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A measure of concern

*Research-based program aids innovation
by addressing teacher concerns*

By Karel Holloway

What happens when programs intended to improve student learning aren't successful? Staff carefully researches potential programs, hand-selects one to address the specific needs of the students, and thoroughly prepares teachers. But, once implemented, the innovation doesn't produce the desired results.

Often, researchers say, the problem is not the program, but the way individual educators respond to it.

Each administrator, each principal, each teacher approaches a new program, any change, with a personal set of concerns, researchers have found. Individuals question: *Why should I do this? How long is it going to take me to work through this? I know my kids and I don't think this will work.* Helping educators work through these concerns is crucial in making certain that changes happen.

Just as there are research-based educational innovations, there is a research-based program for aiding innovation — the Concerns-Based Adoption Model or CBAM. It offers a way to understand, then address educators' common concerns about change.

CBAM has other components but the most readily and commonly used is "stages of concern." The ideas were developed in the mid 1970s and many staff developers have integrated the concepts into their work over the past 25 years.

"I run into people all the time who have heard of the stages of concern and kind of keep them in the back of their minds," said Shirley Hord, program manager with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. She is one of the principal authors of the system.

Hord said the program is helpful because it is based on research. "We didn't just think this up," Hord said. Through questioning and correlating answers from teachers and college professors about change, Hord and her colleagues identified

common concerns that most educators — or any group confronted with change — harbor. Some will go through all the stages, leaving one and moving up to the next. Most will skip around and may have several concerns simultaneously, Hord said.

CBAM's seven stages of concern are:

- **Awareness:** Aware that an innovation is being introduced but not really interested or con-

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Program addresses teacher concerns

Continued from Page One
cerned with it.

- **Informational:** Interested in some information about the change.
- **Personal:** Wants to know the personal impact of the change.
- **Management:** Concerned about how the change will be managed in practice.
- **Consequence:** Interested in the impact on students or the school.
- **Collaboration:** Interested in working with colleagues to make the change effective.
- **Refocusing:** Begins refining the innovation to improve student learning results.

Being aware of the concerns allows those in charge of the innovation to tailor aid given to individuals.

“Using the stages of concern, you can get a whole profile,” said Gene Hall, one of the CBAM researchers and dean of the college of education at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. For example, if a leader knows a teacher is concerned about how the innovation will be used in the classroom, that teacher can be given additional preparation or paired with a teacher who is using it well.

ASKING QUESTIONS

Determining a person’s stage of concern can be as simple as asking questions, Hord said. Educators can be asked informally during a chance meeting in the hall or in the lunchroom, something Hord calls a “one-legged interview.” Or teachers can be asked to respond to open-ended questions as part of the original training. For those interested in building statistical data, teachers can be asked to fill out a survey developed by university researchers. That method is best used only by those who have received training and have a particular need for the data, Hord said.

For most, the informal questions of Hord’s “one-legged interview” are the most productive. The questions should be fairly specific: How are your students managing the new math manipulatives?

If a teacher answers, “I haven’t really had a chance to use those,” the teacher is at the first stage, awareness, not really concerned about the innovation.

A teacher who answers “Mary Jo and I have been working on some ways to let the students use them more for discovery” has reached the collaborative stage.

Teachers can then get the follow-up support for their stages. The first teacher may need retraining to get more information and be impressed with how important the innovation is. The second teacher needs to be encouraged to continue and expand the collaboration.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

A more formal way to assess an individual’s stage of concern involves asking teachers to respond to an open-ended question. The question can be asked at the beginning of training, the end, or both. Before and after training, teachers can be asked a question such as “What concerns you about the new program?”

If asked before and after, facilitators can see where teachers started and how much movement has occurred. Similarly, when asked at the end, responses indicate what type of follow-up is needed with specific teachers.

USING A QUESTIONNAIRE

Sister Karen Dietrich, principal of the Mt. Saint Joseph Academy near Philadelphia, has used the questionnaire developed by Hord, Hall and their associates and said bar graphs of teacher responses provide comforting proof that technology use is taking hold in her school.

After a technology institute last summer, teachers were asked to fill out a 35-statement survey. Dietrich and a technology facilitator used the results from the 24 responses to address their concerns individually. The teachers filled out the survey again and there was clear movement, Dietrich said.

“When I look at my first 24 bar graphs, there is real density in self concern. In De-

cerner, that has clearly spread out. What is so significant is that in eight weeks, there has been clear movement,” she said.

The survey and later personal interviews revealed some real surprises, she said. A teacher who had already been using technology to arrange video conferences with a school in England had responses that showed her concerns were at the bottom stages of awareness and informational. “She had the skills, she just needed the confidence,” Dietrich said.

Dietrich used the formal survey and is working out statistical data because her results are part of her doctoral dissertation. But she said the informal interviews have been key. Each interview lasts five to 30 minutes. Some of the exchanges have been by e-mail.

Quickly addressing the concern following an interview was important as well, she said. A teacher who can’t figure out how to do something may abandon most technology use if not given aid. “They weren’t left hanging for weeks or months,” she said. While Dietrich has done much of the evaluation and follow-up, she has had help. The school hired a teacher technologist and Dietrich said she sends some responses to her. Other teachers have been referred to other teachers. “We have a culture of teachers helping teachers,” she said.

Finding the time to use CBAM has not always been easy, she said. With a limited budget, hiring the technologist took careful planning. And teachers asked to work with other teachers must get the free time to provide help.

CBAM isn’t fast but it provides the ongoing, steady support needed to move an innovation forward, she said.

Dietrich said she felt that using the method to assess how the technological innovations were going was a necessity. “We’ve invested in the technology. If we are going to invest \$50,000, \$60,000, or \$70,000 in new computers and mobile technology, I can’t let it go to waste and be covered with dust.”

7 Stages of Concern

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model outlines seven Stages of Concern that offer a way to understand and then address educators' common concerns about change.

Stage 0: Awareness

Aware that an innovation is being introduced but not really interested or concerned with it.

- "I am not concerned about this innovation."
- "I don't really know what this innovation involves."

Stage 1: Informational

Interested in some information about the change.

- "I want to know more about this innovation."
- "There is a lot I don't know about this but I'm reading and asking questions."

Stage 2: Personal

Wants to know the personal impact of the change.

- "How is this going to affect me?"
- "I'm concerned about whether I can do this."
- "How much control will I have over the way I use this?"

Stage 3: Management

Concerned about how the change will be managed in practice.

- "I seem to be spending all of my time getting materials ready."
- "I'm concerned that we'll be spending more time in meetings."
- "Where will I find the time to plan my lessons or take care of the record keeping required to do this well?"

Stage 4: Consequence

Interested in the impact on students or the school.

- "How is using this going to affect students?"
- "I'm concerned about whether I can change this in order to ensure that students will learn better as a result of introducing this idea."

Stage 5: Collaboration

Interested in working with colleagues to make the change effective.

- "I'm concerned about relating what I'm doing to what other instructors are doing."
- "I want to see more cooperation among teachers as we work with this innovation."

Stage 6: Refocusing

Begins refining the innovation to improve student learning results.

- "I have some ideas about something that would work even better than this."

"Everyone
thinks of
changing the
world, but no
one thinks of
changing
himself."

— Leo Tolstoy

Address Individual Concerns

To help bring about change, you first must know an individual's concerns. Then those concerns must be addressed. While there are no set formulas, here are some suggestions for addressing the stages of concern.

Stage 0: Awareness concerns

- If possible, involve teachers in discussions and decisions about the innovation and its implementation.
- Share enough information to arouse interest, but not so much it overwhelms.
- Acknowledge that a lack of awareness is expected and reasonable and that there are no foolish questions.

Stage 1: Informational concerns

- Provide clear and accurate information about the innovation.
- Use several ways to share information — verbally, in writing, and through available media. Communicate with large and small groups and individuals.
- Help teachers see how the innovation relates to their current practices — the similarities and the differences.

Stage 2: Personal concerns

- Legitimize the existence and expression of personal concerns.
- Use personal notes and conversations to provide encouragement and reinforce personal adequacy.
- Connect these teachers with others whose personal concerns have diminished and who will be supportive.

Stage 3: Management concerns

- Clarify the steps and components of the innovation.
- Provide answers that address the small specific “how-to” issues.
- Demonstrate exact and practical solutions to the logistical problems that contribute to these concerns.

Stage 4: Consequence concerns

- Provide individuals with opportunities to visit other settings where the innovation is in use and to attend conferences on the topic.
- Make sure these teachers are not overlooked. Give positive feedback and needed support.
- Find opportunities for these teachers to share their skills with others.

Stage 5: Collaboration concerns

- Provide opportunities to develop skills for working collaboratively.
- Bring together, from inside and outside the school, those who are interested in working collaboratively.
- Use these teachers to assist others.

Stage 6: Refocusing concerns

- Respect and encourage the interest these individuals have for finding a better way.
- Help these teachers channel their ideas and energies productively.
- Help these teachers access the resources they need to refine their ideas and put them into practice.

Source: *Taking Charge of Change*, by Shirley Hord, William Rutherford, Leslie Huling-Austin, and Gene Hall, ASCD, 1987.

“If we don’t
change the
direction we’re
going, we’re
likely to end up
where we are
headed.”

— Chinese proverb

10 Things To Do About Resistance

Everybody is at least a little resistant to change. They wonder how it will affect them daily and in the long-term. There are ways to overcome resistance, though.

1. Acknowledge change as a process.

Change is not an event but an ongoing process. Remember that it may take years from goal-setting to stable results. Conflict and resistance are natural processes and not signs of failure.

2. Empower stakeholders.

To get the most cooperation, stakeholders must be included as decision makers. If meeting individual needs is part of the plan, resistance is less likely. Empowering people means creating mechanisms that provide them with genuine authority and responsibility. To minimize discord, the change process should be guided by negotiation, not by issuing demands.

3. Encourage all stakeholders.

Stakeholders must be active, invested participants throughout the change process. Setting up opportunities for individuals and groups to vent concerns can be effective. Being heard is fundamental in establishing understanding and consensus.

4. Set concrete goals.

Set goals by consensus, creating a broad sense of ownership. This step is critical because stakeholders will be able to return to a shared agenda when there are missteps. This makes it easier to refocus.

5. Be sensitive.

Everyone needs respect, sensitivity, and support as they work to redefine their roles and master new concepts. Managing conflict means being aware of differences among individuals. Each stakeholder must genuinely feel valued throughout the change process.

6. Model process skills.

Teach by demonstrating the appropriate skills and actions. Trainers may find that reflecting publicly and in a straightforward manner on their own doubts and resistance may help others.

7. Develop strategies for dealing with emotions.

Educators often focus on outcomes, neglecting the emotions that can go with change. Focus on such questions as: How will our lives be different? How do we feel about the changes? Is there anything that can or should be done to honor the past before we move on?

8. Manage conflict.

Ideally, change is a negotiated process. Stakeholders should be invited to negotiate issues that may cause resistance. For example, an assistant principal may need to negotiate the needs of the whole school with faculty members more concerned with departmental priorities.

9. Communicate.

Talk, write memos, e-mail. Open communication is a necessity. It can move concerns out of the shadows so they can be resolved. Try focusing on reflective questions such as: Where are we in the process? Where are we headed?

10. Monitor process dynamics.

The constant interplay between groups involved in the change must be monitored and the appropriate adjustments must be made. Begin evaluations when the change process is being developed and continue throughout. Ongoing evaluations of progress are essential.

Source: "Shhh, the Dragon Is Asleep and Its Name Is Resistance," by Monica Janas, *Journal of Staff Development*, Summer 1998 (Vol. 19, No. 3). Available online at www.nsd.org/library/jstd/janas193.html.

“The main dangers in this life are the people who want to change everything ... or nothing.”

— Lady Nancy Astor

Scheduled Maintenance

Every education innovation should include a maintenance plan. Sketch out ways to follow-up on the innovation before you begin.

Decide who will determine teacher concerns. Will the original trainer evaluate answers to open-ended questions? Will they be turned over to someone at the school?

Will the staff developer visit the school for follow-up interviews? How often and for how long? Or will a school staff member be responsible for follow-up? How will he or she be trained?

Once a concern is identified, who will provide support? For example, if a teacher is concerned about getting proper equipment, who is responsible for ordering it and following through to see that it is received? Who will provide any necessary retraining?

Who will identify teachers who can help others? Who will provide the support and training that those teachers need to be successful at this new task?

Will those teachers be given free time to aid others? How will this be arranged?

Are the resources – time, people, and money – available for ongoing evaluation and support of the change? How can they be found?

“We must

always change,

renew,

rejuvenate

ourselves;

otherwise, we

harden.”

— Goethe

Resources

to learn more about change

Change in Schools: Facilitating the Change Process

Edited by Gene Hall and Shirley Hord. State University of New York Press, 1987.

Summarizes 15 years of research on CBAM and addresses the question: "What can educators and educational administrators do on a day-to-day basis to become more effective in facilitating beneficial change?" The book presents the concepts and research of the authors and translates those concepts into research-based tools, techniques, and approaches that can help change facilitators to attain this goal. Available at www.sunypress.edu. Price: \$22.95.

Implementing Change: Patterns, Principles, and Potholes

Gene Hall and Shirley Hord. Allyn & Bacon, 2001.

The latest work updating ways to understand and use CBAM components. Each chapter is organized to move from concept to application covering: research, a clear description of the change concept, case studies, examples, discussion questions, and activities. Available at www.ablongman.com. Price \$49.

A Manual for Assessing Open-Ended Statements of Concern about an Innovation

B.W. Newlove and Gene Hall. Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 1976.

Provides procedures for identifying, analyzing, and understanding teachers' concerns when questions are presented as open-ended statements. Includes explanations of how to use CBAM to predict teacher behavior and provides a framework for attending to teachers' concerns. Available through the NSDC Online



Bookstore, www.nsd.org/bookstore.htm. Item B144. Price: \$12.50, non-members; \$10, members.

Measuring Stages of Concern About the Innovation: A Manual for Use of the Stages of Concern Questionnaire

Gene Hall, A.A. George, and William Rutherford. Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 1977.

A complete guide to using the CBAM questionnaire to help understand and track the CBAM stages of concern of educators involved in school change. Includes how to use and score the stages of concern questionnaire and how to interpret the resulting data. Available through the NSDC Online Bookstore, www.nsd.org/bookstore.htm. Item B143. Price: \$20, non-members; \$16, members.



"Shhh, the Dragon Is Asleep and Its Name Is Resistance"

Monica Janas. *Journal of Staff Development*, Summer 1998 (Vol. 19, No. 3).

Describes a three-step process to manage resistance to change: being aware of resistance, identifying sources and types of resistance, and developing and applying proactive strategies for managing resistance. Available online at www.nsd.org/library/jsd/janas193.html.

Taking Charge of Change

Shirley Hord, William Rutherford, Leslie Huling-Austin, and Gene Hall. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1987.

Provides easy-to-understand techniques for using CBAM. Out of print. Check your local library for a copy.

"Tornado of Change"

Don Horsley and Susan Loucks-Horsley. *Journal of Staff Development*, Fall 1998 (Vol. 19, No. 4).

Describes specific tools that can be used to help staff developers identify staff concerns and craft responses to them. Available online at www.nsd.org/library/jsd/horsley194.html.

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Classroom visits provide chance to see changes in practice

Ask Dr. Developer



Dr. Developer has all the answers to questions that staff developers ask.

(At least he thinks he does!)

Q *Classroom observations are hard to schedule and make some teachers nervous. But I still need to get a concrete idea of whether and how teachers are using new materials. Any suggestions?*

A Principals can use virtually any opportunity to spend a few moments in a classroom without scheduling a visit. A trip to find a student or ask a question provides a good opportunity to gather first-hand information. One principal said she took on the job of distributing notices that had to be sent home with students because that gave her many opportunities for quick classroom observations. She took a few seconds in each room to look around and ask a question or two of the students.

During visits, principals should scan the room for details. For example, is the teacher manual for the new reading program on a shelf or among other books at the end of the desk? Or is it open, with sticky notes marking particular sections?

If computers have recently been added, are they turned on? Is a program running? Is the space around the comput-

ers stacked with other materials or do students have space to work?

Look at student work. Does it reflect the new program?

Question students about the new innovation. How are their new reading materials different from those they had been using before? Can they explain the math problem they've been trying to solve today?

Using the results of such quick visits can be tricky. Teachers can feel spied on if follow-up conferences are confrontational. Making a statement about what you observed during your visit is likely to prove more successful than challenging the teachers' management of her classroom. For example: "I noticed that students seem quite familiar with the new math manipulatives. Tell me more about how you introduced students to them."

Finally, teachers should understand that you want to know how they are introducing an innovation in their classrooms. Ask them to invite you to visit during student demonstrations or during lessons that they feel particularly confident about having observed because teachers also ought to have opportunities to be seen when they believe they're at their best.

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