

Transcript for *Implementation Standard: Stages of Change*

Kimberly Audet (Kimberly): Welcome to this edition of our professional learning series focused on creating and sustaining change. We are hopeful that this topic will inform Professional Development and Evaluation Committees as they design professional learning systems in their districts. I'm Kimberly Audet from the Connecticut State Department of Education. I'm here today with Kate Field from the Connecticut Education Association.

Kate Field (Kate): Hello. Thanks for having me.

Kimberly: There are eight CT Standards for Professional Learning. Today we will focus on the Implementation standard. So let's take a closer look at the standard first. The Implementation standard is Professional learning that enhances both educator practice and outcomes for each and every student applies change research and uses tools to identify and support the developmental stages of change and ensures the fidelity of implementation.

Understanding the change process is an important part of the Implementation professional learning standard. This podcast will focus on three components of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model for change, which, when used well, can help smooth the path to successful implementation of any initiative that requires a change in practice.

Kate, can you give us a little background on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model?

Kate: Sure. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model, also known as CBAM, is a researched-based model for creating and sustaining change. Growing from research into the concerns that new teachers had when they entered the profession, its tools have been validated many times over. It describes, explains and predicts beliefs and behaviors of individuals throughout the change process.

Frances Fuller was one of the firsts to conduct research into the stages of concern for teachers. Fuller identified three phases of concerns of new teachers on continuum from self, task of teaching, and impact on students. Later, the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at University of Texas in Austin developed what we know today as CBAM.

Hall and Hord continue to build on the research of the stages of change and have identified the most recent principles of change and developed the three tools that we will reference later on – Stages of Concern, Levels of Use, and Innovation Configurations.

According to Hall and Hord, there are 10 principles that underlie the process of change. It is important to note that the principles are foundational to change but do not reflect all aspects of change because change is very complex. These 10 change principles are:

1. Change is learning;
2. Change is a process, not an event;
3. The school is the primary unit for change;
4. Organizations adopt change. It is the individual that implements change;
5. Interventions are key to the success of the change process;

6. Appropriate interventions reduce resistance to change;
7. Administrator leadership is essential to long-term success and change;
8. Facilitating change is a team effort;
9. Mandates can work; and
10. The context influences the process of learning and change.

Although we won't go into further detail about these principles, it is important to keep these in mind as we review the Stages of Change or Levels of Use.

When considering implementing an innovation in your district, there are three dimensions to consider: Innovation Configuration Maps, Stages of Concern, and Levels of Use. When considering all three of these in the change process the Innovation Configuration Maps describe the innovation in use, the Stages of Concern describe individuals' attitudes and beliefs, and the Levels of Use describe individual behaviors. Each of these dimensions can be used alone or collectively.

Kimberly: So Kate, you mentioned Innovation Configuration maps. So I have two questions. First, what are they and second how would a district use them?

Kate: Well Innovation Configuration maps or IC maps are one of the dimensions of implementing change. An IC map describes the innovation in action and what it looks like in use across a continuum from unacceptable behavior to the ideal behavior. It is a tool that users can refer to identify the ideal actions that the change would look like when it is implemented with fidelity.

Learning Forward's resource *Standards into Practice: IC Maps for Standards for Professional Learning* describes innovation configuration maps as a resource to help navigate a change. An IC Map communicates a shared vision, identifies what key educators do to be successful, provides a resource for monitoring progress, and specifies what the outcome of assistance is. When designing an IC map it is important to have many different stakeholders contributing to the shared vision of the innovation. It will create more buy-in from the members in your school and district.

All stakeholders who play a role in the innovation can contribute to defining and describing the varying behaviors that would be demonstrated throughout the change process for a specific innovation.

Hall and Hord's *Implementing Change: Patterns, Principles, and Potholes* identifies three questions that should be asked throughout the process of IC Map development. Those questions are:

- What does the innovation look like when it is in use?
- What would you see in classrooms where it is used well? (and when it is not used well)
- What will teachers and students be doing when the innovation is in use?

Kimberly: The other two dimensions of implementation that you mentioned are stages of concern and levels of use. How necessary is it to consider these dimensions when implementing a new initiative?

Kate: Well, it's critical. It's important to pay close attention to how users feel about the change they're trying to implement, as well as the challenges and successes they face as they attempt to change their performance.

When going through the early stages of a change, users often are unsure that they have enough information about the initiative, how using it will affect them personally, and what it will take to manage all the tasks of use. Often times these early concerns are more intense than they are at the later stages. If these concerns aren't appropriately addressed, it's common for users to discontinue use of the initiative to whatever extent they can. However, if their concerns are addressed appropriately, the user is encouraged to continue refining his or her use of the initiative.

As use of a new initiative becomes more smooth, users then tend to begin to think of how their use can impact more people, and work with colleagues to expand the use even more. The user's concerns take on an entirely different, and often more positive, meaning.

Kimberly: So, Kate would you say there is a relationship between the Stages of Concern and Levels of Use of a new practice?

Kate: Yes, but it's not a direct cause-and-effect relationship, and one can't draw a direct line from any one Stage of Concern to any single Level of Use. Change is too complex for that, and both Stages of Concern and Levels of Use are highly dependent on the context in which the educator works. When the support given is specific to the individual's needs, rather than more generic, it comes from a skilled facilitator or colleague who has a good working relationship with the user, the user moves through the implementation continuum more quickly. When users have the same concerns, and can work together with a facilitator or colleague to address them, the feelings of isolation break down more, and progress in implementation comes quicker. The seven Stages of Concern are organized into 3 categories, which follow a continuum, self, task, and impact.

Kimberly: Well, how might this play out if a district announces a new initiative?

Kate: Well, first a district must address self-concerns to help individuals become more comfortable preparing for, and beginning to, change behavior. Not addressing self-concerns may result in resistance by the individual. Within the category of self, the three stages are: Awareness, Informational and Personal. If educators have Awareness concerns, they generally either won't be affected by the change the district wants to implement, or they have so many other things on their plates at the present time that the initiative being discussed takes a back seat in their minds.

At the Informational level, educators look to learn more about the initiative. Informational concerns can arise at any time during the implementation of a change, which might be

determined by the depth of knowledge educators want to achieve, questions or challenges that arise during implementation, and the impact they see the change has on students.

The second category of Stages of Concern is the Task area, which supports a person to get through the ‘awkward’ stage of use usually within the first years of use. Similar to the Self area of the Stages of Concern, not addressing TASK concerns encourages resistance to change.

When an educator begins something new in his practice, it’s often very awkward and mechanical, and requires a lot of time to manage all of the tasks of just getting used to the new practice. When management concerns aren’t addressed, educators tend to give up trying to use the new practice. They perceive it as not worth the time and effort when they don’t see progress. However, when management concerns are addressed successfully, and the use of the new practice becomes more smooth, the educator’s thoughts turn to how the new practice is really impacting students.

Kimberly: Kate, the last area you mentioned was impact. Can you tell us a little more about that?

Kate: Absolutely. The three stages of concern in this area can occur after three to five years of the initial innovation implementation. This area focuses on the individual expressing concerns about the impact the innovation has on others such as colleagues or students. The consequence concern is when the individual begins to think about the impact he or she has on others. This is a positive development in the change process, and often leads the educator to begin collaborating more with colleagues to coordinate their efforts in using the new practice and work together to improve the innovation.

Kimberly: Are the concerns always negative?

Kate: Not necessarily. Refocusing concerns can be either positive or negative, depending on the context in which they arise. If educators have refocusing concerns early on when implementing a new practice, those could indicate that the educator is facing challenges and instead of trying to overcome them, wants to change direction completely or they could arise when a practice has become embedded in the educator’s practice. Those could be an indication that the educator is ready to look at other practices that might have an even greater impact on students.

Kimberly: The last area you mentioned was Levels of Use.

Kate: Yes, that’s right. The Levels of Use can be thought of as falling into three different categories that describe use along a continuum. In the Pre-Use category, the focus is on the initiative itself and its requirements for use. In the Immediate Sphere of Influence category, the focus falls on learning to use, and refine. In the Wider Sphere of Influence category, the user is skilled at using the new practices and seeks to have a greater impact on a larger group

Kimberly: Is it correct then to say that the levels describe what the user actually does when preparing for and implementing change?

Kate: At the first three levels, the educator isn't actually using the new practice. Unless the change is mandated of all potential educators, the decision to actually make the change might be made at any time during the orientation or preparation level. Gaining enough information to determine the value of a potential change and what it will require to use it will often lead an educator to decide whether or not to begin preparing to use the change. The preparation could include, for example, learning a new skill, gathering materials, or scheduling use of a new program. Sometimes, a final decision to use a new initiative isn't made until preparation takes place.

Kimberly: We know that sometimes it's easier to learn and use some skills than others. So how long does it take before an individual is comfortable using a skill?

Kate: Research has shown in the past that it takes a skilled educator a minimum of 10 to 12 attempts when using something relatively new before there's any real comfort level in using it. When we begin using something new, it's usually awkward and difficult, we feel clumsy, and a lot of time is spent just getting ready for each use. But if we stick with it, our use generally becomes more smooth over time, as long as we continue to mostly do what we originally learned to do with the new initiative. Once we're much more comfortable with the practice, we're more likely to look more closely at the impact it has on students and begin to make some changes to use that will increase the positive impact for them.

In schools today, more often than not, educators are encouraged to work together when they begin to implement new practices. This collaboration might be misconstrued as those educators being at the Integration level of use. However, if these practices are new, educators might actually, as a group, be at a mechanical level.

Kimberly: So how would a change facilitator know the difference?

Kate: Well in part, it's determined by *why* the educators are working together, and what they do when they collaborate. For example, if the practice is new, chances are good that they work together to plan lessons, organize materials, and solve the problems they encounter when they try to use the practice.

But if they're individually reaching the point where their use is very smooth, and they're individually making decisions that they see as having a positive impact on their students, then they might want to work together more to share those ideas, to generate more changes, and to widen the impact that they collectively have when they use the practice together.

Kimberly: So Kate, what happens when an initiative has been in use and educators have been supported?

Kate: Well, when an initiative has been in use and educators have reached the Renewal level, they'll once again move on to an Orientation or Preparation level, since major changes bring the need to learn new skills or significantly alter existing practices.

Although all educators should have a basic understanding of the concepts of change, it's especially important for PDECs to have this understanding. Districts will have greater success in preparing educators for, and implementing, new initiatives if they have several people – both teachers and administrators – who are trained to use the Stages of Concern tools, and use them consistently.

Kimberly: Well thank you for the information and joining me today, Kate. For our listeners, if you have any questions about the topic in today's podcast, please contact the Connecticut State Department of Education at 860-713-6820. Or Kate, can they contact you as well?

Kate: Oh, absolutely. They can contact me at the Connecticut Education Association at 860-725-6368.