

Tools FOR SCHOOLS

FOR A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS AND LEADERS

CLARIFY YOUR VISION *with an Innovation Configuration map*

BY JOAN RICHARDSON

After three years of implementing a new writing program, teachers in Arizona's Gadsden Elementary School District #32 were still confused about how they were supposed to be teaching writing.

"We had inconsistent implementation. Often, teachers were calling the same practices and components by different names," said Olivia Elizondo Zepeda, Gadsden's assistant superintendent.

As a result, students were not making the progress the district wanted.

Then the district began working with Shirley Hord, a consultant with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, who introduced the district to Innovation Configuration maps (ICs). Hord is one of the original developers of IC maps, a tool that educators can use to identify expectations about a new program or other innovation.

"When she mapped the components of the writing program, it was very evident that nobody

really knew what the focus of the writing program really was. It was amazing to us that after three years of professional development and implementation we were still confused," Zepeda said.

Now, "our results are incredible," she said.

Gadsden's 6th-grade writing results on the statewide assessment soared from 45% in 2005 to 82% in 2006. Fifth-grade results remained about the same, but 4th-grade results in writing moved from 28% proficient in 2005 to 69% proficient in 2006.

"With an IC, there is no misunderstanding; we have developed a common language. It's just very, very clear. It's clear for the people who are training. It's clear for the principals

who know what to look for when they do a walk through. It's clear for the teachers," Zepeda said.

An Innovation Configuration map clarifies what a program or practice — the innovation — is and is not. The IC creates a vision of what a new program or practice looks like in use by

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Clarify your vision with an Innovation Configuration map

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spelling out what is ideal and what is not acceptable. An IC map also shows the stages that a teacher might move through as he or she moves toward ideal practice.

NSDC developed a series of IC maps to describe the responsibilities of 11 different role groups for implementing NSDC's Standards for Staff Development. In the same way, educators can use IC maps to measure implementation of a new math or reading program, use of cooperative learning strategies, or differentiation strategies.

Patricia Roy, one of the co-authors of NSDC's standards IC maps, said developing and using an IC map helps everyone involved with a new implementation. "People who do training always think they are being crystal clear about explaining new practices. They can't even imagine some of the ways that new ideas might be implemented. But, when you're training, you don't always know what it is that people heard. ICs help with getting a clear picture," she said.

Hord and Roy both say that individuals who are involved with a new program or practice — teachers and principals — should be involved in writing the IC map for the implementation. Hord recommends seeking assistance from an expert during the initial writing of an IC.

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

Another Arizona school district, Chinle Unified School District #24, also developed an IC map to guide its instruction in writing. Nearly all of Chinle's 4,000 students are Native Americans, most of whom live in poverty.

After attending a 6+1 Trait Writing workshop, a group of Chinle teachers wrote their own IC map for implementing that model of writing instruction. They used the components identified by 6+1 Trait Writing and then wrote five levels of implementation for each of the components. They identified the levels of implementation as highly effective, satisfactory, needs improvement, unsatisfactory, and wrong direction. (See sample of Chinle's IC map on Page 7.)

Steve Brown, Chinle's school improvement

coordinator, said five teachers spent about 15 hours developing the IC maps. "We were lucky because we had some teachers who were well trained in (6+1 Traits) before we tried to develop the ICs," Brown said.

These teachers used the IC maps as they instructed other teachers during a series of workshops. After each session, teachers returned to their classrooms with something specific to implement, Brown said.

Chinle asked teachers to use the IC maps to assess their writing instruction. After several months of implementation, the district asked teachers to use the maps for a second self-assessment. "We would have run up against a brick wall if we had anything that looked like an evaluative piece. We have learned to be very careful about making sure that teachers understand that this is a tool for coaching and for monitoring their own work," said Mike Reid, Chinle's director of federal programs.

Brown agreed. "Developing the maps went really smoothly. But during implementation, you have to go more slowly. Administrators have to be careful that this is used as a program evaluation, not teacher evaluation and to make sure teachers know that this is for their own use," he said.

Like Gadsden, Chinle also experienced significant results on Arizona's statewide writing assessment after using the IC maps. Sixth graders scored 95% proficient in 2006, up from 59% proficient in 2005. Fifth graders remained about the same after making steady gains from the low 30s to the mid- to high 70s over four years. Fourth graders moved from an already high 65% proficient in 2005 to 85% proficient in 2006.

Elizondo agrees that IC maps are best used as self-evaluation tools for teachers. But as teachers become more comfortable using IC maps and more accustomed to looking at student data, Elizondo said principals have been able to show that teachers who are moving closer to the ideal of implementation have students who are achieving more.

"Teachers can look at the IC maps and see what they are missing and what they need to do. They identify their own areas of weakness. That's very good," she said. ■

- **See Page 3 for an excerpt from an Innovation Configuration map for one of NSDC's 12 Standards for Staff Development.**
- **See Pages 4 and 5 for instructions on how to create an Innovation Configuration map for a new practice or program in your school or district.**

Example of an Innovation Configuration

for one of NSDC's Standards for Staff Development

Learning Communities 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).
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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 school-wide goals. Works in a learning team (grade-level, subject matter, 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.
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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.
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Source: *Moving NSDC's Staff Development Standards Into Practice: Innovation Configurations, Volume 1*, by Shirley Hord and Patricia Roy. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council, 2003. Available through the NSDC Online Bookstore, <http://store.nsdcc.org>.

SIX STEPS TO CREATE AN IC MAP

THINK ACTION!

Components and variations in Innovation Configuration maps should begin with a verb. Here are some possibilities.

- Analyzes
- Assesses
- Attends
- Collects
- Contributes
- Creates
- Describes
- Develops
- Differentiates
- Discusses
- Engages
- Ensures
- Establishes
- Exhibits
- Experiments
- Explains
- Identifies
- Implements
- Involves
- Manages
- Participates
- Plans
- Promotes
- Provides
- Recognizes
- Reviews
- Rewards
- Selects
- Structures
- Uses
- Works

Copy the following 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.

1 Visualize and brainstorm the components of the new program or practice.

Using the tool on Page 5, have teachers identify the key components of the new program or practice. This is the hardest part of developing an IC.

For example, if teachers were developing an IC for cooperative learning, the major components would be grouping patterns, tasks for students, individual accountability, group skills, interdependence, and group processing.

Sometimes, the creator of a program has already identified the key components and teachers are able to begin working with those. For example, when teachers in the Chinle Unified School District #24 in northeastern Arizona wrote an IC for the 6+1 Trait Writing Program, they were able to build on components that had already been clearly identified for them by program developers.

2 For each component identified in Step #1, visualize and brainstorm the ideal behavior for the key individuals involved in the implementation.

For example, if grouping patterns is one of the components, the ideal might be having teachers assign all students to four-member groups. Write that in the first set of spaces under Variation.

3 For each component identified in Step #1, visualize and brainstorm the behavior for the key individuals involved in the implementation.

For example, in cooperative learning, not grouping students together would be the nonuse level. Write that in the last set of spaces under Variation.

4 Continue to generate variations for each component, essentially filling in the gap between the ideal behavior and the nonuse level.

Under grouping patterns for cooperative learning, for example, variations would include assigning students to three-member groups or assigning students to work with a single partner. Every component can have a different number of variations. This is one of the differences between an IC and a rubric.

The number of variations will vary with each component. Write these variations in the remaining spaces, moving from most ideal use to nonuse.

5 Rewrite each variation, using an action verb to begin each sentence and describe the 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.”

See the list of action verbs at left.

6 Using the tool on Page 6, write the variations from left to right, with the most ideal variation on the far left and nonuse level on the far right.

Although every component will have a different number of variations, all of the components will have an ideal variation. Placing the ideal state in the far left column puts it in the most prominent place for the reader.

IDENTIFY COMPONENTS OF AN INNOVATION

COMPONENT 1:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

COMPONENT 2:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

COMPONENT 3:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

COMPONENT 4:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:	Variation:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

COMPONENT 5:	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 nonuse level variation in the #5 position. Place the other variations in between.

Component 1:

1	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Component 2:

1	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Component 3:

1	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Component 4:

1	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Component 5:

1	2	3	4	5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Chinle School District Writing Innovation Configuration map

Ideas & Content Component 3: Formally and informally assess for ideas and content.			
HIGHLY EFFECTIVE	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	UNSATISFACTORY
<p>Consistently provides constructive feedback to students — <i>How can you clarify, support, focus, etc? Do you have the attention of the reader?</i></p> <p>Assists students in assessing using the Six-Traits rubric during several stages of the writing process.</p> <p>Rates students on the Six-Traits rubric and provides timely detailed feedback.</p>	<p>Consistently provides constructive feedback to students — How can you clarify, support, focus, etc? Do you have the attention of the reader?</p> <p>Rates students on the Six-Traits rubric and provides detailed feedback.</p>	<p>Seldom provides constructive feedback to students — How can you clarify, support, focus, etc? Do you have the attention of the reader?</p> <p>Rates students on the Six-Traits rubric.</p>	<p>UNSATISFACTORY Fails to provide feedback. Fails to use Six-Traits rubric when grading.</p> <p>WRONG DIRECTION Provides negative feedback, which causes students to be afraid to expand ideas. Grades organization too heavily, with words like “off topic, delete, you don’t need this, etc.) Teaches students it’s safer to say less.</p>

Organization Component 3: Formally and informally assess for organization.			
HIGHLY EFFECTIVE	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	UNSATISFACTORY
<p>Provides a variety of assessments, rubrics, and workshops for scoring application of multiple literary forms.</p> <p>Provides time for self and peer assessment of personal writing.</p> <p>Provides prompt and detailed verbal and written feedback to students using established rubric on organization.</p> <p>Provides one on one conferences.</p>	<p>Occasionally provides a rubric or other assessment to student with explanation.</p> <p>Periodically provides time for self or peer assessment.</p> <p>Provides verbal and written feedback.</p>	<p>Seldom provides rubrics, time, or feedback to students.</p>	<p>UNSATISFACTORY Fails to provide rubrics, time or feedback – just give a grade.</p> <p>WRONG DIRECTION Throws away papers without reading them.</p>

Source: Chinle Unified School District #24, Chinle, Ariz. Used with permission.

ISSN 0276-928X

Tools For Schools is published four times a year (August, November, February, and May) by the National Staff Development Council, 5995 Fairfield Road, #4, Oxford, OH 45056, for \$49 of each membership. Periodicals postage paid at Wheelersburg, Ohio, and additional offices.

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NSDC EMBRACES A NEW PURPOSE

For the first time, the National Staff Development Council has adopted a bold new purpose that connects professional development and student learning. The purpose also emphasizes that all educators have a responsibility to learn in order to improve student performance.

NSDC's new purpose statement says the organization exists to ensure that "*every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves.*"

"At NSDC, we believe that when educators engage in effective professional learning every day, then students will achieve," said NSDC President Sue McAdamis of Rockwood, Mo. "That belief requires that educators have a clear vision of what such learning will look like in their schools. Once they have that vision, they will be able to become skillful advocates to achieve what they envision. Individual educators can make a profound difference, no matter what their role, when they believe that all students and teachers can learn and

perform at high levels, when they possess a deep understanding of effective professional development practice, and when they consistently and persistently act on these beliefs and understandings.

"We want to make sure that everyone understands that learning is for everyone and that it's all of us learning that will impact student achievement. If educators can really engage in learning every day, then we firmly believe that student learning will improve," McAdamis said.

The board shifted from a "goal" to a "purpose" to send a message that NSDC's reason for existence is ensuring effective professional learning, McAdamis said.

"Goals are important because most individuals and organizations believe they are essential for improvement in schools. A purpose, however, is the essence of what we believe and what we are deeply committed to. Our purpose establishes the reason we exist as an organization and focuses on the essence of our work," McAdamis said.

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