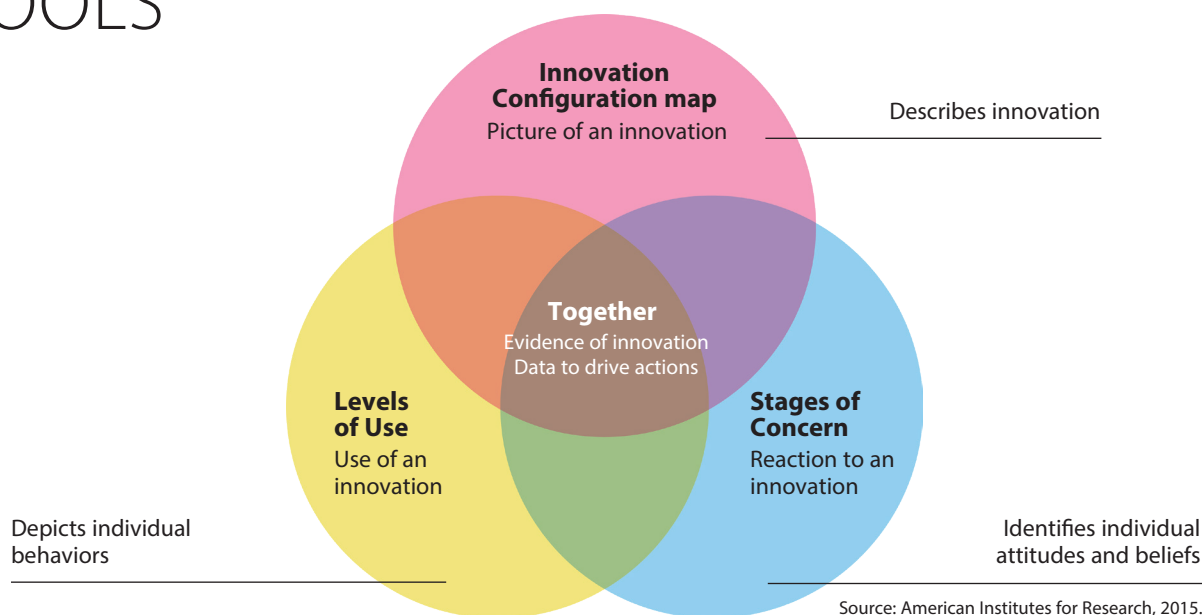


TOOLS



A tool to address educators' concerns about change

BY LEARNING FORWARD

Too often, schools or districts introduce an innovation or program with high hopes for student improvement only to see the expensive, time-consuming effort fizzle out. When that happens, they may try another program, and then another, eager for different results. However, the problem is usually not the program, but the way educators respond to it.

To avoid this cycle, educators need to better understand the change process so that new initiatives work effectively and achieve the desired results. Change is a process, not an event, and it occurs when the individuals in an organization work to make it happen. Researchers have found that all individuals approach a new program or change with a personal set of concerns, and those concerns end up impacting a group or organizational response (Psencik et al., 2020).

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model, or CBAM, offers a way to

understand change and address common concerns related to it (Hord & Roussin, 2013). It is a conceptual framework with tools and techniques for assessing a change process in an educational environment.

CBAM includes three dimensions: Stages of Concern, Levels of Use, and Innovation Configurations (American Institutes for Research, 2015). Educators can use the three dimensions to examine the components of an innovation, track implementation progress, report the findings objectively, and design interventions or strategies to move the process forward.

In the Stages of Concern, leaders address the concerns of the people charged with implementing the change effort and assess attitudes and feelings. The Levels of Use tool helps determine how well staff are using a program, ranging from nonuse to advanced use. An Innovation Configuration map provides a clear picture of what high-

quality implementation looks like in classroom use.

Together, the dimensions give a better understanding of where educators are in the process of change and where they need to go. The following tool outlines seven Stages of Concern commonly experienced by educators encountering change.

REFERENCES

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Hord, S.M. & Roussin, J.L. (2013). *Implementing change through learning: Concerns-based concepts, tools, and strategies for guiding change*. Corwin Press.

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IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS EDUCATORS' STAGES OF CONCERN

Examining Stages of Concern is a process that includes a questionnaire, interviews, and open-ended statements, enabling leaders to identify staff members' attitudes and beliefs toward a new program or initiative. This tool presents statements typical to each stage in the change process and strategies leaders can use to move their staff from one stage to the next toward more thorough program implementation.

<p>Stage 0: Unconcerned (Awareness) <i>Educators are aware that an innovation is being introduced but not really interested or concerned with it.</i></p> <p>Typical responses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm not really concerned about this innovation. • I don't really care what this innovation involves. 	
Strategies leaders might employ:	Strategies I want to try:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 there are no foolish questions. 	
<p>Stage 1: Informational <i>Educators are interested in some information about the change.</i></p> <p>Typical responses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	
Strategies leaders might employ:	Strategies I want to try:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	
<p>Stage 2: Personal <i>Educators want to know the personal impact of the change.</i></p> <p>Typical responses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is this going to affect me? • I'm concerned about whether I can do this. 	
Strategies leaders might employ:	Strategies I want to try:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	

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<p>Stage 3: Management <i>Educators are concerned about how the change will be managed in practice.</i></p> <p>Typical responses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I seem to be spending all my time getting materials ready. • I'm concerned we'll be spending more time in meetings. 	
Strategies leaders might employ:	Strategies I want to try:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	
<p>Stage 4: Consequence <i>Educators are interested in the impact on students or the school.</i></p> <p>Typical responses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is using this going to affect my students? • I'm concerned about whether I can change my practice and ensure that students will learn better. 	
Strategies leaders might employ:	Strategies I want to try:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	
<p>Stage 5: Collaboration <i>Educators are interested in working with colleagues to make the change effective.</i></p> <p>Typical responses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm concerned about relating what I'm doing to what other teachers are doing. • Let's work together to move this idea forward. 	
Strategies leaders might employ:	Strategies I want to try:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	
<p>Stage 6: Refocusing <i>Educators begin refining the innovation to improve student learning results.</i></p> <p>Typical responses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have some ideas about something that would work even better than this. • I think we can take this initiative to a whole new level. 	
Strategies leaders might employ:	Strategies I want to try:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	
<p>Source: Adapted from Psencik, K., Brown, F., & Hirsh, S. (2020). <i>The learning principal: Becoming a learning leader.</i> Learning Forward.</p>	