

Instructional Learning Cycle Overview

CONTINUOUS USE OF DATA TO INFORM AND DIFFERENTIATE INSTRUCTION

Many schools have instituted Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as outlined by Rick DuFour or the Data Teams process as described by Doug Reeves to provide structures for teacher interaction around student learning. Both of these structures include two basic tenets: 1. Ensure that all Students Learn; 2. Create a Culture of Professional Collaboration and Collective Responsibility. Professional Learning Communities and the Data Teams process both provide a structured way for teachers to talk about improving student and adult learning and promote the actions needed to produce results. For those schools that have not already adopted a process such as Professional Learning Communities or Data Teams that implements short term cycles of improvement focusing on the quality of classroom instruction, the Instructional Learning Cycle process provides a defined structure for schools to follow.

WHAT IS THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEARNING CYCLE PROCESS?

The Instructional Learning Cycle (ILC) process is a defined structure that promotes collaboration and collective responsibility within a teacher team by setting up structures for short term cycles of improvement. Upon review of state and local assessments, Reform and Redesign and School Improvement Plans, as well as additional factors uncovered during Data Dialogues, teacher teams determine a focus for each short term Instructional Learning Cycle. These short cycles of improvement are meant to last 2 to 4 weeks and are guided by a teacher team identifying a measureable objective aligned to state standards and determining an instructional strategy for implementation during a specific round of the ILC.

The ILC process includes a series of three collaborative meetings held by content area or grade level teacher teams. Each meeting provides an opportunity for teachers to reflect on the quality of instruction and the evidence of student learning. Collaborative meetings also allow teacher teams to analyze their combined implementation and impact data to build a sense of collective responsibility for the learning of all students. Between meetings, teachers implement specific instructional strategies and gather student data through formative assessments. Each teacher collects and analyzes data on both the implementation of the strategy and the impact of the strategy on student learning within their own classroom. This data is used to determine next instructional steps for students.

The Instructional Learning Cycle process is guided by the following questions:

What do we want students to know and be able to do?

How will students demonstrate that they have acquired the essential knowledge and skills?

How will we agree on the criteria that we will use in judging the quality of student work, and can we apply the criteria consistently?

How will we intervene for students who struggle and enrich the learning for students who are proficient?

How will we use the evidence of student learning to improve our individual and collective professional practice?

Theory of Action

If teacher teams engage in regular dialogues around the implementation and impact of instructional strategies on student learning, then the quality and scope of classroom instruction will improve and student learning will increase.