### 

Continuous Improvement Planning

Session 1: Preparing to Plan

Handouts

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# **Session Overview**

## Session Goals

* Define continuous improvement planning and explain its role in an adult education program
* Begin the pre-planning process

## Learning Objectives

* Name the stages in a continuous improvement planning cycle
* Identify key steps in preparing to plan
* Complete the pre-planning questionnaire
* Identify potential pitfalls and strategies for pre-planning

## Pre-Work

* Read [Performance Accountability: For What? To Whom? And How?](https://sabes.org/content/continuous-improvement-planning-resources-2025-cohort/educational-leadership-program) (Merrifield, 1999)
* Familiarize yourself with the following:
  + [FY24-FY28 Massachusetts Policies for Effective Adult Education in Community](https://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/abeprogram/default.html)
  + [Adult Learning Centers and Correctional Institutions](https://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/abeprogram/default.html)
  + [Indicators of Program Quality](https://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/accountability/program-quality/)
  + [Program Quality Review and Site Visit Protocol](https://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/accountability/program-quality/reviews.html)

Homework

* Complete [Session 1 Exit Ticket](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScFjjgqSEzwSxpHCRHi8vAiLmXIS-UcC2C9YTYhIQuBDX-xqQ/viewform?usp=sf_link)
* Bring 3 elements of data to bring to the next session, including one from LACES/Desk Review, one *not* from LACES/Desk Review, and one of your choice
* Begin working on your plan using the Planning Template

# **Handout 1** | Warm-Up Activity

### 

### Purpose

To identify what drives you and get to know your colleagues.

### Activity Instructions

1. Reflect on the question. Feel free to write, draw, or get creative with how you represent your response.
2. Share your answer with your group.
3. If time allows, discuss.

### Optional Group Discussion Questions

* What do your visions have in common?
* What do your respective visions say about your values? About your shared values?

### Notes and Space for Reflection

What would the world look like if your program were no longer needed?

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# **Handout 2** | Premises of Change Activity

Reading adapted from “Change theory: A force for school improvement” by Michael Fullan. See Session References for full citation and links.

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### Purpose

To reflect on factors that drive change and that can inform your program’s planning process.

### Activity Instructions

1. Divide the premises among your group members.
2. Read your section. Prepare to summarize and share your understanding with your group.
3. Group members report out.
4. Discuss and prepare to share out.

### Group Discussion Questions

* How do these premises apply in your context?
* Which resonate with you?
* What would you add?

### Group Notes

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| **Premise 1 | Focus on motivation**  If you take any hundred or so books on change, the message all boils down to one word: motivation. If one’s theory of action does not motivate people to put in the effort – individually and collectively – that is necessary to get results, improvement is not possible.  Let me make two points:   1. The other six core premises are all about motivation and engagement – ie, they are about accomplishing the first premise. 2. As we shall see, motivation cannot be achieved in the short run. In fact the beginning of all eventual successes is unavoidably bumpy. However, if your strategy does not gain on the motivation question over time (eg, end of year one, year two etc) it will fail.   Certainly moral purpose is a great potential motivator, but by itself won’t go anywhere, unless other conditions conspire to mobilize several key aspects of motivation, including   * moral purpose; * capacity; * resources; * peer and leadership support; * identity and so on.   It is the combination that makes the motivational difference. |
| **Notes** |

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| **Premise 2 | Capacity-building, with a focus on results**  Capacity building, with a focus on results, is crucial. Here is an example of where our theory of action became more refined over time. Around 1995 we coined the phrase that for large-scale reform we need a combination of ‘pressure and support’. This was on the right track, but not precise enough. For one thing many policy makers overdosed on the side of pressure. When they did attend to support, it was segmented from pressure and was not specific enough to have an impact. Now the integrated phrase of ‘capacity building, with a focus on results’ captures both aspects well.  Capacity building is defined as any strategy that increases the collective effectiveness of a group to raise the bar and close the gap of student learning. For us it involves helping to develop individual and collective   * knowledge and competencies; * resources; and * motivation.   These capacities are specifically about getting results (raise the bar, close the gap). Our theory of action says that nothing will count unless people develop new capacities. And, indeed, that new capacities are a route to motivation (as I said, all our premises contribute to increased motivation).  Most theories of change are weak on capacity building and that is one of the key reasons why they fall short. As Elmore (2004) advised, no external accountability scheme can be successful in the absence of internal accountability – in fact, the latter is none other than capacity building with a focus on results.  A key part of the focus on results is what I call the evolution of positive pressure. An emphasis on accountability by itself produces negative pressure: pressure that doesn’t motivate and that doesn’t get to capacity building. Positive pressure is pressure that does motivate, that is palpably fair and reasonable and does come accompanied by resources for capacity building.  The more one invests in capacity building, the more one has the right to expect greater performance. The more one focuses on results fairly – comparing like schools, using data over multiple years, providing targeted support for improvement – the more that motivational leverage can be used. In our change theory, it is capacity building first and judgment second, because that is what is most motivational. |
| **Notes** |

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| **Premise 3 | Learning in context**  The third basic premise is that strategies for reform must build in many opportunities for ‘learning in context’. In fact, creating cultures where learning in context is endemic is the point. Again Elmore (2004) has pinpointed the issue:  Improvement is more a function of *learning to do the right things in the settings where you work’* (p 73)  the italics indicating his emphasis for ‘learning to do the right things’; mine for ‘in the settings where you work’.  He goes on to say  The problem [is that] there is almost no opportunity for teachers to engage in continuous and sustained learning about their practice in the settings in which they actually work, observing and being observed by their colleagues in their own classrooms and classrooms of other teachers in other schools confronting similar problems.  He then puts forward the positive implication (it is no accident that he uses the exact phrase – ‘theory of action’):  The theory of action behind [this process of examining practice] might be stated as follows: The development of systematic knowledge about, and related to, large-scale instructional improvement requires a change in the prevailing culture of administration and teaching in schools. Cultures do not change by mandate; they change by the specific displacement of existing norms, structures, and processes by others; the process of cultural change depends fundamentally on modeling the new values and behavior that you expect to displace the existing ones (p 11).  In this way learning in context actually changes the very context itself. Contexts do improve. |
| **Notes** |

Handout 2 | Premises of Change Activity | page 5 of 6

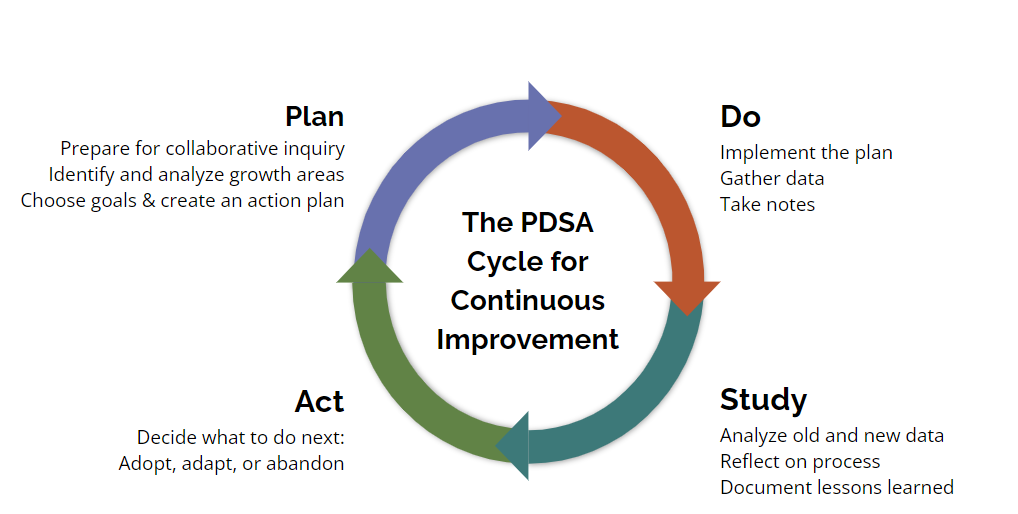
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| **Premise 4 | A bias for reflective action**  For the previous four components to move forward in concert, they must be fueled by a bias for reflective action. Here our change knowledge is quite specific, and any leader must know this. There are several aspects to the reflective action premise.  First, shared vision and ownership is more an outcome of a quality process than it is a precondition. This is important to know because it causes one to act differently in order to create ownership.  Second, and related, behaviour changes to a certain extent before beliefs. Again there are do-and-don’t change actions that derive from this knowledge, such as our third aspect, which is that the size and prettiness of the planning document is inversely related to the amount and quality of action, and in turn to the impact on student learning (Reeves, 2006). Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) emphasise our action theme in their book about the knowing–doing gap book – for example with the first barrier that they identify: when planning substitutes for action.  We need to dig a bit deeper to understand the theory of action underpinning the bias for reflective action. The reflection part is crucial. This goes back to Dewey, who offered the insight that it is not that we learn by doing but that we learn by thinking about what we are doing. It is the purposeful thinking part that counts, not the mere doing. Mintzberg (2004) makes the same point when he says we need  programs designed to educate practicing managers in context; [such leadership] has to be learned, not just by doing it but by being able to gain conceptual insight while doing it’ (p 200).  All the current emphasis about evidence-based and evidence-informed leadership is based on this same premise (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2006). People learn best through doing, reflection, inquiry, evidence, more doing and so on. |
| **Notes** |

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| **Premise 5 | Persistence and flexibility in staying the course**  Lastly, because the above six premises are complex to manage and must be cultivated over time, including bumpy cycles, a strong resolve is necessary to stay the course. It takes what I would call resilience – persistence plus flexibility. Rigid persistence begets pushback in equal or greater measure. Failure to keep going in the face of inevitable barriers achieves nothing. Being flexible, in fact, is built into the action theory. Because the theory is reflective and inquiry-based, and because it is cultivated in the minds and actions of key players operating with a similar theory of action (the seven premises), there is plenty of self-correction and refinement built-in.  In the seven premises of change knowledge I have attempted to capture the underlying thinking of effective change strategies – the theory of action if you like. It is essential to understand this thinking deeply, rather than just knowing the concrete strategies. If you do understand the thinking you spontaneously get the strategies right, and self-correct as you experience them unfolding. If you don’t understand the thinking you are more likely to use even the best strategies (such as capacity building) superficially or in a piecemeal fashion.  We can now put some meat on the theory of action by referring to two examples of how they translate into a specific set of strategies in concrete situations (see Fullan, Hill and Crevola, 2006, and Fullan, 2006 for more elaboration on these and other examples). The first example refers to district-wide reform in a large urban district; the second to a statewide reform. |
| **Notes** |

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# **Handout 3** | The PDSA Cycle for Continuous Improvement



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# **Handout 4** | Readiness Checklist

Adapted from *Continuous Improvement in Education: A Toolkit for Schools and Districts* from the Institute for Educational Sciences. See Session References for full citation and links.

**Purpose**

To reflect on your program’s readiness for continuous improvement planning, identify potential challenges or barriers, and identify work that may need to happen in advance of continuous improvement planning.

**Activity Instructions**

Use this checklist to help evaluate your program’s readiness to begin a continuous improvement planning process. Mark each checkbox where you and (if appropriate) other relevant stakeholders agree that your program meets the criterion. If a few boxes remain unchecked, focus on building readiness in those areas before convening your planning team or as your first tasks. If many boxes remain unchecked, you may consider working to build readiness before beginning a continuous improvement effort.

As you consider the readiness topics, keep these questions in mind and take notes as appropriate:

* On what evidence can we base these answers?
* What additional information do we need to collect?
* How might we adjust our resources, culture, timeline, approach, or activities to increase readiness?

**Readiness Checklist**

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| Broad agreement on the need or benefit to change practice  * There have been discussions among staff, students, and partners about the overall focus. * A critical mass of people agree that change is necessary to address the overall focus.  Enough ideas about how to respond to the need for change  * Participants have ideas about how to respond to the issue or problem that has been identified. * There are examples of practices and processes, from research or knowledge of successful efforts elsewhere, that may be applicable to address the issue or problem. |

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| Program culture of collaboration, learning, and change  * There are structures or common practices in place that allow for collaboration. * There is a culture of learning and openness to change. * There is interest and willingness among participants to engage in continuous improvement.  Leadership support for the continuous improvement effort  * Organizational leaders are aware of the proposed continuous improvement effort. * Leadership is willing to provide time and space for the Improvement Team to engage in the continuous improvement effort.  Resources to support the continuous improvement effort  * Resources have been identified (such as release time, meeting space, or personnel). * Improvement Team members’ schedules allow for meeting and working on the continuous improvement effort.   Resources needed: Data literacy skills of potential team members; availability, accessibility, and quality of appropriate data  * Sufficient data on the overall focus can be collected. * The planning team is comfortable and experienced working with data. * A plan exists for supporting and/or strengthening data literacy.  Potential barriers to successful implementation of the continuous improvement effort Potential barriers: |

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# **Handout 5** | Data Inventory

**Purpose**

To identify existing data sources to review and data to be collected.

**Activity Instructions**

Independently or with the planning team, review the data checklist to identify types of data that you already have or might need to collect to choose an overall focus and, later, to inform planning and evaluation. Once you have chosen an overall focus, consider using the second checklist to identify additional sources of data that can help your team identify core issues and root causes.

**Preliminary Data Types Checklist**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Data Source** | **Have or Need?** | **Notes** |
| Recent desk review | * Have * Need |  |
| MSG reports:   * EFL completion * HSE credential attainment * Postsecondary education or training enrollment after exit * Can these be broken out by level and class? By demographics? | * Have * Need |  |
| Most recent PQR report | * Have * Need |  |
| Class records:   * Attendance reports * Enrollment reports * Class size * Are these broken out by level and class? By demographics? | * Have * Need |  |
| Classroom observations | * Have * Need |  |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Data Source** | **Have or Need?** | **Notes** |
| Student or teacher artifacts (e.g. lesson plans, student work) | * Have * Need |  |
| Focus groups, interviews, and conversations (formal or informal)   * Students * Staff * Partners * Do participants reflect the full diversity of stakeholders? | * Have * Need |  |
| Surveys | * Have * Need |  |
| Partner data and input   * City and town websites * Community and partner meetings * Local Workforce Development Board plans | * Have * Need |  |
| Census data | * Have * Need |  |
| Budgets | * Have * Need |  |

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**Data Checklist by IPQ**

| **IPQ** | **Types of Data** | **Data Sources** | **Qualitative/ Quantitative** | **Answers questions about…** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator 1**  **Program Design**  The program, in alignment with its mission, implements the services approved by ACLS. | * Class focus * Design options (e.g., in person, distance or hybrid) * Student barriers to participation * Class size * Actual vs. target enrollment * Outreach efforts and partners * Wait list | * Desk Reviews * Class Records (e.g., EFLs, class size, tutor hours and matches, cost per student) * Staffing charts * Budgets * Community Partners for Recruiting and Support | Qualitative and quantitative | * Do our program services align with the proposed design and the purposes for which it was funded? * Does our program provide adequate supports and options that enable students with barriers to participation to attend? * Is our program design of adequate intensity to promote student outcomes? |
| **Indicator 2**  **Equitable Access**  Guided by data and a responsibility for diversity, equity and inclusion, the program ensures that all adult learners in the local workforce area have equitable access to high quality educational services. | * Student demographics * Enrollment * Class levels * Dropout rate * MOAs with partners * Local employment (and other) needs and assets * High need regional employment sectors | * Desk Review * LACES Reports * Program Records * Local WDB Plan * NRS Tables 2, 6 * Accommodations * [Census Equity Data](https://covid19.census.gov/pages/data-equity) * [Community Resilience Estimates](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates.html) * [Household Pulse Surveys](https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/hhp/#/) * [Statistical Atlas](https://statisticalatlas.com/state/Massachusetts/Overview) * [MA Occupational and Industry Projections](https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/lmi/LongTermOccupationProjections) | Quantitative, can also be qualitative | * Who are the adults in need of classes in our community? * Among those, who do we serve? Who are we not serving? * Is our program responsive and accessible to those in the community most in need of services? How do we know? * How do we address the needs of applicants/learners with diagnosed or self-disclosed learning and other disabilities? |

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| **IPQ** | **Types of Data** | **Data Sources** | **Qualitative/ Quantitative** | **Answers questions about…** |
| **Indicator 3**  **Career Pathways Collaboration**  The program ensures all staff understand the essential role that the program plays to access career pathway opportunities as outlined in the local plan. | * Student goals * Referrals to and from WIOA partners * IET participants and Industry Recognized Credentials earned * Transitions to postsecondary education, training, or employment * Median income | * Desk Reviews * Integrated advising curriculum * Job descriptions and/or staff handbook that describe the process for identifying and sharing student goals across the program * Formal partnerships with WIOA partners * WDB Local Plan * Student goals, advising records, and outcomes * NRS Table 5a; 9 for workplace programs and 10 for AECI * Notes and results from meetings with local partner agencies (education, WFD, training, social services) | Qualitative and quantitative | * Are all staff engaged in the process of helping students understand career pathways and options? * Is our process for advising students on next steps effective? * Do employers, WIOA partners, and other key community organizations know about our program? * Do all staff in our program know about relevant community organizations, services, resources, and key employers? * Are there clear, seamless pathways for students to be referred to WIOA partners and for their clients to be referred to us? * How do we monitor, capture, and communicate student progress toward meeting their next step goals across the program? |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **IPQ** | **Types of Data** | **Data Sources** | **Qualitative/ Quantitative** | **Answers questions about…** |
| **Indicator 5**  **Instruction and Assessment**  The program consistently uses high quality instructional strategies to meet all students’ academic needs and prepare them for family sustaining employment and/or postsecondary education, and civic engagement. The program has an assessment system to inform planning and decision-making, monitor and communicate learner progress, and improve teaching and learning. | * Lesson Plans with formative and summative assessments * Processes and tools for formally and informally assessing learners * Processes for sharing assessment results with students | * Teacher observations with feedback * Formative and summative assessments * Standardized/NRS assessments * Assessment results * Formalized process for teachers to analyze and share assessment results with students that informs both teaching and learning | Qualitative and quantitative | * How do curriculum and standards drive instruction? * How well are our students learning? * How do assessment results inform and strengthen teaching and learning? * How can we improve learner gains? * Is instruction of adequate rigor to help students successfully transition to further education, training, and employment? * Are students empowered to take control of their own learning? * Do we celebrate achievement? |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **IPQ** | **Types of Data** | **Data Sources** | **Qualitative/ Quantitative** | **Answers questions about…** |
| **IPQ 6**  **Student Progress**  The program consistently meets or exceeds state student performance targets for academic growth, and for postsecondary education, training, and employment. | * Follow-up process for tracking student outcomes * Student Learning Data: MSG is only one measure, but an important one * HSE attainment * Transitions to PSE, training, or employment but also broader than that * IET/Industry-recognized credentials | * Pre- and post-test % * % of Social Security numbers collected * Assessment scores * Formative and summative assessments * Teacher checklists of student competencies * Portfolios * Desk Review * NRS Reports 4, 4b, 4c * Advising records * Data matching * Self-reporting * Focus groups * Surveys | Qualitative and quantitative | * Are students’ meeting their purposes for attending AE classes? * Do we provide the necessary supports to prepare students for next steps? * What role do our WIOA and other community partners play in creating opportunities for our learners? * Do we help students persist long enough to meet their goals? * Is our follow-up process efficient enough? |
| **Indicator 7**  **Advising and Student Support Services**  The program ensures effective and equitable delivery of advising and support services. | * Student demographics * Student goals and barriers * Information about community resources * Student attendance and persistence | * Advising curriculum * Advising notes * Student outcomes (see also IPQs 3, 4, and 5) * MOAs and other partnerships * Student persistence rates * Student attendance | Qualitative and quantitative | * What are students’ barriers to learning and next steps? * What resources/partnerships do we leverage to help students overcome barriers? * Do all students have access to advising and other supports they need? Do students use/take advantage of advising services? If not, why? |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **IPQ** | **Types of Data** | **Data Sources** | **Qualitative/ Quantitative** | **Answers questions about…** |
| **Indicator 8**  **Organizational Support** The organization’s policies, practices, and facilities sufficiently support the adult education program. | * Suitable and safe, classroom space * Accessibility and safety guidelines * Minimum staff requirements for level of education, experience, and professional licensure * New staff onboarding process * Staff compensation and benefits * Type of classroom, advising, office, and other space * Staff longevity * Staff PD plans * Meetings with agency leaders * Devices and technology infrastructure for staff and students | * Accessibility checklist * Job descriptions with minimum qualifications * Staff retention vs. turnover rates * Staff and student handbook policies * Staff salaries and benefits * Number of full-time and part-time positions and staff * Staff credentials and experience * Number/% of staff with relevant K-12 or ABE licensure * Classroom, office, advising, and record-keeping space * Staff PD participation and completion records * Continuous improvement data and plans | Qualitative and Quantitative | * Are the organizational systems in place compliant and effective? * Do we have suitable and appropriate space for classes, private advising, offices, and secure record keeping? * Do all staff meet minimum requirements? * Does our staff compensation package and other relevant working conditions allow us to attract and retain high quality staff? * Is space accessible to all current and potential staff and students? * Do our staff attend PD that supports professional growth and program goals? * What is the impact of PD learning on classroom and program effectiveness? |

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| **IPQ** | **Types of Data** | **Data Sources** | **Qualitative/ Quantitative** | **Answers questions about…** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator 9 Educational Leadership**  Educational leaders guide a continuous improvement planning process that supports high quality practices and a shared vision for student and staff success with the goal of improving student outcomes. | * Staff and student perceptions of quality * Values, beliefs, and attitudes * Staff and student feedback * Program Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP), data, and progress reports * Staff observation protocols, schedules, and tools * Mission and Vision Statements * Support for all staff to engage in high quality professional learning and support for them to implement new learning * Professional learning plans based on data and what students need to know and do * Transparent and high expectations for all staff and students | * Desk reviews * Staff observation notes and reflections * Surveys * Focus groups * Program handbooks * Student Leadership structure and process * PQR reports * Site visit summaries * Data-driven program continuous improvement plans developed through an inclusive process that engages all stakeholders and holds everyone accountable for the programs’ effectiveness * Plan for creating a an inclusive program culture that is welcoming of diverse staff and students * PD budget and plans | Qualitative  and quantitative | * Do we have a quality program? How do we know? * Are our mission, vision, and values transparent and understood by all? * Do we practice what we say we value? What evidence is there that we do or we don’t? * Do we improve every year? * Do we have high expectations of all staff, students, and partners? * Do we believe that every student can succeed? * Is program and instructional practice regularly informed by student data? * Do all staff, students, and other key stakeholders have opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways to the success of the program? * Do all staff, students, and other key stakeholders understand their role in being accountable for the success of the program? * How do we use data to the benefit of staff, students, and the program? |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **IPQ** | **Types of Data** | **Data Sources** | **Qualitative/ Quantitative** | **Answers questions about…** |
| **Indicator 10**  **Fiscal and Data Accountability**  The organization maintains a stable financial condition operating in a financially sound and publicly accountable manner. The program has a system for collecting and reporting data that ensures its integrity. | * Organizational and program fiscal procedures and oversight policies * Budget balances and line item expenditures (grant funding, match, donors, other) * Process for approving payroll, expenditures * Process for capturing and entering data into LACES | * Desk Reviews: Year-to-date total funding vs. expended funds * GEM$: Monthly drawdown amounts * Internal budget records, including match * Time sheets/staff time records * Org chart with oversight structure * Annual audit and tax returns * LACES Reports * Fiscal Audits | Mostly quantitative | * Are we efficiently managing our budget consistent with funded purposes? * Do our accounting procedures comply with funder requirements and with regulations related to the use of public monies? * Are we making the best use of our funding? * Can we afford to do “X”…? |

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# **Handout 6** | Shared Vision Worksheet

Adapted from *Comprehensive Needs Assessment: A Resource for Schools and Systems Engaging in the First Phase of Continuous Improvement Planning* from the Vermont Agency of Education. See Session References for full citation and links.

### 

### Purpose

To develop or revise a shared vision representing the common beliefs, values, and goals of all stakeholders (including students, staff, and partners).

### Activity Instructions

1. Respond independently to the questions below.
2. In small groups, share your responses and develop a new, shared response. Add your response to your group’s slide.
3. Come together as a full group to merge small group responses into a single, unified shared vision statement, written in the present tense.

Handout 6 | Shared Vision Worksheet | page 2 of 4

**Individual Responses & Examples**

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| **Guiding Questions** | **Ideas and Responses** |
| **Core Values & Beliefs**   * What do we value in our students, our schools, our communities, and ourselves? * What do we believe are the factors that support effective learning and positive outcomes for all? | ***Examples:*** *curiosity, diversity, problem-solving, independence, citizenship, lifelong learning* |
| **Core Purposes**   * What is the purpose of our work with and on behalf of students? * What are we committed to providing to our students and partners? | ***Examples:*** *high-quality instruction, challenging curriculum, opportunities for personalized differentiated learning, equity* |
| **Goals**   * Based on our core values, beliefs and purposes, what are our goals for our students and program? * What would the successful implementation of our core values, beliefs and purposes look like? Or, what would the outcomes be for our students? | ***Examples:*** *every student achieves the goals they set for themselves, their families, and their communities; thriving students and communities* |
| **Draft a Vision Statement**   * With consideration for your team’s shared core values and beliefs, core purposes and common goals, write a narrative or statement(s) that captures your vision for your students and school(s). | ***Example:*** *Wayne Township Adult Education’s vision is to see all learners reach their personal, educational, and career goals with the support of Wayne Township Adult Education’s staff and resources, breaking down the barriers that stand in the way of students having hope of a better future.* |

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**Small Group Response**

*Please record your small group’s response on the appropriate slide.*

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| --- | --- |
| **Guiding Questions** | **Ideas and Responses** |
| **Core Values & Beliefs**   * What do we value in our students, our schools, our communities, and ourselves? * What do we believe are the factors that support effective learning and positive outcomes for all? |  |
| **Core Purposes**   * What is the purpose of our work with and on behalf of students? * What are we committed to providing to our students and partners? |  |
| **Goals**   * Based on our core values, beliefs and purposes, what are our goals for our students and program? * What would the successful implementation of our core values, beliefs and purposes look like? Or, what would the outcomes be for our students? |  |
| **Draft a Vision Statement**   * With consideration for your team’s shared core values and beliefs, core purposes and common goals, write a narrative or statement(s) that captures your vision for your students and school(s). |  |

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**Collective Response**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Guiding Questions** | **Ideas and Responses** |
| **Core Values & Beliefs**   * What do we value in our students, our schools, our communities, and ourselves? * What do we believe are the factors that support effective learning and positive outcomes for all? |  |
| **Core Purposes**   * What is the purpose of our work with and on behalf of students? * What are we committed to providing to our students and partners? |  |
| **Goals**   * Based on our core values, beliefs and purposes, what are our goals for our students and program? * What would the successful implementation of our core values, beliefs and purposes look like? Or, what would the outcomes be for our students? |  |
| **Draft a Vision Statement**   * With consideration for your team’s shared core values and beliefs, core purposes and common goals, write a narrative or statement(s) that captures your vision for your students and school(s). |  |

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# **Handout 7** | The SABES Continuous Improvement Planning Template

**Purpose**

To plan and track your continuous improvement planning process.

**Resource Instructions**

Complete this resource as you go through this course and complete your planning process in your program. You may want to consider making a copy and keeping it in a place that is accessible to all planning team members and participating staff, so that everyone can use it to communicate updates, notes, and other important information.

Program Name:

Fiscal Year/s: From to

**1 | Prepare for Collaborative Inquiry**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Notes or Links to Supportive Resources** |
| * Assessed readiness |  |
| * Assembled a planning team |  |
| * Wrote, revised, or revisited a shared vision |  |
| * Conducted an initial review of relevant data |  |
| * Considered opportunities for student, staff, and partner input and agency |  |

Handout 7 | The SABES Continuous Improvement Planning Template | page 2 of 4

**2 | Overall Focus**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Overall focus statement:** | |
| **Relevant IPQ (Choose one or more):**   * 1: Program Design * 2: Equitable Access * 3: Career Pathways Collaboration * 4: Curriculum * 5: Instruction & Assessment | * 6: Student Progress * 7: Advising & Student Support Services * 8: Organizational Support * 9: Educational Leadership * 10: Fiscal & Data Responsibility |
| **Relevant data points or sources that inform the overall focus:** | |

**3 | Core Issues & Root Causes (optional)**

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes from discussions on core issues and root causes:** |

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**4 | Working Theory of Change**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Objectives & Initiatives** | **Reason for Choosing** | **Measurement**  *How will you know it is successful?* |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**5 | Action Planning**

*Duplicate this table for each objective or initiative that you have chosen.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective or Initiative:** | | | | |
| **Action Step** | **Who** | **Timeline** | **Resources/PD** | **Progress Updates** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

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**6 | Reflection**

After completing each objective or initiative, reflect on its success (using the measurements you identified) as well as the process and any lessons learned along the way. For process reflections, include all relevant partners/stakeholders and consider using a plus/delta chart:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Plus**  *What about this worked for our team?*  *What successes did we have?*  *What contributed to our successes?* | **Delta**  *What about this did not work for our team?*  *Where did we fall short, and what contributed to that?*  *What could we do differently next time?* |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

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# **Handout 8** | Session 1 Case Studies

**Purpose**

To consider the pre-planning steps in action, identify potential issues in advance, and consider potential solutions.

**Activity Instructions**

1. Choose *one* of the following scenarios to read.
2. Use the guiding questions to discuss the case study with your group.

**Discussion Questions**

* What is the overall issue that Richard or Cyndi wants to address?
* Who should be part of their planning team?
* How should they present the issue to the planning team?
* What questions might they ask them in seeking further input on the issue?
* What data might they collect to help the planning team understand the issue?

**Notes and Space for Reflection**

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| --- |
|  |

## 

## Handout 8 | Session 1 Case Studies | page 2 of 3

## Case Study 1: Richard & Instructional Practices

Richard recently became the Director of the Watatic Adult Education Program. When he arrived, the program was struggling in several areas, and teacher morale was low, according to numerous staff members. In addition, through classroom observations he observed that many teachers were not using evidence-based strategies, which he concluded could be contributing to low teacher morale and to low student retention rates.

At his previous program, Richard worked with a team of lead teachers and an instructional coach, using frequent classroom observation to support the implementation of several evidence-based instructional practices. The practices included a framework that maximized instructional minutes and more efficient lesson planning to support differentiated and experiential learning opportunities. Instruction was improved and students received more instruction per class and therefore throughout the year. Given his past success with classroom observation and instructional coaching to change instructional practices in these areas, Richard set out to re-create his past success at Watatic.

Unfortunately, Richard’s attempts to implement frequent and targeted observations and feedback to support evidence-based practices were met with resistance from several teachers. The teachers at Watatic were not used to having non-instructional staff in their classrooms on a regular basis. Most teachers were observed and provided with feedback for their formal evaluations only as part of a required, but far from meaningful activity. Only the least successful teachers received additional ongoing attention throughout the year, which resulted in many teachers reacting to the increased engagement from lead teachers and the instructional coach as a signal that they were now the lowest performing teachers within the program

Richard could tell he had his work cut out for him. It wasn’t going to be easy to change the professional culture and the instructional practices at Watatic. He wanted to find a way to effectively build collaborative and supportive working relationships while simultaneously creating a sense of urgency for improving classroom management, use of instructional minutes, and student engagement.

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## Handout 8 | Session 1 Case Studies | page 3 of 3

## Scenario 2: Cyndi & Digital Literacy

Cyndi’s program has adopted a new digital literacy curriculum at her program in Springfield. As the lead teacher, Cyndi is excited about this opportunity to use a new digital literacy curriculum to strengthen digital literacy integration in the classroom. Cyndi especially loves that the new curriculum comes with interactive activities, lesson plans, and digital literacy routines that teachers can start implementing right away. She also appreciates that the curriculum is aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (CCRSAE) and comes with recommendations and strategies for integrating reading and writing instruction. The curriculum includes assessment tools, individual and group reporting, and badging/credential integrations, which Cyndi thinks will help teachers plan ahead and tailor their instruction.

However, with all the opportunities for new teaching methods and new activities comes a lot of teacher anxiety. Cyndi is concerned that some of the teachers will be anxious about implementing the new curriculum. Some teachers are themselves uncomfortable with the technology, and worry about their ability to support student learning. The curriculum also requires teachers to shift from teacher-led activities to more student-led activities, and many teachers are concerned about classroom management and finding ways to simultaneously support students at so many different skill levels. Although the teachers unanimously agree that digital literacy is important for students’ academic and career success, quite a few teachers feel intimidated by this new curriculum and the expectations around it.

As is usual for Cyndi, she has a hundred ideas about things she can do to support her teachers in implementing this curriculum. But she is not sure which ideas are going to resonate with her teachers, nor is she sure what support teachers feel they most need.

# **Handout 9** | Pre-Planning Pitfalls and Strategies

The following pitfalls have been gathered from programs over the years.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **Rationale** | **Pitfalls** | **Strategies** |
| Overall Focus & Scope | Clarity about what is feasible, timeline, expectations, and boundaries will establish guidelines for the process. | * The scope is too ambitious or unrealistic * Or…it’s too weak—it has no possibility of actually leading to meaningful change * The scope is not specific, clear, or transparent to all * It does not consider other perspectives or priorities | * Pay attention to the organization culture and context. * Identify where buy-in and different perspectives are valuable. * Consider the timing and plan so it doesn’t conflict with major potential barriers like refunding cycles. * Don’t decide to tackle something that won’t or can’t be supported at the organizational level. |
| Process and Structure | Clarity about the process and structure will ensure that you get the right people on your team and transparency will help them to stay. | * Lack of interest to volunteer or serve on the team if it doesn’t have decision-making authority. * Process isn’t authentic (looks like it’s inclusive but actually is not) | * Be honest about the roles and responsibilities. Don’t expect more than what’s reasonable for people to devote to this process. * Make participation voluntary. Don’t force people to be part of a process they don’t support. * Look for ways to pay people for their time or at least provide a stipend for their participation. Get creative about recognizing people for their time if you can’t pay them. |

## Handout 9 | Pitfalls & Strategies | page 2 of 3

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **Rationale** | **Pitfalls** | **Strategies** |
| Assembling a Planning Team | An effective planning process benefits from multiple perspectives from people who are committed and engaged. They need and deserve to understand their role, responsibilities, and commitment. | * Deciding who can (availability) and should (expertise) be part of the team. * Politics about who “must” be part of the team, even if they don’t necessarily have time or beneficial expertise. * Logistics: Good people are always busy. When, where, and how to coordinate meetings can be challenging. * Need to build community and trust | * Ensure that decisions are made based on the expertise and availability of people according to the specific scope and goals of the process. * Make participation voluntary: no “arm twisting” * Create a doodle poll to capture common possible meeting times * Be up-front about the need for a group orientation. |
| A smooth planning process begins by making sure that everyone is on the same page and fully understands the scope, their role, and the process. | * Logistics * Lack of time, interest * Lack of resources | * Intentionally plan to incorporate activities that build community and trust among members. * Provide written materials that clearly outline and explain the scope, roles, and responsibilities of members on the team. * Look for local staff who can support the process. |
| Identifying Data Sources | An effective planning process should be based on what we “know” (because it’s based on evidence), not on what we “suspect” (because we’ve made assumptions). | * Lack of awareness of where to find relevant and valid data. * Lack of staff who are comfortable and have time to explore, compile, and analyze data. | * Brainstorm what types of data are available. * Assign someone who can do this work. Who can serve this role on your team? * Be sure to draw from multiple sources and use both quantitative and qualitative data. * Consider the planning team’s data literacy and whether you need to build specific skills or shared understandings before or through the planning process. |

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## Handout 9 | Pitfalls & Strategies | page 3 of 3

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **Rationale** | **Pitfalls** | **Strategies** |
| Engaging Diverse Perspectives | A clear and intentional plan for communicating with stakeholders outside of the core committee promotes transparency and allows for more engagement and feedback. | * Students or stakeholders tune out because they don’t have context or because they’re receiving too much information. * Community input is weak. * or, conversely, there is more feedback than the core committee can address. | * Create a plan that considers frequency, content, and depth of communications to those outside of the core committee. * Create feedback checkpoints: where do you need feedback, and how will you gather it? Be very clear on what you are asking for. |
| Having a clear plan for including students (in particular) in the planning process ensures student input and promotes student leadership. | * Students are too busy or too occupied with other things to be involved. * Students don’t feel prepared or empowered to contribute in meaningful ways. * Other planning team members have fears about students’ ability to contribute in meaningful ways. * Students are included, but their opinions are secondary to the “experts.” | * Consider a variety of ways that students can contribute to planning: surveys, focus groups, and informal (but intentional) conversations all count! * Clearly identify and communicate the value that students have to contribute to the planning process. * Connect student feedback to program changes and point out the ways that your program is strengthened by their input. * Clearly define roles and responsibilities. Provide adequate training, and be sure to follow up with students about their experiences on the planning team. * Consider protocols and discussion frames that ensure that everyone has the same information and is starting from the same place. |

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