

Using Continuous Improvement in the Classroom

The following steps outline how I have implemented C.I. in my classroom. You will want to adapt these to your own circumstances!

1. Select a day of the week on which you will give the quiz. It is important that you pick a day that can be used each week consistently throughout the school year, so Mondays and Fridays are generally not good choices due to school holidays.
2. Provide each student with a file folder. Give each student a C.I. graph (1-10) to put inside the folder. You can organize the folders using any method. I organize mine by class and then by group.
3. On the day selected, distribute the quiz and a sheet of paper on which to write answers. I cut old notebook paper in half vertically and tell students to number from one to ten on the first ten lines and to use the remaining space and the back for their scratch work. I circulate through the classroom as the students work, picking up answer sheets (half sheets) as they finish. This may take up to thirty minutes at the first of the year, but by winter break, students should be able to complete the ten problems in less than fifteen minutes. I tell students to write an "X" next to the number of any question they do not know. At the beginning of the year, this might be 8-9 problems, but as the year progresses, I tell the student I expect them to attempt the problems, especially the ones we have learned.
4. Once the majority of the class has finished (this may vary at the beginning of the year), give a two-minute warning for any remaining students. After two minutes, collect the remaining answer sheets. The students should still have their quiz questions.
5. Next, quickly review each problem and ask students to volunteer answers. This is not an explicit teaching time--you will eventually teach all the quiz concepts during your regular instructional time. This review time should not take longer than ten minutes.
6. Collect the quiz copies and return them to a file to be used twelve weeks later. (There are 12 quizzes and 36 weeks of school, so students will eventually see each quiz up to three times.)
7. I grade the quizzes that day and return them to students the following day while they work on warm-up problems at the beginning of class. At the beginning of the year, I establish a routine that assigns only a few students to retrieve the CI folders (I have them organized in hanging folders by class) and distribute them to students. Each student records his/her score for the corresponding week on his or her chart.
8. I ask students to stand for an ovation if s/he earned an "All Time High" or personal best score. We celebrate as a class and then pass the folders back in to the "folder monitors" who return them to the hanging files.
9. After grading the quizzes, I also determine the "Class Average" by adding all the scores and dividing by the number of students enrolled. Students soon realize that absent students affect their class performance, and begin to encourage their peers to come to school, especially on C.I. day. I record the Class Average on a large graph so the class can see their progress each week. If the class earns an "All Time High," we determine a celebration. This varies from class to class, but previous "rewards" have included ten minutes of free time, cookies, donuts, pencils, etc.
10. Repeat the process each week on the determined day so that a routine is easily established.