



# EVALUATION BRIEF

*Schultz Center for Teaching and Leadership | September 2010*

**Continuous Learning Cycles:**  
Evaluating lesson study efforts at the elementary school level.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Elementary Continuous Learning Cycle (CLC) program was developed in 2006-2007 by Duval County administrators in partnership with the Schultz Center for Teaching and Leadership. The program was based on best practices and a review of the literature supporting job-embedded professional learning and collaborative coaching models for continuous improvement. The purpose of CLC work was to build capacity of teachers to conduct self-directed inquiry around teaching strategies while addressing the specific instructional needs of students. Following a review of best practices, DCPS in partnership with the Schultz Center, developed a model for coaching that was supported by school and district level resources and coaches.

## EVALUATING THE PROGRAM

The CLC program has been evaluated three times in the course of its development to standardize and verify high levels of consistency and quality in the dialogue protocols that were followed (see previous reports if you would like more information about how process quality was established). In 2010, the evaluation focused primarily on program outcomes including documentation of school and teacher participation in coaching cycles, and documentation of student gains from completed coaching cycles in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies.

In 2008-2009, process quality and documentation of the process were areas of concentration. Process quality was established by checking for the presence of certain required elements in Course of Study and End of Cycle reports documenting the standardized dialogue process followed by coaches. In order to assure program fidelity, a high level of process quality was established as a program requirement (75%). This was based on consistency and the presence of certain criteria using a scoring rubric.

At the end of 2008-2009, process quality across all three areas was high with 86% of criteria met in the student learning goal, 84% in the teacher learning goal, and 82% in the measurement of learning goal. At the end of 2009-2010, process quality in the first two areas increased even more to 97% in describing the student learning goal, and 100% in documenting the teacher learning goal, but dipped below the quality standard (75%) to 69% in the measurement of student learning goal.

## WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

When the impact (or benefit) of a program is dependent on a process, measuring the quality of that process is critical. The lower quality rating in 2010 in measurement of learning was due to the fact that fewer schools provided evidence of student gains in 2010. In 2009 student progress was tracked for 577 students, and among those students, 33% (one third) moved from non-mastery



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**IN 2009-2010**

54 schools and 415 participants

**OVER THREE YEARS**

1890 teachers, coaches, and administrators

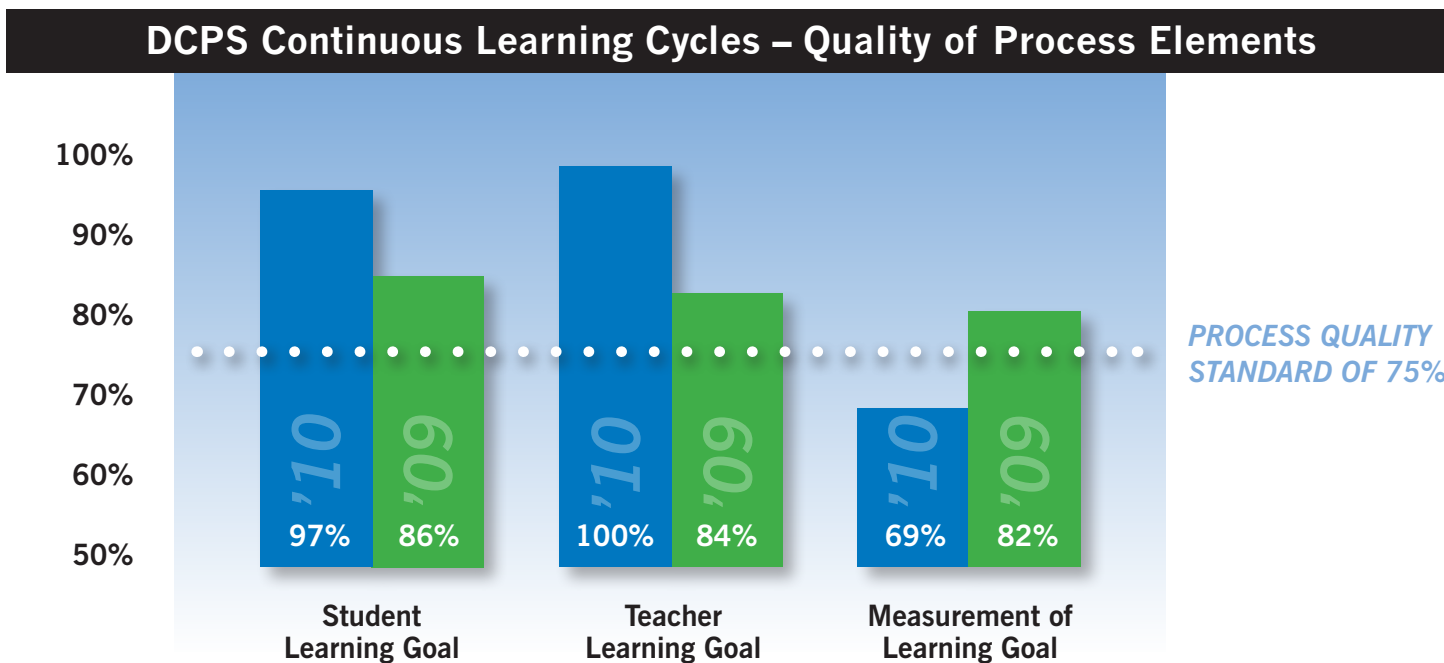
to mastery of the skills being studied in the coaching cycles. In 2010, student results were reported for only about half that number (277), but a large number of those students (82%) made extremely good progress during that time (see Figure 1 below).

**LESSONS LEARNED**

Having completed three evaluations of the elementary Continuous Learning Cycle (CLC) program, we have seen that a replicable process for conducting collaborative coaching cycles with groups of teachers has been formalized and documented. Moving forward, it is suggested that a review of results from coaching cycles conducted each year should be shared between Schultz Center coaching staff leading these cycles and Duval County Academic Services staff to identify joint concerns and plan for next steps. There are recurring topic areas that are commonly reported by coaches and captured in End of Cycle reports as areas of difficulty for teachers. These include topics dealing with appropriate forms of classroom assessments that serve to support and guide instructional decision making. In addition, the feedback from coaches who conduct CLC cycles in schools indicate the continuing need for professional learning opportunities for teachers about:

- Improving methods for reviewing and conducting diagnostic analysis of student work samples
- Expressing curriculum standards in sequentially ordered series of skills and content that build to learning targets
- Increasing teacher understanding of appropriate forms of classroom assessment that can document short-term improvements; and
- Collaborating about ways to engage more teachers in group lesson study around teaching practice; and
- Finding ways to provide the resources (space, time, and personnel) to sustain and expand the work.

**Figure 1**



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

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