THE PROBLEM OF MORE:
THE PERILS & POSSIBILITIES OF SCALING UP

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If you want to understand something, try to change it.

--Kurt Lewin
Driving Question

What does it take to successfully expand the footprint of an academic initiative (eportfolio) while maintaining the excellence of its initial iteration?

→ The Problem of More
THE TCU EPORTFOLIO STORY—

○ INTEGRATIVE LEARNING EMPHASIS

○ CHARGE FROM PROVOST: GET AN EPORTFOLIO INTO THE HANDS OF AS MANY STUDENTS AS YOU REASONABLY CAN, AS QUICKLY AS YOU REASONABLY CAN.
HOW?

• **Buy-in from colleges (some more than others)**

• **Gateway courses (English comp, basic speech)**

• **Introduction to University Life**
  
  ○ First-year seminar we created
  
  ○ Knowledge, skills, strategies to flourish as a learner in college
  
  ○ How would you tell your learning story to others? (ePortfolio component)
HOW ELSE?

• **SEMINARS FOR FACULTY, STAFF, AND PROGRAM LEADERS**

• **PARTNERSHIPS WITH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES**

• **A TEAM OF UNDERGRADUATE “ETERNS” WHO COACH & PRESENT**
  - DEVELOPMENT OF **HIGH-QUALITY RESOURCES**

• **MARKETING EVENTS IN CAMPUS COMMONS & LIBRARY**

• **STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER CAMPUS ENTITIES**
  - CENTER FOR DIGITAL EXPRESSION
  - CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
THE TCU EPORTFOLIO STORY—

2013-2014: Pilot Year 200 students
2014-2015: Approximately 1,000 Students across colleges
2015-2016: " " " 3,000 Students…
2016-2017: 5,000 Students…
2017-2018: 7,000 Students…
A UBQUITOUS CHALLENGE—

HOW TO SPREAD EXEMPLARY BELIEFS, BEHAVIORS, IDEAS, AND PRACTICES TO MORE PEOPLE AND MORE PLACES WITHIN A COMPLEX SYSTEM.

OR, HOW CAN YOU KEEP EXCELLENCE FROM FADING AS YOUR FOOTPRINT EXPANDS?
SCALING UP: PRINCIPLE 1

• You’re trying to spread a *mindset, not just expand your footprint.
  *The core of what you’re doing, and why.
SCALING UP: PRINCIPLE 1A

• Use your mindset as a guide, not as an airtight answer to every question and problem.
  • Commit to openness and dexterity
  • Scaling is about both addition & subtraction
  • The inability to modify an ingrained mindset can spell D-O-O-M
  • “Drop your tools” when necessary
SCALING UP: PRINCIPLE 1A

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SCALING UP: PRINCIPLE 2

• **Successful scaling is more analogous to a ground war than an air war.**
  
  • **Grind it out:** Door-to-door visits, lunches, Dept. Mtgs., focus groups, and listening sessions.
  
  • “If you build it, they will come.” (This is not true.)
SCALING UP: PRINCIPLE 3

• HAVE AN END GAME.

(IF YOU DON’T, YOU WON’T HAVE ANYTHING TO LINK YOUR SHORT-TERM REALITIES TO.)
SCALING UP: PRINCIPLE 3—A COROLLARY

i. All things being equal, it’s better to have a plan than not have a plan.

ii. All things being equal, it’s better to do the plan if you have one.

iii. All things being equal, if you have a plan and are doing the plan, it’s better to assess and adjust the plan accordingly.
Scaling Up: Principle 4

- Fear the trio of doom:
  - Illusion
  - Impatience
  - Incompetence
CLARITY, CALM, AND SHARED UNDERSTANDING IN THE BARN
EVERYTHING MAKES SENSE UNTIL THE HORSES ARE OUT OF THE BARN.
SCALING UP: PRINCIPLE 5

• Clarify whether you are replicating tried-and-true practices or modifying practices to fit conditions on the ground.

• The Catholic – Buddhist continuum
  • Catholic scaling: replication without deviation; emphasize consistency in beliefs & practices.
  • Buddhist scaling: essential principles are preserved; structure, practices, & packaging vary
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SCALING UP: PRINCIPLE 6

- “BAD IS STRONGER THAN GOOD.”
- BIGGER FOOTPRINT = MORE PROBLEMS
- MORE PROBLEMS = BAD VIBES ON CAMPUS
- MAKE SURE YOU’RE PROPERLY RESOURCED TO MANAGE THE PROBLEMS AT A RATE YOU CAN ABSORB.
SCALING UP: PRINCIPLE 7

• Conduct a premortem to avert looming failures.
  • Gather the team
  • Everyone write a story about why the effort was 1.) a huge success, and 2.) a miserable failure.
  • Helps avoid irrational exuberance (see principle 4)
CHECKING IN

- **What experience do you have with scaling initiatives, and where do you see your experience reflected in any of these principles?**