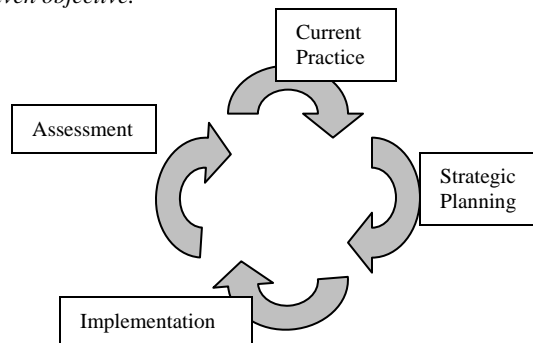


Benchmarking

n.) is measuring performance against that of best-in-class organizations, determining how the best in class achieve those performance levels, and using the information as the basis for goals, strategies, and implementation that must be undertaken to achieve a given objective.



The practice of benchmarking may have two prime objectives. First it serves as a means for assessing the quality and/or cost of an organization's practices and processes in a "best practice" comparison. Secondly, and more in line with our accreditation processes, benchmarking can be used as an ongoing diagnostic management tool focused on learning, collaboration and leadership in achieving continuous improvement in our school over time.

The Process

Current Practice Do a **SWOT** analysis. Identify your areas of **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**. Look carefully at your program and measure the current outcomes in reality by quantitative reports, surveys, process mapping, and even financial analysis. Are you doing the best job possible or could things be done more effectively and efficiently for students? The focus is always on the learning of students. Graduate and alumni surveys are key indicators of success.

Strategic Planning When all areas have been analyzed, what three, four or five goals for change are identified? Remember that change comes in small increments. Even little change will impact the outcome. When you have a goal identified locate a school or organization that has the best outcome in this particular area. Make a list of specific questions that need to be addressed and consult those places worthy of consultation. Find out detailed information, not only about their outcomes, but their processes and all mitigating factors.

Implementation An agreed strategy needs to be designed and implemented. All stakeholders need to understand the task. They may need advising, training or information to ensure the process is carried out. Regular meetings and review of the changing operation will need to be accomplished to see if additional changes need to be factored into the improvement process.

Assessment Collect evidence to demonstrate improvement has occurred successfully from the original process. Use all the reports, surveys and process mapping that were used originally to identify the problem area. These should be formal feedback processes that ensure effectiveness. Identify what has been learned from the process; garner insights into the cost-effectiveness and outcomes. Continue the cycle for ongoing improvements. SACS refers to this as "closing the loop."