schoolhouse to a much more complex educational model with factory-like schools. Although the Industrial-Age school model was suitable for its age, there is growing evidence of the need for a new paradigm of education as society rapidly changes, making our current educational model obsolete (Reigeluth, 1994).

Serious shortcomings of the current Industrial-Age paradigm have emerged and been reported as a result of the mismatch between current educational needs and the system that provides the means to meet those needs. For example, the current education system forces students to advance based on a time schedule rather than when they have mastered their learning objectives. Given both its time-based student progress and its norm-referenced assessment, the current system was clearly designed primarily for sorting students rather than for learning, which was appropriate in the Industrial Age, because manual labor was most common, and only managers and professionals needed much education. As a result of time-based student progress and norm-referenced assessment, slower students accumulated gaps in their learning that made it more difficult for them to subsequently learn related material, virtually condemning them to flunk out and making them less capable of accomplishing the complex, knowledge work that is increasingly becoming the norm in the workplace. Hence, the recent surge in knowledge work requires a shift from sorting to learning – that is, from time-based student progress to competency-based student progress and from norm-referenced assessment to criterion-referenced assessment – which in turn requires personalized rather than standardized learning. This is truly a paradigm change to the learner-centered paradigm that is customized to the individual needs of each learner (McCombs &

Whisler, 1997). Such a change entails fundamental changes from uniformity to diversity, from control to empowerment, from compliance to initiative, and from standardization to customization (Reigeluth, 1999).

## The Paradigm Change Process

In any context, it is useful to distinguish between the process and product of paradigm change. While the product of paradigm change refers to a redesigned system, the *process* of paradigm change refers to what should be done within the current system to transform it to a different paradigm. Many researchers and practitioners have focused attention on the product of change, as shown in the case of the Coalition of Essential Schools' nine principles (Sizer, 2002) and the New American Schools' comprehensive school designs (Stringfield, Ross, & Smith, 1996). Consequently, the educational change literature lacks much knowledge of the process of paradigm change, and there is a strong need for advancing knowledge of a change process that can be employed to transform educational systems (see, e.g., Banathy, 1991; Comer, Haynes, Joyner, & Ben-Avie, 1996; Duffy et al., 2000; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Jenlink, Reigeluth, Carr, & Nelson, 1998; Reigeluth, 1994).

Systems thinking recognizes that significant change in one part of a system requires changes in other parts of that system to survive and thrive. For paradigm change in education to be successful, a fundamental rethinking or mindset shift is needed among all stakeholders. To guide the process, several researchers have developed design theories for paradigm change in education (see, e.g., Banathy, 1991; Duffy et al., 2000; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Jenlink et al., 1998; Reigeluth, 1993, Schlechty, 1990).

For instance, Francis Duffy's "Step-Up-To-Excellence," or SUTE, is one such design theory employed with the goal of creating and sustaining positive, transformative change in school districts (Duffy, 2000). SUTE focuses its efforts on *district-wide* reform, but SUTE also recognizes the larger system of which the district is a part. In essence, the model requires the simultaneous involvement of three improvement initiatives: for the district's core and supporting work processes, internal social infrastructure, and external environment (Duffy, 2000). To elaborate, a district's *core work processes* are the sequenced programs for instructing students, and the supporting entities are those that support the core work processes (Duffy, 2006). Librarians, janitors, and bus drivers are some examples of those doing *supporting work processes*. The internal *social infrastructure* of a district includes organizational elements such as job descriptions, reward systems, and administrative policies. Finally, the *external environment* includes any entities outside of the direct school system that influence the school's functioning. Parents, local government, and businesses are just some aspects of the external environment. To achieve whole-district transformation, the model suggests that the three components be transformed simultaneously. The model has been peer-reviewed and sanctioned by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA).

A separate model, the Guidance System for Transforming Education, or GSTE, was utilized by the Indianapolis Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township in an attempt to create lasting transformational change within their educational system. The model, like “Step-Up-To-Excellence,” facilitates stakeholders in a school system to collectively design the changes they believe are most beneficial. Comprising the model are several “discrete,” or chronologically ordered, events and several “continuous” events that are engaged in throughout the transformation process (Jenlink et al., 1998).

The discrete events begin with confirming that a level of “readiness” exists within the district. Next, the GSTE recommends that a small team be brought together and prepared to address the transformation process from a systems perspective. This team then begins taking on greater change-related responsibilities, including diffusing their thinking and decision making to other key individuals (Jenlink et al., 1998). The major goal of this process is for those involved to collaboratively design an ideal vision for their school system, along with an implementation plan to bring the ideas into the real world (Reigeluth, 2007). The GSTE guidance system was developed through a formal process of field testing within school districts. Data were collected to evaluate the GSTE and its actual implementation within the districts.

While both the above-described models are designed for paradigm change and systemic change at the district level, an initiative called “FutureMinds: Transforming America’s School System” was designed with the goal of organizing state-level leaders to transform their State Education Agencies (SEAs) so as to be able to assist their Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with district-wide school transformation efforts. The initiative’s process begins by encouraging SEAs to recognize the need for paradigm change before they promote and support changes at the LEA level. Next, the SEAs are guided to develop cooperative relationships with key groups in the state. After those relationships are established, the SEAs are prompted to develop the mechanisms necessary to help LEAs develop, initiate, and eventually diffuse their unique transformation strategies.

Although many of the principles behind the two district-level models apply on the state level, those models provide insufficient guidance for a successful state-level paradigm change process. Also, the FutureMinds state-level model, which no state has yet adopted, lacks the detailed guidance and support needed to facilitate a state-level paradigm change effort for the long term. However, in this chapter, we describe a design theory called the Transformational Dialogue for Public Education (TDPE), which offers a considerable amount of detailed process guidance for facilitating state-level paradigm change in education. As the TDPE is, to our knowledge, the first such detailed theory, it holds some promise for states to transform their educational systems.

## **The Transformational Dialogue for Public Education (TDPE)**

The TDPE (Kim, 2008, 2014) is a design theory for facilitating a state-level paradigm change initiative in education. It was designed to provide detailed process

guidelines to facilitators involved in a state-level paradigm change effort. In brief, the TDPE aims at fostering long-term dialogues that help participants to suspend their current thinking about their own organizational objectives and focus on the core purpose, beliefs, and values of their state's public education system. Kim (2001) states that emphasizing the core purposes and values of education will catalyze a change in participants' thinking. Also, articulating shared core purposes, values, and vision develops a shared understanding that in turn guides innovation and systemic transformation.

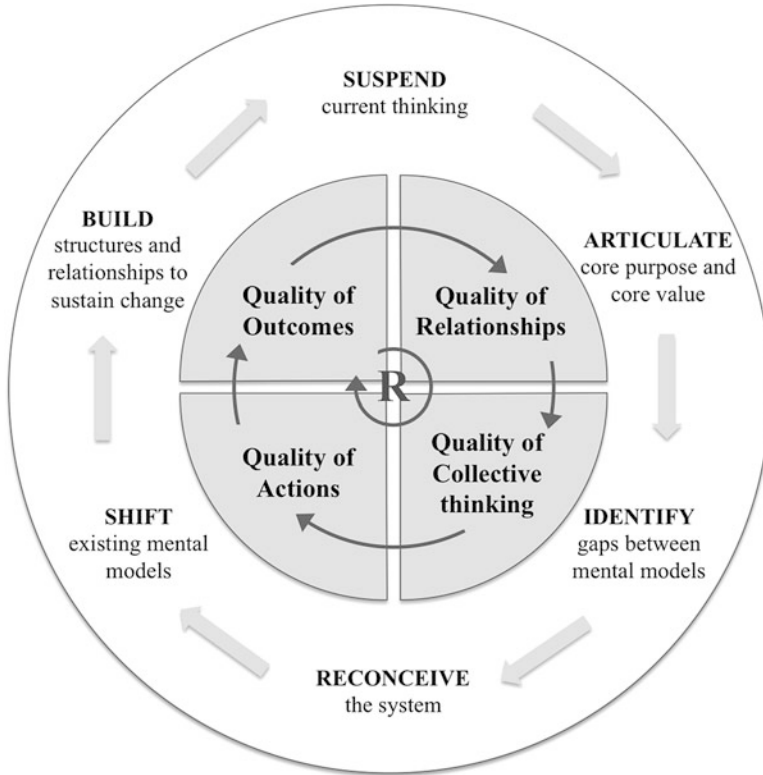
One of the core outcomes of the dialogues is robust relationships built on such characteristics as candor, trust, respect, and deep appreciation for collaboration with others. As Hattori and Wycoff (2002) state, this type of relationship is the "lifeblood of innovation." Relationships in the TDPE process are indeed one critical part of accomplishing optimal success. The TDPE theory posits that high-quality relationships tend to improve thinking, which in turn produces actions and intended outcomes (Kim, 2008). Those outcomes then enrich the quality of relationships, and the whole cycle repeats iteratively, so the "flywheel" can achieve sustainability of innovation. Figure 1 illustrates the TDPE flywheel.

Kim (2008) developed the Generative Spiral Sequence Model based on William Isaacs's earlier work. The process is composed of 12 steps embedded in three phases (see Table 2). These phases are described in greater detail below.

**Phase I: Setting the foundation for change.** The main goal of the first phase is to establish, through consensus building, a stable foundation for the subsequent steps of the change process. This can be accomplished by clarifying the purpose and core values that will underpin the state's educational efforts (Kim, 2008). These underlying concepts will serve as the foundation for all successive decision making and are thus integral to the future success of the initiative. During this phase it is also necessary to impart the knowledge and skills required for the participants to be successful during the collaborative change effort. For example, those involved will need to develop the ability to suspend their previous way of thinking in order to conceive of new solutions. If the proper care is not taken to ensure that everyone involved is willing *and* capable of that which the change process requires, then the next two phases will be met with resistance and confrontation.

**Phase II: Creating vision.** In the second phase, the core vision is further refined as a result of greater involvement from additional participants and organizations. Because new people are being introduced to the effort, it is necessary to again perform foundation-building aspects from Phase I. Whenever new members are brought into a previously established group, great care is taken by the consultants to facilitate trust building. This is because, without cohesive relationships between new and old members, productive communication and consensus building rarely occur. Those participating are guided in their development of core values by being repeatedly reminded to consider what needs to happen in order to fully "live" within the purpose and core values for the larger educational system (Kim, 2008).

**Phase III: Ensuring sustainability.** Finally, during the third phase those involved with the process are required to create new infrastructures so the changes previously determined can be sustained. It may also be necessary during this phase



**Fig. 1** The TDPE flywheel. (Adapted from Kim, 2008)

for old infrastructures to be eliminated to make room for new operations. Because the TDPE is an iterative process, the inclusion of broader key partners continues to occur. Ultimately, for the initiative to be considered sustainable, the consultants need to give all control of the “dialogue” to the participating stakeholders (Sturges, 2010).

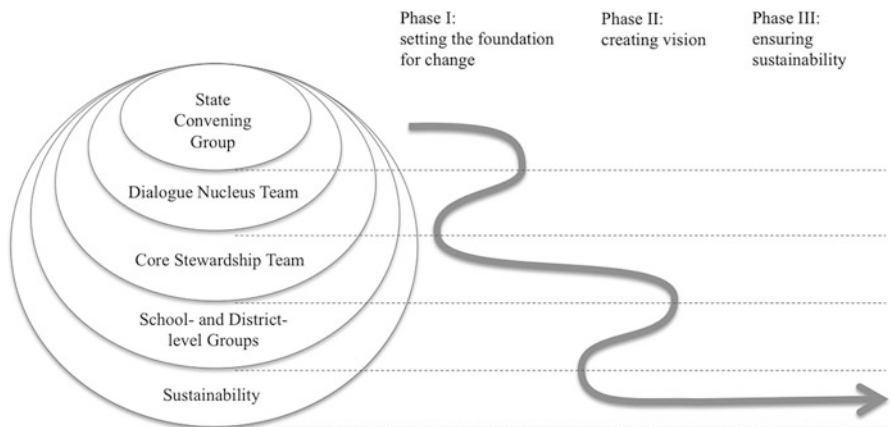
Along with the three phases of the whole process, the TDPE process involves five stages of team expansion. Such expansion is significantly important in the change process because the dialogue starting with a small number of people allows more manageability, a sense of intimacy, and ownership of the process. Knowledge and competencies learned from the process then can be distributed thoroughly to participating organizational members, such as the governor’s office, teachers’ unions, and state department of education. Figure 2 describes the relationship between the overall three-phase process and the five-stage team expansion process. The five team stages are: (1) State Convening Group, (2) Dialogue Nucleus Team, (3) Core Stewardship Team, (4) School- and District-level Groups, and (5) Sustainability Group.

In conclusion, the literature on the paradigm change process in education focuses primarily on the contexts of school-level and district-level processes. For guiding the



**Table 2** Discrete stages of the Transformational Dialogue for Public Education (Isaacs, 1999)

<b>Phase I: Building the container and setting the foundation for change</b>
Step 1 <b>Initiation:</b> See and assess the promise based on what is possible and what is yet to be
Step 2 <b>Discovery:</b> Map self-limiting features of current reality; what is missing
Step 3 <b>Gathering:</b> Form initial alliances, create loose core, and pilot testing for mapping core knowledge
Step 4 <b>Set a core container:</b> Create a core group able to handle the intensities and establish clarity of purpose and core values to make key strategic choices
<b>Phase II: Creating vision and transforming memory/structures</b>
Step 5 <b>Broaden the inquiry:</b> Engage and include whole system and identify and partner with stakeholders
Step 6 <b>Transform history:</b> Acknowledge, suspend, and release limiting structures of the past
Step 7 <b>Form new collective identity:</b> Vision and design of enterprise at scale
Step 8 <b>Differentiate the core:</b> Differentiated leadership
<b>Phase III: Ensuring a sustainable new world at scale</b>
Step 9 <b>Broaden alliances:</b> Broaden key partners and alliances
Step 10 <b>Design the system:</b> Complete detailed enterprise design
Step 11 <b>Implement the design:</b> Implement the design and build scalable structures
Step 12 <b>Create sustaining infrastructures:</b> Embed processes that are self-reinforcing



**Fig. 2** Overall phases and team expansion phases

paradigm change process in education at the state-level, the TDPE is the only design theory we have found that offers a considerable amount of detailed process guidance for educators. Therefore, we have found that the current educational change literature lacks sufficient validated knowledge of the process of state-level paradigm change. Consequently, there is a strong need for advancing knowledge about state-level paradigm change. Our research set out to advance that knowledge by studying an initiative in Ohio that used the TDPE.

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## Research Questions

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. What was the context in which the TDPE initiative operated in Ohio?
2. What was the process of the TDPE initiative in Ohio?
3. What were the outcomes of the TDPE initiative in Ohio?

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## Method

This study was exploratory with a focus on capturing and describing the TDPE process implemented in Ohio. The TDPE process was designed to be carried out over 8–10 years; however, according to some interviewees, it ended earlier because it did not anticipate the effects of a change in governorship, a costly lesson that has resulted in important improvements to the TDPE for future use (described later). It was important to study this case with both micro and macro perspectives, wherein the micro perspective looks at how each meeting was conducted, and the macro looks at the sequence of meetings and how the goals of those meetings changed over time.

Framed as qualitative (Creswell, 1998; Bogdan and Biklen, 1992), this study utilized a case study approach that focused on capturing and interpreting participants' experiences of the Ohio TDPE effort. Yin (1989) states that the findings from case studies are perhaps not generalizable, but that those findings allow researchers to explore and theorize relationships that may otherwise remain undiscovered. Moreover, Reigeluth and Frick (1999) identified two different classifications of case studies that are referred to as designed cases or naturalistic cases. Naturalistic case studies describe situations in which researchers merely observe a phenomenon, whereas designed case studies involve situations where a design theory is intentionally instantiated (implemented) and observed. This was a designed case study in which the TDPE process was intentionally implemented by consultant-facilitators. As a *post-facto* designed case study, the researchers' roles in this study were interviewers, guiding the interviewees to recall the case during semi-structured interviews (Reigeluth & Frick, 1999).

## Setting

Funded by the Institute for Creative Collaboration at the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, which is an Ohio-based educational research organization, and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Transformational Dialogue for Public Education (TDPE) was a partnership between the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, the National Education Association (NEA), and the lead consultant-facilitator, Dr. Daniel Kim, a consultant member of the Society for Organizational Learning. The TDPE was designed to be implemented over an 8–10 year period with the long-term goal of

establishing educational transformation as a stable process in perpetuity. Our data cover the TDPE as implemented from 2007 to 2012, when it stopped. The change process employed a facilitated dialogue process developed by the lead consultant-facilitator, Dr. Daniel Kim, who was also the developer of the TDPE design theory. Over the 5 years, three consultant facilitators, Daniel Kim, Diane Cory, and Kathy Zurcher, facilitated 26 two-day dialogues. Given that most participants resided in Columbus, Ohio, the dialogues were held in a typical conference room located in suburban Columbus. The location of the meetings required that some participants living outside of Ohio traveled long distances.

## Participants and Sampling

The participants included key state-level education stakeholders in Ohio who were interested in establishing a shared understanding and direction for reconceiving the state's educational systems. The TDPE process in Ohio was implemented through three of the five team stages and the first two phases of the generative spiral sequence process described earlier, with progress entailing the development of a progressively larger group. The first phase started with five members, (Phase I, Step 1) called the Convening Group, represented by the CEO of KnowledgeWorks and one of their lead directors, the Vice President of the National Education Association and one of their lead directors, and Daniel Kim. This group strategized about who would form the initial nucleus group to pilot test the concept at the state level (Phase I, Step 2). For the team expansion approach, Kim shared his logic for the sampling method by answering the following question, "What if we started without team expansion, for example, starting with everyone. Would that be effective?"

No. It is better to start with a smaller group because smaller groups are better able to have honest conversation. And then, with good induction strategies, you can add people's voices that you believe should be there. In my own organization, we tried a similar process with 27 people, and it was very difficult to elicit the honest conversation necessary. (Kim, 2008)

Related to the number of participants, it was a relatively small sample size for interviews, which allowed a limited understanding of the detailed phenomenon this part of the TDPE in Ohio. However, after careful analysis of qualitative data, we found the results to be highly consistent, and we believe we reached a saturation of data with that sample.

The next step in phase I was the formation of the 14-member Dialogue Nucleus Team (plus two facilitators) representing key education-related organizations at the state level: KnowledgeWorks Foundation, Office of the Governor, Office of the First Lady, Ohio Education Association, National Education Association, Ohio Federation of Teachers, American Federation of Teachers, Ohio Department of Education, and Ohio Board of Regents (Phase I, Step 3). The DNT met together for a full year, with much of that time focused on strengthening itself as a team to be able to hold the "heat" of the "real" conversations they needed to have with each other. The last two

meetings also devoted time to preparing the DNT and the newly invited members to join the dialogue. In July 2008, 20 new members joined the DNT to compose the Core Stewardship Team (this marked the final step in Phase I of setting a core container, Phase I, Step 4).

As of 2012, the TDPE was deep in Phase II work with the Core Stewardship Team, continuing to engage with the larger system in Steps 5, 6, 7, and 8 (Kim, 2008). Most of the CST members were professionals spending most of their time in the field of education. The participants (over the span of 5+ years) included representatives of these organizations:

- Buckeye Association of School Administrators
- Educational Issues – American Federation of Teachers, School of Education, Health, and Society
- Federal Hocking Middle and High School – The Forum for Education and Democracy and the Governor’s Institute on Creativity and Innovation
- KnowledgeWorks Foundation
- LGA Consulting, LLC
- Martha Holden Jennings Foundation
- Miami University of Ohio
- National Education Association
- Office of the First Lady of Ohio
- Office of the Governor
- Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators
- Ohio Association of Public School Employees
- Ohio Association of School Business Officials
- Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators
- Ohio Board of Regents
- Ohio Conference NAACP
- Ohio Department of Education
- Ohio District 28
- Ohio Education Association
- Ohio Federation of Teachers
- Ohio House District 11
- Ohio House District 41
- Ohio Senate
- Ohio School Boards Association
- Ohio State Board of Education
- State University Education Dean (SUED)
- The P12 Initiative at the Ohio State University
- Urban League of Greater Cincinnati

We categorized the participants into the following five categories, and to ensure anonymity, participants’ real names are not described in this report, but names of their organizations are used instead.

1. Not-for-Profit (NFP) Organization – A not-for-profit organization is defined by its use of surplus revenues to achieve its goals. It does not distribute profits as dividends as it has no shareholders. The Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools is an example of a NFP organization.
2. Higher Education Organization – Colleges and universities are institutions of higher education that conduct research and award degrees in a variety of subjects. Ohio Wesleyan University is an example of a Higher Education Organization.
3. Education Unions – Unions are organizations legally representing workers. Their main activities center on collective bargaining over wages, benefits, and working conditions for their members. They also frequently represent their members in contract disputes. The Ohio Education Association is an example of an education union.
4. Education Organizations – These are membership organizations such as The Ohio School Boards Association.
5. Government Organization – Government organizations include (a) the state department of education, (b) state governor’s office, and (c) other state government organizations. The Ohio House of Representatives is an example of a government organization.

Table 3 illustrates the department affiliation and organizations according to the phases in which they participated.

## Data Collection

Data were collected at the conclusion of the Ohio TDPE process in 2012, at which time we conducted interviews and collected documents during the period from November 2012 to April 2013. Interviews and documents served as the primary data sources.

**Interviews.** For convenient sampling (Creswell, 1998), we obtained a list of possible interviewees from the consultant-facilitator. Upon request from the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, we intentionally did not contact the eight individuals who were no longer in their positions at the organizations where they were when they participated in the TDPE process. After removing those eight individuals, we contacted 36 participants, 12 of whom (33%) agreed to telephone interviews. Based on the interview protocol, we first distributed the consent form to obtain participants’ agreement and then conducted the interviews with pre-made semi-structured interview questions. The purpose of conducting the interviews was to describe the TDPE process on the macro level by collecting, analyzing, and representing the participants’ heuristic and procedural knowledge about the flow and structure of the whole process. Data were also collected on the micro level of the TDPE process, which focused on what happened within individual meetings. We obtained a series of meeting notes from the consultant-facilitator and the KnowledgeWorks Foundation. They had collected a large amount of data over 5 years, but this study only analyzed the descriptive knowledge about the macro-level process, meaning the report

**Table 3** Department affiliations and organizations in the team stages

	Stage 1: State Convening Group since early 2007	Stage 2: Dialogue Nucleus Team since June 2007	Stage 3: Core Stewardship Team since July 2008
Not-for-Profit Organization	KnowledgeWorks Foundation (2)	KnowledgeWorks Foundation (2)	KnowledgeWorks Foundation (2) Martha Holden Jennings Foundation (1) LGA Consulting, LLC (1) Ohio Conference NAACP (1) Urban League of Greater Cincinnati (1) Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools (1)
Higher Education Organization	–	Ohio Board of Regents (1)	School of Education, Health, and Society, Miami University, State University Education Dean (1) Ohio Wesleyan University (1) Ohio Board of Regents (2)
Education Union	National Education Association (2)	Ohio Federation of Teachers (2) Educational Issues, American Federation of Teachers (1)	Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators, NEA (1) Ohio Association of Public School Employees (1) Ohio Federation of Teachers (2) Educational Issues, American Federation of Teachers (1)
Education Organization		Ohio Education Association (2) National Education Association (2)	Ohio Education Association (2) Ohio School Boards Association (1) Ohio PTA (1) Ohio Association of School Business Officials (1) Federal Hocking Middle and High School, The Forum for Education and Democracy and Governor’s Institute on Creativity and Innovation (1) Columbus City Schools and Governor’s Institute on Creativity and Innovation (1) Buckeye Association of School Administrators (1) Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators (1)
Governmental Organization		Office of the First Lady (1) Office of the	Office of the Governor (1) Office of the First Lady (1) Ohio Board of Regents (2)

(continued)

**Table 3** (continued)

	Stage 1: State Convening Group since early 2007	Stage 2: Dialogue Nucleus Team since June 2007	Stage 3: Core Stewardship Team since July 2008
		Governor (1) Ohio Department of Education (2)	Ohio Department of Education (2) State Board of Education (1) Ohio House District 41 (1) Ohio House District 11 (1) Ohio House District 28 (1) P12 Initiative at The Ohio State University (1)
Others	Facilitator (1): Daniel Kim	Facilitators (2): Daniel Kim and Diane Cory	Facilitators (3): Daniel Kim, Diane Cory, and Kathy Zucher
Total number of participants (n)	5	16	34–39 (varied between 2008–2012)

included major themes and their descriptions. Each interview took about 30–90 min, and the researchers interviewed the participants until a point of saturation or redundancy of themes was found (Merriam, 1998). The interviews were semi-structured, for facilitating focused, conversational, reciprocal communications. Semi-structured interviews are composed of a mix of both unstructured and structured questions. Semi-structured interviews allow interviewers to evolve their understanding and questions as the interview proceeds as well as the ability to probe areas of interest (Smith, 1995). All participants gave permission for the interviews to be recorded and transcribed. Follow-up interviews were conducted with several participants, contingent upon their agreement.

**Documents.** Documents included:

- Five sets of meeting notes prepared by the KnowledgeWorks Foundation shortly after each meeting. Meeting notes documented the meetings held on 2–3 October 2007, 22–23 April 2008, 9–10 September 2010, 3–4 May 2011, and 25 February 2012
- Attendance data, taken at each meeting
- An evaluation report developed in July 2010 by Edvantia (Sturges, Earnest, & Fultz, 2010)

Four researchers individually reviewed the interview transcripts as well as the coding sheets and discussed them if a conflict in interpretation emerged.

## Data Analysis

**Thematic analysis.** Interview transcripts, documents, and field notes were analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis is a process of defining, reducing, and creating the

illusion of coherence from large amounts of textual, partial, and often contradictory data (Wolcott, 1994). Analysis was a recursive process that began during initial data collection and continued after data collection was completed (Davies, 1999). Categories were created in a systematic manner (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984) from a combination of *a priori* guiding questions and emergent themes. Data analysis involved regular and reflective review of the database, refining and generating the themes, with interpretation continuing throughout the entire research process, from data collection to the write-up phase. We followed the six phases of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006): (1) familiarize yourself with your data, (2) generate initial codes, (3) search for themes, (4) review themes, (5) define and name themes, and (6) produce the report. Four researchers were involved in the data analysis.

**Trustworthiness.** To enhance the credibility of the data, the researchers transcribed each interview and developed a summary of points for participant review (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Through this review, any misconceptions or misunderstandings were corrected and interpretations were clarified that in turn modified the emphases. To improve the validity of our findings, we analyzed multiple qualitative and quantitative data sources. These sources included interviews with participants, facilitators, and program sponsors, as well as meeting notes and other documents. This process of triangulation, or the examination of multiple perspectives, has long been accepted as an appropriate method for enhancing validity.

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## Results

Results for each of the three research questions (context, process, and outcomes) are described next.

### What Was the Context in which the TDPE Initiative Operated in Ohio?

The KnowledgeWorks Foundation, the National Education Association, and Dr. Daniel Kim were the originators of the initiative. Beginning in Columbus, Ohio, in 2007, the TDPE began by bringing together several state leaders related to Ohio's education and reform programs. Those leaders pledged a multi-year commitment to the process.

The key driver for the launch of the TDPE in Ohio was the then CEO of the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, Chad Wick, who decided to sponsor a TDPE initiative based on his sensing that the circumstances were ripe for such an approach. He had a good relationship with the newly elected Democratic governor and with the long-serving state superintendent at the time, and a strong track record of collaborating with the teachers' unions. That, coupled with the fact that the NEA was supportive of the TDPE, convinced Wick that the TDPE could succeed in Ohio. It was also essential that KnowledgeWorks was willing to financially underwrite the process.



KnowledgeWorks being seen as a neutral party in the state was an important factor for the initial success of the TDPE. The initial members of the TDPE believed the role of a neutral convener was absolutely necessary in order to maintain neutrality in the face of political conflicts. Daniel Kim believed that the TDPE needed to continue for at least 8 years, or two political cycles, to be sufficiently established for the flywheel to have enough momentum to sustain the process through future political changes, hence the original timeframe commitment of 8–10 years. When the TDPE effort was terminated, the participants were at the stage of quality of collective thinking.

The State Convening Group (comprised of Chad Wick and Jillian Darwish of KnowledgeWorks, Dennis Van Roekel and Mel Myler of the NEA, and Daniel Kim – see Table 3) decided to create the Dialogue Nucleus Team (DNT) – the core coalition to test the concept of the TDPE – under the premise that these players were the critical core of the state leaders in education. The DNT was composed of representatives from the Governor’s Office, State Superintendent’s Office (Ohio Department of Education), Board of Regents, and the two teachers’ unions from both the state and national levels. People in the meeting were excited about the transformation process being a learning and developmental process, to learn how to think and talk differently.

One of the biggest initial achievements was that the dialogue process created the glue that kept the TDPE members together instead of succumbing to the usual forces of fragmentation, such as an “us” versus “them” mindset (Senge, 1991). Any one of many events could have reinforced the fragmentation, had each member acted to optimize their subsystem rather than to optimize the larger public education system. A shift in the attitude of the governor’s office played a critical role. One interviewee recalled,

Then, when the new governor came on, we started doing teacher union and collective bargaining things and we talked about 3rd grade reading guarantees that were going on in Florida, and charter schools and vouchers. The topics changed to much more of the Republican agenda because many felt that if we really studied the Republican agenda, then the governor and the other republican education leaders would become engaged, if we became the mind trust for the governor. But that didn’t happen. So, we got very topical based on the Republican agenda. Even though we did attend to the Democratic agenda in the beginning, it was based on the idea that our ideas would get enacted into legislation. (April 4th, 2013)

After the dialogue proved to be very instrumental in mending relationships from a highly divisive event in the first year of the process, the governor’s office began to share more with the dialogue group, which demonstrated the value of the TDPE process to everyone. One interviewee reflected on the trust-building process through deep dialogues during the sessions.

I think there definitely was a sense of trust that you are open and free to speak your mind. One of the ground rules was that you could talk about what was discussed in the meeting but never do personal attributions. For example, someone said this, or someone said that. And everyone honored that. (Thursday, March 28th, 2013)

A key person in all this was the First Lady of Ohio, who was a member from the outset. She was such an open and down-to-earth person that she engendered a great deal of trust. In addition, her doctorate in educational psychology added to her credibility in playing a substantive role in the governor's educational policy arena.

To build the "container" of the initial group, Kim interviewed everyone on the Nucleus Team face-to-face to help them ground themselves in the understanding that this was a different way of coming together. This helped participants understand that they were not representing their organization but working to optimize the larger system, rather than to optimize their part. Optimizing a part causes fragmentation that sub-optimizes the whole. The underlying reason for coming together was to overcome such fragmentation. In the interviews, the members were asked questions that linked back to their own life history to get at what led to their current role in the education system and the role the system had in their lives. It was about getting to the root of their root, to ground themselves in caring about the whole system.

The TDPE process was instrumental in passing House Bill 1, which required the collaboration of many educational leaders. Through the TDPE process, the governor's office began to share more with those leaders, which built greater trust and commitment among the TDPE members. The CST pledged to focus on the roughly 90% that they all agreed on and wanted, rather than be divided by the 10% that they did not agree on. Focusing on that 90%, the CST members were able to successfully work with their own constituencies and pass House Bill 1. The TDPE process was also credited with enabling Ohio to be among the short list of "winning" states to secure federal funds in the Race to the Top competition. One interviewee mentioned the successful achievement of the Race to the Top grant. However, the interviewee reported that he felt like there were no tangible project outcomes to pursue after the successful submissions of the bill and the grant proposal:

...When that was accomplished and finished with the governor and the Race to the Top grant was submitted and awarded, after that there was a sinking feeling that we no longer had a project. (Thursday, March 28th, 2013)

As briefly discussed, the TDPE was designed to be carried out over 8–10 years. In Ohio, it lasted 5 years spanning two separate administrations. In fact, the transition of state administration generated challenges for the continuation of the TDPE initiative. Nearly every participant interviewed reported that the TDPE suffered greatly as a result of the change from a Democratic governor to a Republican governor. After analyzing extensive data, we found that the TDPE initiative in Ohio was heavily rooted in politics. Considering its significance, we identified three sub-themes related to politics that affected the dialogues: (1) polarized political parties, (2) lack of communication during the political transition, and (3) selective agenda on topics.

First, participants reported the highly polarized partisan mentality evident throughout much of the US political system had a negative impact on the TDPE. The particularly bitter campaign that led to a new governor heightened the feelings of animosity felt by those participating within the TDPE (mostly Democrats) and

those newly elected to leadership positions outside the TDPE (mostly Republicans). One of the facilitators mentioned,

In such an environment, there is a tendency to label anything done by the previous administration to be bad, and those feelings made it very difficult to continue [the discussion] . . . We are in the midst of a lot of political swirling. I saw a real need for my idealistic self to do the unwavering/brutal facts exercise to re-center and not get caught up in the political onslaught. (Friday, July 27th, 2012)

Another interviewee also mentioned the partisan mentality.

In the environment of Ohio and the country, there's this partisan mentality. Therefore, the work of the past governor should never go forward with the new governor, because it's a new group of people. It's a little foolish for me, but that's just speaking as a citizen.

Second, according to several participants, the governor's office sent fewer representatives to participate in the initiative despite repeated requests from those involved in the process. For many participants, the spotty attendance of powerful governmental representation caused a feeling that the group lacked communication with key political stakeholders and that their power of influence had been reduced. That resulted in members not attending the sessions as regularly and constructive discussion became less frequent.

Third, the group began to select conversation topics and projects that were more short-term results focused and/or reflected the governor's agenda in the hopes that doing so would improve participation. This was detrimental for several reasons. For one, the team began to shift from the tenets of dialogue to a more "conference-like" meeting structure in which presentations were given with little time to discuss and plan. One of the interview questions asked about the content covered during the meetings. An interviewee provided an insightful response regarding the ways the content for discussions was decided. The interviewee stated,

There were two different sets of content. In the first 4–5 years, the content had a lot to do with federal and state requirements and analyzing federal and state education public policy. So, early on there was a lot of analysis about topics such as "value added assessment" and "accountability requirements for the states" and the "achievement gap issue for No Child Left Behind". There were many discussions about the professional accountability of educators. There were many discussions about the 4 assurances in Race to the Top as Arnie Dunkin laid out. We also spent time looking at innovation zones in Colorado, and other things that were going on in other states regarding their leadership. We did state and international comparison work.

## **What Was the Process of the TDPE Initiative in Ohio?**

The TDPE uses a facilitated dialogue process designed by Dr. Kim. Two-day dialogues with key education stakeholders were co-facilitated (by two external

consultant co-facilitators – Dr. Kim and Diane Cory) with the goal of re-conceiving the state’s educational system to be a knowledge-era model of education. We identified the major themes regarding the TDPE process as team expansion, facilitators, content, meeting format and time, meeting intervals, orientation for new members, and barriers to the TDPE process. Each of these is discussed next.

**Team expansion.** The team expansion is composed of the five major stages (Kim, 2008) described earlier: (1) State Convening Group, (2) Dialogue Nucleus Team, (3) Core Stewardship Team, (4) School- and District-level Groups, and (5) Sustainability Group. We collected data from stages 1 to 3 during 2007 to 2012. Through our interviews and document analysis, we realized that the expansion of the team generated a concern about new members’ unfamiliarity with the TDPE process and its effects. To address this, the consultant-facilitators conducted 90-min phone calls to give new members a personal orientation that included sharing with them the essence of the conversations, conceptual papers, and visions developed.

The TDPE expanded the team as part of the progression along the generative spiral sequence. As the strength of the quality of relationships among the existing members grew, and as the nature of the issues being discussed evolved, the participants were encouraged to nominate potential participants who were vital to the dialogue process. Initial members believed that team expansion was effective in bringing appropriate people into the dialogue. For example, a representative from an education union stated,

The group would talk about who was not in the room that should be in the room, and based on those questions, others were invited in. Some of the other staff did a great job reaching out to others and letting them know what was going to happen in the meetings and how they are conducted. Overall, they did a good job bringing people into the group. (Thursday, March 28th, 2013)

Through interviews, it became apparent that the participants were instrumental in determining which individuals would be invited to participate in the next phase of the TDPE. The current members discussed who they believed should be included before making any decisions. The group attempted to reach out to individuals who represented important perspectives or institutions that were not currently present among the members. Another deciding factor for inclusion was whether a potential member was able to support a particular outcome the group was pursuing. In response to the question, “What if we started without team expansion, would that be effective?,” the representative reflected on his past experience in his own organization and showed skepticism by saying,

It is better to start with a smaller group because smaller groups are better able to have honest conversation. And then, with good induction strategies, you can add people’s voices that you believe should be there. In my own organization, we tried a similar process with 27 people, and it was very difficult to elicit the honest conversation necessary. (Thursday, March 28th, 2013)

**Facilitator.** Daniel Kim, Diane Cory, and Kathy Zurcher acted as facilitators during the TDPE process. Daniel Kim primarily co-facilitated with Diane Cory for most of the process, with Kathy Zurcher joining in the final year when Diane left. Their main responsibilities were to share models for paradigm change and ensure that the participants engaged in constructive dialogue. As a way to generate effective conversation, the facilitators would ask thought-provoking questions aimed at getting participants to ideate new strategies for achieving learner-centered education. They would also hold telephone sessions with incoming participants so that those new members could become acclimated to the dialogues quicker. The facilitators would routinely call participants between meetings to “check-in” and inquire about their opinions on the process. Activities like this illustrate how the atmosphere of open conversation was supported by the facilitators throughout the process. Additionally, interviews with participants revealed that the high level of expertise of the facilitators was a positive influence. Numerous books, such as Peter Block’s *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, were assigned to the group as part of their own development and served as stimulus for dialogue conversations.

Every interviewee spoke very highly of the consultant-facilitators and believed that they were the driving force to develop new mindsets about education, establish trust among participants, forge alliances across organizations, and keep the dialogues going. Participants noted such influential competencies as thorough preparation, possessing substantial knowledge of organizational change, a great sense of humor to create an open and fear-free environment, immediate feedback, and insightful perspectives due to a broad range of experience. When Kim decided to discontinue facilitating the dialogue, several participants experienced a clear sense of loss.

**Content.** A number of strands emerged within the theme of content and topics. The content covered in the TDPE initiative seemed to include three components: (1) learning models and frameworks for educational paradigm change, (2) government compliance requirements, and (3) collaborative opportunities for educational changes. Consultant-facilitators first established the set of topics, learning models, and frameworks for the sake of establishing underlying foundations for paradigm change in education. They then moved on to discuss the government compliance requirements and legislative opportunities, meaning what participants can do to make education better in Ohio while considering state laws and rules. Educational opportunities such as technology and innovation, personalized learning, and creativity were discussed in groups. Every topic was shared and elaborated through group discussions, and participants often addressed *Race to the Top* issues and legislative compliance.

Another strand was useful models and concepts for systems thinking. Participants reported that they found that becoming familiar with systems thinking was most beneficial. Other useful theories and models included hierarchy of choices, core theory of success, and the creative tension model. The dialogues focused on evolving new mindsets, and thus much content was centered on abstract concepts. Because of this, one participant felt worthless not discussing concrete, actionable topics. One participant from a Governmental Organization stated that she was merely sitting and talking:

If we were working on a specific topic and needed more information, that would be something; but we weren't. It was an unusual kind of thing, and I don't know if it was valuable to just have people sitting in a room discussing things, because that's what it came down to. (Thursday, April 4th, 2013)

Another participant pointed out the influence of politics in the selection of the discussion agenda, as the governor in Ohio was changed from Democratic to Republican in the middle of the TDPE process. The shift of power indeed influenced the content of the dialogues. One participant from a not-for-profit organization noted,

When the new governor was elected, we returned to the governor's policy agenda, and then we ended with those. We were hopeful that we would stay in Educational Opportunities, but the group pressured themselves to trying to please the governor. (Thursday, April 4th, 2013)

**Meeting format and time.** The TDPE initially held two-day meetings for over 4 years, and then changed to a one-day format at the very end of the process, reflecting the participants' requests. Most participants agreed that the two-day meetings were effective in promoting in-depth conversation, providing time to reflect, and forming quality relationships with other participants. However, a number of participants also showed concerns with time and scheduling issues, given the positions that they held, and suggested switching the meetings to a one-day format. While a few participants expressed concern about the time intervals between the meetings, the facilitators tried hard to contact every member before each meeting, and notes from the previous meeting were provided as a way to foster continuity.

**Meeting intervals.** All participants reported that they were asked to read previous session meeting notes in preparation for the next meeting. If a guest speaker was scheduled to present, participants were frequently requested to familiarize themselves with readings that covered specific themes related to educational reform or mental models. Besides readings, some participants would work to assist specific legislative initiatives that the group deemed worthy of promoting. Occasionally, participants would voluntarily meet outside of scheduled meetings to further discuss initiatives introduced through the TDPE process. Nearly all participants reported that it was a benefit that leaders from different groups were being brought together. One participant from a governmental organization stated,

We see these individuals all the time because our organizations cause us to see each other, not always at the same time though. Because of the TDPE, it made it easier to talk to each other because of our established relationship. (Wednesday, April 3rd, 2013)

Likewise, participants showed much more openness to meetings outside of the TDPE sessions, and that was regarded as a good sign of relationship.

I think I was much more receptive and open to fellow participants when they made a phone call or reached out and contacted me with issues and problems. (Wednesday, April 3rd, 2013)

At the same time, it is worth noting the importance of having a clear goal between the meetings. One participant from a governmental organization said,

I think having clear goals to work towards would help people understand what they should be doing in between the meetings. (Thursday, April 4th, 2013)

**Orientation for new members.** The primary means for orienting new members to the team was a lengthy phone conversation between the facilitator and the incoming members. During these conversations, the facilitator explained the overall purpose of the TDPE, ground rules for participation, and several of the mental models and topics that were discussed in previous sessions. Much of that information was also distributed in document form for the new members to read. Volunteers from the existing member pool would also meet with new members to assist with orientation. Most of those interviewed believed that the orientation process was comprehensive enough to sufficiently prepare new members. However, two reported that the facilitator should have spent more time explaining mental models during orientation.

**Barriers to the TDPE.** Most interviewees reported that time and politics were the two main barriers in the TDPE process, while some of the participants indicated other barriers. Three participants commented that they were not able to produce tangible outcomes from the project due largely to the obscurity of goals and objectives. The nature of the TDPE effort was centered on facilitating sustainable dialogue, and it was not very attractive to those task-oriented people seeking tangible outcomes. Also, expanding the size of the team became a barrier to some extent. For example, the large (Core Stewardship) team seemed to inhibit participants from having in-depth conversations and exacerbated their defensive attitudes, because more participants advocated certain positions instead of thinking about what needed to be done.

In sum, we have described the major components of the TDPE process. We found that expanding the team through the three phases played a pivotal role in the enlargement of the change effort at the state level. As to content, the TDPE primarily dealt with concepts in relation to the learner-centered paradigm of education with an emphasis on systems thinking. The consultant-facilitators strived to help participants understand a diversity of perspectives in hopes of fostering quality relationships and collaboration. The lead consultant's high level of knowledge and qualifications were critical factors in the maintenance of high motivation. Also, the two-day meeting format was considered challenging yet necessary to accomplish in-depth conversations among the participants. However, many participants found the long interval between the meetings to be detrimental to the process.

## **What Were the Outcomes of the TDPE Initiative in Ohio?**

In this section, we describe the outcomes of the TDPE effort: Overall impressions and satisfaction, strengthened relationships and trust among participants, culture of

collaboration, newly emerged mindset toward learner-centered education, established shared purpose and core values, and a coherent education strategy.

**Overall impressions and satisfaction.** Most participants reported a high degree of satisfaction with the TDPE process. The participants particularly appreciated the opportunity to have dialogues with other leaders who were influential in educational reform. Several participants noted that the greatest benefit from participating in the dialogues was to gain better insights about how leaders of other organizations lead and how they themselves lead in their own organizations.

It was an interesting collection of smart people who are very influential in Ohio in terms of education reform, so the conversations that occurred were always interesting. As an overall impression, I am very positive. (Thursday, April 4th, 2013)

Another participant from a governmental organization said,

The process was very effective in bringing together groups that didn't necessarily have a lot in common but, as a result of the dialogue, really found paths to good communication and good work moving the state forward. (Wednesday, April 3rd, 2013)

This helped them develop a systems perspective in understanding others, leading to more open and collaborative dialogues. Furthermore, all participants spoke very highly of the consultant-facilitators in regards to fertilizing the dialogue process, maintaining quality discussions, and achieving the long-term goals of the TDPE. However, although many participants were highly satisfied with the dialogues, concern with a lack of tangible outcomes emerged.

A few participants from a higher education organization explained that unclear assignments somewhat discouraged their participation and their perception of peer participation:

There was sometimes reading material like a book, but the goal for why we were reading the book and how that reading could spur something tangible was not really clear. I couldn't participate in it, but there was a homework assignment for those that were involved at the K-12 level in terms of, I think, collecting information regarding innovative practices going on in schools. But I don't think a lot of people did it. (Thursday, April 4th, 2013)

**Strengthened relationships and trust among participants.** Establishing trusting relationships is one of the major objectives of the TDPE for building the capacity of state leaders to transform their state educational system. Most participants said they were able to build strong and reliable relationships with each other because of the underlying purpose of participation – to advance education. Our data indicated that the sincere and open conversations were the largest factor for successfully building trust and reliable relationships. Although the vast majority of participants believed they formed a strong bond, one participant became a bit skeptical of getting along with others, because he suspected it indicated that they were not getting into the tough issues. One participant from a higher education organization provided this different point of view.



Yeah, I think people got along well. But because we got along, that might suggest that we weren't getting into deep areas that might need to be discussed and worked through. . . If we were really trying to change people's views and feeling on topics, I'm not sure we got to those topics. (Thursday, April 4th, 2013)

But others from an education union seemed to appreciate the importance of strong relationships. They said trusting relationships enabled them to speak freely and discuss sensitive issues openly.

When you get to know each other as people, and you start to see areas where you agree, it becomes easier to have difficult conversations where you sometimes don't agree. It doesn't become as personal. (Friday, April 5th, 2013)

**Culture of collaboration.** A key driver of the TDPE is the fostering of positive sustained relationships among the members, again for building the capacity of state leaders to transform their state educational system. Nearly all participants reported that they felt free to share their opinions within the group. The fact that all members shared the common goal of improving education in Ohio was not the only factor that aided collaboration. A trusting environment was also promoted by rules supporting open communication. For example, the facilitator emphasized the group guidelines that everyone agreed to abide by where no one would use individual attributions of "he said, she said" when discussing topics outside of the dialogue. This "Principle of Anonymity" was meant to allow people to speak freely without worrying about something being publicly attributed to them out of context. Also, the facilitator made sure that everyone had a chance to voice their perspectives about the entities others represented. Because these reflective conversations were held in-person, participants had the opportunity to explain their perspective in more detail. As one member from a governmental organization said,

One of the benefits, then, that came out of the TDPE process was that, instead of the union and myself speaking through newspapers and press releases, we were speaking to each other. (Thursday, April 4th, 2013)

The culture of collaboration that the TDPE fostered also greatly impacted how the participants interacted with other people and groups in their jobs. One participant from a not-for-profit organization reported that, because of engaging with the process, he was better able to "recognize common ground" with people he hadn't yet formed relationships with.

**Mindset change toward learner-centered education.** The goals of the TDPE required building a positive, collaborative vision of Ohio's future state-level educational system. For paradigm change to occur, people with different perspectives had to come together to discover common ground. This coming together also aided mindset change by helping participants better understand the larger system that their roles fit within. As a member from an education union put it,

People came into the room from the perspective of a legislator, or as a union leader, or as an aid to the governor and by putting themselves in conversation with those other individuals, they got a better picture of the whole. (Thursday, March 28th, 2013)

We uncovered several strategies that positively benefited mindset change through our data analysis. First, participants were more likely to adopt others' viewpoints when they spent discussion time inquiring about others' comments, rather than advocating for their own position. Another representative from an education union explained: "We talked about making the conscious effort to set aside your assumptions and conclusions and be open to hear different ideas than you previously held for yourself" (Thursday, March 28th, 2013).

Also, participants reported that the consistent daily protocols helped them develop new understandings. For example, at the end of the day the members would "check out" by each saying one thing that they understood more clearly. During this activity, only one participant was allowed to speak at a time without interruption while everyone else's job was to practice "deep listening," which is listening to the quality of his or her own listening. Finally, one of the strongest catalysts for mindset change was the insistence that commonalities in values and principles must be identified before strategies could be enacted. This concept was made clear to new members as soon as they joined the process.

**Shared purpose and core values.** The TDPE asserts that effective paradigm change is best accomplished by building a group that shares first a core purpose and then core values. The Dialogue Nucleus Team's primary job was to begin articulating their purpose and values through research, discussion, and other activities. For example, on one occasion, the team was asked to research reasons "why some schools are performing better under similar conditions," before reconvening to share. These kinds of activities helped the team discover their core purpose of supporting learner-centered education that cultivates creative students. One way that core values were uncovered was by having leaders who represented different entities share the principles that defined their group. Frequently, these principles would be adopted by the entire team, as was the case when the Ohio Department of Education shared their guiding principle to "provide services to all children and children with special needs." As the TDPE progressed, participants began to mutually adopt several core values related to the future of education in Ohio.

**Coherent education strategy.** Although a coherent educational strategy was not detailed by the conclusion of the TDPE case in Ohio, it is important to remember that strategy creation was not the purpose of the TDPE. The initiative's main goal was to build the capacity of state leaders to transform their state educational system by creating a collaborative environment where mindset change could occur and be later spread through workplace interactions outside of TDPE meetings, and that strategies and actions for paradigm change would occur through those collaborating organizations. Through data analysis, it became clear that several members, especially those added under the new political administration, had a different perspective of the TDPE process. One participant representing an education union said,

When we added new people that were outcome oriented. . . they wanted us to be doing projects, and I didn't think that was the purpose of the TDPE entirely. (Friday, April 5th, 2013)

Despite multiple changes in state leadership, the process allowed key stakeholders to continue education reform conversations. Topics that surfaced from the TDPE were integrated by legislators, the state board, and the Ohio Education Association into a teacher evaluation system. This framework was adopted in November 2011 and piloted in the 2011–2012 school year.

Although the TDPE was not a decision-making body, it was intended that the insights and changed behaviors that occurred during the discussions would become a positive force within each participant's professional work. One participant from a not-for-profit organization commented on this incorporation of new knowledge and behaviors by explaining that in his outside work he now "always goes back to the [roots of] values and principles before getting into the leaves of activities and strategies" (Thursday, April 4th, 2013).

The key point here is that the TDPE as a process was engaging a body of key decision makers to focus on the whole of the system so that they could collaborate and contribute in making the whole system better (not just their part). Then, as each of them acted in their own role as decision-making bodies, they would work toward optimizing the larger system. So, the CST, by design, was a body of decision makers, not a decision-making body. Those who did not understand or like this distinction were probably the most frustrated by its "lack of action."

The completion and passing of House Bill 1 is an example of a more tangible outcome of the TDPE. The bill, which was officially introduced in February of 2009, was influenced by the TDPE through the knowledge-era education principles it adopted. For example, the bill proposed a budget with the promise that it would be used to "ensure the success of all children regardless of their socioeconomic situation." Additionally, the bill explicitly recognized that new data and information will require the model to be recalibrated in future years. Taken in total, Table 4 summarizes the key findings in the categories of context, process, and outcomes supported by illustrative data.

## Limitations

Findings from this report may have some limitations. As to methodology, we conducted a qualitative research study that was exploratory. Thus, findings are more descriptive and suggestive and cannot be generalized. Second, even though we reached saturation in our interviews, we had a relatively small sample size, and it is possible some members not interviewed may have had some different perceptions of the TDPE process in Ohio. Third, it is unfortunate that, being a *post facto* study, we were not able to conduct observations. In addition to interviewing and analyzing documents, observing the dialogue process would have provided beneficial information in describing the phenomenon and triangulating the results, though more so

**Table 4** Summary of the context, process, and outcomes of the TDPE in Ohio

Category	Elements/key findings	
Context	TDPE initiative	<p><i>When and Where:</i> Columbus, Ohio, from 2007 to 2012</p> <p><i>Why:</i> To bring together several state leaders related to Ohio's education and reform efforts</p> <p><i>What:</i> To achieve quality collaboration based on trusting relationships and visible outcomes for educational paradigm change in Ohio</p> <p><i>How:</i> Participated in a multi-year commitment to the process; articulation of shared purpose and core values of education</p>
	Initiation background/success of initial phase	Several key drivers of the success of the TDPE in the initial phase were: (1) a great deal of support from the governor, NEA, and KnowledgeWorks Foundation; (2) well-designed orientation and engagement process as well as successful teaming of lead nucleus group; (3) governor's office's changed attitude, from being close to the vest and closed to open and supportive, which helped keep the group engaged and committed; and (4) the participation of the First Lady of Ohio. One result of the collective effort was House Bill 1
	Politics	Three political components influenced the change process: (1) negative opinions of the opposing political party linking the TDPE too closely to the previous administration, (2) lack of communication during the political transition, and (3) selective agenda on topics
Process	Team expansion	Expanded the team as the quality of relationships strengthened and as the issues being discussed merited new members joining at different steps in the phases of change. Those are: (1) State Convening Group, (2) Dialogue Nucleus Team, (3) Core Stewardship Team, (4) School- and District-level Groups, and (5) Sustainability Group
	Facilitators	Their main responsibilities were to share models for paradigm change and ensure that the participants engage in constructive dialogues
	Content	The first theme was about its sequence of presence. Another strand of theme was the most useful models and concepts for systems thinking
	Meeting format and time	The TDPE initially held two-day-long meetings for over 4 years, and then changed to a one-day-long format, for what became its final session reflecting the participants' requests
	Between-the-meetings	Participants were asked to read previous session meeting notes, short readings covered specific themes related to educational reform or mental models. Often they met outside of meetings to further discuss topics
	Orientation for new members	The primary means for orienting new members to the team was in the form of 2–3 h, in-person interviews with the DNT and the initial CST members. The later additions to the CST were handled through a 90-min phone conversation

(continued)

**Table 4** (continued)

Category	Elements/key findings	
Outcomes		between the current facilitator and the incoming members
	Overall impression and satisfaction	Most participants reported a high degree of satisfaction with the TDPE process. The participants particularly appreciated the opportunity to have dialogues with other leaders who were influential in educational reform. <i>“As an overall impression I am very positive”</i> <i>“The process was very effective in bringing together groups . . . as a result the dialogue really found paths to good communication and good work moving the state forward”</i>
	Strengthened trust among participants	Most participants responded they were able to build strong and reliable relationships with each other because of the underlying purpose of participation – to advance education. <i>“When you get to know each other as people, and you start to see areas where you agree, it becomes easier to have difficult conversations where you sometimes don’t agree”</i>
	Culture of collaboration	Nearly all participants reported that they felt free to share their opinions within the group. <i>“Because of engaging with the process, I was better able to recognize common ground with people I hadn’t yet formed relationships with”</i>
	Mindset change toward learner-centered education	For real change to occur, people with different perspectives had to come together to discover common ground. <i>“People came into the room from the perspective of a legislator, or as a union leader, or as an aid to the governor, and by putting themselves in conversation with those other individuals, they got a better picture of the whole”</i>
	Shared purpose and core values	The TDPE asserts that effective paradigm change is best accomplished by first building a group that shares a core purpose and then core values
	Coherent education strategy	Although a coherent educational strategy was not detailed by the conclusion of the TDPE, it is important to remember that strategy creation was not the purpose of the TDPE. <i>“When we added new people that were outcome oriented. . . they wanted us to be doing projects and I didn’t think that was the purpose of the TDPE entirely”</i>

for the micro level than the macro level. Fourth, this study investigated a process that happened in the past, requiring interviewees to recall their past experience, which could be inaccurate or insufficient, despite the triangulation of data. Finally, since we were not directly involved in the change process, it is possible that we missed some insights that could have been gained from the research context.

## Conclusion

By carefully reviewing the interviewees' responses, we interpret the TDPE initiative in Ohio to have had many successes. The initiative fulfilled the role of bringing together key leaders to discuss plans to bring about educational paradigm change. Educational leaders who participated in the TDPE process in Ohio felt satisfied with the overall process, in the course of which they were able to develop new mindsets about education, new perspectives for systems thinking, and sound relationships for collaboration. However, findings show that the change process can be greatly affected by an external force – politics. Conflicting political views after the change in governorship caused participants to alter discussion agendas and be hesitant to share their opinions and reflections. This in turn became an obstructive factor for the whole initiative, as the change of governor resulted in the recess of the effort. The creator of the TDPE was well aware of the potentially negative influence of politics and worked hard to avoid them.

To address the challenges stemming from the change in governorship, multiple attempts were made to include members from the new administration and the Republican Party. While those attempts were successful in bringing in the newly appointed superintendent of the ODE, the new education policy person in the governor's office, the newly elected president of the Ohio Board of Education, and the Republican chair of the Senate Education Committee, it was not sufficient to overcome the politics of continuing something that started with a Democratic governor. This surfaces a weakness that had been underlying the Ohio TDPE process from the very beginning, that it was comprised of predominantly Democratic members. That issue had been identified from the beginning, and attempts had been made during the first 2 years to get more Republicans involved. When the TDPE was unsuccessful at gaining and/or retaining such members, the efforts to reach out were greatly reduced after the second year.

## The TDPE Process: Strengths and Opportunities

Although the TDPE process can be affected by external forces, it has many strengths and opportunities to help state leaders foster the transformation of their state's public education systems.

**Detailed process guidance for paradigm change.** Given the importance of state laws, policies, and regulations for success in systemic transformation of education systems, our study begins to fill a huge gap in knowledge for successful systemic change in education. The TDPE is a design theory intended to promote a deep and open dialogue. Here, again, it is important to emphasize that the TDPE does not say anything about what transformed educational systems should be like on any level – state, district, school, or classroom. It does not say what laws, policies, and

regulations should be removed, changed, or added. It is a model to guide the process whereby state leaders explore the need for transformational change and decide for themselves what changes should be made. In the same sense, TDPE participants were not a group of decision makers or action body. It was a forum where participants could freely speak their minds and contemplate a better kind of education system.

**Foundation for sustainable changes.** Dialogues can potentially serve as the foundation for sustainable changes, which include future directions for education. In fact, one of the promising outcomes was a legislative action derived from the TDPE process – House Bill 1. This shows the potential effectiveness of the TDPE as a design theory, making it worthwhile for other states to try. Again, knowledge of “how” to make changes was not tested due to the untimely termination of the process. When taken to its conclusion, the TDPE could help state leaders to come up with a long-term plan for fundamental educational change. Also, the TDPE is designed to address multiple perspectives, which encourages state leaders to understand and critically analyze alternative ideas for their future education system. In the case of Ohio, the state leaders focused on establishing a learner-centered education system. State laws, policies, and regulations are critical for any state-level innovations. Due to the nature of political and power shifts, policies or state plans are subject to change, although the changes are an unambiguous synonym and necessary. TDPE was a bi-partisan effort where both parties of participants met and discussed primarily focused on directions for their education systems. In this way, possibility of establishing a long-term plan with consensus is high, which is expected to have a high level of perseverance. Current literature lacks a knowledge base of how to facilitate a long-term and profound dialogue with the intent to bring about fundamental changes. In this regard, the TDPE is significant in filling knowledge gaps of facilitating dialogues among state-level leaders on paradigm change in education. The TDPE can also be effective for other types of dialogues related to any type of sustainable changes involving multiple stakeholders.

**Facilitating individual leaders’ action to change.** The TDPE is neither a decision body nor an action body. The TDPE helps facilitate the individual leaders doing in their regular jobs. It was to enable them to collaborate better so that they could perform their official jobs better in service of the larger whole. However, people seemed to forget this fact even as they acknowledged the TDPE’s purpose. When the group discussed becoming more of an identified body, like becoming a formal coalition, the group decided against it because making such a shift would require board-level approval for many of the members. While some members wanted the group to DO something, the reality was that the group had neither power nor basis as a group to do anything. However, the power to DO was in the hands of the individual leaders of all the organizations involved. Since this was frustrating for some participants, we see the need for further investigation regarding how the TDPE process could better help action-oriented members to feel more comfortable with the group’s role.

## Implications for Others Leading Paradigm Change

It is noteworthy that this research only investigated the first three of the TDPE team stages and the early steps of Phase II of the Generative Spiral Sequence. Therefore, it is premature to assess the effectiveness of the TDPE as a whole. Future research, therefore, should focus on assessing the strengths, weaknesses, possible improvements, and sustainability of the TDPE in later phases. To our knowledge, the Ohio TDPE process was the first effort to assemble influential leaders in the state of Ohio to discuss paradigm change in education at the state level. As described earlier in this chapter, it is important to advance the process knowledge – the “how to” – of state-level paradigm change in education so that other states can implement their own paradigm change initiatives. Fortunately, the research agenda on paradigm change at the school and district levels has started receiving some attention and can inform the state-level process. We sincerely hope that this study can serve as a building block for the knowledge base on paradigm change initiatives at the state level.

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