

EVALUATION BRIEF

CONTINUOUS LEARNING CYCLE PROGRAM 2008-2009

“At the end of the third year of this program, 83 schools and 906 school-based instructional personnel had been engaged in one or more coaching cycles.”

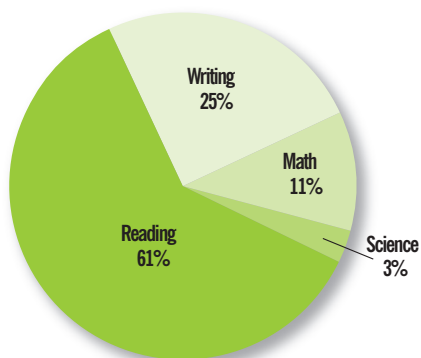
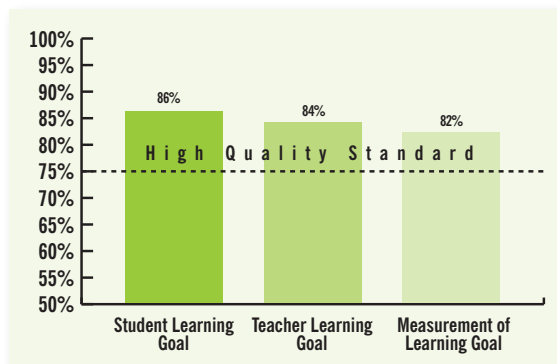
THE CONTINUOUS LEARNING CYCLE (CLC)

The purpose of the Continuous Learning Cycle (CLC) work is to build the capacity of teachers to carry out self-directed inquiry around teaching strategies while addressing specific instructional needs of students. This was the third year of the program, and each year it has been modified in response to district needs and recommendations for improvement by annual program evaluation efforts. The program aims to enhance individual teaching skills by focusing on student work products that highlight problem areas or learning needs.

Areas of difficulty for students are chosen as the subject of collaborative teacher inquiry and group lesson study. Teachers discuss how instruction might be modified and how to assess for changes in student mastery. Work over the past three years has focused on creating a formal process that can be duplicated by groups of teachers to enable teacher inquiry and data-based decision making that can inform teaching practice. Using quality criteria to define the necessary elements of the coaching cycle process assures that there is fidelity to the process in each of the components of: *teacher learning goals, student learning goals, and measurement of learning goals.*

QUALITY OF THE CLC PROCESS

By 2009, the process of developing components for coaching cycle work had been solidified and criteria for evaluating their quality were established. A rubric was developed to evaluate quality of the process components submitted as documentation for the CLC work. The standard for quality was set at 75% and each component was expected to reach or exceed that level. In 2009 all component areas met the high quality standards as seen in the figure above.



The subject matter addressed by teachers in each coaching was determined by student learning needs and school improvement priorities set by school leadership teams. The topics chosen included Language Arts (Reading and Writing), Math, and Science. In 2009, the majority of participating groups focused the coaching cycle work in the subject area of Reading (61%), followed in order by Writing (25%), Math (11%), and Science (3%). The figure at left illustrates the proportions of coaching cycle subject matter work engaged in by groups.

CLC Program Highlights

Who was involved?

- 237** Instructional Personnel
- 173** Classroom Teachers
- 16** Principals (or APs)
- 15** District Field Coaches
- 17** School Instructional Coaches
- 16** Subject Matter Coaches or Others

What Did Participants Say?

57.1% of participants said CLC work led to observable changes in student learning

42.9% of participants said CLC work led to improvement in teaching strategies and practices

How Much Work Did We Accomplish?

- 15** Schools were selected
- 36** Coaching cycles were completed



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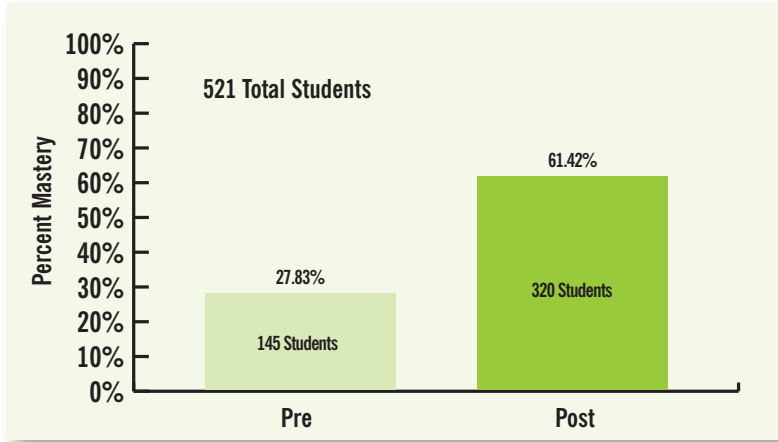
What did teachers get out of the process?

Teachers were asked what “unexpected outcomes” they experienced as a result of the process, and most frequent responses were comments that CLC work:

- ◆ Led to observable changes in student learning
- ◆ Led to improvement in teaching strategies and practices

Did student mastery of skills change as a result of the CLC work?

Coaching cycles are brief, lasting from 6-8 weeks. Can student mastery of skills improve over that period of time? *From beginning (Pre) to end of the cycle (Post), 175 students reached mastery of the skills under study.*



HOW DOES CONTINUOUS LEARNING CYCLES (CLC) WORK LEAD TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT?

CLC work provides a process by which *group lesson study* and *professional learning community (PLC)* principles can grow and flourish. At the end of the third year of this program, 83 schools and 906 school-based instructional personnel had been engaged in one or more coaching cycles. This process of reflective teacher dialogue focused on student instructional needs to improve teacher practice and student learning. The diagram below illustrates how these systems are working together:

