

13 TEACHERS TEACHING TEACHERS™

FOR A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY OF TEACHER LEADERS

Meet a useful tool

THE INNOVATION CONFIGURATION MAP

By Joellen Killion

When the Georgia Staff Development Council and the Georgia Department of Education was developing the statewide Coaches Academy, they wanted a way to communicate clearly to teachers, principals, coaches, and others what coaches' work involved.

Fairfax County (Va.) Public Schools, in its second year of an instructional coaching program to improve student learning, wanted to describe the work of coaches and create a performance evaluation system for coaches.

In NSDC's Coaches Academy, when coaches from across the country learn more about their role in facilitating effective professional learning, they use descriptions of the most effective behaviors.

Each of these groups used NSDC's Innovation Configuration Maps for School-based Staff Developers. The IC maps are a valuable source of information to define, strengthen, assess, and support

the work of teacher leaders serving as school-based staff developers, coaches, or instructional specialists.

Innovation Configuration maps are tools coaches and their supervisors can



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SCHOOL-BASED STAFF DEVELOPERS

Learning Communities

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.

DESIRED OUTCOME 1.1: Initiates structures for learning communities that support teacher and student learning.					
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Provides information about the roles of team members and meeting protocols to ensure effective use of the time for team meetings. Serves as a skilled facilitator for learning teams. Suggests and provides resources to learning teams to assist them in meeting their goals. Attends team meetings to help members stay focused on goals.	Provides information about the roles of team members and meeting protocols to ensure effective use of time provided for team meetings. Suggests and provides resources to learning teams to assist them in meeting their goals. Attends team meetings to help members stay focused on goals.	Provides information about the roles of team members and meeting protocols to ensure effective use of time provided for team meetings. Attends team meetings to help members stay focused on goals.	Attends team meetings to help members stay focused on goals.	Conducts training on the value of and strategies for collaborative professional learning.	

▲ **Outcomes.** For NSDC’s Learning Communities standard, there are five desired outcomes.

The example here shows the first of those — *Desired Outcome 1.1: Initiates structures for learning communities that support teacher and student learning.*

▲ **Levels.** Variation is a key part of an Innovation Configuration map. Levels 1-6 describe the variations of behaviors related to each outcome.

The ideal variation for Desired Outcome 1.1 is in the column marked Level 1. The least acceptable variations are on the right, typically Levels 4 through 6.

use to clarify or define their work, set personal and professional goals for continuous improvement, assess their performance, and measure their success. Innovation configuration maps are tools that describe specific behaviors clustered around desired outcomes. NSDC offers innovation configurations for each of its 12 standards for staff development for school-based staff developers and 10 other educator roles.

Background

Beginning in the 1970s and continuing through the 1980s, a team of researchers at the University of Texas at Austin conducted research on change in education. Focusing on its early stages on curriculum implementation and then in other areas, this body of research, led by William Rutherford, Gene Hall, Shirley Hord, and Susan Loucks-Horsley, was known as Concerns-Based Adoption Model, or CBAM for short. Four significant prongs of this research continue to be both practical and influential in education today. Among the four prongs, Stages of Concern, Levels of Use, change facilitators, and innovation configuration maps, the latter two have been less

well known and less frequently used until more recently. This article focuses on Innovation Configuration Maps (ICs) and how they are helpful to coaches.

Innovation Configuration Maps

ICs are tools that describe what an innovation, something new, looks like in practice, or in behavioral terms. An innovation can be anything new, such as a new classroom management program, instructional program, curriculum program, or attendance monitoring system. When something new is implemented, researchers tell us, variation in its implementation can influence its success. “Studies of implementation of policies, programs, and processes have shown that innovations are typically implemented in a variety of ways,” says Hord (2006). “Just because authorities mandate, experts request, or colleagues agree to adopt innovations does not guarantee fidelity of implementation” (p. 157-158). To reduce variation that might diminish a pro-

DESIRED OUTCOME 4.4: Engages teachers in data analysis and interpretation to determine student and teacher needs.					
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Engages teachers in data analysis and interpretation to determine student and teacher learning needs. Adjusts educational programs and professional learning experiences based on these needs.	Engages teachers in data analysis and interpretation to determine student and teacher learning needs.	Engages teachers in data analysis and interpretation.	Provides teachers with analyzed data.		

gram’s success, program developers found that those responsible for implementing, managing, or supervising a program would benefit if they developed detailed descriptions of the program in action.

Developed to indicate a range of behaviors from ideal to minimal, an IC spells out what a program, practice, or standard looks like in action. An IC has several parts. One part is the program’s desired outcomes. Desired outcomes describe the focus for coaches’ work.

For NSDC’s Learning Communities standard, there are five desired outcomes:

- **Desired Outcome 1.1:** Initiates structures for learning communities that support teacher and student learning (see p. 2).
- **Desired Outcome 1.2:** Aligns the work of learning communities with school improvement goals.
- **Desired Outcome 1.3:** Sustains teacher collaboration during the school day to improve teaching and learning.
- **Desired Outcome 1.4:** Coordinates work among learning teams to assist members in accomplishing their goals.
- **Desired Outcome 1.5:** Participate with other coaches in learning communities, some of whose membership extends beyond the school.

An IC is helpful in a variety of ways.

- The IC helps those responsible for implementing an innovation understand what is expected and allows them to assess their own implementation behaviors.
- The IC creates a clear picture of the next step for refining implementation.

For example, in the sample IC on p. 2, if a coach notes that he is attending team meetings and not taking an active role in helping teams use their time productively, he can use the IC map to help him know various ways he can support teams.

- For those who manage or supervise school-based staff developers, an IC helps them assess learning needs for school-based staff developers.

If a principal notices that team meetings are not focused on student learning, she might recommend to the coach that he take a more active role in the team’s meetings to help members and help the coach gain the expertise to do so.

NSDC developed innovation configuration maps for school-based staff developers’ responsibilities related to NSDC’s 12 standards for staff development. With the support of state department of education and state affiliate representatives in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Virginia and the financial support of Wachovia Foundation’s Teachers and Teaching Initiative, the school-based staff developer ICs delineate the responsibilities of school-based coaches for each standard. For example, coaches can easily see the four desired outcomes related to the Data-Driven standard — Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement:

▲ **Actions.** For each cluster of behaviors, the IC specifies what coaches will do related to each standard.

The ideal school-based coach behaviors for Desired Outcome 4.4 are shown above.

▲ **Blank areas.** Levels 5 and 6 are blank because no other variation is possible for this desired outcome.

NSDC developed innovation configuration maps for school-based staff developers’ responsibilities related to NSDC’s 12 standards for staff development.

- **Desired outcome 4.1:** Prepares disaggregated data from multiple sources for teacher use.
- **Desired outcome 4.2:** Teaches data access and organization.
- **Desired outcome 4.3:** Teaches analysis and interpretation of data from multiple sources.
- **Desired outcome 4.4:** Engages teachers in data analysis and interpretation to determine student and teacher needs (see p. 3).

Coaches can use the IC to know how to strengthen or refine their work with colleagues by reading all levels and setting a personal goal for where they want their own practice to be. Supervisors of coaches can use the IC to determine aspects of coaches' work they might want to develop more and provide coaches with targeted skill development in those areas. Coaches and their principals can use the IC for school-based coaches to discuss the expectations for the coach's work. Together, they can study the desired outcomes and determine which are appropriate for the role of a coach in this school.

Coaches also can develop their own ICs for

areas of their work not described in NSDC's school-based coaches IC. For example, if coaches are supporting teachers on a specific science program involving inquiry instruction and the scientific method, coaches might engage teachers in developing an IC that describes each of these. By doing so, teachers gain a deeper understanding about what inquiry and the scientific method are.

Innovation Configuration maps are useful tools that have multiple purposes. Coaches will find them invaluable in their work. Whether for assessment, refinement, clarification, or description of their work, ICs help coaches understand fully their responsibilities and fulfill those responsibilities daily.

References

Hord, S. (2006). Innovation configurations for school-based staff developers. In Killion, J. & Harrison, C., *Taking the lead: New roles for teacher leaders and school-based coaches*. pp. 157-159. Oxford, OH: NSDC. ♦

GET THE ICs
IC maps for school-based staff developers are included in *Taking the Lead* (see below) and also available separately on a CD-ROM. Available through store.nsd.org.

by Joellen Killion and Cindy Harrison

Taking the Lead

New roles for teachers and school-based coaches



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This book explores the complex, multi-faceted roles played by teacher leaders and school-based coaches as well as examining district and school expectations, hiring practices, and deployment of these educators. NSDC, 2006



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