Webinar 4

Curriculum and Alignment

Implementation Challenges

Webinar 4 in a Series of 4

Webinar 1: What is Curriculum, Curriculum Alignment and Why Is It So Important?

Webinar 2: An Overview of Alignment Tools

Webinar 3: The Instructional Materials Review Process

Webinar 4: Curriculum and Alignment Implementation Challenges

Potential Implementation Challenges

- **Time & Money**

- Mindset
  - Individual – student-centric
  - Team

- Unrealistic Timelines

Time and Money
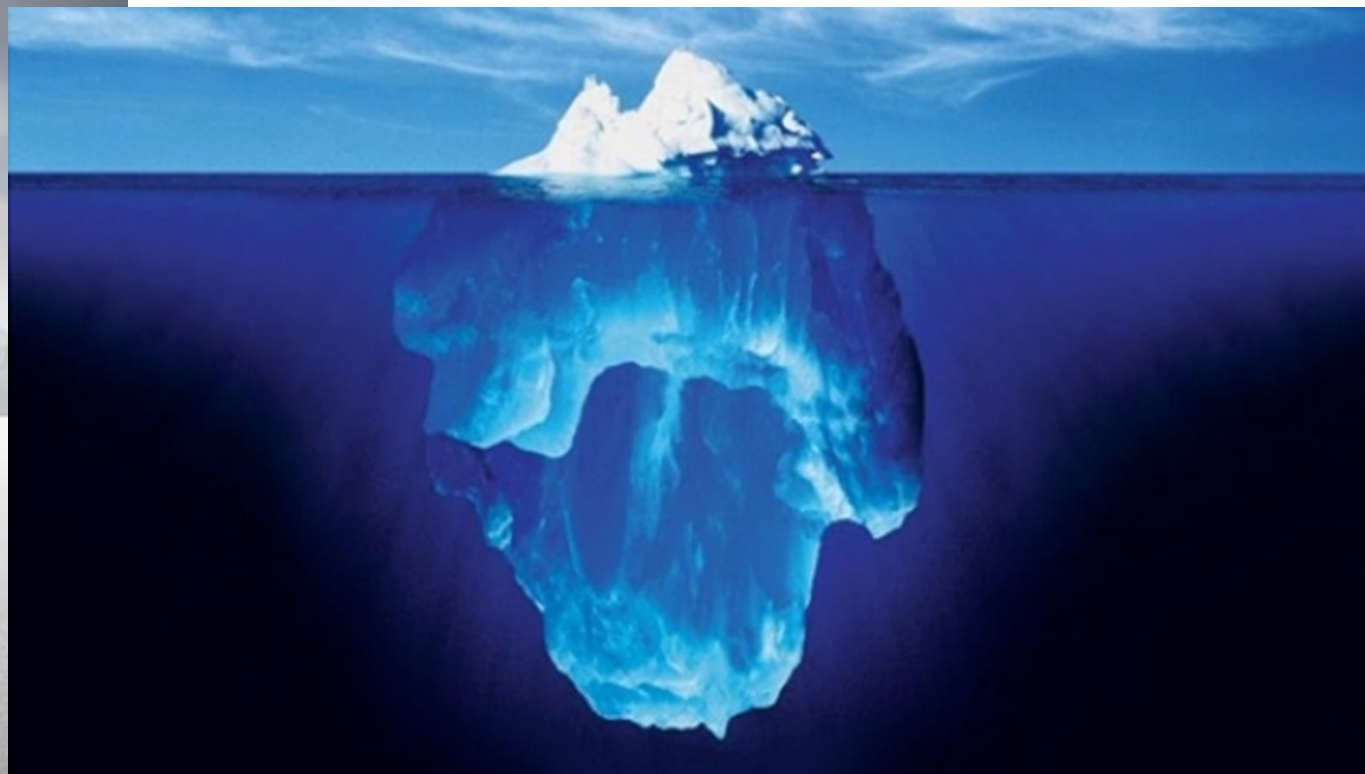
Potential Implementation Challenges

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Challenging Individual Mindsets

Change can be Hard

- Increase stress
- May get unpleasant
- Many argue "Why can't school be the way it has always been? It worked for me."

So what can we do to ease this transition for teachers?

For any major change, teachers must be clear about three essential points — *why, what,* and *how*: why they (or the school) can't continue a current practice; what new practice must be adopted; and how they will be helped to accomplish this.

This means candidly acknowledging aspects of the change that cause loss and allowing people time to grieve and time to make the change their own. It also means a sustained effort to ensure that the change is "user-friendly," that teachers' questions and concerns are addressed, and their suggestions solicited and considered.

Evans, 2017

Team Mindset

How can we shift the team's mindset to focus on the student's K-12 education rather than our individual subject/grade needs?
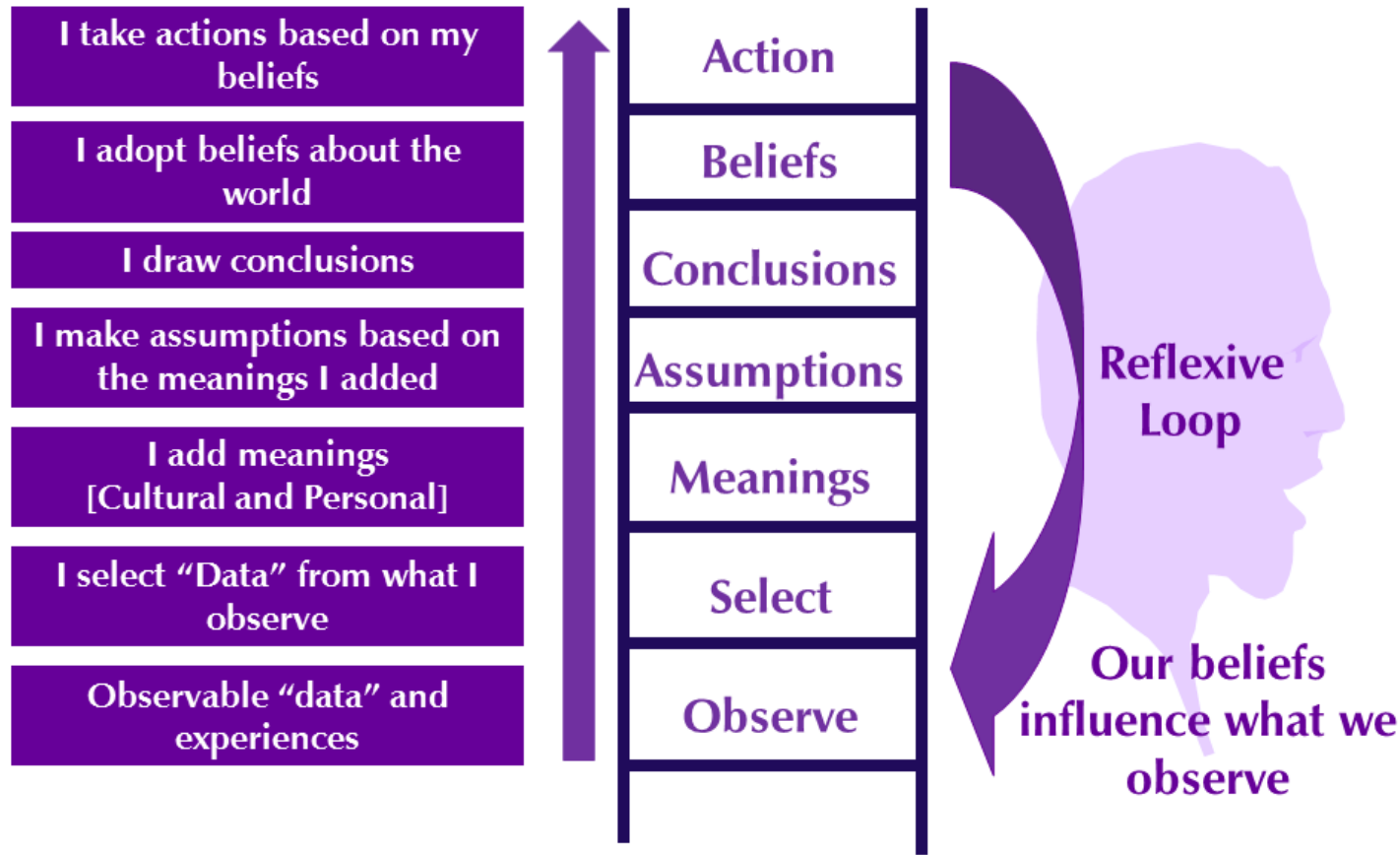
What are some ways we can support a student-focused mindset within the team?

1. Be aware of our individual thought process (ladder of inference)
2. Establish consensus-building protocols
3. Share our stories

1. The Ladder of Inference: Taking a Learning Stance

The Ladder of Inference

I take actions based on my beliefs	Action
I adopt beliefs about the world	Beliefs
I draw conclusions	Conclusions
I make assumptions based on the meanings I added	Assumptions
I add meanings [Cultural and Personal]	Meanings
I select "Data" from what I observe	Select
Observable "data" and experiences	Observe

Reflexive Loop

Our beliefs influence what we observe

Soon we are literally jumping to conclusions by missing facts and skipping the steps in the reasoning process. This can lead to misunderstanding within the team if not addressed.

2. Consensus-Building

1. We make decisions through consensus, whenever possible.

2. Consensus means that:

   a. I can live with the decision
   b. I will support my colleagues in implementing this decision.
   c. I will do absolutely nothing to impede the implementation of the decision.

3. Any proposals that are presented by a committee, a team, or a task force must be agreed to by consensus before it is brought forward to the decision making body.

4. After the decision making body fully explores a proposal and all concerns and questions have been resolved and it appears that consensus has been reached, then the facilitator will double check for consensus by asking:
   Are there any other questions, issues or concerns regarding this proposal?
   http://schoolreforminitiative.org/doc/consensus_decision.pdf

3. Sharing Your Story

With a partner/trio, share your story of a personal learning experience as a student in area that was challenging. Or perhaps how you may have found a way to "play the game" of school.

What's your story?

Then discuss:

- What is common to your stories?

- What were barriers to your learning?

- What worked for you as a student?

- Is your story as a student typical for most students?

- How does this look the same/different for your students today?
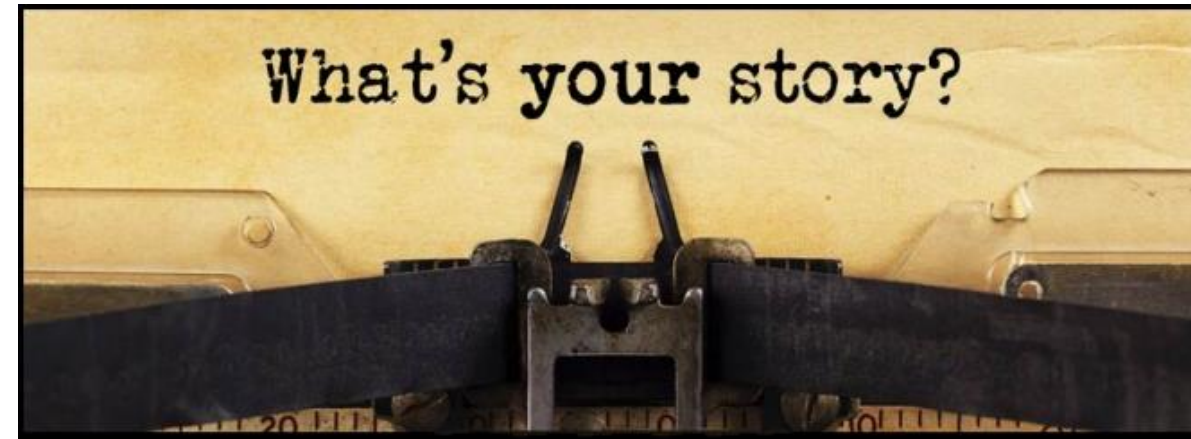
Potential Implementation Challenges

- Time & Money

- Mindset
  - Individual – student-centric
  - Team – building consensus

- **Unrealistic Timelines**

Unrealistic Timelines

Biggest mistake: Assuming that teachers already have the expertise to implement the change.

Think about how you'd feel if you got a new type of car, new computer operating system, or a new brand of phone than what you've been familiar with. This change feels foreign and uncomfortable at first and takes time for you to become acclimated with the new system.

Similarly, timelines need to incorporate the idea that teachers not only need to be able to understand the curricular materials but truly feel comfortable as well as change routines accordingly. **This is very difficult to bring about – yet essential for true and sustainable implementation.**

References

- Argyris, C. (1990) *Overcoming Organizational Defenses. Facilitating organizational learning,* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

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- Evans, R. (2017). *NAIS - Why a School Doesn't Run — or Change — Like a Business.* [online] Nais.org. Available at: https://www.nais.org/magazine/independent-school/fall-2015/why-a-school-doesn-t-run-or-change-like-a-busi/ [Accessed 25 Sep. 2017].

Thank You!

- This is the end of Webinar #4, "Curriculum and Alignment Implementation Challenges"

- This concludes our series of webinars on Curriculum and Alignment. For more information please check out the Curriculum and Alignment button on the Illinois Classrooms in Action Webpage.

Questions?

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