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Taking measure

Innovation Configurations gauge the progress of a new initiative

BY JOAN RICHARDSON

When 2,500-student Madison Parish School District in Louisiana prepared to introduce a new reading curriculum, members of the reading cadre first developed an Innovation Configuration (IC) map.

Members of the reading cadre talked about what they believed the new instruction should look like in practice. Then they talked with teachers who were actually implementing the curriculum. “Then, we worked together to develop the configuration,” explained elementary supervisor Patricia Candler.

Madison’s reading IC details how teachers are expected to use standards to develop lessons, use data to guide their instruction, design appropriate assessments, and group students.

“It is very specific. It helps the teachers do a bit of self-evaluation so they know what they should be doing and what they should not be doing. It helps the principal know what to look when he’s doing observations,” Candler said.

An Innovation Configuration (IC) map clarifies what a new program or practice — the innovation — is and is not. It creates a vision of what the new program or practice looks like in use. Rather than dealing with an abstraction, an IC map makes

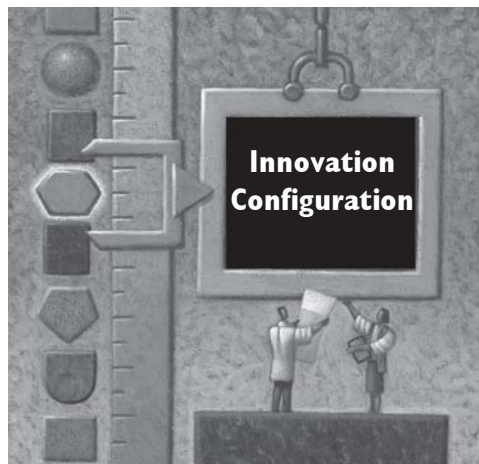
very concrete what the expectations are for implementation of a new program or practice. NSDC recently used IC maps to create clear pictures of how the NSDC Standards for Staff Development look in practice.

In the same way, educators could use IC maps to measure the implementation of new math curriculum, use of cooperative learning strategies, differentiation strategies in

classrooms, or any other program or practice.

“We know that people get very muddled ideas of what a change is all about. ICs help people understand the new parts,” said Shirley Hord, scholar emerita at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory in Austin, Texas and one of the original developers of ICs. Hord is also co-author with Pat

Continued on Page 2



Innovation Configurations gauge progress

Continued from Page 1

Roy of NSDC's book, *Moving NSDC's Staff Development Standards into Practice: Innovation Configurations* (NSDC, 2003).

"There are two things that stall us in the change process. One is being very fuzzy about what we want and what this new thing looks like when we have it in place. The second is the failure to have leadership that pushes and supports and helps get where we want to go," she said.

An Innovation Configuration map is a tool that can help address both of those issues. Because an IC map makes clear what's expected, teachers are more likely to implement a new program or practice in a consistent way. The clarity of the IC maps means leaders have an easier time identifying when and where to provide the push and support required to nudge educators towards the ideal implementation of a new program or practice.

Hord believes the individuals who will be expected to implement the innovation should also develop the IC maps for it. For example, if the innovation is a new mathematics curriculum for elementary school, the classroom teachers who will be teaching that new math should be the ones who develop the IC map. Even when a school district is buying a commercial program, Hord urges districts to take the time to have their own staffs develop an IC to guide its implementation.

"The most powerful part of the IC is that it brings the group together to discuss it and debate it. As they do that, they are clarifying what this thing is," she said.

There are generally seven steps in the creation of an IC map:

Step #1. Visualize and brainstorm the components of the new program or practice. (See tool on Page 3.)

If teachers were developing an IC for cooperative learning, for example, they might identify the major parts or components of that initiative as grouping patterns, tasks for students, individual accountability, group skills, interdependence, and

group processing. (See Page 5 for a completed IC on cooperative learning.)

Step #2. Within each of the components identified in Step 1, visualize and brainstorm the ideal behavior of key individuals — principals, teachers, students. (See tool on Page 3.)

For example, if grouping patterns is one of the components, the ideal might be having teachers assign all students to four-member groups.

Step #3. Within each of the components identified in Step 1, visualize and brainstorm any unacceptable behavior of key individuals — principals, teachers, students.

For example, using grouping patterns again, not grouping students for learning would be unacceptable behavior.

Step #4. Generate variations for each component, essentially filling in the gap between the ideal behavior and the unacceptable behavior.

For example, using grouping patterns, variations would include assigning students to three-member groups or assigning students to work only with a single partner.

"There is no magic number for the number of variations," Hord said. Some components may have only three variations; some as many as six.

Step #5. Rewrite each variation, using an action verb to begin each sentence and describe behavior of the key individual, such as the teacher or principal.

Assume that each sentence begins with the phrase, "The teacher ..."

For example, "The teacher assigns students to four-member groups," rather than "students in four-member groups."

Step #6. Using the tool on Page 4, write the variations from left to right, with the most ideal variation on the far left and the most unacceptable variation on the far right.

Hord favors the left-to-right arrangement because it places the ideal variation in the most prominent location for a reader.

Although each component may have a different number of variations, all of them will have an ideal variation.

Step #7. Again using the tool on Page 4, draw lines to show users the ideal behaviors, the acceptable behaviors, and the unacceptable behaviors.

In her work, Hord uses a solid line to distinguish between the ideal and the acceptable and a dashed line to distinguish between the acceptable and the unacceptable. If you are working with colored markers, select a different color for each line.

Once developed, ICs can be used in a variety of ways. They can guide goal-setting for a new program or practice. Teachers and principals can determine where they are in the map and create a clear picture of where they want to be, even assigning a target date for getting there. If a principal determines that a teacher or teachers are stuck at a certain point along the continuum, she has the information to determine what professional development might help teachers move towards the ideal.

An IC map for a new math curriculum, for example, could also be used to help parents understand what to expect in their child's classroom.

Teachers can use an IC map for self-evaluation by asking themselves where they fall along the path from "ideal" to "unacceptable."

When evaluating teachers' implementation of a new program or practice, Hord recommends interviewing teachers about their work rather than providing them with a survey to fill out. "People tend to respond on surveys the way they think you want them to respond," she said. In an interview, a principal or staff developer can probe more deeply to determine the reality of how the innovation is being implemented, she said.

As much as educators talk about the difficulty of change, Hord said few schools have actually embraced ICs as a tool that could help them.

—But, Madison Parish School District's NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL Patricia Candler, who's been using them for several years in her district, said ICs

Identify components of an innovation

Copy this page for each member of the group creating the Innovation Configuration. Be prepared to write the components and variations on a large piece of chart paper or on a whiteboard that can be seen by all members of the group.

- Step #1.** Visualize and brainstorm the major parts or components of the new program or practice.
- Step #2.** Within each of the components, visualize and brainstorm the ideal behavior by key individuals — principals, teachers, students. Those are “variations.”
- Step #3.** Within each of the components, visualize and brainstorm the unacceptable behavior by key individuals — principals, teachers, students. Those also are “variations.”
- Step #4.** Generate more variations for each component, essentially filling in the gap between the ideal behavior and the unacceptable behavior. Some components may have only three variations; others could have up to six.

COMPONENT 1:	COMPONENT 2:	COMPONENT 3:	COMPONENT 4:	COMPONENT 5:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
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Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:
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Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:
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Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Map an Innovation Configuration

Directions: Using action verbs, describe each component and each variation. Place the ideal variation in the #1 position and the most unacceptable variation in the #5 position. Place the other variations in between. When every component and variation have been written into the appropriate location, draw a solid line to separate the ideal variations from the acceptable and a dashed line to separate the acceptable from the unacceptable variations.

Component 1:				
I	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Component 2:				
I	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Component 3:				
I	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Component 4:				
I	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Component 5:				
I	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

----- Variations to the right are unacceptable; variations to the left are acceptable.
 _____ Variations to the left are ideal.

Completed Innovation Configuration map

for a cooperative learning initiative

Component 1: Structures groups	
1 Assigns students to four-member groups	3 Assigns students to groups larger than four
4 Assigns students to work with only one partner	5 Does not assign students to groups
Component 1: Structures tasks	
1 Explicitly defines tasks and criteria for success as all group members accomplish the task	2 Explicitly defines tasks and criteria for success as most group members accomplish the task
3 Explicitly defines tasks and criteria for success as some group members accomplish the task	4 Specifies no criteria for success
5 Specifies no task	
Component 3: Assures individual accountability	
1 Selects any or all group members to answer for the group and/or gives individual tests to each student	2 Repeatedly selects those who typically answer correctly
3 Fails to solicit answers from ethnic/minority students or girls	4 Permits one student to complete tasks and answer for the group
Component 4: Develops group skills	
1 Explicitly states, monitors, rewards group or social skills expected during the task	2 States and monitors group skills expected to be exhibited
3 States but does not monitor or reward expected group skills	4 Does not state, monitor, or reward group or social skills
Component 5: Promotes positive interdependence	
1 Consistently arranges (organizes) tasks so group members must depend on one another to complete the task	2 Frequently arranges (organizes) tasks so group members must depend on one another to complete the task
3 Occasionally arranges (organizes) tasks so group members must depend on one another to complete the task	4 Arranges tasks that permit group members to complete the task alone
Component 6: Assesses group processing	
1 Provides students the time and procedures to analyze how well their groups are functioning and how well they are using the necessary social skills	2 Continues to enhance analysis and assessment skills
3 Monitors the students' development of group process analysis and assessment	4 Allows students to analyze and assess how their groups function
5 Does not give attention to analysis and assessment of group processing	

----- Variations to the right are unacceptable; variations to the left are acceptable.
 _____ Variations to the left are ideal.

Example of Innovation Configuration

for one of the NSDC Standards for Staff Development

Learning Community Standard: Staff development that improves the learning of all students organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.

The Teacher

Desired Outcome 1.1: Meets regularly with colleagues during the school day to plan instruction.					
LEVEL 1 Meets regularly with learning team during scheduled time within the school day to develop lesson plans, examine student work, monitor student progress, assess the effectiveness of instruction, and identify needs for professional learning.	LEVEL 2 Meets regularly with learning team during the school day to plan instruction, examine student work, and monitor student progress.	LEVEL 3 Works with learning team on special instructional projects during planning time.	LEVEL 4 Works with others on non-instructional issues. Addresses personal concerns, not group issues.	LEVEL 5 Uses planning time for individual planning.	LEVEL 6 Uses planning time for non-instructional tasks (e.g. management, personal tasks).
Desired Outcome 1.2: Aligns collaborative work with school improvement goals.					
LEVEL 1 Participates frequently with all professional staff members to discuss, document, and demonstrate how their work aligns with school and district goals. Engages in professional learning with colleagues to support this work.	LEVEL 2 Aligns the work of the learning team with schoolwide goals. Works in a learning team (grade-level, subject matter, interdisciplinary, vertical) to address issues related to the grade or subject area.	LEVEL 3 Works in a learning team (grade-level, subject matter, interdisciplinary, vertical) to address issues related to specific grade or subject area.	LEVEL 4 Works alone; addresses individual issues rather than school or grade-level issues.		
Desired Outcome 1.3: Participates in learning teams, some of whose membership extends beyond the school.					
LEVEL 1 Participates in state, regional, districtwide, and/or national networks. Participates in interdisciplinary or subject matter/grade-level learning teams.	LEVEL 2 Participates in districtwide and regional networks and interdisciplinary or subject matter/grade-level learning teams.	LEVEL 3 Participates in both interdisciplinary and subject matter/grade-level learning teams within the district.	LEVEL 4 Participates in interdisciplinary learning teams and/or subject matter or grade-level teams only.	LEVEL 5 Participates in individual learning outside grade level, subject area, and/or school.	

Source: *Moving NSDC's Staff Development Standards into Practice: Innovation Configurations*, by Shirley Hord and Patricia Roy. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council, 2004. Available through the NSDC Online Bookstore, <http://store.nsd-c.org>.

RESOURCES

for Innovation Configuration maps

■ **“A measure of concern,”** by Karel Hollowell. *Tools for Schools*, February/March 2003. A brief overview of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) and “stages of concern.” Useful to any educator involved in a change process who needs to understand resistance and acceptance of changes. Available online at www.nsd.org/library/publications/tools/tools2-03holl.cfm

■ **“CBAM brings order to the tornado of change,”** by Susan Loucks-Horsley and Donald L. Horsley. *Journal of Staff Development*, Fall 1998 (Vol. 19, No. 4), pp. 17-20. Describes specific tools that can be used to help educators identify staff concerns and craft responses to them. Includes a discussion of Innovation Configurations. Available online at www.nsd.org/library/jsd/horsley194.html

■ **Implementing Change: Patterns, Principles, and Potholes**, by Gene Hall and Shirley Hord. Allyn & Bacon, 2001. Focuses on the process of educational change and leadership using the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). 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 through the NSDC Online Bookstore, <http://store.nsd.org>. Item #B241. Price: \$54, members; \$67.50, nonmembers.

■ **Measuring Innovation Configurations: Procedures and Applications**, by Susan Heck, Suzanne M. Stiegelbauer, Gene E. Hall, & Susan F. Loucks. Reprinted and distributed by Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), 1999. Prepares educators on some of the issues that must be addressed when you institute a new program. Includes methods for using an Innovation Configuration (IC) map to assess how

teachers are adapting innovations to their unique situations. This manual explains how to create and apply checklists to evaluate different ways individuals use parts of an innovation. Available through www.sedl.org.



■ **Moving the NSDC Standards into Practice: Innovation Configurations**, by Shirley Hord and Pat Roy. NSDC, 2003. Provides IC maps for each of the 12 NSDC standards and five role groups — teachers, principals, central office staff, superintendent, and school boards. Each set of ICs describes the possible actions that a particular group could take as it implements the standards. Available online at <http://store.nsd.org>. Item #B221. Price: \$32, members; \$40, nonmembers.

■ **“Taking measure: The Innovation Configuration,”** by Robby Champion. *JSD*, Spring 2003 (Vol. 24, No. 2) pp. 69-70. Offers another description of how to develop Innovation Configurations. Online version includes sample IC for a high school reading initiative. Available online at www.nsd.org/library/publications/jsd/champion242.cfm.

■ **“What’s next after adopting the standards?,”** by Stephanie Hirsh, *Results*, November 2003. Explains the development of the Innovation Configuration maps to guide implementation of the NSDC Standards for Staff Development. Available online at www.nsd.org/library/publications/results/res11-03hirs.cfm.

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MAIN BUSINESS OFFICE

5995 Fairfield Road, #4, Oxford, OH 45056
(513) 523-6029
(800) 727-7288
(513) 523-0638 (fax)
E-mail: NSDCoffice@aol.com
Web site: www.nsd.org

Editor: Joan Richardson

Designer: Sue Chevalier

NSDC STAFF

Executive director

Dennis Sparks (SparksNSDC@aol.com)

Deputy executive director

Stephanie Hirsh (NSDC_Hirsh@aol.com)

Director of publications

Joan Richardson (NSDCJoan@aol.com)

Director of special projects

Joellen Killion (NSDCKillio@aol.com)

Distinguished senior fellow

Hayes Mizell (HMizell@msn.com)

Business manager

Leslie Miller (NSDCLeslie@aol.com)

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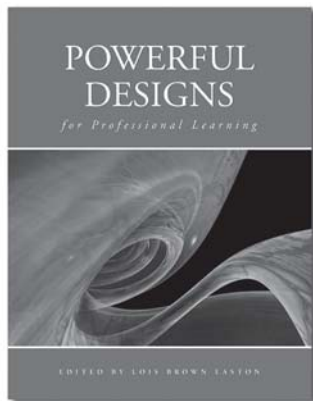
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LEAD p. 2

But, Madison Parish School District's Patricia Candler, who's been using them for several years in her district, said ICs can ease the way in making changes. "In the very beginning, (teachers) did not see this as something that was going to help. Now, they see the value of knowing exactly what we want them to do. Now, they tend to take it as a positive, as an improvement instrument for their instruction," Candler said.

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