

Analyzing Instruction for the Purpose of Improving It

Overview of analyzing instruction for the purpose of improving it

Learning to teach and continuing to improve require regular analysis of instruction and its effectiveness. Teachers study their own teaching and that of their colleagues in order to improve their practice. Analyzing instruction may take place individually or with colleagues and involves identifying patterns, opportunities, and specific moves, and making hypotheses for how to improve. Teachers pay close attention to and study their students' contributions, work, and engagement, and challenge themselves to see and understand more, and to consider how their own actions are supporting or impeding their students to flourish. They systematically interrogate their underlying assumptions and seek to develop new instructional habits and strategies that support students to thrive.

Advancing justice through analyzing instruction for the purpose of improving it

Teachers make numerous moves and in-the-moment decisions every day. Their moves and decisions are often shaped by deeply held assumptions and dominant notions about students, the content, and teaching. By analyzing instruction, teachers attend to subtle patterns and biases and learn about how they might impact children. Analyzing instruction also provides opportunities to study students' work, which can support teachers to see students' strengths, deepen their own content knowledge, and develop new strategies and approaches that can intervene on patterns that reproduce inequity. Reflective teachers ask themselves continuously how they might be contributing to the perpetuation of racism and oppression through specific actions or failures to act and seek out resources to support these reflections, including colleagues with similar goals.



Decomposition of analyzing instruction for the purpose of improving it

Table 1: Areas of Work and Techniques for Analyzing Instruction for the Purpose of Improving It

Areas of work for analyzing instruction for the purpose of improving it	Techniques for analyzing instruction for the purpose of improving it
Identifying a focus	• Identify specific areas of instruction to focus on. • Develop questions for inquiry that create opportunities to challenge assumptions and biases about students, content, and teaching practices. • Determine artifacts that will provide insight into the focus area such as: ○ Video records of instruction; ○ Records of student work or formative assessments; ○ Observation notes from others; and ○ Input from students.
Collecting artifacts of practice	• Collect the artifacts in ways that guard against biases. • Account for the limitations of a single observation or snapshot of teaching. • Identify elements of teaching and learning that are not captured by a given set of artifacts.
Analyzing artifacts of practice	• Seek patterns or trends and form hypotheses about students, learning, classroom environment, and teachers. • Consider how your own identities shape what you see and understand about your students and their learning. • Be careful to avoid jumping to conclusions and seek additional evidence to support or challenge hypotheses.



Areas of work for analyzing instruction for the purpose of improving it	Techniques for analyzing instruction for the purpose of improving it
Identifying and using professional resources	• Seek recommendations from colleagues or coaches. • Draw on a wide range of resources, including those from other grades and content areas, and those developed by members of non-dominant communities and cultures. • Review materials from coursework or professional development. • Consult materials recommended or published by professional or community organizations.
Determining and implementing next steps	• Identify concrete actions, strategies, or techniques to try. • Determine what to collect to document work on next steps.

