



Essential Practices: Observation and Coaching Cycles

Illinois Quality Improvement

Illinois 21st Century Community Learning Centers Workshop

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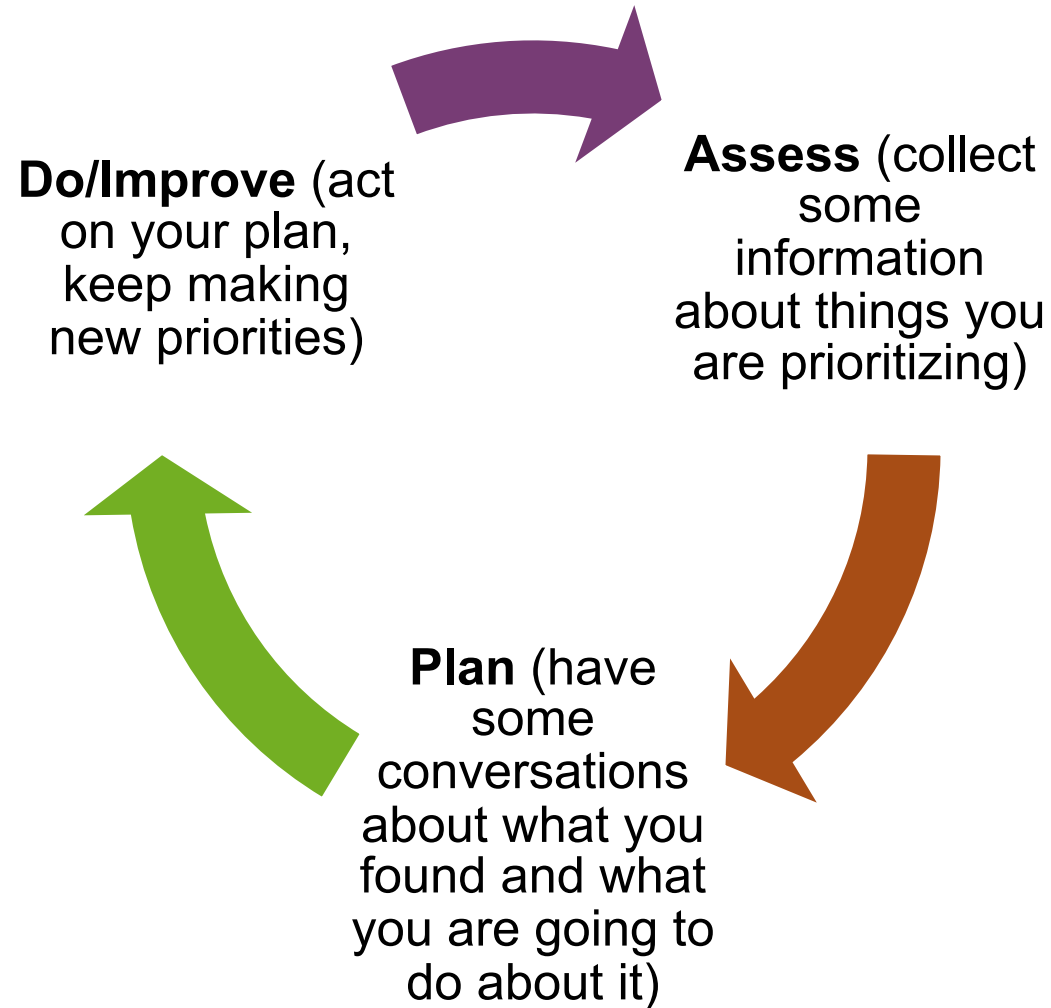
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Continuous Quality Improvement



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**If you can only pick ONE thing,
what can you do to improve
program quality?**

Photo by Allison Shelley/The Verbatim Agency for EDUimages

Observation and Coaching Cycles

- Assess:
 - Set your “top 10” priorities for programs.
 - Schedule and conduct observations (5–10).
- Plan:
 - Discuss what you saw (or did not see).
 - Create an improvement plan.
- Do/Improve
 - Implement your plan.

Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUimages, <https://images.all4ed.org/active-male-teacher>



Top 10 Program Practices

- Use a research-based tool or set of guidelines to start.
 - Beyond the Bell Youth Development Checklist
 - [Youth Program Quality Assessment](#)
 - [Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards](#)
- Use **what you already know** to set your priorities (2022–23 evaluation results, staff or youth surveys, past observations).
- Do it **together!** Set and share your priorities with your team.



What are your “Top 10” practices?




Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUimages, <https://images.all4ed.org/small-group-of-second-and-third-grade-boys>

Conducting Observations

- Does it have to be YOU? (Bring a young person or train your staff.)
- Keep an open mind. You are observing behaviors—not judging them in terms of good or bad, or right or wrong.
- Take detailed notes, including recording the date, time, and place; review and clean up your notes as soon as possible after completing the observation.

Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUimages, <https://images.all4ed.org/four-elementary-students-examine-plants>





Reflect: Think about a time when you received feedback from someone that helped you improve. What was effective about what they shared or how they shared it?

Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUimages,
<https://images.all4ed.org/science-teachers-collaborate>

Plan Coaching Observations

- Have a 5:1 positive to negative ratio.
- Share what you saw; identify areas of improvement together.
- Talk about supports using a professional development plan.
- Consider peer-to-peer strategies.

Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUimages, <https://images.all4ed.org/female-history-teacher>



Plan Group Observations

- Convene a staff/youth leadership team.
- Discuss what the observers saw (e.g., trends, innovations).
- Identify specific areas of strength and improvement.
- Set next-step strategies (make them SMART [Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound]).

Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUimages, <https://images.all4ed.org/close-up-of-female-teacher-during-faculty-meeting>



Improve

How can improvement become part of your program culture?

What do these next steps look like in your program?

- Follow-up
- Ongoing observations
- Peer-to-peer feedback
- Messaging and sharing

Photo by Allison Shelley/The Verbatim Agency for EDUimages, <https://images.all4ed.org/middle-school-students-at-table>



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