



WSLA STRAND

Problem of Practice

Looking at...

- Framing the Question
- Reframing
- Data
- Focused Action
- Evaluation



GETTING STARTED WITH INQUIRY

ELEMENTS OF A CRITICAL INQUIRY PROCESS

- **FRAME THE PROBLEM:** Develop an initial understanding
- **REFRAME TO FIND “ROOT CAUSE”:** Raise, check and clarify values, assumptions, beliefs embedded in the problem; connect to core values
- **WORK FROM DATA:** Seek information that bears upon the problem
- **TAKE FOCUSED ACTION:** Generate possible solutions or strategies; decide on a solution, based on identified “theory of action”
- **EVALUATE:** Assess your progress toward addressing the problem in light of new data.....



REFRAME TO GET TO “ROOT CAUSE”

”PEELING THE ONION”

- Involves reframing problems in ways that connect to what matters to people in the organization.
- Connects to core principles/beliefs, and reminds others of how the work matters for students.
- Helps others to understand or “see” the problem differently – professional learning and system learning implications.
- Works to determine “root causes” of problems



REFRAME TO FIND “ROOT CAUSES”

A *KEY* Leadership Task: Reframing! –

Questions to ask:

- On what assumptions or beliefs does our understanding of this problem rest?
- What are the professional learning implications of the student learning problem we’ve been considering?
- What are the implications for system learning? How might our district have to function differently to help solve the student learning problem?



UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM

A “GOOD” PROBLEM STATEMENT

- Identifies a learning issue, or achievement gap issue for students
- Frames the challenge as a question to be answered
- Avoids embedding blame in stating the problem to be solved
- Avoids embedding pre-conceived solutions in stating the problem
- Considers “root causes” that led to the problem, such as personal beliefs, professional learning needs, and system learning/alignment needs.



REFRAMING A “LEARNING” PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE
EXAMPLE, TAKE 1

Problem/challenge statement:

Kindergarten students come to school with widely different levels of reading readiness



REFRAMING A “LEARNING” PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE
EXAMPLE, TAKE 2

Problem/challenge statement:

How to ensure that all Kindergarten students will be reading at or above grade level by the end of Kindergarten?



REFRAMING A “LEARNING” PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE EXAMPLE, TAKE 3

Problem/challenge statement:

How to ensure that Kindergarten students who enter school speaking a primary language other than English will be reading at or above grade level by the end of Kindergarten?



REFRAMING A “LEARNING” PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE EXAMPLE, TAKE 4

Problem/challenge statement:

How will the school district fully support all Kindergarten teachers to know and use instructional practices in literacy that ensure Kindergarten students who enter school speaking a primary language other than English will be reading at or above grade level by the end of Kindergarten?



REFRAME TO FIND “ROOT CAUSE”

TEAM TASK #2: Reframing the Work

- **Table Talk: Revisit Your Problem Statement**
 - On what assumptions or beliefs does our understanding of this problem rest?
 - What do you believe to be the root causes of this learning problem?
 - What more do you need to know to understand the problem as fully as possible?
 - ******What are the leadership implications for you as a leadership team in helping others to develop a common understanding and commitment to working on this particular problem of practice this year?



LOOKING AHEAD

PROBLEM STATEMENT ASSIGNMENT

For next time, as a team:

- Revisit your written statement of the problem for focus this year; revise accordingly based on your work this session (see handout).
- Note the sources of data you are relying on to identify the problem for focus, as well as any other data sources you are intending to gather and analyze.
- Send an electronic copy to Mike, your coach, your regional instructors, and bring 3 copies with you to the next session.



Elements of Critical Inquiry: REVIEW

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WORKING WITH AND FROM DATA

RATIONALE

Data are helpful in working on a problem of practice in at least three ways:

- First, data help teams understand the nature of the problem they want to work on.
- Second, various forms of data taken together help teams determine evidence of progress on the problem they've identified.
- Finally, data help guide decisions about what to do next.



WORKING WITH AND FROM DATA

HELPFUL PROMPTS

- Data and evidence are not the same thing.
- Turning data into evidence of something requires tools, like comparison or corroboration, that help teams see particular things in the data.
- Be explicit about assumptions the team brings, and test those assumptions by examining data.



DATA INTO EVIDENCE

EXERCISE: LOOKING AT STUDENT WORK

- Read the student's written response.
- Given what you know so far, (1) assess the student's grade level, and (2) rate the quality of this response on a five point scale -- 1 = low; 5 = high.
- At your table, discuss your assessment.



DATA INTO EVIDENCE

LOOKING AT STUDENT WORK EXERCISE

- What kinds of support materials would help you turn this “data” into evidence of something?
- What sorts of tools do you currently have at your fingertips that might be useful in turning this data into evidence?
- What are the implications of this exercise for your thinking about how teachers might use student work productively to improve practice?



DATA INTO EVIDENCE

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What data do we have that tells us something about the problem we identified earlier?
- What do we know about the instructional processes that produced this data?
- What other data do we need to get that might inform us about the problem?
- What is needed to turn these various forms of data into evidence?



DATA INTO EVIDENCE

GROUP WORK: DATA ANALYSIS

As you work, dig into the data your group brought to the session--

- What kind of data is it? How, if at all, does it help inform the original conception(s) of the problem(s) you noted earlier?
- What doesn't the data tell you?
- What additional support materials might you need to examine to get clearer about the nature of the "gap" problem you've identified?
- What sorts of tools might help turn these various forms of data into evidence of something?



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