

WELS Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Process

Module 3

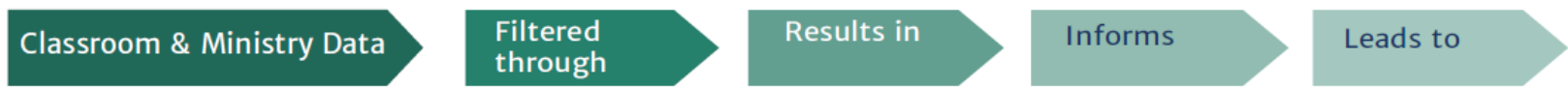
Ministry Development Plan

A Tool for Growth

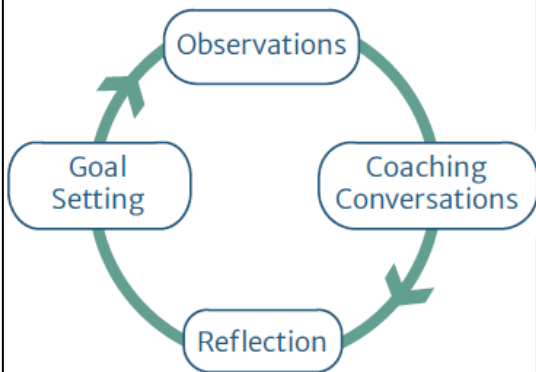
Resource Packet



WELS Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Process



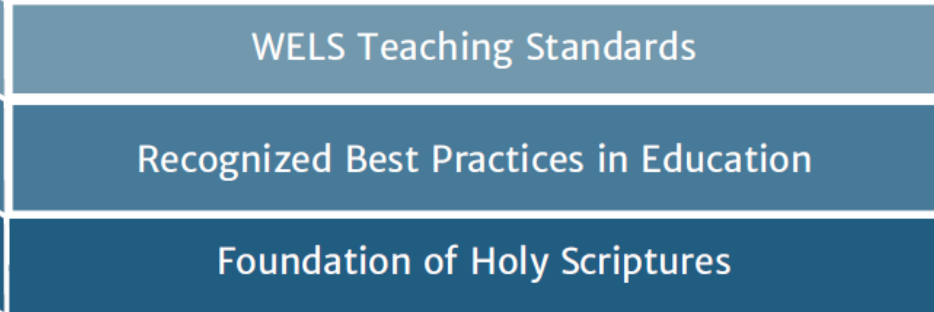
Learning Focused
Teacher-Growth Model



Formative Teacher Growth

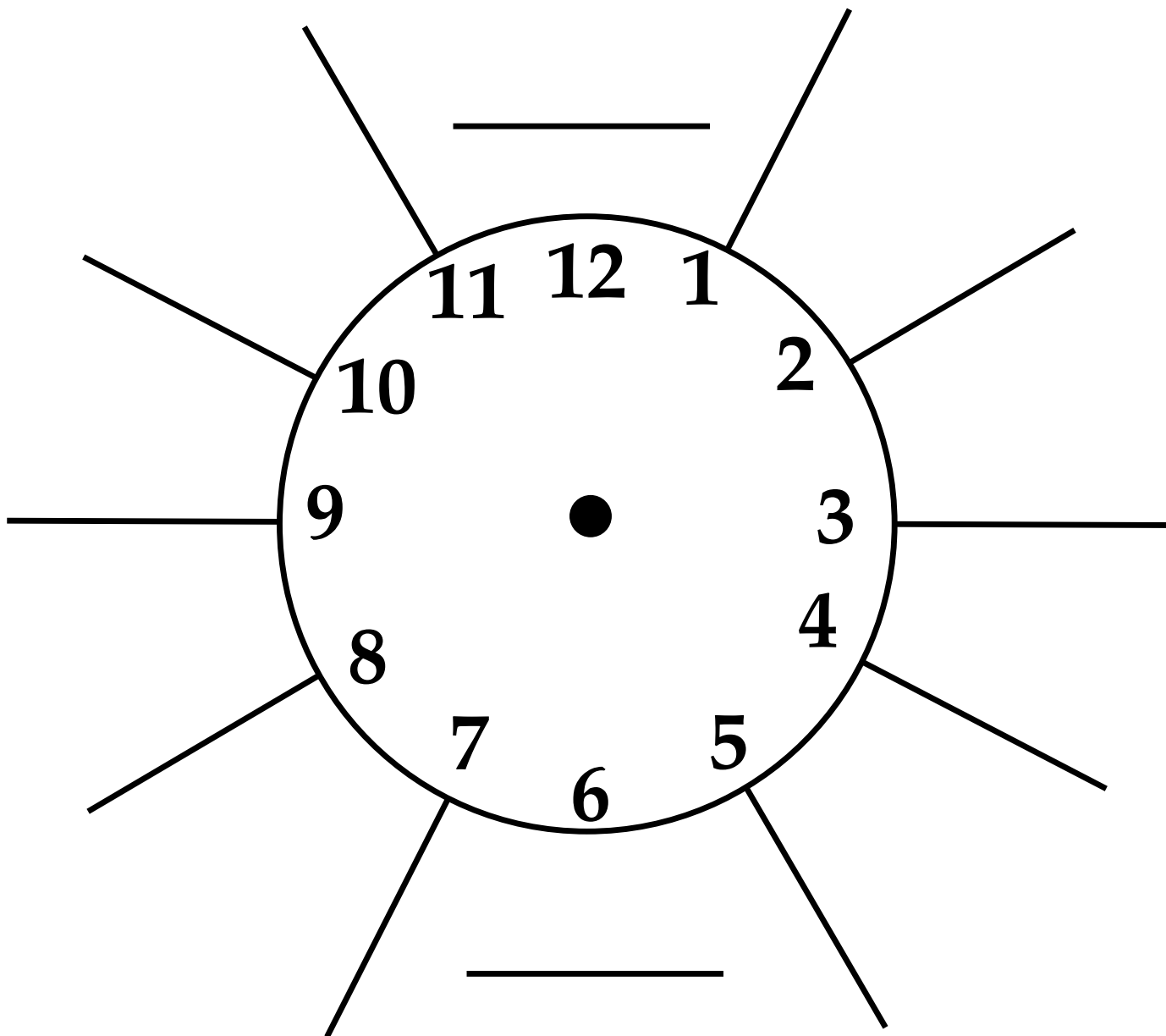


Summative Teacher Evaluation





CLOCK BUDDIES



MDP Purpose

The WELS Ministry Development Plan (MDP) serves as a **formative growth tool** WELS teachers. Based on the WELS Teaching Standards, the MDP's function is to assist teachers and those supporting them in purposely focusing on professional growth to enhance student learning and spiritual growth to better equip teachers to speak and share God's saving message. In addition, the MDP serves as a tool to promote and strengthen discussion and data gathering regarding pedagogical practices which will allow for positive teacher and school development and **assist in providing data for meaningful summative evaluation.**

(Commission on Lutheran Schools Teach Conference Update, 2016)

You Can Say THAT Again

Choose a quote that rings true from your experiences or observations.

"Try not to have a good time ... this is educational."

"Education is not preparation for life. It is life itself."

"I have never let my schooling interfere with my education."

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

"We spend the first 12 months of our children's lives teaching them to walk and talk, and the next 12 years telling them to sit down and shut up."



Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Teaching Standards

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FOUNDATION: Christian teachers are faithful servants of Jesus Christ.

Christian teachers faithfully serve others with joy, enthusiasm, and dedication through the activities of the church and school, through personal relationships, and through community involvement.

- Reflects faith in Christ through words, actions, activities, and relationships.
- Models Christian love and faithfulness in carrying out family responsibilities.
- Shows joy and enthusiasm for teaching, learning, leading, and serving.
- Demonstrates dedication by cheerfully contributing time and energy.
- Supports students, coworkers, and the congregation through active participation in varied activities.
- Serves with appropriate involvement in community organizations and events.

STANDARD ONE: Christian teachers know the subjects they are teaching.

The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the disciplines she or he teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for learners.

- Uses multiple representations and explanations of disciplinary concepts that capture key ideas and links them to learner's prior understandings.
- Represents and uses differing viewpoints, theories, human ways of knowing, and methods of inquiry in teaching subject matter in the light of God's Word.
- Evaluates teaching resources and curriculum materials with Christian discernment for their comprehensiveness, accuracy, and usefulness for representing particular ideas and concepts.
- Engages learners in generating knowledge and testing hypotheses according to the truth of God's Word and the methods of inquiry and standards of evidence used in the discipline.
- Develops and uses curricula that encourage learners to see, question, and interpret ideas from diverse perspectives.
- Creates interdisciplinary learning experiences that allow learners to integrate knowledge, skills, and methods of inquiry from several subject areas.

STANDARD TWO: Christian teachers know how individuals grow and develop.

The teacher understands how students learn and develop and provides instruction that supports their spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth.

- Assesses individual and group performance in order to design instruction that meets learners' current needs in each domain (spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, and emotional).
- Stimulates reflection on prior knowledge and links new ideas to familiar ones, making connections to learners' experiences.
- Provides opportunities for engagement, manipulation, and testing of ideas in view of God's Word and encourages learners to take responsibility for their learning tasks.
- Assesses individual learner's thinking and experiences as a basis for instructional activities.

STANDARD THREE: Christian teachers understand that individuals learn differently.

The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and the barriers that impede learning and adapts instruction to meet diverse cultural, socioeconomic, and exceptional needs.

- Identifies and designs instruction appropriate to individual development, learning styles, culture, strengths, and needs.
- Uses teaching approaches that are sensitive to the multiple experiences of individual learners and address how they learn and demonstrate what they have learned.
- Makes appropriate provisions for individual students who have particular learning differences or needs.
- Identifies when and how to access appropriate services or resources to meet exceptional learning needs.
- Brings multiple perspectives to the discussion of subject matter, including attention to students' personal, family, and community experiences, spiritual heritage, and cultural norms.
- Creates a learning community in which individual differences are respected.

STANDARD FOUR: Christian teachers know how to teach.

The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners' spiritual growth and the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

- Evaluates how to achieve learning goals and purposefully chooses teaching strategies and materials to meet learner's needs and to achieve instructional purposes.
- Uses multiple teaching and learning strategies to foster spiritual growth, to develop performance skills, and to engage students in active learning, critical thinking, problem solving, and appropriate use of learning resources.
- Consistently monitors and adjusts strategies in response to learner feedback.
- Varies his or her role in the instructional process in relation to the content and purposes of instruction and the needs of learners.
- Develops various clear and accurate presentations of concepts and uses alternative explanations to assist learners' understanding.

STANDARD FIVE: Christian teachers know how to create and maintain a Christian learning environment.

The teacher uses an understanding of the proper use of law and gospel as well as individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that promotes Christian living, self-discipline, positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

- Models and encourages Christian living in words and actions.
- Establishes an effective learning community in which students assume group- and self- responsibility, participate in decision making, work collaboratively and independently, and engage in purposeful learning activities.
- Organizes, allocates, and manages resources (e.g. time, space, activities) to provide equitable engagement of students in productive tasks.
- Maximizes the amount of class time spent in learning by creating expectations and processes for communication and behavior along with a physical setting conducive to classroom goals.
- Establishes Christ-centered values and expectations that foster a positive classroom climate of openness, mutual respect, support, and inquiry.
- Analyzes the physical classroom environment and makes adjustments to enhance social relationships, motivation, engagement, and productive work.
- Organizes, prepares, and monitors independent and group work for full and varied participation of all individuals.

STANDARD SIX: Christian teachers communicate effectively.

The teacher uses effective verbal and non-verbal communication techniques as well as instructional media and technology to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

- Models evangelical communication of God's Word.
- Models effective communication strategies in conveying ideas and information.
- Supports and expands learner expression in speaking, writing, and other media.
- Asks questions and stimulates discussion in various ways for particular purposes.
- Communicates in ways that demonstrate an understanding of cultural and gender differences.
- Uses a variety of media communication tools to enrich learning opportunities.

STANDARD SEVEN: Christian teachers know how to plan a variety of effective lessons.

The teacher organizes and plans systematic instruction based upon knowledge of God's Word, curriculum goals, pedagogy, subject matter, learners, and the community.

- Selects and creates learning experiences that integrate God's Word and are appropriate for curriculum goals, relevant to learners, and based upon principles of effective instruction.
- Plans for learning opportunities that recognize and address variation in learning styles and performance modes.
- Creates lessons and activities that operate at multiple levels to meet the developmental and individual needs of diverse learners.
- Creates short and long-term plans that are linked to learners' needs and performance.
- Demonstrates flexibility by responding to feedback and adapting plans to ensure progress and to capitalize on motivation.

STANDARD EIGHT: Christian teachers know how to assess student progress.

The teacher uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and promote the continuous spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of learners.

- Uses a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques to enhance her or his knowledge of learners, evaluate students' progress and performance, and modify teaching and learning strategies.
- Solicits and uses information about students' experiences, learning behavior, needs, and progress from parents, other colleagues, and the students themselves.
- Engages learners in self-assessment activities to develop awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and to set personal goals for learning.
- Continuously evaluates the effect of class instruction on both individuals and the class as a whole.
- Monitors teaching strategies in relation to student success, modifying plans and instructional approaches accordingly.
- Evaluates and modifies assessment processes to ensure alignment with instructional objectives.
- Maintains useful records of student work and performance, provides meaningful feedback to learners, and communicates student progress knowledgeably and responsibly to parents and colleagues.

STANDARD NINE: Christian teachers know how to grow spiritually and professionally.

The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others in the learning community, and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow.

- Studies the Scriptures diligently in personal, small-group and corporate settings.
- Uses classroom observation, information about students, and research as sources for evaluating the outcomes of teaching and learning and as a basis for experimenting with, reflecting on, and revising practice.
- Seeks out professional literature, colleagues, and other resources to support his or her development as a learner and a teacher.
- Collaborates with colleagues and support professionals by actively sharing experiences, seeking input, and providing feedback.

STANDARD TEN: Christian teachers are connected with colleagues and the community.

The teacher acts ethically and with Christian integrity to foster relationships with colleagues, other education professionals, families, the congregation, and the community to support student learning and well-being.

- Participates in collegial activities designed to make the entire school a productive learning environment.
- Establishes beneficial links with the learners' external environments.
- Identifies and uses congregational and community resources to foster student learning and well-being.
- Establishes respectful and productive relationships with families from diverse home and community situations, and seeks to develop cooperative partnerships in support of student learning and well-being.
- Talks with and listens to the student, is sensitive and responsive to signs of distress, investigates situations, and seeks appropriate professional services.
- Advocates actively for students.

TYPE	LENGTH	LEVEL OF USE	LEVEL OF IMPACT
One-time workshop	Episodic	Awareness of new idea or strategy	Little or non Less than 5%
Series of workshops	2-3 days	Awareness, practice	Beginning use - less than 5%
Series of workshops	3 months-1 year	Awareness, practice, beginning implementation	Implementation, developmental level less than 10-15%
Conferences	Periodic	Awareness and Sharing	Little or none Less than 10%
Summer Institutes	Periodic	Awareness, development, practice, reflection	Little or none – less than 10%
Practice, feedback, coaching	Ongoing	Ongoing coaching	Continued use – 85-90% use
Job embedded	Daily	Research into practice	Inquiry into practice 85-90% use
Cycle of Inquiry, Action Research	Ongoing	Research into practice	Study of issue, understanding

Source: Adapted from the research of Joyce & Showers (2002) and Speck & Knipe (2001).



The action research process can help you understand what is happening in your classroom and identify changes that improve teaching and learning. Action research can help answer questions you have about the effectiveness of specific instructional strategies, the performance of specific students, and classroom management techniques.

Educational research often seems removed from the realities of the classroom. For many classroom educators, formal experimental research, including the use of a control group, seems to contradict the mandate to improve learning for all students. Even quasi-experimental research with no control group seems difficult to implement, given the variety of learners and diverse learning needs present in every classroom.

Action research gives you the benefits of research in the classroom without these obstacles. Believe it or not, you are probably doing some form of research already. Every time you change a lesson plan or try a new approach with your students, you are engaged in trying to figure out what works. Even though you may not acknowledge it as formal research, you are still investigating, implementing, reflecting, and refining your approach.

Qualitative research acknowledges the complexity of the classroom learning environment. While quantitative research can help us see that improvements or declines have occurred, it does not help us identify the causes of those improvements or declines. Action research provides qualitative data you can use to adjust your curriculum content, delivery, and instructional practices to improve student learning. Action research helps you implement informed change!

The term “action research” was coined by Kurt Lewin in 1944 to describe a process of investigation and inquiry that occurs as action is taken to solve a problem. Today we use

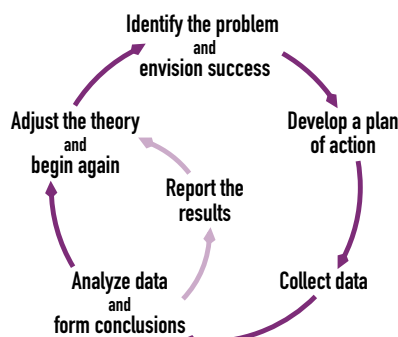
the term to describe a practice of reflective inquiry undertaken with the goal of improving understanding and practice. You might consider “action” to refer to the change you are trying to implement and “research” to refer to your improved understanding of the learning environment.

Action research also helps you take charge of your personal professional development. As you reflect on your own actions and observe other master teachers, you will identify the skills and strategies you would like to add to your own professional toolbox. As you research potential solutions and are exposed to new ideas, you will identify the skills, management, and instructional training needed to make the changes you want to see.

The Action Research Cycle

Action research is a cycle of inquiry and reflection.

During the process, you will determine 1) where you are, 2) where you want to be, and 3) how you are going to get there. In general terms, the cycle follows these steps:



1. Identify the problem and envision success
2. Develop a plan of action
3. Collect data
4. Analyze data and form conclusions
5. Modify your theory and repeat the cycle
6. Report the results

Identify the Problem

The process begins when you identify a question or problem you want to address. Action research is most successful when you have a personal investment, so make sure the questions you are asking are ones YOU want to solve. This could be an improvement you want to see happen in your classroom (or your school if you are a principal), or a problem you and your colleagues would like to address in your district.

Learning to develop the right questions takes time. Your ability to identify these key questions will improve with each iteration of the research cycle. You want to select a question that isn't so broad it is almost impossible to answer or so narrow that the only answer is yes or no. Choose questions that can be answered within the context of your daily teaching. In other words, choose a question that is both answerable and worthy of the time investment required to learn the answer.

Questions you could ask might involve management issues, curriculum implementation, instructional strategies, or specific student performance. For example, you might consider:

- How successful is random grouping for project work?
- Why is the performance of one student lacking in a particular area?
- Will increasing the amount of feedback I provide improve students' writing skills?
- What is the best way to introduce the concept of fractions?
- Which procedure is most effective for managing classroom conflict?

Determining the question helps focus your inquiry.

Before you can start collecting data, you need to have a clear vision of what success looks like. Start by brainstorming words that describe the change you want to see. What strategies do you already know that might help you get there? Which of these ideas do you think might work better than what you are currently doing?

To find out if a new instructional strategy is worth trying, conduct a review of literature. This doesn't have to mean writing up a formal lit review like you did in graduate school. The important thing is to explore a range of articles and reports on your topic and capitalize on the research and experience of others. Your classroom responsibilities are already many and may be overwhelming. A review of literature can help you identify useful strategies and locate information that helps you justify your action plan.

The Web makes literature reviews easier to accomplish than ever before. Even if the full text of an article, research paper, or abstract is not available online, you will be able to find citations to help you locate the source materials at your local library. Collect as much information on your problem as you can find. As you explore the existing literature, you will certainly find solutions and strategies that others have implemented to solve this problem. You may want to create a visual map or a table of your problems and target performances with a list of potential solutions and supporting citations in the middle.

Develop an Action Plan

Now that you have identified the problem, described your vision of how to successfully solve it, and reviewed the pertinent literature, you need to develop a plan of action. What is it that you intend to DO? Brainstorming and reviewing the literature should have provided you with ideas for new techniques and strategies you think will produce better results. Refer back to your visual map or table and color-code or reorder your potential

Your First Action Research Cycle

Looking Backward

You may be a little overwhelmed after reading through all of the steps of the action research cycle. Here is a quick-start guide to help you get going with your first action research process!

As Dick Sagor mentioned in his interview, "inquiry is something we do naturally." You may not realize it, but you have integrated parts of the action research cycle many times in your classroom already!

- Every time you look back on how a lesson was implemented and consider how you might change it to make it better, you have done research.
- Each time you read about a new technique or strategy and plan to try it with your students, you have created an action plan.
- When you review student samples and realize with satisfaction that a change you made in your instruction worked, you have analyzed data.

When you first started teaching, you had dreams of the things you'd do and the positive impact you would make when you had a classroom of your own. You had a vision of what you thought your classroom learning environment would look like. The realities of today's classroom may have changed, and your vision may have changed over time, but your desire to positively impact students and those reasons you became a teacher in the first place are as strong as ever.

Reflect on your vision and tell the story of your classroom. Explore the current demographics and challenges in your classroom. Describe changes you have already made. Have these changes resulted in improved learning? What might have contributed to these positive outcomes?

Go back and start collecting data so that you have quantitative and qualitative information that back up your informal analysis (your hunches and feelings). You can explore grade books, attendance numbers, disciplinary referrals, and student work. You can even give surveys to students about past work.

Rather than trying to come up with a full-scale, ground-up plan for implementing action research, review the actions you have already taken. You may be farther along than you imagined.

Once you have a clearer picture of where you are, where you have been, and where you want to go, it will be much easier to repeat the cycle and continue the pattern of positive change.

solutions. You will want to rank them in order of importance and indicate the amount of time you will need to spend on these strategies.

How can you implement these techniques? How will you? Translate these solutions into concrete steps you can and will take in your classroom. Write a description of how you will implement each idea and the time you will take to do it.

Once you have a clear vision of a potential solution to the problem, explore factors you think might be keeping you and your students from your vision of success. Recognize and accept those factors you do not have the power to change—they are the constants in your equation. Focus your attention on the variables—the parts of the formula you believe your actions can impact.

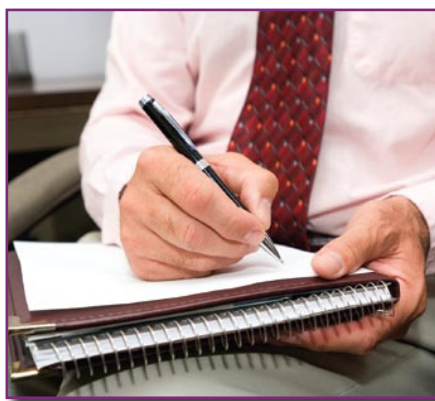
Develop a plan that shows how you will implement your solution and how your behavior, management style, and instruction will address each of the variables. Sometimes an action research cycle simply helps you identify variables you weren't even aware of, so you can better address your problem during the next cycle!

Collect Data

Before you begin to implement your plan of action, you need to determine what data will help you understand if your plan succeeds, and how you will collect that data. Your target performances will help you determine what you want to achieve. What results or other indicators will help you know if you achieved it? For example, if your goal is improved attendance, data can easily be collected from your attendance records. If the goal is increased time on task, the data may include classroom and student observations.

There are many options for collecting data. Choosing the best methodologies for collecting information will result in more accurate, meaningful, and reliable data.

Obvious sources of data include observation and interviews. As you observe, you will want to type or write notes or dictate your observations into a cell phone, iPod, or PDA. You may want to keep a journal during the process, or even create a blog or wiki to practice your technology skills as you collect data.



Reflective journals are often used as a source of data for action research. You can also collect meaningful data from other records you deal with daily, including attendance logs, grade reports, and student portfolios. You could distribute questionnaires, watch videotapes of your classroom, and administer surveys. Examples of student work are also performances you can evaluate to see if your goal is being met.

Create a plan for data collection and follow it as you perform your research. If you are going to interview students or other teachers, how many times will you do it? At what times during the day? How will you ensure your respondents are representative of the student population you are studying, including gender, ability level, experience, and expertise?

Your plan will help you ensure that you have collected data from many different sources. Each source of data provides additional information that will help you answer the questions in your research plan.

You may also want to have students collect data on their own learning. Not only does this provide you with additional research assistants, it empowers students to take control of their own learning. As students keep a journal during the process, they are also reflecting on the learning environment and their own learning process.

Analyze Data and Form Conclusions

The next step in the process is to analyze your data and form conclusions. Start early! Examining the data during the collection process can help you refine your action plan. Is the data you are collecting sufficient? If not, you have an opportunity to revise your data collection plan. Your analysis of the data will also help you identify attitudes and performances to look for during subsequent observations.

Analyzing the data also helps you reflect on what actually happened. Did you achieve the outcomes you were hoping for? Where you able to carry out your actions as planned? Were any of your assumptions about the problem incorrect?

Adding data such as opinions, attitudes, and grades to tables can help you identify trends (relationships and correlations). For example, if you are completing action research to determine if project-based learning is impacting student motivation, graphing attendance and disruptive behavior incidents may help you answer the question. A graph that shows an increase in attendance and a decrease in the number of disruptive

incidents over the implementation period would lead you to believe that motivation was improved.

Draw tentative conclusions from your analysis. Since the goal of action research is positive change, you want to try to identify specific behaviors that move you closer to your vision of success. That way you can adjust your actions to better achieve your goal of improved student learning.

Action research is an iterative process. The data you collect and your analysis of it will affect how you approach the problem and implement your action plan during the next cycle.

Even as you begin drawing conclusions, continue collecting data. This will help you confirm your conclusions or revise them in light of new information. While you can plan how long and often you will collect data, you may also want to continue collecting until the trends have been identified and new data becomes redundant.

As you are analyzing your data and drawing conclusions, share your findings. Discussing your results with another teacher can often yield valuable feedback. You might also share your findings with your students who can also add additional insight. If they agree with your conclusions, you have added credibility to your data collection plan and analysis. If they disagree, you will know to reevaluate your conclusions or refine your data collection plan.

Modify Your Theory and Repeat

Now that you have formed a final conclusion, the cycle begins again. In light of your findings, you should have adjusted your theory or made it more specific. Modify your plan of action,

begin collecting data again, or begin asking new questions!

Report the Results

While the ultimate goal of your research is to promote effective change in your classroom or schools, do not underestimate the value of sharing your findings with others. Sharing your results helps you further reflect on the process and problem, and it allows others to use your results to help them in their own endeavors to improve the education of their students.



You can report your findings in many different ways. You most certainly will want to share the experience with your students, parents, teachers, and principal. Provide them with an overview of the process and share highlights from your research journal. Because each of these audiences is different, you will need to adjust the content and delivery of the information each time you share. You may also want to present your process at a conference so educators from other districts can benefit from your work.

As your skill with the action research cycle gets stronger, you may want to develop an abstract and submit an article to an educational journal. To write an abstract, state the problem you were trying to solve, describe your context, detail your action plan and

methods, summarize your findings, state your conclusions, and explain your revised action plan.

If your question focused on the implementation of an action plan to improve the performance of a particular student, what better way to show the process and results than through digital storytelling? Using a tool like Frames, you can share images, audio, artifacts and more to show the student's journey. Action research is outside-the-box thinking... so find similarly unique ways to report your findings!

In Summary

All teachers want to reach their students more effectively and help them become better learners and citizens. Action research provides a reflective process you can use to implement changes in your classroom and determine if those changes result in the desired outcome.

Your ideas and experience combined with action research are a powerful formula for effective change!

Resources

Grady, M.P. (1998). *Qualitative and Action Research*. Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Sagor, R. (2005). *The Action Research Handbook*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Biography



Melinda Kolk

Melinda Kolk has been helping educators implement project-based learning and creative technologies into classroom teaching and learning for the past 15 years.

INTERVIEW

Dick Sagor: action research leader

I had the privilege of speaking with Dick Sagor, a pioneer in action research, for this issue's interview. Dick has been assisting schools, districts, and school improvement teams with their efforts to improve student performance, develop professional learning communities, and build capacity through the use of "Collaborative Action Research." A long-time champion of the power of inquiry as a route to school improvement, Dick is currently the Director of the Institute for the Study of Inquiry in Education (www.isie.org).



When did you first start using action research?

I got started with action research when I was still a high school principal. I had heard about it at a conference and read a few articles about it. I thought that maybe it would not only make a difference at my school, but might be a process that my teachers would find attractive. I did some reading and we started doing it at West Linn High School in West Linn, Oregon.

The process caught on quickly, and why not? Who would you rather impress than your colleagues? The process empowered them by helping them show demonstrable success. As the teachers learned the action research process, they began working as teams and departments to take on initiatives they were passionate about. The culture of the school changed because every person was engaged in the part of teaching and learning they were most interested in!

One of the best things we did at West Linn was to meet each spring to celebrate our success. As we learned from more and more researchers and were able to demonstrate more and more success, it became a self-reinforcing cycle. The teachers started to make even more time and energy investments in the process, and twenty years later the process is still flourishing!

The term "research" scares a lot of people away. Why shouldn't we be afraid?

The idea of research shouldn't be scary because the inquiry process is something we do naturally. Teachers are constantly thinking about how to do something better. When we finish a lesson or design a new one, we naturally ask ourselves the best way to do it. Then, we observe student reaction and performance during the lesson, and begin thinking about how we might teach it differently next time.

Some of the bad research done to education has conjured up a picture of statistics and tests and information that isn't comprehensible. I think the negative reaction to the idea of research is a response to some of this bad research, so I often start by calling the process "inquiry." But the process of collaborative inquiry IS research, and the action research cycle is both natural and comprehensible!

I still like to use the term research because it is a term of esteem. Once you understand what action research is, you begin to share your work by saying, "Let me show you what I found as a result of the research I conducted in my classroom." It adds a sense of legitimacy and helps you demonstrate real results from the work you are doing. Teachers should be able to wear the title of researcher and walk proud!

What is the most powerful benefit of action research?

Action research has the power to transform school culture. The way educators talk to each other, what we invest in, how we see ourselves as professionals—they are all different when we are doing action research. When action research isn't going on, it is possible for teachers see themselves as a cog in the machine and simply do what is expected. But when there is culture of inquiry, it becomes part of our job to find out how to do things better, learn from our experience, and share our findings with other. The research process is incredibly enriching, because you can see yourself having an impact. The energy created is amazing.

Research seems dry and boring. Is there any place for creativity and imagination in the process?

Creativity and imagination are absolutely essential to the process! I view teaching, the supporting process of action research, as a form of artistry! As a teacher, I am like an architect who is creating a picture in my mind of something new and exceptional, a classroom operating unlike any classroom I have ever had before. The process begins with my vision of something that does not currently exist. The action research process then helps me figure out how to accomplish that goal... and while I am working, it helps monitor my success.

The second part, where I develop my plan of action, may be even more creative as I choose and develop strategies that I think will help me get there.

Interpreting the data is a creative process as well. This is qualitative research that understands the unique differences of each learner. It should not surprise me that different kids have different reactions to the same lesson. But what does that mean? Cold hard numbers (quantitative research) cannot provide that answer.

How does one get started? Are there baby steps?

I would suggest starting with a single lesson. Begin by asking yourself the same question you do when designing any lesson—what do I want my kids to get out of the lesson today? Your lesson plan then becomes your theory of action. How will you write, structure, and implement the lesson? When you deliver the lesson, collect data on its success by observing student reactions and behavior, reviewing student work, and asking students for their opinions. Then, reflect on the data, analyzing it and forming conclusions that will inform your practice the next time.

Find some peers doing it too. This does not mean you have to be doing the same project, but if you have multiple people implementing the process, they can act as a support group. Action research with colleagues produces a sense of camaraderie. If you feel like you are all alone in the process, self-doubt often creeps in and you begin over-questioning.

And don't begin with projects that will be multi-year. Before school ends, you want to be able to come to some tentative closure, so you can reflect on what you learned and evaluate if it

is better than what you did before. You need to see a return on the investment of your time. While I have found that teachers ALWAYS see the return, they still need to be encouraged to stop and take stock of what they have learned.

Where should I focus my research questions?

Instruction tends to be the primary focus of most action research, because it is the area of action that teachers have the most control over. We may not control the curriculum, but how the material is presented to students is usually in our control. Action research is about our own action, so completing your research in an area that maximizes your ability to have an impact makes the most sense.

How can action research make a difference in the classroom?

This is an exciting time in education. We have incredibly high expectations for kids, but no one had figured out how to leave no child behind. The only way we are going to reach this goal is to harness the creativity of teachers. Action research empowers teachers to find the information we need to get there.

Teacher Connection***Action research—what have I done?***

Kal McGinnis

"Have you ever wondered if your students really understood what you were teaching? I have... many times. After completing lessons where I felt I had done my best, grading my students' work made it clear that some still didn't understand the content. What to do?

Things began to change in 1994 when I got my first computer. I was hooked! Was this THE answer? Unfortunately it wasn't, but I started seeing some positive change. When my district offered grants to teachers to use technology in the classroom, I jumped at the chance. When I received a second grant the next year, I was told the district needed proof that these grants were making a difference. How could I quantify the change I was seeing?

The answer arrived when a colleague introduced me to action research. Action research provided a process I could use to measure student success in a variety of ways, helping me collect data for performances that were previously hard to quantify. When Richard Sagor visited our district to train on this method, I could finally see a clear path to improving my teaching and student learning. Richard wisely advised us to first focus on smaller issues we could control to see what makes a lesson work or not work. This was the beginning of my action research journey.

I decided to focus on projects every three to four weeks, so I could reach conclusions before the end of the school year. I would evaluate several times along the way. I began teaching with note cards and outlining without using computers. These early projects elicited groans from the students, who

were eager to get their hands on the computers. As we began to progress from note cards to databases, learning to take pictures and video, scanning pictures, and using the computers in ways the kids had never imagined, my students' excitement about what we would do next continued to grow.

I started by using external methods of surveying my class. From having students close their eyes and raise their hands to creating formal surveys to gather numeric data, I worked to find numbers to show my students' thoughts and feelings about their work. I also used their project work to determine whether I was successful at helping them understand the concepts I was teaching.

On we blazed... trying new, exciting things and all the while collecting measurable results! The data reflected that my students' grades were improving, as were their attitudes and excitement about learning.

So what did I learn? Every project my students completed (even those on note cards or stapled, smudgy paper) could be measured for success using statistics, surveys, polls, reviews of student work, even the opinions (and expressions!) of the students. Students felt successful, and I also felt successful now that I could show that what I was doing was making their success possible."



WELS Ministry Development Plan (MDP)

The WELS Ministry Development Plan (MDP) serves as a formative growth tool WELS teachers. Based on the WELS Teaching Standards, the MDP's function is to assist teachers and those supporting them in purposely focusing on professional growth to enhance student learning and spiritual growth to better equip teachers to speak and share God's saving message. In addition the MDP serves as a tool to promote and strengthen discussion and data gathering regarding pedagogical practices which will allow for positive teacher and school development and assist in providing data for meaningful summative assessment.

Biographical Information

Name:

E-mail:

Address:

Phone:

Ministry Context

Please include the following elements

- Brief summary of your ministry position
- Your school's goals (academic and spiritual)

Position:

School Goals (academic):

School Goals (spiritual):

Ministry Development Plan Professional Component

I. Goal

A. Emphasis for Professional Goal

Consider areas of education about which you are passionate as well as those that challenge you. Use previous classroom observations reports, TMP assessments, and Teacher Performance Assessments as tools to determine an area of emphasis. Identify ways in which this topic relates to your school's short and long-term goals.

B. Goal Statement

Write a goal statement using the “**I will ... so that**” format which includes:

- Area of professional growth
- Anticipated effect on student learning

C. Rationale

Please include the following elements:

- Background for your goal
- Connection to school goals
- Connection to WELS Teaching Standards

II. Assessment (Anticipated Evidence)

Professional Growth

Prompt: What will you create/implement as a result of your new learning?

Student Learning

Prompt: What data demonstrate the effect of your professional growth of student learning?
(Providing before-and-after data will add validity to your results.)

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III. Timeline

Research

Planned Activity	Anticipated Timeline	Completed

Implement

Planned Activity	Anticipated Timeline	Completed

Assess

Planned Activity	Anticipated Timeline	Completed

IV. Year-End Summaries

Please include the following elements:

- Summary of Activities.
- Connections to the Continuum of WELS Teacher Development
- Adjustments and/or Additions
- Next Steps

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3: Final Summary

Please include the following elements:

- Summary of how you grew in the Continuum of WELS Teacher Development
- Explanation of how artifacts provide evidence of student learning
- Note: Evidence = Artifact + Explanation

Artifacts

Include at least two artifacts to show your professional growth and its effect on student learning:

Professional Growth (Implementation)	
PG1	
PG2	

Effects on Student Learning (Assessment)	
PG1	
PG2	

Ministry Development Plan Conferences

Ministry Development Conference (Initial – Before Year 1)	
Educator_____	Date_____
Principal/Supervisor_____	Date_____

Ministry Development Conference (After Year 1)	
Educator_____	Date_____
Principal/Supervisor_____	Date_____

Ministry Development Conference (After Year 2)

Educator_____ Date_____

Principal/Supervisor_____ Date_____

Ministry Development Conference (Final – After Year 3)

Educator_____ Date_____

Principal/Supervisor_____ Date_____

Ministry Development Plan Tools

Please reference the samples below when writing your goal statement and when considering evidence of professional growth and student learning.

Goal Statement – Samples

Write a goal statement that describes the end result of your professional growth after completing this Ministry Development Plan (3 years). Write your goal using the “I will ... so that” format that includes: Area of professional growth (I will) Anticipated effect on student learning (so that)

- *I will* learn and put into practice best practices in developing science lesson that challenge all learners *so that* my students will increase their science knowledge and enjoyment.
- *I will* study and apply differentiated instructional strategies with an emphasis on English Language Learners *so that* students of all backgrounds increase in mathematical proficiency and ability to understand and apply Biblical truths.
- *I will* research and implement student-centered approaches in my *teaching so that* my students are more motivated to take responsibility for their own learning.
- *I will* study and develop classroom management routines with an emphasis on special needs students *so that* students show an increase in on-task behavior.
- *I will* study and apply varied assessment practices *so that* students with a variety of gifts can demonstrate their learning.

Assessment (Anticipated Evidence) – Samples

Professional Growth: What will you create or implement as a result of your new learning? **Student Learning:** What data demonstrate the effect of your professional growth on student learning? (Providing before-and-after data will add validity to your results.)

Professional Growth

- Lessons & units featuring differentiation
- Action research project
- Lessons
- Units
- Rubrics
- Technology integration Annotated list of strategies implemented
- Journal reflections on applications of new learning
- Assessment tools
- Degree, certificate, license credits, clock hours

Student Learning

- Standardized test scores
- Test or subject grades
- Student work samples
- Parent feedback
- Classroom assessments
- Standardized test scores
- Action research results
- Student artifacts (written work, projects)
- Student or classroom awards (Math Competitions, Spelling Bees)
- Student activities (community service)
- Student or parent surveys
- Observer notes
- Measures of student engagement

Writing a Goal Statement

Professional Growth: Focus on Teacher's Learning

I will (research, study, explore, learn, investigate, examine, ...)

Prompt: When you think about ideas in education, what would you like to learn more about?

Action Plan: Focus on Classroom

and (implement, develop, apply, design, incorporate, integrate, create, ...)

Prompt: What will you incorporate in your classroom as a result of your new learning?

Student Learning: Focus on Outcomes

So that my students will

Prompt: If you implemented this idea, what would you like to see in students that you're not seeing now?

Assessment: Focus on Results

As indicated by

Prompt: How could you document or verify the effect of your implementation on student learning?

WELS Ministry Development Plan (MDP)

The WELS Ministry Development Plan (MDP) serves as a formative growth tool WELS teachers. Based on the WELS Teaching Standards, the MDP's function is to assist teachers and those supporting them in purposely focusing on professional growth to enhance student learning and spiritual growth to better equip teachers to speak and share God's saving message. In addition the MDP serves as a tool to promote and strengthen discussion and data gathering regarding pedagogical practices which will allow for positive teacher and school development and assist in providing data for meaningful summative assessment.

Biographical Information

Name:

E-mail:

Address:

Phone:

Ministry Context

Please include the following elements

- Brief summary of your ministry position
- Your school's goals (academic and spiritual)

Position: I am currently teaching in a fifth and sixth-grade self-contained classroom. I teach all subjects with the exception of Art and Phy Ed. I have taught levels preschool through 8th grade in my 13 years of teaching. I have been at this school in this position for 7 years and for 2 additional years as a part time teacher. My additional duties include directing the Junior Choir and play organ for church twice a month.

School Goals (academic): Our mission is to assist parents in providing a Christ-centered education to our students. One of our current school goals is to embrace and use to the benefit of our students the Common Core Standards.

School Goals (spiritual): Our school has identified equipping families for spiritual growth as a goal with encouraging home devotions as an area of emphasis.

Ministry Development Plan Professional Component

(Sample)

I. Goal

A. Emphasis for Professional Goal

Consider areas of education about which you are passionate as well as those that challenge you. Use previous classroom observations reports, TMP assessments, and Teacher Performance Assessments as tools to determine an area of emphasis. Identify ways in which this topic relates to your school's short and long-term goals.

B. Goal Statement

Write a goal statement using the “**I will ... so that**” format which includes:

- Area of professional growth
- Anticipated effect on student learning

I will research and implement research-based strategies for struggling readers **so that** students show an increase in comprehension levels and gain confidence in their ability to understand and interpret text.

C. Rationale

Please include the following elements:

- Background for your goal
- Connection to school goals
- Connection to WELS Teaching Standards

I've noticed that my fifth and sixth-graders have difficulty comprehending grade-level material in literature and in content-area classes like social studies and science. Some seem to struggle with decoding, others seem to read smoothly, but have trouble with higher-order questions. Formal discussions and informal conversations among faculty members have also focused on this idea. Additionally, addressing this topic fits with our school's MVO, “Through our programs of Christian education, we are providing children of God with the discipline and training for a more effective service to their Lord and at the same time, *furnishing them with the knowledge and skills necessary for life in the world around them.*” My goal also aligns with our school's goal of having a greater percentage of students reading at a proficient level.

WELS Teaching Standards

2. Christian teachers know how individuals grow and develop.

Focus area: Stimulates reflection on prior knowledge and links new ideas to familiar ones, making connections to learners' experiences.

4. Christian teachers know how to teach.

Focus area: Evaluates how to achieve learning goals and purposefully chooses teaches teaching strategies and materials to meet learner's needs and to achieve instructional purpose.

II. Assessment (Anticipated Evidence)

Professional Growth

Prompt: What will you create/implement as a result of your new learning?

Professional Growth Prompt: What will you create/implement as a result of your new learning?

Annotated List of Strategies Implemented
Journal Reflections
Notes from Classroom Observer

Student Learning

Prompt: What data demonstrate the effect of your professional growth of student learning?
(Providing before-and-after data will add validity to your results.)

Student Learning Prompt: What data demonstrate the effect of your professional growth on student learning? (Providing before-and-after data will add validity to your results.)

Classroom Assessments
Samples of Student Work
Student Surveys

III. Timeline

Research

Planned Activity	Anticipated Timeline	Completed
Attend teachers' conference sectionals on reading strategies.	2017-18 school year	
Read <i>The Struggling Reader: Interventions that Work</i> by J. David Cooper	Summer 2017	
Identify internet resources on content-area reading.	Summer 2017	
Visit the classroom of a teacher implementing reading intervention strategies.	2017-2018 (fall)	

Implement

Planned Activity	Anticipated Timeline	Completed
Teach students how to conduct a textbook walkthrough.	2017-2018 (and ongoing)	
Implement “before, during, and after” reading activities.	2017-2018 (and ongoing)	
Implement additional strategies based on research activities.	2018-2019	
Review and revise strategies.	2019-2020	

Assess

Planned Activity	Anticipated Timeline	Completed
Gather individual and group classroom assessments.	2018-2019 (and ongoing)	
Gather samples of student work	2018-2019 (and ongoing)	
Assemble summary data to determine effect on student learning	2019-2020	
Conduct beginning, mid-year, and end-of-the-year student surveys to assess their level of confidence in reading.	2018-2019 2019-2020	

IV. Year-End Summaries

Please include the following elements:

- Summary of Activities.
- Connections to the Continuum of WELS Teacher Development
- Adjustments and/or Additions
- Next Steps

Year 1

Summary of Activities

I finished *The Struggling Reader: Interventions that Work* and implemented “before during and after” reading strategies in the last two units in Social Studies. This strategy was particularly helpful for two of my struggling readers who used it to organize longer reading sections and break them into manageable parts.

Over summer I searched for internet resources on content-area reading. One that connects well with my goal is <http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies>. Another result was the ASCD book *Literary Strategies for Struggling Readers*. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/104428.aspx>

The teachers' conference sectional, *Helping Young Readers*, did not speak as directly to my goal as I had hoped, but I was able to talk with the presenter who suggested two websites that she thought I'd find helpful. I was also able to connect with a colleague at a similar grade-level. Although our schools are quite a distance apart, we plan to communicate periodically to share information and insights.

My principal suggested the name of a public school teacher in our town who is known for successfully using graphic organizers and study methods for content-area reading. I came away with several organizers. Some are designed to organize information and others are intended to promote reflection on what was read. Toward the end of the year, I used her version of the SQRRR note-taking method for reading assignments in Social Studies.

Connections to the Continuum of WELS Teacher Development

Standard 2

SQRRR note-taking method: *Creates lesson that ask students to access prior knowledge and link new ideas to already familiar ideas.*

3-2-1 and Head, Heart, Foot organizers: *Develops lessons that encourage critical thinking.*

Standard 4

SQRRR & organizers: *Engages students through activities and questioning strategies that develop skills for understanding key concepts and issues.*

Adjustments and/or Additions

I feel my goal narrowing a bit from students' general ability to read and interpret text to a focus on doing so in Social Studies and Science.

Next Steps

- Continue with strategies implemented last school year.
- Implement strategies from <http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies>.
Implement reading comprehension strategies in Science.

Year 2

Summary of Activities

I began the school year by teaching students the steps of a textbook walkthrough in both Social Studies and Science. Students used the SQRR note-taking method and reflective organizers in both subjects. Using an idea from *Literacy Strategies for Struggling Readers*, students wrote diary entries using information based on famous scientists and historical figures they studied. Remembering the caution I heard from the teacher I visited last year about implementing too many strategies too quickly, I staggered implementation of three additional strategies <http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies>: Learn-Read-Discuss (LRD), Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR), and concept maps.

I've begun to gather student work samples, and developed a student survey on which they assess their confidence in understanding Social Studies and Science content and identify strategies and procedures that they feel helped them better understand content. I did not have the survey constructed in time to administer it at the beginning and middle of the year, but I was able to use it in April.

Connections to the Continuum of WELS Teacher Development

Standard 2

SQRRR note-taking method: *Creates lesson that ask students to access prior knowledge and link new ideas to already familiar ideas.*

LAD, QAR, concept maps: *Develops lessons that encourage critical thinking.*

Standard 4

Student survey: *Monitors and adjusts strategies in response to learner feedback.*

Adjustments and/or Additions

I'd like to arrange for a colleague to observe my classroom in the fall and again in spring focusing the observations specifically on the strategies I've implemented.

Next Steps

- Continue implementation of strategies I've adopted in the last two years.
- Survey students at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Use observations and student feedback to refine the strategies and to determine which are best suited to particular learning tasks. Assemble summary data and choose representative items for supporting evidence in the Final Summary at the end of Year 3.

Year 3: Final Summary

Please include the following elements:

- Summary of how you grew in the Continuum of WELS Teacher Development
- Explanation of how artifacts provide evidence of student learning
- Note: Evidence = Artifact + Explanation

From the WELS Standards, I chose to focus on #2 and #4. These ended up being a good fit for my goal. In particular, the strategies provide ways to organize content (SQ3R, QAR, concept maps) and methods to think about content more deeply (Head-Heart-Foot, 3-2-1, LAD).

Artifact PG1 compiles these strategies along with my observations of how well they worked. One thing I discovered was that these strategies are not just a grab-bag of items to be used interchangeably. I found that I needed to match the tool with the learning objectives (St. 4). If the instructional purpose was to understand key concepts (St. 2), concept maps seemed to be more effective than Head-Heart-Foot. If the goal was for students to use critical thinking (St. 2) to extend an idea and make a personal application, HHF proved to be the better tool. Other times I observed that students benefitted from being able to choose a strategy that fit with individual learning preferences.

Artifact PG2 is the note-taking strategy my students used. As an adjustment I revised the procedure to provide choices in note-taking "style" (outline, picture notes, concept map). In all choices students needed to

include focus terms and a summary paragraph. All choices also retained SQ3R's focus on connecting to prior knowledge (St. 2) and questioning strategies (St. 4).

Artifact SL1 shows student survey feedback (St. 4). The "beginning" survey simply used the prompt, "I learn best in _____ when ...". The "middle" and "end" surveys had a similar prompt but also listed the strategies students had learned. The fact that there wasn't a clear preference for one strategy supports the idea that students may benefit from a strategy based on their learning preferences.

Artifact SL2 shows feedback from a colleague who teaches 4th grade. She observed my classroom in October and in March. Among her observations, she noted that students seemed to have "adopted" the strategies to apply key concepts and facts (St. 4) by the time of her later visit, when in the earlier observation they were learning them. It was her suggestion from the October visit that I look for opportunities to allow students to choose from a menu of strategies. Since she had these same students last year she knew their strengths, struggles, and personalities.

Although classroom assessments in Year 3 showed a slight improvement in Social Studies and Science, I don't think I can draw a direct cause-effect relationship between the strategies I implemented and the higher scores, since this is a different group of students than those Year 2. Still, informal observations and survey results indicate that students had a higher level of confidence in their ability to understand Social Studies and Science concepts when using the strategies. Additionally, I saw greater student participation and depth of understanding during classroom discussions.

Two ideas I didn't consider during this implementation, but that I'd like to incorporate, are using these strategies for Bible study and using the "Heart" part of Head-Heart-Foot and the "1" part of 3-2-1 to make a Christian viewpoint observation about topics in Social Studies and Science.

Artifacts

Include at least two artifacts to show your professional growth and its effect on student learning:

Professional Growth (Implementation)	
PG1	Annotated List of Strategies Implemented.
PG2	Student Handout on SQ3R note-taking strategy.

Effects on Student Learning (Assessment)	
PG1	Student Surveys
PG2	Observational Feedback

Ministry Development Plan Spiritual Component

(Sample)

I. Goal

A. Emphasis for Spiritual Goal

Consider your role as a minister of the gospel, called to share the love of Jesus with children and families. Identify personal, formal, and professional study opportunities that will help you grow in your understanding and application of God's Word. Use the definitions below as you choose options that will enable you to grow in faith, be equipped for service, and guard against unbelief.

- *Personal* study is done privately and enables daily contact with God's law and gospel.
- *Formal* study is done together with others but does not result in a written record. Formal study provides the called worker with fellowship, mutual encouragement, and outside perspectives.
- *Professional* study is conducted through an institution that provides a record of completion. Professional study encourages a deeper understanding of God's word by sitting at the feet of experts and completing assignments.

Note: The three categories are listed to provide options for spiritual growth, not as a requirement that each MDP include all three.

B. Goal Statement

Write a goal statement using the "I will ... so that" format which includes:

- Area of emphasis
- Anticipated effect on your ministry

I will improve my ability to connect Scripture promises with the book of the Bible from which they come **so that** I can be prepared to give a witness to students, parents, and others when the situation arises.

C. Rationale

Please include the following elements:

- Background for your goal
- Connection to your ministry
- Connection to your school's mission

As a Lutheran teacher, my students, parents, and congregation members share with me their concerns, joys, and heartaches. I often am at a loss sharing spiritual advice and end up saying, "I'll keep you in my prayers." While that is good, I believe God has called me to also share specific promises from God's word. Our school mission is to *prepare children to live as disciples of Jesus*, and I want to do that by seizing the informal opportunities that occur each day. I need to re-connect myself with as many of God's promises as I can so that when someone comes to me for spiritual help, I am ready to provide a promise from God's word that applies.

II. Timeline

Personal

Planned Activity	Anticipated Timeline	Completed
Daily family devotions	ongoing	
Chronological Bible study subscription from biblegateway.com	July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2018	

Formal

Planned Activity	Anticipated Timeline	Completed
Sunday AM Bible Study at church	Weekly	

Professional

Planned Activity	Anticipated Timeline	Completed
New Testament Theology from MLC	Summer 2017	

III. Year-End Summaries

Year 1

Summary of Activities: I attended Sunday morning Bible class most Sundays except during the basketball season. Practices and games took so much time during the week that I needed Sunday morning time to make sure I was ready for my week's classes. Our family devotion time was often interrupted by school meetings and basketball. Once we got out of a routine, it was hard to get back into it. I was able to follow the BibleGateway Bible study at least three days each week.

Connections to your Ministry and your School's Mission: I am called as a spiritual leader in the school and classroom. Being a spiritual leader requires that I prioritize my spiritual growth and that of my family.

Adjustments and/or Additions: In the second year, I will seek to establish a more regular routine for family devotions.

Next Steps:

- Establish a regular routine for family devotions and encourage my family to keep it even if I am gone at a meeting or basketball practice.
- Continue personal and Sunday morning Bible study routines.

Year 2

Summary of Activities: My family was much more regular in home devotions. If I was unable to be home, my wife kept the devotion time. The kids would fill me in on what I missed the next time we were together for a devotion. Sunday morning and personal Bible study continued much the same as the previous year. Pastor asked me to fill in for a few Sunday Bible studies when he was unavailable. I really enjoyed that.

Connections to your Ministry and you School's Mission: The congregation is seeing me as a spiritual leader in the congregation.

Adjustments and/or Additions: I will continue the routines already established. I am planning to take the course *New Testament Theology* this summer. I'm considering working on a Master of Arts in Theology degree.

Next Steps:

- Sign up for the theology course.
- Continue the regular Bible study.
- Look into what would be required of a Master of Arts in Theology degree.

Year 3: Final Summary

Please include the following elements:

- Summary of how you grew in understanding and applying God's Word
- Examples of how your learning affected your ministry

I have really enjoyed getting into a regular routine with Bible study as a family and personally. I continue to attend Sunday morning Bible study, take time at least three days per week for personal Bible study, and our family has a devotion almost every day. Our devotion has really helped us discuss spiritual topics as a family and pray together for others.

I completed the theology course and really enjoyed it. I'm not ready to commit to a degree program just yet, but I will be adding more courses in my next ministry development plan. I was invited by pastor to turn the topics of my theology class into a Bible study for the congregation. The congregation responded really well to my four-week series. I plan to take *Religions of the Far East* next year and develop a Sunday Bible study series based on what I learn.