



How well is change progressing in your school or system?

BY LEARNING FORWARD

After carefully vetting and selecting a new curriculum, a school district rolls it out enthusiastically, hoping it will improve students' math scores. District leaders dedicate time and effort to the professional learning to support the program. Yet despite planning for these changes and investing in teachers' knowledge of the curriculum, what happens in each classroom varies widely.

Some teachers skip the professional learning sessions and never look at the materials. Some incorporate a few of the curriculum components but struggle with the pacing, so they don't get through the lessons fully. Others diligently attempt to keep up with the pacing guide, but without pausing to thoroughly reflect on how it's going, there's no way to know if students are mastering the content.

"No one would expect improvement under those conditions, but time after time, organizations will seek to assess the effectiveness of an innovation without ever examining how it is being used," wrote Shirley Hord in *Taking Charge of Change* (Hord et al., 2006). Before leaders have gained a firm grasp on an innovation's use throughout the district or system, they often de-emphasize it or replace it because they aren't seeing the outcomes they anticipated.

How, then, can leaders assess who is applying the innovation, how, how often, and whether they are modifying it? How could the principal of the school described above get a pulse on how teachers throughout the school are or are not adopting the curriculum?

The Levels of Use tool on the following pages fills that gap. Drawn

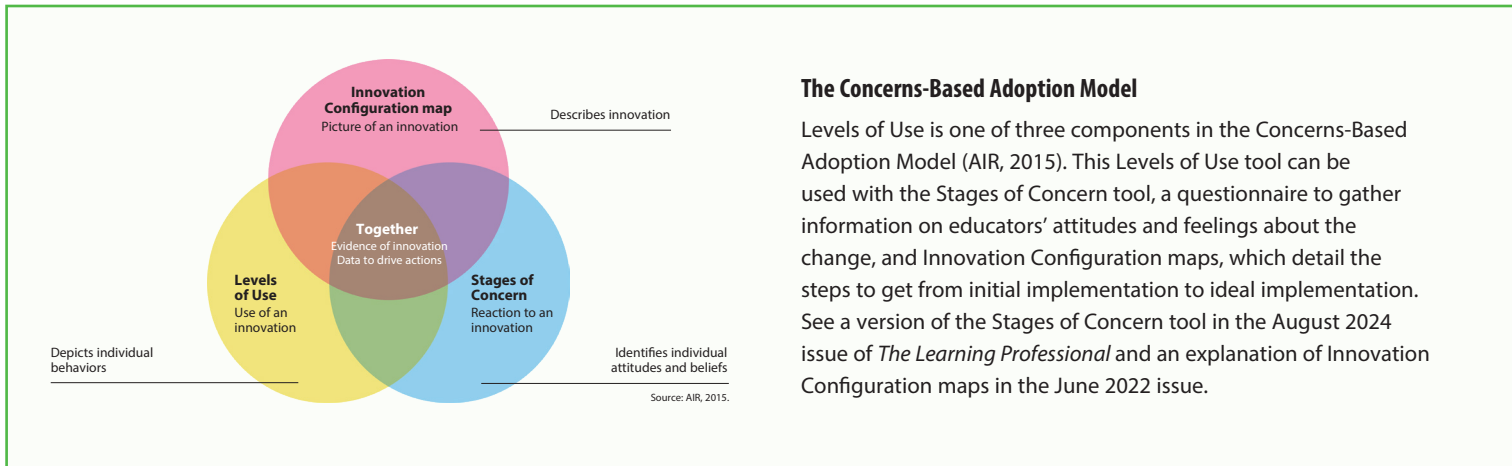
from the Concerns-Based Adoption Model for managing change (Hall et al., 2006), it helps leaders and change facilitators understand where participating educators are along the implementation continuum, ranging from nonuse to full classroom integration and beyond.

With this tool, leaders can be better equipped to guide their teams toward successful implementation, whether the change is a new curriculum, improved instructional practice, or another innovation.

REFERENCES

Hall, G.E., Dirksen, D.J., & George, A.A. (2006). *Measuring implementation in schools: Levels of Use*. SEDL.

Hord, S.M., Rutherford, W.L., Huling, L., & Hall, G.E. (2006). *Taking charge of change*. SEDL.



The Concerns-Based Adoption Model

Levels of Use is one of three components in the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (AIR, 2015). This Levels of Use tool can be used with the Stages of Concern tool, a questionnaire to gather information on educators’ attitudes and feelings about the change, and Innovation Configuration maps, which detail the steps to get from initial implementation to ideal implementation. See a version of the Stages of Concern tool in the August 2024 issue of *The Learning Professional* and an explanation of Innovation Configuration maps in the June 2022 issue.

IDENTIFY HOW EDUCATORS ARE IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

Use this tool to understand where an individual is along the continuum of use of a new curriculum, initiative, or change. The column on the left of the table below and on the following page describes eight levels of use and the middle column provides a statement that is characteristic of someone who is at that level of use. The column on the right provides a space to check the level of change that applies to the educator you are working with. Under each level is a decision point, which individuals need to make to take steps toward the next level of use.

To determine an educator’s level of use, you can use the interview questions that follow the table along with your observations of the educator, if applicable.

Note that this tool is not intended to be used for evaluation or assessment but for developing a holistic understanding of an educator’s current status to inform next steps and support for implementing change.

Level of Use	Characteristic statement	✓
Level 0: Nonuse The user has little or no innovation knowledge or interest and is taking no action.	“I’ve heard about it, but, honestly, I have too many other things to do right now.”	
<i>Decision point A:</i> Explores the innovation and what it requires of students and educators.		
Level 1: Orientation The user takes the initiative to learn more about the innovation.	“I’m looking at the materials and am considering using it sometime in the future.”	
<i>Decision point B:</i> Establishes a time to begin using the innovation.		
<i>continued on next page</i>		

IDENTIFY HOW EDUCATORS ARE IMPLEMENTING CHANGE *continued*

Level of Use	Characteristic statement	✓
Level 2: Preparation The user has plans to begin using the innovation.	"I've attended professional learning, and I've set aside time every week for studying the materials."	
<i>Decision point C:</i> Makes educator-oriented changes (as opposed to student-oriented ones).		
Level 3: Mechanical The user makes changes to better organize the innovation with little time for reflection.	"Most of my time is spent organizing materials and keeping things going as smoothly as possible every day."	
<i>Decision point D1:</i> Establishes a routine pattern of use.		
Level 4A: Routine The user makes few or no innovation changes and has an established pattern of use.	"This year, it has worked out beautifully. I'm sure there will be a few changes next year, but basically I will use it the same way I did this year."	
<i>Decision point D2:</i> Changes the innovation to increase student outcomes based on formal or informal evaluation.		
Level 4B: Refinement The user makes changes to the innovation to increase student outcomes.	"I recently developed a more detailed assessment instrument to gain more specific information from students to see where I need to change my use of the innovation."	
<i>Decision point E:</i> Initiates innovation changes based on colleague input and coordination.		
Level 5: Integration The user makes deliberate efforts to coordinate with others in using the innovation.	"Not everyone has all the skills needed to use the program to have the greatest impact on student learning. I've been working with another teacher for two years, and recently a third teacher began working with us."	
<i>Decision point F:</i> Begins exploring alternatives or major modifications to the innovation presently in use.		
Level 6: Renewal The user re-evaluates the quality of their use of the innovation and seeks more effective alternatives to its established use.	"I am still interested in the program and using it with modifications. Frankly, I'm reading, talking, and even doing a little research to see whether some other approach might be better for the students."	
Adapted from Hall et al., 2006, and Hord et al., 2006.		

How well is change progressing in your school or system?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DETERMINING LEVEL OF USE

Ask the educator you're working with the following questions in the order they appear. When you reach a "no" response, probe further on that question and then mark the educator's level of use as indicated below. When you get a "yes" response, continue to the next question. When you have marked a level of use, move to the reflection questions below.

Are you using the (curriculum, innovation, or other change strategy)?	
No: Select Level 0, 1, or 2	Yes: Continue to the next question
If not, do you plan to use it and have you set a start date? Are you currently looking for information about it?	
No: Select Level 0 or 1	Yes: Continue to the next question
If you are using it, are you making any changes to it, and if so, what kind?	
No: Select Level 3 or 4A	Yes: Continue to the next question
Are you coordinating your use of the innovation with colleagues or other users internal or external to our system?	
No: Select Level 4B or 6	Yes: Continue to the next question
Are you planning on exploring major modifications?	
No: Select Level 4B or 5	Yes: Select Level 6
Adapted from Hall et al., 2006.	

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

After talking with the individual and checking off the appropriate level of use, consider these questions to determine your next steps in supporting change implementation.

What is the educator's current level of use of the new curriculum, initiative, or change?	
How will you support the educator to move to the next level of use? The decision points, or needed action steps, between each level can give you ideas of the kind of support the educator needs.	

REFERENCE

AIR. (2015, December 8). *CBAM: The Concerns-Based Adoption Model.* air.org/resource/cbam-concerns-based-adoption-model ■