

Innovation Configuration Map: Clarifying Instructional Leadership

A body of research about what constitutes effective instructional leadership reveals meaningful improvements in student outcomes result when educators have collaborative opportunities to learn and refine practice. Students benefit most when all educators are expected to be professional learners who deepen their understanding of the *what* and *how* of teaching and learning. Developing a culture of organizational learning and collaborative communities of practice among educators is among the greatest challenges and goals of any instructional leader – district or building administrator, curriculum specialist, instructional coach, or teacher-leader. The use of reflective tools can guide instructional leaders as they grapple with the complexities of building and sustaining a rigorous instructional program. This document provides a suite of such tools to help instructional leaders enact and foster systemic change by creating the kinds of district, school, and classroom environments needed to prepare students for success.

A change, or innovation, can assume several different configurations that encompass the ideal state envisioned by its designers and different variations arising from user interpretation and experience. Innovation Configuration (IC) maps are descriptive documents that provide clarity by detailing what an innovation should look like in practice. IC maps describe the *how* and *what* of an innovation and provide a way to understand the possible progression of behaviors. These maps are useful not only throughout the change process, but also once an innovation is fully implemented and leaders strive to maximize outcomes. IC maps are valuable in developing a common understanding of expectations, identifying where additional support is needed, and encouraging self-reflection and self-assessment. It is important to note that IC maps are not intended as evaluative tools. Instead, they are a means to assess and measure the various forms of innovation implementation and inform goal setting and next steps. Inherent in the productive use of IC maps is the need to openly share their purpose and intent and use results to enhance collaboration in ways that allow all voices to contribute and be presumed significant.

The following IC maps, organized around four dimensions of sound instructional leadership – Strategic Competence, Facilitating Adult Learning, Planning and Collaboration, and Data Support and Analysis – give instructional leaders purposeful opportunities to pause, reflect, and compare current practice to organizational values and expectations. Regular application of these tools helps leaders determine needs, plan actions, and measure the impact of those actions.

A suggested first step is for instructional leaders to develop a common understanding of the components in each map through collaborative dialogue. Instructional leaders can then use these tools in ongoing continuous improvement efforts to –

- Initiate or focus the conversation about instructional leadership.
- Examine the current state of instructional leadership in a district or school.
- Design or strengthen existing district or school structures for collaboration and learning.
- Support job-embedded professional leadership growth and development.
- Guide decision-making about how to leverage instructional leadership to improve teaching and learning.

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A. Strategic Competence. <i>Leaders attend to the relevant mission and vision, have sufficient content and pedagogical content knowledge, build positive relationships, implement effective routines and processes, support collaborative improvement processes, and engage in metacognition and reflection.</i>			
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The leader maintains a vision of excellence in teaching aligned with the mission and vision of the district and campus. 2. The leader has a balance of content and pedagogical knowledge, supported by context knowledge. 3. The leader works continuously to establish routines and trust. 4. The leader provides clear expectations and implements structures to align efforts by groups of teachers. 5. The leader focuses on building collective capacity. 6. The leader consistently demonstrates reflective practice that supports thinking about the work deeply in order to learn and get better. 7. The leader focuses collaboration with teacher groups through the ongoing consideration of several key questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is our fundamental purpose? • What do we hope to achieve? • What are our strategies for becoming better? • What criteria will we use to assess our improvement efforts? 8. The leader consistently refines his or her knowledge of—and practices for—facilitating adult learning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The leader supports teaching aligned with the mission and vision of the district and campus. 2. The leader is familiar with content and pedagogical knowledge, supported by context knowledge. 3. The leader works to establish routines and trust. 4. The leader provides expectations and implements structures to align efforts by groups of teachers. 6. The leader demonstrates reflective practice that supports thinking about the work deeply in order to learn and get better. 7. The leader focuses collaboration with teacher groups through the ongoing consideration of some of the following key questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is our fundamental purpose? • What do we hope to achieve? • What are our strategies for becoming better? • What criteria will we use to assess our improvement efforts? 8. The leader is developing his or her knowledge of—and practices for—facilitating adult learning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The leader’s work is often aligned with the mission and vision of the district and campus. 2. The leader is learning the content, supported by context knowledge. 3. The leader has some routines and is building trust. 4. The leader provides expectations and implements structures to align the efforts of individual teachers and with some groups of teachers. 6. The leader is learning reflective practice that supports thinking about the work deeply in order to learn and get better. 8. The leader is developing knowledge of—and practices for—facilitating adult learning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The leader’s work is not aligned with the district or campus goals. 3. The leader uses few established routines. 4. The leader works one-on-one with teachers. 8. The leader has minimal knowledge of adult learning.