

Constructing the Improvement Process Instructions

Timing

The protocol as described below takes 45-60 minutes.

Purpose

- To help a group of people come to a common understanding of how they view the improvement process.
- To allow people to discover for themselves that the improvement process is not linear and that there is no one “right” way to do it.

Materials

- Chart paper & markers
- An envelope containing eight squares of paper, each having one step of the Data Wise Improvement Process written on it. Also include a couple of blank squares of paper for participants to add their own steps during the activity.

Steps

1. **15 MINUTES.** Break the group into teams of three to five people each. (This is a hands-on activity; it is important that groups be small so that everyone can actively participate.) Ask groups to use the supplies given to create a visual representation of how schools engage in the improvement process. Tell them they can feel free to add, change, duplicate, or delete any of the steps included in the envelope.
2. **5 MINUTES.** Ask groups to discuss where their school is in the process they have just described.
3. **10 MINUTES.** Have groups post their creations around the room, and ask people to do a “gallery walk” to see each other’s work.
4. **10 MINUTES.** Ask people what they noticed in doing the exercise, and what they noticed in doing the walk. Ask what steps were missing or unnecessary. Key points to bring out are the variety of the processes created and their nonlinear and recursive nature.
5. **5-15 MINUTES.** (optional, depending on circumstances). Come to an agreement about the improvement cycle that the group will use in its work together, acknowledging that any way of modeling the improvement process is artificial but that to make progress, a group needs to agree on how it will approach the work.

