

Inquiry Cycle Map

School: **SAMPLE MIDDLE SCHOOL** Team: **WRITING** Date: **Oct 2009**

ASSESS EFFECTS
of current practice

Priority problem area* Over the past three years, our 7th graders averaged 11.2/20 overall and 6.1/12 for topic development on the MCAS ELA long composition.
* in the form of a data-based problem statement

School-year goal* 100% of our 7th graders will earn at least 8/12 possible Topic Development points on the 2010 MCAS long composition.

When and how to assess 7th grade ELA MCAS — March 2010

HYPOTHEESIZE
what to change & why

Analyze evidence In the past three years, 7th graders averaged 6.1/12 possible points in the topic development category and 6.7/8 on conventions (convention scores have been trending upward). Students in the Warning and low Needs Improvement levels averaged 4.4 on topic development; in past essays, students maintained a general focus or idea, but did not elaborate with sufficient detail.

Make and test inferences We identified 50 target students who scored between 2-6 on topic development and ruled out 5 students who had excessive absences. We looked at these students' responses to last year's common analytical writing assignment and noted that most had a general theme of what they wanted to say, but it was not clear nor was it well-developed. Papers that were more than one page long had a lot of repetition of thoughts, and they were not well organized.

Analyze current conditions We weren't sure whether students had received explicit instruction on thesis development, so we talked to our 6th grade colleagues and found that it is not specifically included in the G6 curriculum. Only one teacher had directly taught elements of analytical writing in 6th grade.

State what needs to change and why Instead of assuming that students come to 7th grade having been taught how to write and expand on a good thesis statement, we will teach it directly early in the year.

DEFINE SUCCESS
for this cycle

**Learning Target/
Cycle goal*** 100% of target students will be able to successfully write a thesis statement and will score at least a 2/3 on the skill assessment

How to assess Students will be given three familiar topics and will write a thesis statement that includes a position and at least two major supporting ideas for each topic (e.g., "The school day should not be extended because many students need to work, it is unsafe, and students need time to be with family," or "Frederick Douglass's speeches are still relevant today because...")

When to assess Thursday October 15th, after one week of classroom lessons on thesis development

PLAN & ACT

Plan We will create lessons on how to write a thesis statement and teach them to the 7th grade ELA classes for one week. All 7th grade ELA teachers will teach this lesson. The literacy coach will work with our two new teachers and the SEI teacher, who may need additional scaffolding.

Act 4 of 6 ELA teachers delivered the lessons as planned. One was out sick with the flu; one other struggled with classroom management and wasn't confident in the effectiveness of the week's lessons.

ASSESS EFFECT
of this cycle

Analyze evidence:

- to assess effect of this cycle* 32 of the 50 target students (64%) scored 2 or 3 on the thesis-statement assessment. Of the other 18, 10 had missed 2 or more days during the week the unit was taught. (Our team lead will report this to the ILT and check whether any of those 10 students are part of the ILT's target group as they try to improve attendance.)
- to identify next learning target What we taught was effective for most of the students who "got the dose." To move the other 18 students, we will analyze their responses to determine next steps.

This analysis will help to develop your next hypothesis.



★ Attach implementation plans, assessments, student performance data, etc. ★

Inquiry Cycle Map

School: **SAMPLE HIGH SCHOOL** Team: **ILT** Date: **September 2009**


ASSESS EFFECTS
of current practice

Priority problem area*
* in the form of a data-based problem statement
101 of our 298 9th graders (34%) were absent more than 20 days last year. 40 students had between 20-60 absences last year.

School-year goal*
The 40 identified target students will miss 15 or fewer days in the 10th grade.

When and how to assess Check attendance at the end of each quarter and at the end of the year.


HYPOTHESIZE
what to change & why

Analyze evidence
We analyzed CLI data and found that 61 students had >60 absences or >20 tardies last year in G9. We selected 40 students who had been absent 20-60 days and were tardy 19 or fewer days to be our target group. 82% of those 40 students were absent in clumps of days; 30 missed the first two days of the year; 18 missed school mostly on Mondays and Fridays; and 13 missed whole weeks before or after school vacations. We suspect that communication and feedback to students and parents about attendance is inconsistent.

Make and test inferences

Analyze current conditions
The ILT interviewed a sample of students with poor attendance at the end of last year: 65% felt that no adults cared whether they came to school or not, and 53% reported that their parents did not know they were absent so frequently. Our current practice is for an automated phone message to call home when a student is out, but many phone numbers in our records are outdated.


STATE WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE AND WHY

State what needs to change and why
We need to send a clear, immediate, and consistent message that adults **do** notice and care whether students come to school; we'll do so with phone calls to target students and their families before school and each of the first two days.


DEFINE SUCCESS
for this cycle

**Learning Target/
Cycle goal***
100% of our 40 target students will attend the first two days of school.

How to assess
We will closely check that the target students attend each of the first two days of school.

When to assess
By the end of each of the first two days of school.


PLAN & ACT

Plan
Each member of the ILT will call four target students before school starts, using common talking points to ensure the students understand the importance of the first two days of school. Follow-up calls will be given after each of the first two days, both to students and parents ("Glad you came!" or "We missed you").

Act
All team members attempted calls to their designated target students. We successfully reached 21 of the 40 students and family members of 11 others. The phone numbers we had for the other eight were outdated.


ASSESS EFFECT
of this cycle


Analyze evidence:

- to assess effect of this cycle*
- to identify next learning target

This was successful with 31 of the 40 target students (77.5%). Only 9 target students missed both of the first 2 days—this is a 50% reduction from last year! 7 of these 9 students also missed the first 2 days last year; 6 had outdated phone numbers; 2 said they weren't coming

We will ask advisory teachers to procure correct, current phone numbers for all students' families to update school records (and will particularly test numbers for all target students).

This analysis will help to develop your next hypothesis.



★ Attach implementation plans, assessments, student performance data, etc. ★