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IT'S ABOUT LEARNING—PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Our conception of using data in the service of wise decision making is grounded in a conviction that improved learning outcomes for students is the ultimate goal of decision making, and that more and better learning for students depends on informed professional judgment that results in changes in classrooms and schools. To bring about these two outcomes successfully will require new learning for both teachers and leaders.

Figure 2.2 provides a generalized model of the core elements necessary for school improvement. Although many influences and processes can encourage school improvement, professional learning is the heart of any school-based activity that will result in deeper learning and success for students.

This model is conceptually simple but operationally complex. As Fullan (2006) states, the core of improving schools rests with professionals continuously improving learning and progress at all levels so that their collective efficacy enables them to “raise the bar and close the gap of student learning for all students” (p. 28). It is increasingly clear that deep and productive professional learning is critical to educational change.

Our position about the manner in which data shape practice in productive ways has been reinforced by work done within the Best Evidence Synthesis Programme of the New Zealand Ministry of Education (for more information about this program, see www.educationcounts.govt.nz/themes/BES). One of these Best Evidence Syntheses, on Professional Learning and Development, examines studies in professional learning that have had demonstrated impact

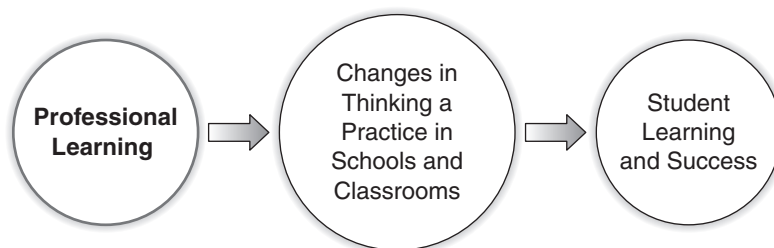


Figure 2.2 Professional Learning at the Core

CHAPTER THREE

USING ASSESSMENT DATA TO LEAD TEACHING AND LEARNING



PETER W. HILL

This chapter addresses the future of assessment data in schools and the ways in which teachers, principals, and system leaders will use the data to transform teaching and learning. Right now, most schools are flooded with assessment data, but much of that data is of limited value in improving classroom instruction. (A useful discussion of the dilemma of “too much data but too little information for school leaders” appears in a series of articles in the December 2008/January 2009 edition of *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 66, No. 4, entitled “Data: Now What?”)

Priority is attached to data that are used summatively to meet system- and school-level accountability requirements. Much less attention is paid to formative uses of data to improve teaching and learning, particularly at the school and classroom levels. Worse, summative assessment data are often promoted as having a formative value far beyond their actual utility.

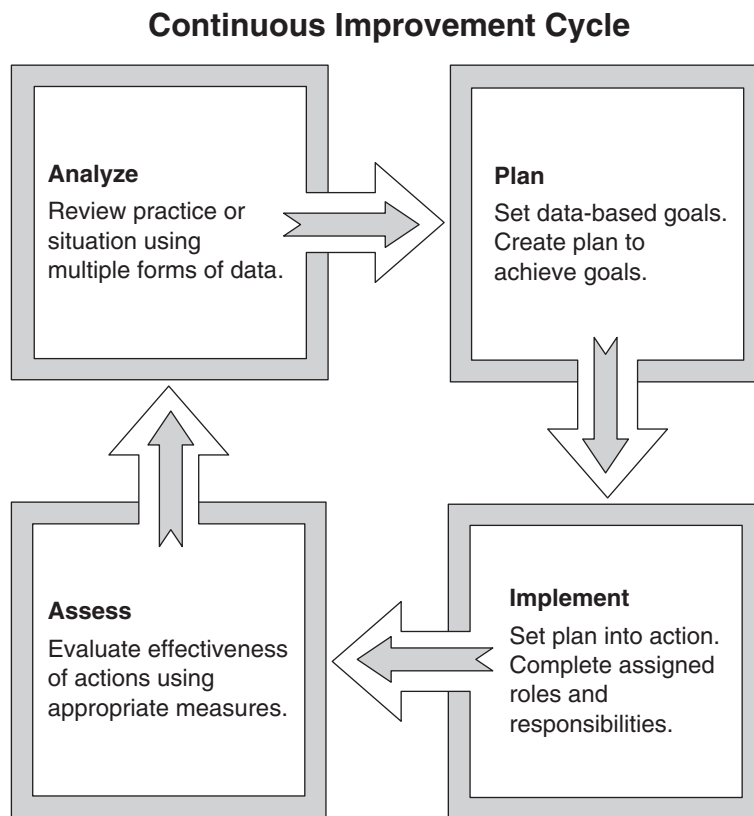


Figure 4.1 Continuous Improvement Cycle

During the *analysis* portion of the plan, data are reviewed. Student achievement data are most often the focus. During this phase of the cycle, it is important to view a variety of data. A well-rounded picture of achievement will provide the best chance for a valuable analysis. Data may include, but not be limited to, such national assessment results as AP, SAT, or ACT data; state testing data; and local common assessment data. The data should include disaggregations and a variety of levels of data depending on the purpose of the event. More information will follow in step 6.

The *planning* phase would typically begin with one to three goals based on the data analysis. The purpose of the planning phase is to create next steps supported by data to improve or enhance the

USING DATA TO DRIVE
INSTRUCTION AND
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STANDARDS-BASED
CLASSROOM



KAY BURKE

THE POWER OF DATA

Today's educators are using data to drive instruction and improve student achievement. Almost all the processes in this age of accountability involve data because it requires self-analysis and supports the use of effective innovations and strategies. Schmoker (2001) says, "A rapidly growing number of schools have made a momentous discovery: When teachers regularly and collaboratively review assessment data for the purpose of improving practice to reach measurable achievement goals, something magical happens" (p. 1). These teams of teachers, however, will be more successful if they review data