

## Questions About the Instructional Planning Resource

According to the CLI process, once a new curriculum is written, the teachers of the target subject are trained to plan for implementation of that new curriculum. Careful alignment of *instruction* is as essential as the careful alignment of the K -12 curriculum itself. The issue remains how to get it all done in the time available. In this *e-hint* we offer suggestions for how to manage successful implementation of the new curriculum with a minimum of confusion and without causing undue stress.

**Step 1.** The Curriculum Coordinating Council determines the requirements for the completion of the Instructional Planning Resource for each outcome, including the timeline and rationale for completion. This timeline and rationale must be clearly communicated to teachers impacted by the new curriculum.

**Step 2.** All teachers of the target subject area receive implementation training. This training includes planning for:

- the pacing of instruction to complete the curriculum within the scope of the school year;
- formative assessments of the components of the outcomes;
- instructional methods, activities and resources;
- corrective and enrichment instruction; and
- the summative assessments of the outcomes.

**Step 3.** Administrators are charged by the CCC to plan and allocate time during the implementation year for teachers to continue work on the Instructional Planning Resource in order to meet the requirements specified by the CCC.

Now, let's talk about the rationale for completing the Instructional Planning Resource and the possible responses of the CCC to the most common question we are asked by teachers in the implementation training — " Why are we doing this?"

- Completing pacing guides accomplishes two very important objectives. First, teachers not involved in the writing phase have the opportunity to look closely at the entire curriculum, and to start thinking about what will be involved in teaching the outcomes. Second, they have the opportunity to schedule, on a pacing calendar, when each outcome or component will be taught during the school year, in order to assure the entire curriculum will be accomplished. Of course, this is a pacing *guide* and thus may need revision as the school year progresses, but it is a good start to this important part of planning.

- In our experience, very few teachers have had formative assessments that are clearly defined for each component. Class discussion, or spot checks as progress is continuing, are not clear enough assessments to identify the learning progress of each student. For this reason, some time is required to more clearly identify the formats and criteria of formative assessments. That is not to say that each one must be a long, formal assessment; however, each formative assessment must clearly indicate individual, independent learning of the component. Without these essential formative assessments, instruction progresses on the *perception* of the level of student learning, rather than the *clearly identified* level of student learning.
- Because numerous outcomes are based on what was *already* in the curriculum, many teachers feel they have previously planned their teaching for those outcomes and that this work is redundant. In that case, the Instructional Planning Resource process serves as an organizational tool to make sure the past instruction does indeed align with the new curriculum. Often, the verb in the new curriculum will necessitate a change in previous plans. The concept within the component may not be different, but the verb that describes what the student will be able to do with the concept may require new approaches. After careful scrutiny, if past practice is determined to be appropriate, then using the Instructional Planning Resource simply as the “organizational template” for the methods and activities is the next step. This may include setting up a folder or binder system with past notes or plans, along with materials needed for the instruction. In this case, the Instructional Planning Resource sheet is left mostly blank in the “activities” or “teacher methods” areas, but is included in the folder with the assessments and whatever notes describe possible instruction of the components. For those who feel the instruction is planned, but “in their heads” rather than on paper, this process provides an opportunity to scrutinize whether the past practice truly meets the needs of the new curriculum, and to start jotting down some of those plans for future reference.
- Using the Instructional Planning Resource as a template — even if it’s just a *guide* rather than an actual form to complete — helps teachers to be more careful about thinking ahead to intended results and aligning instruction accordingly. It causes teachers to think about *why* they are doing what they’re doing, and whether the instruction will indeed yield results.

The CCC may prioritize sections of the Instructional Planning Resource to allow for completion of some portions during the implementation year and other portions by end of the following year. Most CCCs require, at the very least, completion of the pacing guide and assessment descriptions during the first year. The CCC may also determine and communicate that there is no need for extensive writing on the Instructional Planning form itself, as long as the organization of the instructional materials for methods and activities is evident, and clearly planned to align with the outcomes.

Whatever the requirements of the CCC for completion of the Instructional Planning Resource, the intent, timeline, and instructions must be clear to avoid stress and confusion among the faculty as they work to improve student learning.