# Instructional Quality for Summer Learning

TOOL

This tool was designed to help districts plan engaging, empowering, relevant, and rigorous summer programs so that all students have access to high quality summer instruction. The tool addresses the summer learning environment, student engagement, instruction, and curriculum. The key practices highlighted within this tool are intended to complement districts' instructional frameworks, not replace or undermine otherwise established approaches.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

The purpose of the DSLN Instructional Quality tool is to help you improve summer instruction through planning, implementation, and debrief. To that end, you can use part or all of the tool, and can use it during one or all phases of summer planning and implementation. Summer is a short, defined period of time during which you can address specific areas to build capacity and improve student outcomes. It is impossible to address everything in one summer; you should make choices. To that end, we provide suggested steps below.

For information, tips and examples on planning academic and enrichment instruction that is engaging, empowering, relevant, and rigorous, review the **Instruction Resources Tab** in the Hub.

- ☐ Conduct a high-level self-assessment of summer 2022 instruction elements, considering different summer programs, grade bands, teachers, and classrooms.
- ☐ With your summer design team, identify strengths and challenge areas across your programs.
- ☐ Identify one or two focus areas and where you can strengthen instructional quality practices.
- ☐ Define goals for increasing instructional quality in 2023.
- ☐ Design professional development based on your focus area(s).
- ☐ Create observational protocols based on your focus area(s).
- ☐ Outline data collection strategies based on your focus area(s)
- ☐ Schedule a debrief after your summer program ends to assess changes around your focus area(s).
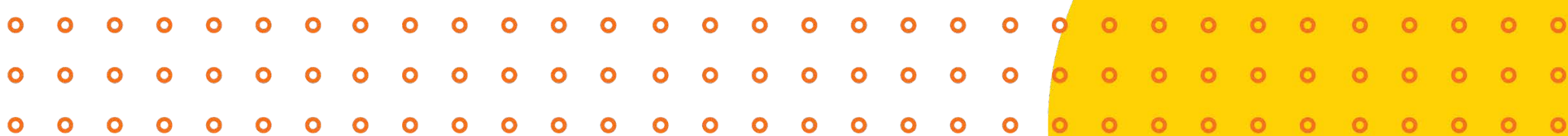
Getting Started

High Level Self-Assessment of Instructional Practice

District Leader(s)	
Select Schools/Sites	
Select Grade Levels	

For each statement below, please type an X in the box that best reflects your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Our academic and enrichment activities **engage** students cognitively, socially, and physically while building their skills.					
Our summer program **empowers** youth to make choices, provide input, take responsibility, and hold leadership roles.					
Our summer program is **relevant** to students' lives, leveraging their interests and responding to their social identities.					
Our activities are **rigorous** and challenge youth to participate in their own learning in increasingly complex ways.					

Instructional Practices

Review the four areas below and choose one or more to focus on for summer planning and implementation. Identify one or more sample instructional practices in each area that you would like to include or strengthen in your summer learning program. You may choose to grow a strength, tackle an area of weakness, or spread a practice that flourishes in one program or grade band so that it is present everywhere.

Check the box(es) next to the sample instructional practice(s) you would like to include or strengthen in your program in the center column. Use the right-hand column to note how you will promote these practices in your summer preparation, implementation, and reflection.

Area	Sample Instructional Practices	Reflection by focus area
1. **Engaging**	☐ Instructors encourage all students to formulate answers and participate. ☐ Activities combine abstract concepts with concrete learning experiences. ☐ Activities lead to tangible products or performances that reflect students' ideas or designs. ☐ Students discuss or otherwise communicate what they are doing and what they are thinking about. ☐ For at least half the time they are in activities, students create, combine, or reform materials or ideas or improve a skill. ☐ Young people have responsibilities within activities and for creating a constructive learning environment.	**Successes last summer:** **Areas for growth:** **How we can improve:**
2. **Empowering**	☐ Young people co-design curriculum and classroom environments. ☐ Students collaborate and take interdependent roles (e.g., project-based and small group learning). ☐ Students take leadership roles in activities and the learning environment. ☐ Young people make decisions about programs, activities, and interactions.	**Successes last summer:** **Areas for growth:**

	☐ Activities provide young people at least one open-ended content choice within the content framework and at least one open-ended process choice while at work. ☐ Instructors emphasize self-regulation. Restorative practices involve youth input and voice.	**How we can improve:**
3. Relevant	☐ Instruction, curriculum, and assessment are relevant to students' cultures and lived experiences. ☐ Instruction, curriculum, and assessment are adaptable to diverse learning styles. ☐ Students do grade-level work and learn big ideas. ☐ Curriculum incorporates current events and real-world issues facing students' communities.	**Successes last summer:**
	☐ Curriculum and instruction are aligned to the histories, languages, and experiences of traditionally marginalized voices. ☐ Resources are included that represent diverse social identities and perspectives. ☐ Activities and staff support young people in using their creativity, curiosity, or imagination.	**Areas for growth:**
	☐ Work study offerings are varied and aligned to youth interests and goals. ☐ Cooperative small group activities build on young people's skills and strengths. ☐ Explicit connection exists between academic and enrichment learning objectives and school year and summer learning objectives.	**How we can improve:**
4. Rigorous	☐ Activities and staff set high expectations for young people and those expectations are made clear through exposure to grade level work, big ideas, and substantive tasks. ☐ Schedules are intentionally designed to foster skill-building (e.g., plans include sequencing and scaffolding of skills, opportunities to improve skills or learn new skills).	**Successes last summer:**

☐ Activities and staff support using information to create something new (design, build, construct, plan, produce, devise, invent). ☐ Activities and staff support students critically examining information and making judgments (judge, test, critique, defend, criticize).	**Areas for growth:**
☐ Activities and staff support students taking information apart and exploring relationships (categorize, examine, compare/contrast, organize). ☐ Activities and staff engage all young people in an intentional process of reflecting on what they have done (e.g., writing in journals or sharing progress, accomplishments, or feelings about the experience).	**How we can improve:**

Instructional Tool look-fors include modified indicators from the following resources: Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA), Social Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SELPQA) and Organizational Quality Assessment (OQA), David P Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality; NYSED.gov Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education Framework; Bloom's Taxonomy Bloom, B. S.; Engelhart, M. D.; Furst, E. J.; Hill, W. H.; Krathwohl, D. R. (1956). Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals. Vol. Handbook I: Cognitive domain. New York: David McKay Company.

Reflection Questions

The four areas outlined in this tool may represent significant shifts in instructional practices. Consider the following questions before you draft your goal(s):

1. Does the specific instructional practice align with what the data tell us about student needs?
2. Do we have the capacity to design professional development, adapt or purchase new curricular resources, and train staff to implement this practice?
3. What is our capacity to observe and gather data that informs the impact of this practice?

Set Your Instructional Quality Goal(s)

The questions below align with the DSLN roadmap process and can help you craft defined goals with clear metrics to achieve results. Use this worksheet to develop goals for your focus area(s).

Instructional Quality Goals	
What is the focus for instructional quality? (Example: We want to increase student voice in ways that empower and engage students.)	
Who can lead this work? (Example: The ES summer team is very strong in this area and can lead through PD and through exemplar tasks.)	
What critical steps would we need to take to ensure success? (Example: Professional development for teachers, professional development for principals, and a modified walk-through rubric that focuses on our identified look fors around student voice that engages and empowers.)	

Defining Success	
Qualitative measures of success	
Quantitative measures of success	
Key testimonials and illustrative examples to look for	
By summer 2023 we will	
By summer 2024 we will	
By summer 2025 we will	

Resources From the Field

Engaging Instruction

- Mizzen by Mott - Lesson plans
- Sanford Harmony Curriculum - Sequenced SEL for School Day or OST with blended ELA
- MathCorp - CBO partner examples
- Moving with Math - Math Teacher Press, Inc.
- Pacing Guide - Grand Prairie ISD; Enrichment Lesson Plan - Grand Prairie ISD

Empowering Instruction

- Preparing Youth to Thrive - Promising Practices for Social Emotional Learning
- Youthpower/USAID - Student/Teen Advisory Councils
- Multicultural Youth Leadership SOAR; Youth Engaged in Leadership and Learning Program
- Neutral Zone Teen Center - Youth Driven Spaces
- Panorama Education Resources; Restorative practices resource

Relevant Instruction

- HQIM Recommendations for Summer Learning (TEA)
- Tip Sheet - Selecting and Modifying Summer Curricula
- Interactive Online Global Books - Curriculum and instruction aligned to the histories, languages, and experiences of traditionally marginalized voices
- Social Justice Books: New Books – Teaching for Change
- New York State Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework

Rigorous Instruction

- What Works Clearinghouse, How can the WWC Practice Guides help teachers?
- Webb's Depth of Knowledge Framework: The Basics; Webb's DOK Levels
- Bloom's Taxonomy- Vanderbilt University
- Danielson Framework for Teaching
- PBL Works (Buck Institute for Education)
- Marzano Research; Overview of Robert Marzano's Model of Teaching Effectiveness; Marzano Crosswalk with State Teaching Standards