



Instructional Leadership

Inquiry Cycle Tool:

A Tool to Assist Principal Supervisors
Support Principals as Instructional Leaders

VERSION 2.0

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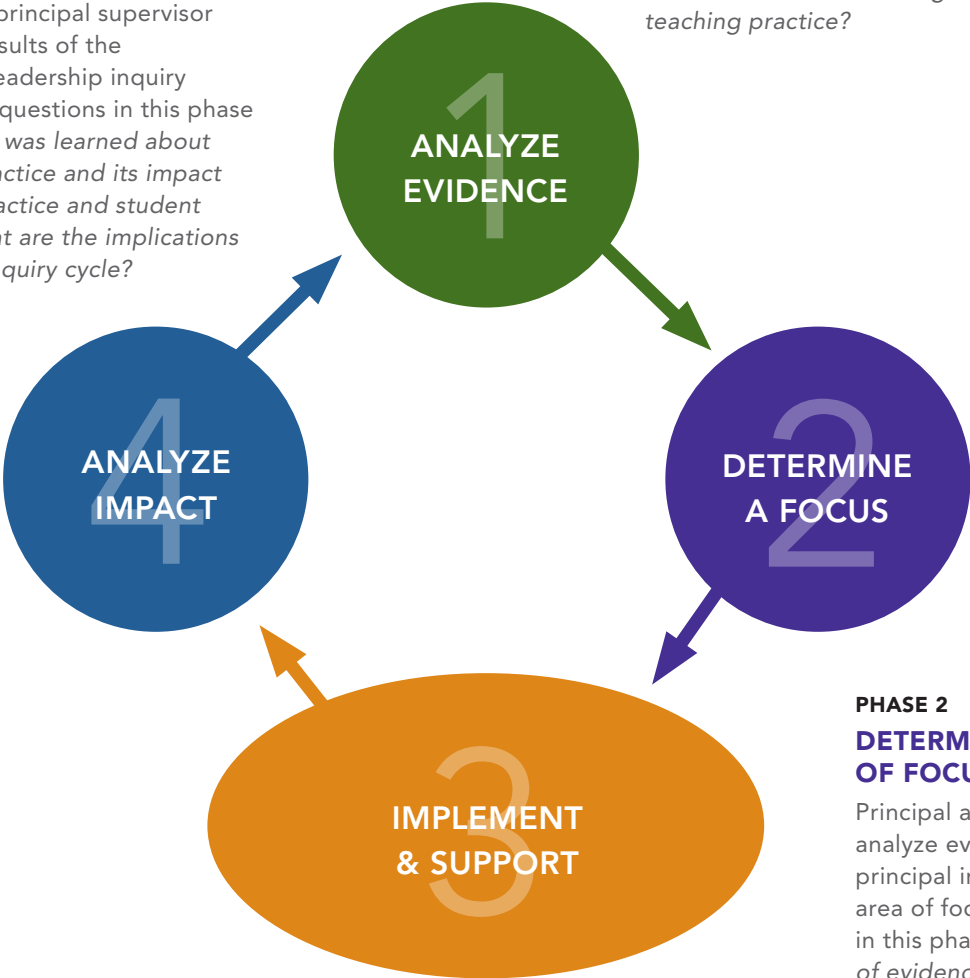
Instructional Leadership Inquiry Cycle Tool

PHASE 1
ANALYZE EVIDENCE TO DEVELOP PROBLEMS OF PRACTICE

Principal and principal supervisor gather and analyze evidence to identify student learning problems and problems of teaching practice. Critical questions in this phase include: *What are the learning strengths and challenges of student learning? What are the related instructional strengths and challenges of teaching practice?*

PHASE 4
ANALYZE IMPACT

Principal and principal supervisor analyze the results of the instructional leadership inquiry cycle. Critical questions in this phase include: *What was learned about leadership practice and its impact on teacher practice and student learning? What are the implications for the next inquiry cycle?*



PHASE 2
DETERMINE AN AREA OF FOCUS

Principal and principal supervisor analyze evidence to identify a principal instructional leadership area of focus. Critical questions in this phase include: *What type of evidence will be collected to determine the area of focus? What is the principal area of focus for this cycle of inquiry?*

PHASE 3
IMPLEMENT & SUPPORT

Principal and principal supervisor engage in a series of learning sessions centered on the principal's area of focus. Critical questions in this phase include: *What are the possible actions for a series of learning sessions? How will these sessions improve principal performance?*

Instructional Leadership Inquiry Cycle Tool

PHASE I: ANALYZE EVIDENCE TO DEVELOP PROBLEMS OF PRACTICE

Principal and principal supervisor gather and analyze evidence to identify student learning problems and problems of teaching practice. Critical questions in this phase include: *What are the learning strengths and challenges of student learning? What are the related instructional strengths and challenges of teaching practice?*

Steps:

1. Analyze evidence of student learning to identify a student learning problem.
2. Analyze evidence of instruction to identify a contributing teaching problem of practice.

CEL Resources:

- Instructional Leadership Inquiry Cycle Tool
- Creating a Theory of Action for Improving Teaching and Learning

District Resources:

- Data gathering tools and processes (e.g., assessment scores, teacher evaluations ratings, walkthrough data)
- School Improvement Plan

PHASE II: DETERMINE AN AREA OF FOCUS

Principal and principal supervisor analyze evidence to identify a principal instructional leadership area of focus. Critical questions in this phase include: *What type of evidence will be collected to determine the area of focus? What is the principal area of focus for this cycle of inquiry?*

Steps:

1. Analyze evidence of principal leadership and determine an area of focus.
2. Generate a theory of action.
3. Determine evidence of success.
4. Determine a date to formally analyze the impact of this inquiry cycle.

CEL Resources:

- Instructional Leadership Inquiry Cycle Tool
- Creating a Theory of Action for Improving Teaching and Learning
- Gathering Evidence for 4 Dimensions of Principal Instructional Leadership
- Principal Area of Focus Conversation

District Resources:

- School Improvement Plan
- Principal self-assessment
- Principal evaluation and goal setting
- Principal performance data (e.g., climate surveys, 360 evaluations)

PHASE III: IMPLEMENT AND SUPPORT

Principal and principal supervisor engage in a series of learning sessions centered on the principal's area of focus. Critical questions in this phase include: *What are the possible actions for a series of learning sessions? How will these sessions improve principal performance?*

Steps:

1. Co-create a learning plan for principal implementation and principal supervisor support.
2. Implement the learning plan.
 - a. Use pre-planning prompts to plan each learning session.
 - b. Create a learning agenda for each learning session.
 - c. Reflect after each learning session and revise the learning plan if necessary

CEL Resources:

- Instructional Leadership Inquiry Cycle Tool
- Walkthrough forms
- Lesson planning templates
- Curriculum guides / grade level standards
- Principal networks
- Videos

PHASE IV: ANALYZE IMPACT

Principal and principal supervisor analyze the results of the instructional leadership inquiry cycle. Critical questions in this phase include: *What was learned about leadership practice and its impact on teacher practice and student learning? What are the implications for the next inquiry cycle?*

Steps:

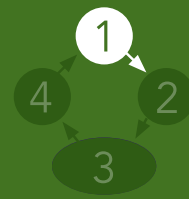
1. Analyze student and teacher evidence.
2. Analyze principal leadership practice evidence.
3. Prepare written analysis for reflection and feedback.
4. Present cycle to principal supervisor and/or colleagues.
5. Determine whether to continue with same area of focus and inquiry cycle or adjust accordingly.

CEL Resources:

- Instructional Leadership Inquiry Cycle Tool
- Analyze Impact Protocol

PHASE I:

ANALYZE EVIDENCE TO DEVELOP PROBLEMS OF PRACTICE



During this phase, the principal and principal supervisor gather and analyze evidence to identify a student learning problem and a teaching problem of practice.

CEL Resources:

- Instructional Leadership Inquiry Cycle Tool
- Creating a Theory of Action for Improving Teaching and Learning
- 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning

District Resources:

- Data gathering tools and processes (e.g. formative and summative assessments, teacher evaluation ratings, observational data, and teacher conversations)
- School Improvement Plan
- System-wide goals and initiatives
- Instructional Framework

STEP 1:

Analyze evidence of student learning to identify a student learning problem.

1. Based on the analysis of data, what are some concerns about student learning?

2. What evidence supports these concerns?

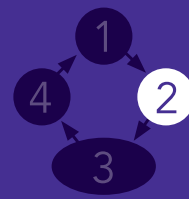
3. What student strengths are there to build upon?

4. What is the specific student learning problem to be addressed in this cycle of inquiry?

5. Why this one over others?

PHASE II:

DETERMINE AN AREA OF FOCUS



During this phase, the principal and principal supervisor gather and analyze evidence of principal practice to identify a principal instructional leadership area of focus.

CEL Resources:

- Instructional Leadership Inquiry Cycle Tool
- Creating a Theory of Action for Improving Teaching and Learning
- Gathering Evidence for 4 Dimensions of Principal Instructional Leadership
- Principal Area of Focus Conversation Phase II
- 4 Dimensions of Instructional Leadership Framework

District Resources:

- School Improvement Plan
- Principal self-assessment
- Principal evaluation and goal setting
- Principal performance data (e.g., climate surveys, 360 evaluations)
- Principal Leadership Framework
- High-priority practices
- System-wide goals and initiatives

STEP 1:

Analyze evidence of principal leadership and determine an instructional leadership area of focus

1. What would a principal be doing if she was effectively addressing the teaching problem of practice and identified student learning problem?

2. When you think about this teaching problem of practice and student learning problem, which leadership practices effectively address it?

3. Which concern you the most?

4. What is the specific problem of principal instructional leadership practice to be addressed in this cycle of inquiry?

5. Why this one over others?

STEP 2:

Generate a theory of action.

Using the responses above, generate a theory of action that explains the specific changes the principal intends to make to improve teaching and learning in the school.

If the principal ...

then teachers will be able to ...

so that students will be able to ...

STEP 3:

Determine evidence of success.

Based on the data and information gathered, what is the current state of student learning, teaching and instructional leadership practice? What is evidence of success and how will the evidence be measured?

AREA OF CHANGE	PRINCIPAL PRACTICE	TEACHING PRACTICE	STUDENT LEARNING
What is the current reality?			
What will success look like?			
How will success be measured?			

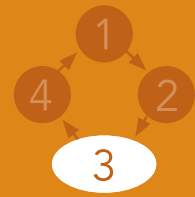
STEP 4:

Determine a date to formally analyze the impact of this inquiry cycle.

Determine a date for the close of this inquiry cycle. Consider the area of focus and the principal’s learning needs and the schedule established for review of the principal’s progress.

Date:

PHASE III:
IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPPORT



During this phase, the principal and principal supervisor engage in action, study and learning around the identified area of focus.

CEL Resources:

- Instructional Leadership Inquiry Cycle Tool
- Learning Session Opening Conversation Phase III
- Learning Session Closing Conversation Phase III
- Example Learning Session Opening Conversation with Principal Web

District Resources:

- Walkthrough forms
- Lesson planning templates and curriculum guides
- Principal networks
- Videos
- Instructional coaches

STEP 1:

Restate the principal area of focus and co-create the learning plan.

Learning Plan	Possible Actions:	Why do you think these actions are likely to improve principal performance?
Learning Session 1 DATE: TIME:		
Learning Session 2 DATE: TIME:		
Learning Session 3 DATE: TIME:		
Learning Session 4 DATE: TIME:		

STEP 2:

Implement the Learning Plan.

During this phase, the principal supervisor, with input from the principal, plans and reflects on each individual learning session.

STEP 2A: Use pre-planning prompts to plan each learning session.

This section is designed to guide the pre-planning process for an individual learning session. Respond to the following questions and incorporate responses into the planning process. You will repeat this process for each learning session that makes up the learning plan.

PURPOSE: What is the purpose of the learning session? How does the purpose relate to the ongoing work of the school? The area of focus for the principal? The teachers? The students?

OUTCOMES: What are the outcomes for this learning session? What evidence will be collected?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES: Which learning activities will best further the principal's learning (e.g., observing classrooms, co-planning, professional development, examining student work)?

TEACHING/COACHING PRACTICES: Which teaching/coaching practices will best further the principal's learning (e.g., modeling, coaching and feedback, inquiry)?

JOINT WORK: How will the planning of this session ensure that the principal supervisor and principal engage in joint work? That the principal has ownership for the learning? What strategies will be used? Which questions will be posed? How will the opening be used?

EVIDENCE GATHERING: How will evidence of the principal's practice be gathered throughout the visit? What will be observed with this principal? How will the information be shared?

RESOURCES: What materials will be used in this session? Are there other resources (including people) that need to be deployed? How will you share with the principal? Prior to the visit? During the visit? After the visit?

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: What needs to be communicated to the principal before the session? How will this be communicated? What does the principal need to prepare? What needs to be communicated to others who might be joining the session?

OTHER:

STEP 2B: Create the learning agenda for each learning session.

This section is designed to support the crafting of a well-organized learning session. Using the responses above in step 2a, organize and plan each individual learning session.

Date:

Duration:

Location:

CONTENT	PROCESS	TIME AND MATERIALS
<p>Opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of the session? What do we want to learn? • How will I introduce the purpose for the session? • How will I communicate the through-line from improved principal practice to improved teacher practice and student learning — the theory of action for our work together? • How will I communicate a “can-do” attitude along with urgency? • How will I communicate my commitment to being a co-learner in the process? 		
<p>Review agreed-upon actions from the last visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will I bring forward agreed-upon actions? • How will I address the current status of these actions? 		
<p>Review evidence of success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will I bring back the evidence of success for this cycle? • How will we note any progress to date? • How will we collect evidence of progress during this session? 		

CONTENT	PROCESS	TIME AND MATERIALS
<p>Engage in the planned activity for the learning session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I anticipate the principal will struggle with? How will I mitigate this struggle? • What will I do to foster time for the principal to think, engage, and ask questions during the learning activity? • What questions, statements, and actions will I use to elicit and assess principal understanding? • How will I continually gather evidence of principal practice? 		
<p>Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the principal summarize the outcomes for the session? • How will I plan for reflection on the success of the visit? • How will I collect these reflections? • How will I use the reflections to inform the principal's next steps? • What other artifacts will I collect to inform principal planning? 		

STEP 2C: Reflect after each learning session and revise the learning plan if necessary.

The principal and principal supervisor respond to the following questions to summarize each learning session. After reflection, both the principal and principal supervisor keep a copy to use as a running record of principal progress over time.

1. What did we learn today?

**2. What is the state of the principal's practice in relationship to the area of focus?
What growth is being made? What is the evidence?**

3. What do we need to pay attention to?

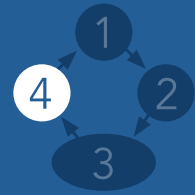
4. What are the principal's next steps?

5. What are the principal supervisor's next steps?

6. How will we communicate in-between sessions?

**7. What do we need to consider in planning the next session on the learning plan?
How, if at all, does the next session need to be revised?**

PHASE IV: ANALYZE IMPACT



During this phase, the principal and principal supervisor analyze and formally close an inquiry cycle. This phase requires a presentation of learning and impact for feedback.

CEL Resources:

- Analyze Impact Protocol
- Instructional Leadership Inquiry Cycle Tool

STEP 1: Analyze student and teacher evidence.

The principal and principal supervisor reflect on the following questions:

1. What has changed with student learning since the beginning of this cycle? What is the evidence?

2. What has changed with teaching practice since the beginning of this cycle? What is the evidence?

STEP 2: Analyze principal leadership practice evidence.

The principal and principal supervisor reflect on the following questions:

1. What has changed with the instructional leadership practice since the beginning of this cycle?

2. What is the evidence?

STEP 3:

Prepare written analysis for reflection and feedback.

In preparation for the presentation of the impact of instructional leadership cycle on teaching practice and student learning, the principal and principal supervisor prepare a written response to the following questions:

1. What is the specific principal area of focus and theory of action for the inquiry cycle?

2. What were the specific learning activities the principal engaged in with the supervisor?

3. To what extent did student learning improve in the identified area of need?
What is the evidence?

4. To what extent did teaching practice improve in the identified area of focus?
What is the evidence?

5. To what extent did the principal practice improve in the identified area of focus?
What is the evidence?

6. What promising leadership practices emerged that the principal should continue? What practices should be under consideration for elimination or minimizing?

7. What ideas have arisen for future leadership cycles of inquiry?

8. What is a focus question that intrigued you during this cycle that the principal supervisor and/or colleagues can provide feedback on?

9. To what extent did the principal supervisor's support impact the outcome of this cycle on principal practice, teaching practice and student learning?

STEP 4:

Present cycle to principal supervisor and/or colleagues.

Use the Analyze Impact Protocol to share results of engaging in the cycle. The presentation allows for the principal and/or principal supervisor to hear and reflect on the feedback in order to make adjustments to future cycles.

STEP 5:

Determine whether to continue with the same area of focus and inquiry cycle or adjust accordingly.

The principal and principal supervisor set a date to develop the next inquiry cycle.