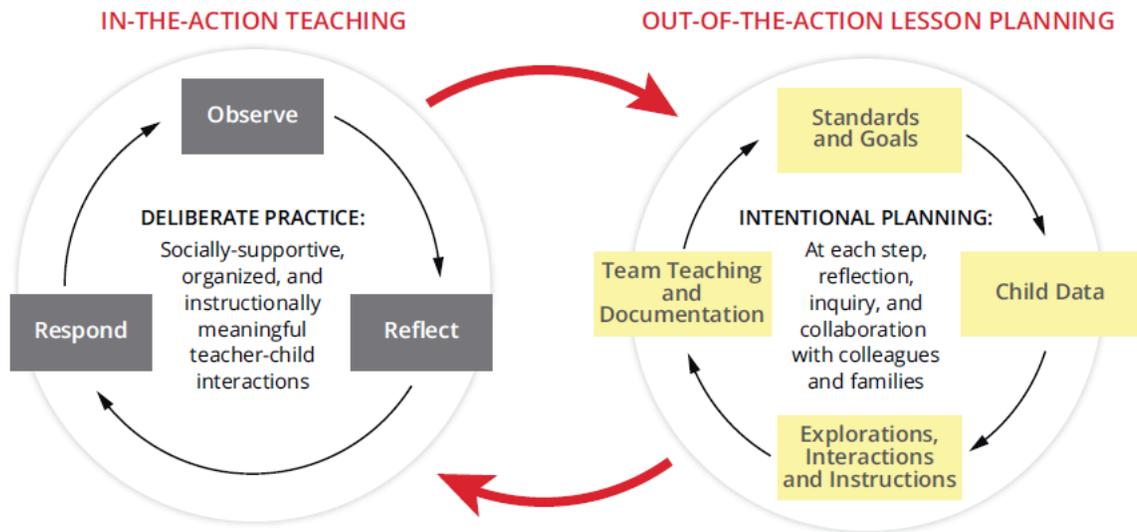




KEY CONCEPT

THE FOCUSED TEACHING CYCLE FOR  
AMBITIOUS INTERACTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS



The **Focused Teaching Cycle (FTC)** transforms early childhood teachers’ lesson planning and instruction from a process characterized by developing activities to occupy the day, to a process characterized by thinking critically and making intentional decisions about the desired learning, development, and kindergarten readiness outcomes, about the child’s progress towards those outcomes, and about the best ways to design learning environments and guide learning opportunities that effectively promote each child’s learning, development, and kindergarten readiness. The **FTC’s Out-of-the-Action Lesson Planning Cycle** makes explicit in four steps the decisions teachers need to make when planning high-impact interactions and instruction for young children, and structures the information and data they use to inform those decisions. The **FTC’s In-the-Action Observe-Reflect-Respond** pattern raises teachers’ attention to the learning unfolding in the moment and prompts them to think intentionally about their next CLASS-based interaction and instructional response while implementing the lesson plan as designed.



## LEAD LEARN EXCEL

**The Focused Teaching Cycle *Out-of-the-Action* starts teachers' lesson planning process with the end in mind, specifically:**

### **STEP ONE - Planning with Standards and Goals for Children's Learning and**

**Development:** Prompts teachers to identify what they want children to know and be able to do at their current age, the next age, and at kindergarten entrance, based on (a) Early Learning Standards and the Common Core at Kindergarten, (b) curriculum and content-specific learning objectives, (c) for children with disabilities, goals from their Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), and (d) goals and aspirations communicated by parents for their child.

**STEP TWO - Using Child Data to Identify Specific Learning Objectives:** Prompts teachers to use ongoing formative assessment data and parent input to track children's progress towards the standards and goals, as well as information about children's temperaments, culture, and interests to inform goal setting and the design of experiences, interactions, and instruction for the class, small groups of children, and individual children. This data includes developmental screening data, observations, photos, and products (GOLD data), IEP and IFSP goal data, and family observations from enrollment forms and meetings, from parent-teacher conferences, etc.

**STEP THREE - Designing Explorations, Interactions and Instruction:** Prompts teachers to combine their knowledge of curricula and parent goals, children's progress data, and with their pedagogical and content knowledge to design high-impact teaching and learning opportunities for children. In this step teachers, consider their ERS and CLASS data about the quality of the learning environments, interaction, and instruction. This step ensures teachers are making data-informed decisions about (a) changes to the learning environments that invite or deepen exploration and engagement, (b) the specific concepts to develop through investigations, (c) the specific skills to develop through small group and individualized instruction, (d) the children who will benefit from additional supports and scaffolding for concept learning, including children with special needs and English language learners, (e) the intensified CLASS-based emotional, organizational, and instructional supports to increase the impact of instruction on children's learning and development, and (f) Ideas for home-school connections that support families with enjoyably strengthening children's learning in the home and that invite families input to make classroom explorations, interaction, and instruction more meaningful and relevant to their lives.

**STEP FOUR - Planning for Team Teaching and Documentation:** Prompts teams to plan intentionally for each teacher's role in implementing the experiences and activities of the lesson plan in a responsive, flexible and effective manner. Step Four also prompts the team to plan in advance and intentionally for ways they will document children's experiences and learning. This documentation informs the next cycle of planning and is also shared with families to help them connect and follow up with what their child is exploring and learning, and how they are progressing toward the standards and kindergarten readiness.