###

Continuous Improvement Planning

Session 4: Moving to Action

Handouts

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# Session Overview

## Session Goals

* Program improvement teams develop a plan for monitoring and evaluating progress using reflective, growth-oriented, and data-driven tools and strategies.
* Program improvement teams identify potential challenges related to managing change in their programs and identify strategies to prevent or address challenges.

## Learning Objectives

* Develop a plan for monitoring and evaluating progress
* Identify 1-2 strategies for collaborative reflection to implement in your program
* Identify 1-2 potential challenges and 1-2 strategies for managing change during your CIP process

## Pre-Work

* Complete Sections 3 and 4 of the **Planning Template** (Session 1, Handout 7), or make a plan to do so
* Review your program’s mission, vision, and values

Homework

* Complete [Session 4 Exit Ticket](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSctLkpnnsFEKWeB_Bo0__qXJefSrXdMyGXlr6CrQEj3QhH3Nw/viewform?usp=sf_link) and the [Course Evaluation](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdr4uY1B33983TIvPt0WoAjKOyiSN4D96yYkyuHZBlsGvTN_w/viewform?usp=sf_link) (note that these are separate forms)
* Create a plan for monitoring and reflecting on your progress
* Reach out to your facilitators for coaching

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# **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 will your program look like if your theory of change is correct and you meet your goals? What will students, staff, and partners see, experience, and feel?

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# **Handout 2** | Plus/Delta

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### Purpose

To reflect on your work on continuous improvement to date.

### Activity Instructions

1. Reflect on the work you and/or your team has done so far (see “Individual Reflection Questions”).
2. Share your answers with your group and discuss (see “Group Discussion Questions”).

### Individual Reflection Questions

* What was this process like for you? What has gone well? What would you do differently next time, or what do you wish you had done differently?

### Group Discussion Questions

* Which items did you have in common? What themes do you see?
* Which items are unique? Why, and what can you learn from those perspectives?
* What else can we learn from this process?

### Notes and Space for Reflection

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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 3** | Reflection Routines & Activities

Building reflection into your regular work and collaborative practices helps build a shared reflective practice and promotes psychological safety on a team. The following activities are meant to be integrated into your regular check-ins and team meetings to prompt individual and group reflection. Using them consistently promotes open channels of communication, builds comfort in giving and receiving feedback, and will help your team identify issues or concerns early on. This will help lay the groundwork for your team to evaluate whether your working theory of change is correct and move to action accordingly.

These reflection routines and activities are most effective for reflecting on process and individual action steps. To reflect on the effectiveness of the objectives, initiatives, and goals that you have chosen as part of your working theory of change, we suggest looking at the data-driven reflection routines and activities in Handout 4.

### Check-In Reflections

Use these during check-ins and team meetings to learn about each other’s work, uncover challenges, and identify areas for support. Participants should share one of each (e.g. a peak and a pit; or a rose, a bud, and a thorn) with a partner or group.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Peaks & Pits** | **Peak:** a high point**Pit:** a low point or challenge |
| **Roses, Buds, & Thorns** | **Rose:** a piece of work or process that is blooming and bearing fruit; a success **Bud:** a piece of work that is almost ready to blossom: a success in the making**Thorn:** something difficult or challenging  |
| **Nuts & Berries** | **Nuts:** projects or problems that are tough to crack**Berries:** projects or lines of inquiry that are rich and productive |

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Handout 3 | Reflection Routines & Activities | page 2 of 2

### Plus/Delta

A **plus** is something that worked well. A **delta** is something that could be improved (from the Greek letter Delta, used in math to indicate difference or change).

Use this to reflect on a shared experience or work product. Give a few minutes for everyone to brainstorm (in a shared document, using sticky notes, independently, or another method of your choice), then discuss patterns and takeaways.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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?*  |
|  |  |

###

# **Handout 4** | Data-Driven Reflection Routines & Activities

Reflecting on, analyzing, and interpreting data is an essential part of monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes. Taking a participatory approach to this work creates opportunities to surface multiple perspectives, build trust, and build a sense of shared ownership around next steps. The following routines and activities can help support this process. Using them consistently as part of your progress monitoring will help surface issues, concerns, and successes early, and pivot as needed.

These routines and activities are most effective for reflecting on and evaluating as a precursor to concrete action. If more consensus is needed before committing to action, see Handout 5 for routines and activities for building consensus. We suggest that activities be led by a facilitator, and that facilitators take time to review and understand the data before the activity.

Activities are organized from least to most amount of time and preparation needed to facilitate. The final item listed is the ORID Framework, a framework for interpreting data that is reflected in many of the other activities. (It also informs the ATLAS protocol that we did in Session 2.) It can be used on its own as a conversation guide, or as a framework to inform the development of new activities and routines. If you choose to create your own activity, be sure to carefully consider the purpose and thoroughly review and understand the data that you will use in advance.

**Dot Voting**

Dot voting is a collaborative decision-making process that can be adapted to reflect on data. To use it in this way, you could ask participants to observe a data set (or a set of group reflections, such as a Plus/Delta) and identify themes. Participants could then put a dot next to the theme or reflection that resonates most with them, or that seems most salient.

**3-2-1 Reflection**

*Adapted from the* [*Center for Leadership & Educational Equity*](https://www.clee.org/resources/3-2-1-reflection/)*.*

In a 3-2-1 protocol, participants reflect on an experience or set of data and write three observations, two questions, and one implication for practice.

### Chalk Talk

*Adapted from the* [*Center for Leadership & Educational Equity*](https://www.clee.org/resources/chalk-talk/)*.*

Chalk Talk is done completely in silence! The facilitator starts the activity by giving instructions and writing a question in the middle of the board. Participants may then respond to the question and one another as they are moved, but without speaking. Participants may write comments, ask questions, draw images/graphics, show connections between various comments, or respond in other ways.

### Handout 4 | Data-Driven Reflection Routines & Activities | page 2 of 3

The facilitator may continue the activity in a way that suits their needs: they may let the activity unfold, react to ideas, add new questions, or connect ideas to prompt further exploration.

This activity is traditionally done using a chalkboard or whiteboard, but would also work well on a digital whiteboard such as Padlet Sandbox, Miro, or Zoom Whiteboard.

**The ORID Framework for Data Analysis**

*The ORID Framework is drawn from* [*The Art of Focused Conversation*](https://newsociety.com/book/the-art-of-focused-conversation-second-edition/)*. See* [*ORID*](https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/methods/orid) *for a summary explanation of the framework and* [*Learning for Action*](https://learningforaction.com/conducting-data-reflection-meetings) *for suggestions for implementation in the context of continuous improvement planning.*

The ORID framework is meant to guide a focused conversation in which participants observe, reflect, interpret, and come to a decision. It is also useful for making collective decisions. It can be used on its own or to inform a more elaborate protocol.

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| **Observation** | * What patterns do we see in the data?
* What do the data show?
* How do these patterns vary by sub-group?
 |
| **Reflection** | * What results did we expect?
* What are we surprised to see?
* Are our assumptions holding up?
 |
| **Insights** | * Where are participants making the most/least progress?
* Why do we think this aspect worked/didn’t work?
* What are the implications?
* What are our options?
 |
| **Decisions** | * How do we need to adjust our approach?
* Where do we need additional data? What are our next steps?
* How will we set priorities?
 |

### Scavenger Hunt

*Adapted from the* [*Evidence Scavenger Hunt*](http://www.bostondebate.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Copy-of-Skill-1-Scavenger-Hunt-CER.docx.pdf) *from the Boston Debate League.* *The Data Match example was adapted from* [*Overcoming data fatigue: creative ways to help teams reflect on data*](https://usaidlearninglab.org/community/blog/overcoming-data-fatigue-creative-ways-help-teams-reflect-data#:~:text=Reflecting%20on%20your%20data%20is,how%20you%20want%20to%20improve.)*.*

### In a Scavenger Hunt, participants are asked to find evidence to support a claim. For example, you could divide participants into two groups, with one group asked to find evidence that an initiative is working and the other asked to find evidence that it is not. Or, you could divide participants into several groups and ask each group to find evidence to support a different reason that an initiative is not working.

A variation on this is a **Data Match**, where participants receive shuffled data and asked to connect it in some way. For example, you might hand out a shuffled set of program years and corresponding outcomes data, then ask participants to connect the years and outcomes as a way to explore trends over time.

### Handout 4 | Data-Driven Reflection Routines & Activities | page 3 of 3

**Data Walk**

*Adapted from* [*Data Walks: an Innovative Way to Share Data with Communities*](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/72906/2000510-Data-Walks-An-Innovative-Way-to-Share-Data-with-Communities.pdf)*.*

During a data walk, participants review data presentations in small groups, interpret what they mean, and collaborate to make recommendations. A data walk starts with posters displaying data for participants to share and explore. The posters are hung around the room and participants are divided into groups, with one group per poster. Groups have 5-10 minutes at their first poster to discuss and interpret the data, then rotate to the next. Participants may take notes on the posters (for other groups to respond), take notes on their own, or not take notes at all.

After each group has visited all the posters, the group debriefs as a whole.

# **Handout 5** | Consensus-Building Routines & Activities

While not all decisions must be consensus-based, the process of building consensus can help generate buy-in and a sense of shared ownership. It can also identify holdouts (and their reasons) early on, so that concerns can be addressed from the beginning.

Before coming to consensus, it can be helpful to have a shared understanding of what consensus means. We like the following definition from the [*Center for Leadership & Educational Equity*](https://www.clee.org/resources/consensus-based-decision-making-process/):

1. I can live with the decision,
2. I will support my colleagues in implementing this decision, and
3. I will do absolutely nothing to impede the implementation of the decision.

Note that consensus does *not* mean that everyone agrees fully: it means that the majority of the group is willing to implement the decision and no one will actively work to block it.

**Dot Voting**

Dot voting is listed above as a reflective process. It can also be a collaborative decision-making process to choose from a list of ideas.

In this case, the facilitator gives each person a certain number of dots that they can divide up in any way they choose on a list of ideas generated. They can put all of their dots on one item, one dot on separate items, or any combination in between.

Dot voting works well when you are going to break and need to do something with the information before people come back together again, or when you have several lists coming together from different groups and you want all participants to respond to the combined lists.

**Conversational Consensus-Building**

*Adapted from the* [*Center for Leadership & Educational Equity*](https://www.clee.org/resources/consensus-based-decision-making-process/)

To reach consensus, a group should first discuss a proposal thoroughly. When all concerns and questions have been resolved (or at least aired), the facilitator may double check for consensus by asking for any other questions, issues, or concerns regarding the proposal. If there are none, the facilitator calls for an affirmation of consensus (“thumbs up” or “aye” work well here) to formally acknowledge the decision.

If the group cannot reach consensus, those who object must state their objections are responsible for proposing alternatives and beginning negotiations.

Handout 5 | Consensus-Building Routines & Activities | page 2 of 3

Once a decision has been made, the group should determine:

* Is the decision a decision or a recommendation?
* If it is a recommendation, who will present the recommendation? To whom?
* If it is a decision, who needs to know about it? Who will tell them, and by when?
* What are the next steps for implementation? Who will do it, and when?

**Fist to Five**

*Adapted from the* [*Heartland Area Education Agency*](https://learningteams.pbworks.com/f/Facilitation%2BTools%2B%2526%2BStrategies.pdf)

In the Fist to Five process, participants use their fingers to show their support for a proposal or decision. Typically, this happens after extensive discussion, once the facilitator decides that the group is ready to move to consensus.

To do a Fist to Five, the facilitator should state the proposal as they understand it in the moment. Then the facilitator asks every member of the group to demonstrate how they feel about the direction on a scale of fist to five:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Fist** | No agreement: I do not support this decision and will work to block its implementation. |
| **One finger** | Very little agreement: I don’t support this decision, but I also won’t block its implementation. |
| **Two fingers** | Little agreement |
| **Three fingers** | Moderate agreement |
| **Four fingers** | High agreement |
| **Five fingers** | Very high agreement. I fully support this decision and will actively support others in implementing it. |

A response of three, four, or five can generally be considered agreement. If all members respond with a three, four, or five, the group can move forward with the decision.

If there are any participants showing a fist, one, or two, the facilitator should ask the objectors about their concerns. Objectors should state what, specifically, they object to. The facilitator may also ask them what would bring them to agreement. (This creates an opportunity for objectors to point things out that others may not have seen. It also creates an opportunity to address concerns from the beginning, while requiring an objector to state the reasons for their objections. This reduces the possibility that individuals will object because they don’t feel well that day or don’t like the person who proposed.)

Handout 5 | Consensus-Building Routines & Activities | page 3 of 3

You may want to establish some team norms around when the team will move forward with a proposal: for example, you will only move forward if two-thirds or more of the group shows a three, four, or five. Note that smooth implementation tends to happen when around 80% or more of the group is in agreement (shows a three, four, or five).

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# **Handout 6** | Case Studies: Managing for Change

Read one of the following scenarios and discuss with your group.

## Scenario 1

Carolina, the director of Community Education Solutions, was exhausted. She had spent the whole weekend pulling together and examining data from the program. She had prepared numerous charts and graphs and drawn several conclusions from the data. She arrived at work on Monday morning at 7:00 am and started planning the changes needed in the program to achieve better outcomes. At 9:00 am she went into the staff meeting, which was attended by two full-time advisors, a full-time administrative assistant, a full-time teacher, and six part-time teachers. She projected the charts, explained her analysis, and outlined the changes that were needed.

Carolina was surprised by the reaction. She had expected the staff to be impressed with the data and excited to move forward. Instead, these were some of the responses:

* “Why do we have to write a new curriculum? Students love our classes; their evaluations are so positive!”
* “There’s nothing we can do about students missing classes. They have poor attitudes and can’t make a commitment.”
* “Students have complicated lives. Sometimes they can’t find a babysitter, and they get sick a lot. We have to adjust our classes each night according to who is there. Nothing is going to change that.”

###

### Guiding Questions

* How can Carolina move forward with her staff?
* What techniques can she use to reduce her own stress and exhaustion?

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Handout 6 | Case Studies: Managing for Change | page 2 of 3

## Scenario 2

The Sunrise Adult Education Program used an inclusive process to develop a two-year plan for continuous improvement. They agreed to address retention problems surfaced by the data by changing classroom structures and routines. Students had complained that they couldn’t see their progress. Each session seemed like a self-contained unit with no connection to the previous week. The continuous improvement plan included the development of curriculum units; all teachers would provide students with a syllabus for the unit and clearly indicate times for formative and summative assessment.

This went well for the first semester after adoption of the plan. Then in the next semester, as the director made informal visits to classes, she noticed that many teachers had slipped back into their old methods.

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### Guiding Question

* What happened? What could she do?

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Handout 6 | Case Studies: Managing for Change | page 3 of 3

## Scenario 3

The Waterville Valley Adult Basic Education Program went through a process with their community partners to redefine a vision and mission. They decided that it would benefit their students and their community to add an integrated education and training component, which would be new to their agency. Their community SWOT analysis indicated that there was a need for entry-level IT workers. Their student survey showed that IT was one of the top three fields that students were interested in. With great enthusiasm, the program included the development and implementation of this new component on their draft continuous improvement plan.

Among the program’s two advisors, however, the enthusiasm was short-lived. They started talking among themselves about all the extra responsibilities that this new program would entail for them. They already felt overloaded with filling classes, tracking data, filling out paperwork, helping students deal with crises, working with students on career plans, organizing workshops, and collaborating with teachers on students’ learning issues. How were they going to take on a whole new area? They shared their concerns with other staff, who also began complaining about how much was expected of them and how hard they had to work.

###

### Guiding Question

* What can the director do to move the IET idea forward on the continuous improvement plan while allaying staff concerns about overload?

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