

THE LEARNING Principal®

FOR A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY OF SCHOOL LEADERS ENSURING SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

INNOVATION CONFIGURATIONS

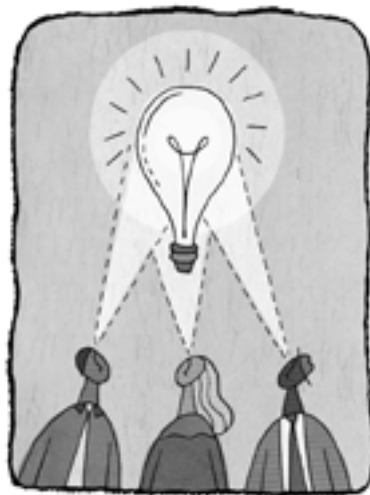
light the way for deeper learning

BY JOAN RICHARDSON

John Shaughnessy admits that his high school didn't always plan its professional development with student learning in mind.

"We were sending teachers to conferences and workshops but we weren't really doing anything with what they were learning," said Shaughnessy, principal of Lafayette High School in Wildwood, Mo., in the Rockwood School District in suburban St. Louis.

Shaughnessy's approach to overseeing professional development for his staff changed after he learned about the Innovation Configuration (IC) maps for NSDC's Standards for Staff Development. An IC 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 spelling out what is ideal and what is not. An IC map also shows the stages in an educator's journey as he or she moves toward ideal practice.

For Shaughnessy, the IC maps were both a tool that enabled him to learn more about high-quality professional development and a tool that showed him what a principal

could do to move a school closer to having a quality professional development program.

"Before I looked at the ICs, I really thought that staff development should be centered around

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**GLENN MALEYKO**

*Principal, Salina
Intermediate School*

District: Dearborn Public Schools, Dearborn, Mich.

Grades: 4-8

Enrollment: 570 students

Staff: 32 teachers
School includes a large population of Arabic-speaking immigrants, mainly Yemenese. Seven of 10 students are English language learners — the highest immigrant and refugee population in the district — and 95% of students receive free and reduced-price lunch.

QUOTE I LIVE BY:

"All of us can consciously decide to leave behind a life of mediocrity and to live a life of greatness — at home, at work, and in the community. No matter what our circumstances may be, such a decision can be made by every one of us."

— Stephen Covey

Q&A Principal creates expectations, supports vision

BY VALERIE VON FRANK

Q: Your school has a technology focus.

How did you become interested in technology?

A: As a teacher, I saw the power of it as a learning tool. I just wanted to link the computer to the TV monitor to show a lesson. Students were naturally drawn to using technology. The other motive is economic — kids in a global economy have a better chance at jobs if they are up-to-date with technology.

Q: In what ways have teachers learned to use the technology to benefit student learning?

A: Students create multimedia projects in almost every class that they present to the class. They research the topics and collaborate with one another. They podcast and blog. They can take broadcasting and web design classes.

Q: How did the school develop the technology it has now — wireless capabilities, six mobile computer labs, two permanent labs, overhead projectors, SMART Boards?

A: A group of teachers, including myself, began writing small grants of \$10,000 to \$15,000. We did that every year for several years. We were doing a professional learning community through this tech team before anyone was talking about PLCs. We were allowed as teachers to initiate the process. The principal (at that time) wasn't a techie, but supported and empowered us. When the district passed a technology bond, we were ready and had plans for how to implement additional technology.

Q: When you became the school's assistant principal, and then principal, how did you begin to create a staff able to use technology across the curriculum?

A: It comes down to two words — accountability and support. I go into every classroom and every teacher is required to use technology. I set up observations in advance and do informal

walk-ins. I track which teachers are using the mobile labs and how often, not to evaluate individual performance, but if some teachers aren't using labs, it's my responsibility to get them support.

I have a tech team that provides training and support. We have a train-the-trainer model. At weekly faculty meetings, when I can arrange a half-day released time for a team, or on a district staff development day, we use that time for learning — it might be in language arts, how to use PowerPoint with the mobile labs (or another focus on content using the technology to support the lesson).

I encourage teachers to present at the annual technology conference we host at our school for teachers from across the district and state. Presenting to colleagues requires a higher level of ability — you have to be proficient in the technology. And teaching peers is an intrinsic reward.

Q: How do you deal with resisters?

A: For a lot of teachers, if the technology doesn't work, they get uptight and intimidated. Through professional learning communities, they have support. There is enthusiasm from being on a team.

Q: What can others do to develop a similar culture?

A: It can't be a top-down model, especially in technology. Start with a team. I'd find one, two, or three people who already have some knowledge and get them together over lunch to get them to talk. I'd ask them to pilot a few things. I'd focus on the real trailblazers and let them take leadership. I'd have them attend a conference together outside of the district to begin to build a team, and start building a plan. You have to start with the leaders in any area, then branch to the rest of the staff. Choose one or two things to implement, and every year, take on one new thing.



Pat Roy is co-author of *Moving NSDC's Staff Development Standards Into Practice: Innovation Configurations* (NSDC, 2003).

Establish connection between professional development and student learning

Each of NSDC's 12 Standards for Staff Development begins with the same phrase: **Staff development that improves the learning of all students**... Those words were selected judiciously to communicate an underlying assumption about effective professional development — that teachers' quality of instruction, content knowledge, and assessment practices result in better academic learning for all students and that effective professional development enhances teachers' knowledge and skills.

In order to provide evidence of an impact on both teachers and their students, the principal **evaluates school-based staff development programs using a variety of data** that includes the collection of evidence throughout the process (Roy & Hord, 2003, p. 79). First, the principal **collects information on participant satisfaction for each professional development** experience whether that is participation in a learning team or attendance at a training session. The principal also **identifies the changes in teacher knowledge and skills that resulted from participation in staff development experiences**. The principal will want to determine whether staff members feel more competent to address the deep content knowledge embedded in student learning standards and whether their lesson plans reflect that deepening knowledge base.

The principal also **assesses the extent to which school culture and organizational structures, policies, and processes have changed** to support and reinforce new practices or programs. Guskey (2000) reports that "many improvement efforts in education fail simply because they are unclear or misleading about the kind of organi-

zational support required for change. As a result, educators end up trying to implement an innovation that they do not fully understand in organizations that do not fully support their efforts" (p. 149). The principal also is skillful in **arranging for teacher surveys, interviews, and observations to identify changes in classroom practices**. This kind of evidence determines the quantity and quality of implementation of new practices or curriculum materials. One of the tools that can be useful in determining the quality of implementation is an Innovation Configuration map (Hord, Rutherford, Huling, & Hall, 2004).

The principal also **arranges for the collection of student data (test scores, student surveys, and interviews) and classroom observations to determine changes in student learning and behaviors**. While there is a national focus on student achievement scores, most communities still want schools to promote positive student behaviors, lifelong learning, and citizenship skills.

A variety of data can be collected to indicate whether positive student behaviors as well as student learning are occurring.

These tasks occur throughout the professional learning process and include both formative as well as summative evaluation data. The formative data assist principals to fine-tune their school's professional development, and the summative data establish the connection between professional development and improved student learning.

Evaluation:

Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.

Learn more about NSDC's standards:
www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm

REFERENCES

- Guskey, T. (2000).** *Evaluating professional development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Hord, S., Rutherford, W., Huling, L., & Hall, G. (2004).** *Taking charge of change*. Austin, TX: SEDL.
- Roy, P. & Hord, S. (2003).** *Moving NSDC's staff development standards into practice: Innovation configurations, Volume I*. Oxford, OH: NSDC.

DEVELOPING A SHARED VISION

READ MORE ABOUT IC MAPS

- The Aug/Sept. *Tools for Schools* offers an introduction to developing and using IC maps to improve instruction.
- The September issue of *Teachers Teaching Teachers (T3)* includes an article about IC maps for school-based staff developers. NSDC members can access that article in the members-only area of www.nsd.org.

One of the key concepts undergirding the creation of a shared vision is that a mental picture is created that describes what the change would look like when fully implemented. The Innovation Configuration maps can be used to help every role group in the district see what they would be doing when implementing one of the standards. The following activity can be used to accomplish that goal.

Purpose: To develop a shared vision about the implementation of one of NSDC's Standards for Staff Development

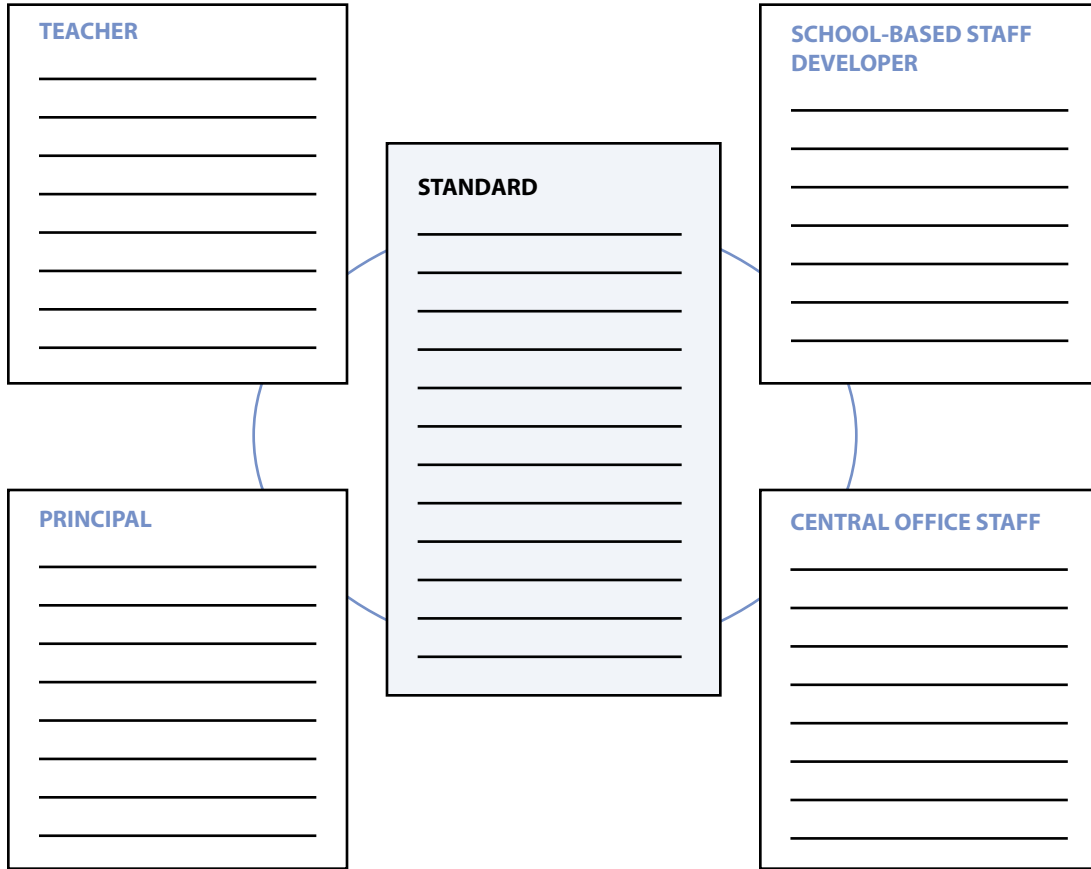
Group Size: 4-5 people

Time: 50-60 minutes

Materials: Copies of the IC maps for each of the role groups for one standard (group decides which standard to work on), rationale for the selected standard

DIRECTIONS

1. Each group selects one of the 12 staff development standards to learn more about.
2. Group members divide and read the IC maps for all of the role groups as well as the rationale for the selected standard.
3. Divide the readings among group members.
For example:
 - a) Person 1 reads the Teacher IC map — Learning Communities
 - b) Person 2 reads the School-Based Staff Developer IC map — Learning Communities
 - c) Person 3 reads the Principal IC map — Learning Communities
 - d) Person 4 reads the Central Office Staff IC map — Learning Communities
 - e) Person 5 reads the Rationale — Learning Communities
4. Each person reads the Desired Outcome statements and Level 1 variation and prepares to explain the tasks and responsibilities required of this role group.
5. Share the information within the group. Each person can use the following page for notes on what he or she has heard.



RATIONALE:

Innovation Configurations light the way for deeper learning

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staff needs. I came to realize the value of the collaboration between administrators and teachers, and teachers with teachers. I learned that we really need to tap into our own resources,” he said.

NSDC did groundbreaking work when it published the standards. Within a few years, however, the Council realized that educators who were embracing the standards still needed more explicit explanations about how to implement the standards. In cooperation with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, NSDC developed a series of IC maps to describe the responsibilities of 11 different role groups for implementing NSDC’s standards. The role groups are teachers, principals, school-based staff developers, superintendents, central office staff, school boards, staff development director, institution of higher education, professional associations, external assistance providers, and state education agency. (See insert for details about these products.)

NSDC considers the role of the principal in professional learning as especially important because of its belief in the value of school-based staff development. Each month, *The Learning Principal* carries a column by Patricia Roy, co-author of the IC maps for NSDC’s standards, which focuses on the principal’s work in improving professional learning. Roy examines one of the IC maps for one of the 12 standards each month and provides specific guidance about the principal’s role in implementing each standard. All of those columns are available on NSDC’s web site, www.nsd.org/standards/about/columns.cfm

Although examining the ICs for principals is important, principals should also spend time understanding the ICs for two other role groups — teachers and school-based staff developers. By probing the responsibilities for those groups, principals will deepen their understanding about how to achieve quality professional learning in their buildings.

THE ICS IN PRACTICE

In 2000, Sue McAdamis, Rockwood’s direc-

tor of professional development, along with the district professional development committee, had created a scoring guide to help principals gauge how well they were implementing NSDC’s standards. McAdamis used the rubric to give principals feedback on how they were including professional development in their school improvement plans.

“For us, ICs were the next logical step. They came at a good time because I was trying to notch it up a bit and help them see how they could evolve to a higher level of professional learning in their schools,” McAdamis said.

McAdamis assembled a study group to delve deeper into the standards. Ultimately, that group identified three standards — Learning Communities, Leadership, and Data-Driven — that it believed would leverage the most improvement in Rockwood.

She met with building principals and their professional development chairpersons and asked them to use the IC maps to rate themselves on those three standards.

“We had great conversations as they assessed where they might be. Most were blatantly honest with me about where they thought they were and what next steps they planned to take,” she said.

Rockwood South Middle School Principal Karen Seiber recalls a very rich conversation with McAdamis about how teachers and administrators in her school could improve. The self-evaluation allowed them to have a conversation about “where we are, why we are there and what we might do to improve during the next year,” Seiber said.

“Using the IC took away that feeling that someone was judging you. It was a very reflective conversation,” Seiber said.

Shaughnessy had a similar experience. “It gave us a chance to grade ourselves on how we were doing on collaboration, providing enough time, allowing the staff development to mirror our school improvement plan and our district goals. That provides staff with a snapshot of the professional development as measured by the 12 NSDC standards,” he said.

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NSDC has created Innovation Configuration maps for 11 role groups:

- teachers,
- school-based staff developers,
- principals,
- director of staff development,
- central office staff,
- superintendent,
- school board members,
- institutions of higher education,
- professional associations,
- external technical assistance providers, and
- state education agencies.

CD-ROMs are available for each of the individual roles.

For details, visit store.nsd.org.

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STANDARDS ASSESSMENT

Since the creation of the IC maps, Rockwood also has invested in NSDC’s Standards Assessment Inventory (SAI). That provides every school with a snapshot of the professional learning in that school.

At Rockwood South, for example, the results of the SAI helped Seiber focus her school’s professional development. The IC maps helped her determine what her work should look like in order to improve in her school’s focus areas.

Although Rockwood South rated quite high on most of the standards, Seiber found that her school could do a better job of providing opportunities for teachers to observe each other teaching and providing feedback following the observations.

When Seiber examined the IC maps, she saw that a principal is responsible for establishing a culture that encourages collegial exchange (Learning Communities, Desired Outcome 1.4) and for developing a schedule that enables collegial interaction to occur (Learning Communities, Desired Outcome 1.2).

Her understanding about the principal’s role enabled her to advocate for released time for teachers and to create job-alike meetings for teachers twice a week. That means that all 7th-grade English teachers, for example, meet twice a week for professional learning and collaboration. In addition, cross curricular teams meet three times a week.

“The ICs have been a really good tool for

HOW DOES AN IC MAP DIFFER FROM A RUBRIC?

There are two major differences between a rubric and an Innovation Configuration map.

A rubric lists the optimal situation in the far right column and has a specific number of levels for each component. Teachers generally create a rubric to measure the quality of student work.

An Innovation Configuration map lists the optimal situation in the far left column and the number of levels varies with each component based on observation and actual practice. There is no defined number of levels for each component. IC maps are developed to measure the implementation of a new practice or program and provide support and assistance to improve the quality of implementation.

— Patricia Roy

me to use. They allow me to take a look at current practices, to evaluate those practices, and set goals for myself as a principal,” Seiber said.

“The challenge in working with teachers is to make professional development worthwhile and meaningful. They need to practice and implement what they have learned. They need time to reflect and learn from their reflections. The challenge to me is how I make those learning opportunities part of their everyday work,” Seiber said. ■

“For us, ICs were the next logical step. They came at a good time because I was trying to notch it up a bit and help them see how they could evolve to a higher level of professional learning in their schools.”

— Sue McAdamis,
director of
professional
development,
Rockwood School
District

Example of an Innovation Configuration

for the Learning Communities standard, Desired Outcome 1.2

Desired Outcome 1.2: Creates an organizational structure that supports collegial learning.			
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Persists with a regular schedule for collegial interaction in the face of resistance. Structures time for teacher reflection about their learning. Monitors to ensure the time is used well.	Structures the daily/ weekly schedule for regular meeting times during the school day for collegial interaction. Monitors to ensure the time is used well.	Uses staff meetings for collegial interaction and sharing. Grade-level and content-area groups meet throughout the year with the goal of sharing ideas, resources, and curricula.	Does not adapt the structure of the school to accommodate collegial learning.

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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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