

EVALUATION BRIEF

CONTINUOUS LEARNING CYCLE PROGRAM 2007-2008

“...designed to train school staff to carry out self-directed inquiry with discussion around specific instructional needs to build school capacity for ongoing and continuous improvement of teaching practice in schools.”

THE CONTINUOUS LEARNING CYCLE (CLC)

A program designed to train school staff in self-directed inquiry with discussion around specific instructional needs to build school capacity for continual improvement of teaching practice in schools. Implementation of the CLCs was aimed at developing an alternative method for delivery of professional development to schools, leveraging limited personnel resources for instructional coaching, and accelerating the work of *professional learning communities* in schools.

CLC PROGRAM FEATURES

Based on nationwide programs and local research, the Schultz Center's model for Continuous Learning Cycles includes:

- ◆ identifying **student learning needs** based on data
- ◆ identifying **adult learning goals (about teaching)** connected to this learning
- ◆ defining a **4-6 week course of study** to:
 - review materials and resources about the topic
 - take turns demonstrating lessons
 - try out new and different teaching approaches
 - facilitate group discussions about what is learned
- ◆ providing a forum to **engage in personal reflection and discussion** about the work with colleagues
- ◆ examining student work for evidence of learning at the outset and throughout
- ◆ evaluation of new approaches by **documenting results**

WHAT WAS EVALUATED

This was the second year of implementation for the *coaching cycle* work carried out with schools by the Schultz Center. First year evaluation documented the need for:

- ◆ more systematic and consistent collection of data reflecting key components of work with schools
- ◆ more systematic process for determining a school's readiness for participation and potential benefit from the CLC program
- ◆ defining quality criteria for use by coaches in completing the documentation of elements in the inquiry process

Based on revisions made at the end of the first year, the 2007-2008 evaluation questioned:

- ◆ the extent to which schools carried out systematic coaching cycles resulting in a standard **Course of Study** and **End of Cycle Report** that documented impact the process had on teachers' practice and student achievement.

(Continued)

CLC Program Highlights

- 67 Participating schools
- 569 Participants
- 72% Teachers
- 19% Coaches
- 19% Guidance, specialists, etc.

89% of the work was carried out with elementary school teams

85% of participants and 100% of principals would like to participate in another CLC



SCHULTZ CENTER

FOR TEACHING & LEADERSHIP

WHO PARTICIPATED

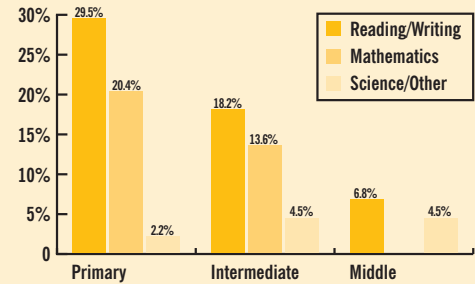
Participants during the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 coaching cycles were surveyed to get their input about the value of their experience in coaching cycle work (N = 569 participants).

During (2006-07 and 2007-08):	We involved:
158 Continuous Learning Cycles	72% teachers
67 Schools were involved	19% coaches
569 Participants	9% guidance, specialists, etc.

WHAT WAS STUDIED

Of 44 coaching cycle products (course of study through end of cycle reports) submitted for review, the majority were carried out in the Reading/Writing area (56%), 34% in the area of Mathematics, and the remaining 10% were in Science. In terms of grade level, the work was carried out primarily with elementary teams (89%) with only a few being done at the middle school level.

Content Areas Reviewed, Measured by Grade Level



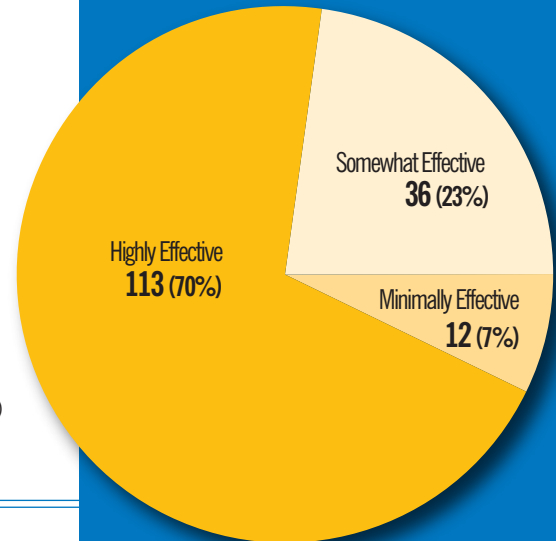
MEASURING SUCCESS

The majority of participants (85%) and principals (100%) say they would like to participate in another Continuous Learning Cycle. Both groups verify that CLC field coaches were quite effective at carrying out coaching cycles. Principals were especially complimentary of opportunities provided to teachers and staff members in the coaching cycle work. When asked what aspect of the work they found most helpful, responses fell into the following categories:

Most Helpful Aspects of CLC Work to Schools	% Responses
... powerful professional development training	66%
... way to operationalize good teaching practice and get teachers to reflect on aspects of their practice	10%
... wonderful process to help build Professional Learning Communities	9%
(Other) ... the model gave us a way to implement training at the school even with fewer staff members; profited from the experience and would like to continue; it gave us a way to initiate continuous improvement	15%
Total	100%

As the figure at right illustrates, 113 (70%) of participants thought that district field coaches were highly effective at facilitating the CLC work, while only 12 participants (7%) felt that they were minimally effective.

How effective was the district (field) coach at facilitating the Collaborative Coaching and Learning Cycle in which you participated last?



CONCLUSION

There is clear evidence that implementation of CLC work has been successful. However, we have learned that we need to be more strategic in identifying and tracking elements in the cycle in order to determine if, or to what degree, student learning had been realized. In this year's review, 64% of CLC products met high quality standards for defining student learning goals, 70% met high quality standards for defining teacher learning goals, and 50% in the measurement of learning goals. In 2008-09, coaches will be provided with more training in this area to assist them in supporting schools to accomplish the learning goals defined for coaching cycle work.