

**Leadership for Transformative Change: Lessons from Technology-Mediated Reform in Broad-Access Colleges**

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**OVERVIEW**

Higher Education institutions, especially community colleges and open-access universities, are playing an essential role in increasing educational equality. In an era of the Internet, new technologies are making higher education more approachable and accessible to a broader range of students. However, the leadership of higher education institutions must also adopt technology-mediated educational services. Are they willing to embrace this transformative change?

In their article, "[Leadership for Transformative Change: Lessons from Technology-Mediated Reform in Broad-Access Colleges](#)", Klempin and Karp (2015) explore the effect of different types of leadership approaches on the implementation of a technology-mediated advising reform in community colleges and open universities. The authors suggest that a transformative organizational change would need multitiered higher education leadership with a commitment to a vision for technology-mediated reform.

**Effects of Four Types of Leadership**

- **Presidential:** Presidential colleges have adaptive leadership at the institutional level, but technical leadership at the project level. Presidential leadership colleges often have institutional-level leadership with a vision of technology-mediated reforms. However, the high-level vision is often not instantly shared among project leaders and other members of the community college. As a result, project leaders often don't quite understand the technology reform and view it as a technical challenge.
- **Visionary:** Visionary colleges have adaptive leadership at the institutional and project levels. For visionary colleges, the leadership team engages in open communication with all the departments involved. The leaders set the vision and they are willing to give authority to project leaders. Both the institutional leaders and the project leaders are invested in the technology-mediated reform, for the unified goal.
- **Technologically focused:** Technologically focused colleges only have technical leadership at both institutional and project levels. In such colleges, a clear vision is missed for institutional and project leaders. For this reason, the implementation plans have met with resistance from end users who do not see a need for technology.
- **Divided:** Divided colleges have technical leadership at the institutional level, but adaptive leadership at the project level. Divided colleges have strong project leaders who value and take the responsibility for technology reform. However, the lack of support from the institutional leaders has often made their reform more difficult to implement.

**DISCUSSION:**

The findings of this research are based on qualitative case studies of six colleges. It illustrates how the four different types of leadership affect the colleges' adaptation of technology-mediated reform. The four types of leadership inspire what community colleges should do at both the institutional and project level. However, as each college has its own unique organizational culture, leadership styles are hard to capture. Leadership style is very important for technology adoption, but there are also other factors to consider, including selection of fit vendors and training of employees.