

EBITE RESOURCE GUIDE

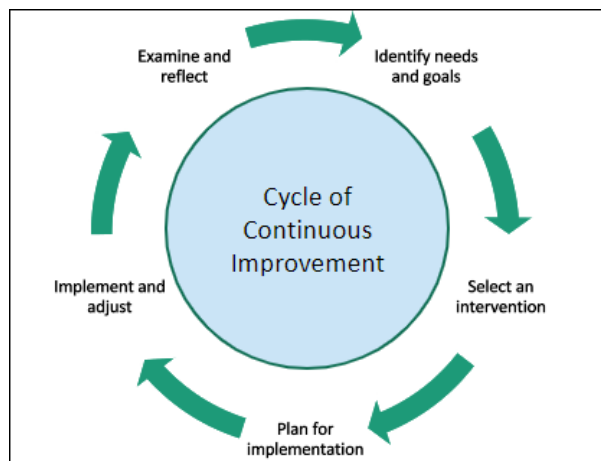
Examine & Reflect: The Continuous Cycle Loop.

Purpose

This guide focuses on the various way educators can examine and reflect on the processes they followed in the cycle of continuous improvement. It will outline some key elements to consider in the fifth step of the cycle which has an overarching goal of assessing progress, learning from past experiences, and making informed decisions about possible adaptations or modifications, as well as guide future programs and interventions.

Things to consider in Step 5: Examine and Reflect

The examination and reflecting stage is a fundamental aspect of the cycle of continuous improvement process. Recall from **Resource Guide #1** that the cycle of continuous improvement is a systematized approach that supports educators in making data-driven decisions, learning from their experiences and continuously evaluating their methods to assure they are adequately meeting student needs. This is the phase where educators are able to re-assess their teaching practices, strategies, and student outcomes to enhance the learning experience and foster academic growth. Examining and Reflecting usually involves a systematic process of data collection, analysis, and thoughtful reflection to inform instructional decisions.



Key Elements to Consider

Below are some key elements teams can reflect on after data collection, analysis, and evaluation.

- **Identify Successes and Challenges** : Recognizing achievements and challenges is a proactive way of checking if the intended outcomes were met or not, and clarifying any challenges that came with either implementation or evaluation. Using collective evidence and the logic model guiding program activities and expected outcomes, teams can determine the extent to which SMART goals were met and document all expected and unexpected challenges that occurred.
- **Summarize Lessons Learned** : Tapping into lessons learned allows valuable insight to be gained into the intervention and/or implementation processes and educator experiences that worked and those that didn't. The team can start by discussing strategies, activities and monitoring practices that were related to successful achievement of intended outcomes and those that posed hinderances to reaching achievement goals. This process could include asking questions like: *Are strategies being implemented as designed? Were the allotted budget and resources sufficient to support program implementation? Was the proposed strategy and action plan effective in reaching the intended goal? Were measures and assessment tools reasonable, meaningful, and easy to use?*



- **Adjust and Revise:** Following an examination of and reflection on intervention goals and implementation processes, teams can use this information to guide modifications of practices and strategies as necessary. This adjustment and revision process may include making necessary adjustments to classroom instructional methods and/or management.

Continuing the Cycle

The cycle does not end with the ‘Examine and Reflect’ stage but rather, it’s an iterative process that ensures that educators initiate the process all over again by updating critical needs, setting new goals, and modifying or devising new strategies to continue to support and improve student outcomes. Overall, following the continuous improvement cycle strengthens capacity for effective use of research evidence and high-quality implementation of evidence-based interventions. This reliance on cyclical and informed decision making promotes a culture of improvement by focusing on principles of implementation science to foster instructional and student success.

Resources

Ohio’s Summary of the Cycle

- [Examine, Reflect, Adjust, Ohio Improvement Process: Department of Education \(2023\)](#)
- The Ohio Department of Education’s website provides guidance for step 5 of the cycle of continuous improvement, and recommendations for implementation adjustments and planning

Michigan’s Implementation/Improvement Science Brief

- [Integrating Improvement and Implementation Science to Enhance Educational Outcomes, Michigan Department of Education \(2021\)](#)
- This Michigan brief clarifies the differences and similarities between Implementation Science and Improvement Science, and suggests approaches in which they can be used together to improve capacity for implementation of evidence-based interventions. The tools and methods follow the Plan-Study-Do-Act continuum.

US “Evidence Act” Toolkit

- <https://oes.gsa.gov/toolkits/>
- A collection of tools created under the 2018 *Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act* by the General Services Administration (GSA). Part of these tools include guidance for establishing an Evaluation Working Group, which schools and EBI teams could consider as part of their improvement/implementation science activities.

IES REL Northeast and Islands – Continuous Improvement Toolkit

- <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products/Region/northeast/Publication/4005>
- A collection of tools based on the Plan-Study-Do-Act cycle, including a flow-chart detailing decision-making steps on “adopting, adapting, abandoning” an evidence-based intervention.

Videos

- <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products/Region/northeast/Publication/4005>
- The IES Northeast and Islands supplements their Continuous Improvement Toolkit with a collection of videos, including one on [Continuous Improvement: A School Perspective](#)