

NAVIGATING LEADERSHIP

DRIFT



*OBSERVABLE IMPACT
ON RIGOROUS LEARNING*

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Navigating Leadership Drift: *Observable Impact on Rigorous Learning*

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Published by:

FIRST Educational Resources, LLC

Winneconne, Wisconsin

www.firsteducation-us.com

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ISBN: 978-1-7332390-9-7

Printed in the United States of America

(EnvisionInk Printing Solutions, Neenah, WI)

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Impact Conversion Process Template

Team Members:

Date:

Need it: What is compelling to your team right now?

Notes:

[Tool](#)

See it: How will you make sure what you want to improve is observable in the several weeks?

Notes:

[Tool](#)

Start it: How will you lower the threshold to move from evidence and ideas into action and action into evidence and ideas?

Notes:

[Tool](#)

Show it: How will you demonstrate your impact?

Notes:

[Tool](#)

Instructional challenge focus tool - "Need it"

PART 1 - BRAINSTORM: What are some of the challenges that we are seeing in our classrooms? Focus on **what we are actually observing** ("Students are not able to complete tasks" or "They are unable to add fractions" or "They struggle to demonstrate <PRIORITY STANDARD A>") rather than the reasons why we might be seeing it ("They don't have the prerequisite skills") or things that are difficult for us to influence ("There is little parental support").

What are we observing?	Evidence (e.g. Student, educator, task)
A	S E T
B	S E T
C	S E T
D	S E T

PART 2 - NARROW: Consider your list above. Which ones do we feel are most important for us to consider at this time?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

PART 3 - OWNERSHIP: Our students' learning challenge is our instructional challenge. Using the sentence stem "We struggle with ...", create an Instructional Challenge statement that will serve to drive the team's next team learning.

Observable impact generator - "See it"

For the skill/attribute of a learner below list the 'observables' (what you would see in **students, educators and in the tasks, activities and assessments**) if this attribute were being demonstrated at the highest level of proficiency. In addition, determine the 'observable' actions

INSTRUCTIONAL CHALLENGE:

<p>PART 1: If STUDENTS (S) were demonstrating this attribute at the highest level of proficiency, what would you observe them DOING and DEMONSTRATING?</p>	<p>PART 1: What would EDUCATORS (E) need to do to enable our students to demonstrate this attribute at the highest level of proficiency? What would we observe them DOING and DEMONSTRATING?</p>
<p>S1. S2. S3. S4. S5.</p>	<p>E1. E2. E3. E4. E5.</p>
<p>PART 1: What TASKS would demonstrate this attribute at the highest level of proficiency?</p>	<p>PART 2: What would LEADERS need to do to enable our teachers to support students in progressing towards this outcome? What would we observe them DOING and DEMONSTRATING?</p>
<p>T1. T2. T3. T4. T5.</p>	<p>L1. L2. L3. L4. L5.</p>

Lowering the threshold - "Start it"

Determine the steps teams will take to lower the threshold for implementing actions to impact student learning.

- **IMPACT** To what extent are we selecting and engaging in practices that have a high probability of making a substantial impact?
- **ACTION** What do we need to do to continually improve/enhance our practices? Student practices?
- **DOABLE** To what extent are we engaging in a habit that is manageable? How will I implement the habit? Who will support me in implementing this habit?

SKILL/ATTRIBUTE/AREA OF FOCUS/GOAL:

<p>PART 1: If we spend our time on the greatest impact strategies possible, what option(s) should we pick to meet the instructional challenge?</p>	<p>PART 2: What support do we need to take action?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
<p>PART 3 How will you/we make this habit manageable to implement?</p>	<p>PART 4 What will I/we do to make changes to the strategy if and when needed?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

If we....

Then....

Selecting a strategy

Support the team in selecting a strategy that will have a high probability in making a substantial impact on student learning.

Step 1: Draft a list of potential strategies that may have a substantial impact on student learning.

Step 2: Evaluate each strategy based on the following criteria. For each solution, provide a score using the table below. The strategy with the highest score should be considered a viable candidate for using in your next cycle of inquiry.

Impact *Does the habit have a basis for observable impact within and outside of our context?*

A habit worth doing has potential to make a significant difference in student learning. We're not going for a little; we're going for a lot. As Reeves (2010) shares, "Because 95% of interventions result in some gain in achievement ... the criterion for 'impact' must be more than 'better than nothing.' It must surpass a benchmark of real-world change" The practices selected should have predictive power on making a substantial impact on student learning OR have real power in our local context through their own investigation of our impact on student learning using the strategy.

Leverage *Does this strategy meet a number of student outcomes in our context?*

A habit worth doing improves a number of student outcomes. Teachers are busy; we need to get the most out of our efforts. For instance, ensuring students are clear on the learning intention and success criteria offers opportunities for students to engage in effective peer-to-peer feedback.

Implementation: *Do we have experience and the appropriate support to engage with this strategy?*

A habit worth doing can get *even better* over time. It must follow a continuum of development, mastery, and iteration and requires training, coaching, and ongoing support and accountability from others.

Challenge and Culture *Does this strategy promote student agency and academic complexity?*

A habit that involves students and pushes toward deep and transfer learning will likely produce greater agency and academic complexity. Moreover, these focus areas have significant effect sizes.

	0	1	2
Impact	The strategy has no basis for making an observable difference beyond small effects on student learning	The strategy has a significant basis for making an observable effect on student learning but has not been tried or inspected in our own context.	The strategy has a significant basis for making an observable effect on student learning and has been tested in our own context.
Leverage	This strategy is in complete isolation from everything else we do.	This strategy has some level of connection to our current work and may or may not meet multiple student outcomes.	This strategy has deep connections to our current practice and likely meets multiple student outcomes
Implementation	We have limited to no experience in this strategy and/or little or no support to implement.	We have limited experience but have significant support from our team or the site/district to implement this strategy.	We have significant experience and support to implement this work across levels of expertise.
Challenge and Culture	We will not be involving students in engaging in this work nor are we focusing on deep or transfer level learning.	We will either involve students or engage in deep or transfer learning strategies.	We will involve students and incorporate deep and transfer learning strategies.

Designing support structures - Lead To/Needs To Protocol

Support the team in creating structures that will support teacher and leader learning (ie. staff meetings/ PD days/workshops/collaborative time models)

Step 1: Ask the team “If this structure led to observable impact in the classroom, what would we observe. What would it LEAD TO?”

Step 2: In order to make our ‘LEAD TO’s happen in the classroom, what elements would the structure or support NEED TO have in order to achieve to the desired impact?

Step 3: What are the ideas we have to make our ‘NEEDS’ happen for us in our context? What would be the evidence that we currently have/need to ensure this is happening?

Step 4: What actions do we need to take immediately? In the next 72 hours? In the next two weeks? Who will champion the next step, and when will we check in to ensure we are making progress?

LEAD TO/NEEDS TO PROTOCOL		
STRUCTURE:		
We want it to LEAD TO... (What would we observe?)	Therefore the structure/ support NEEDS TO...	Ideas/Evidence
NEXT STEPS		
ACTION	CHAMPION	DATE

Lessons Learned - "Show it"

List the observable impact of you and your team's sprint process.

SKILL/ATTRIBUTE/AREA OF FOCUS/GOAL:

<p>PART 1: RELAY What is the observable impact as related to the instructional core? What did you observe as a result in students? In educators? In tasks/activities/assessments?</p>	<p>PART 2: REFLECT What does this tell us about our current instructional model? What do we need to stop/start/sustain/shift in our current practice or set of practices?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
<p>PART 3: REVISE</p> <p>What are we learning? What should we do next?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••	

Questions to Enable Impact Conversion

Team Members:

Date:

Need it: What is compelling to your team right now?

- CHALLENGE *What is a problem that is compelling to my team right now? Why is this a focus?*
- SHARED UNDERSTANDING: What do important words look like, feel like, feel like for us? How do we make those terms observable?
- EVIDENCE: What evidence brings this problem into focus?

Notes:

See it: How will you make sure what you want to improve is observable in the several weeks?

- STUDENT If we were meeting the needs of students at the highest level of proficiency in this area of focus, what would we observe students demonstrating in the classroom?
- TEACHER What is the educator doing to make these things happen AND at what frequency?
- TASK What are the types of tasks, activities, and assessments that we would see in the classroom in this area of focus?
- SCALE What would the student, teacher, and tasks/assessments look like in six weeks?

Notes:

Start it: How will you lower the threshold to move from evidence and ideas into action?

- IMPACT To what extent are we selecting and engaging in practices that have a high probability of making a substantial impact?
- ACTION What do we need to do to continually improve/enhance our practices? Student practices?
- DOABLE To what extent are we engaging in a habit that is manageable? How will I implement the habit? Who will support me in implementing this habit?

Notes:

Show it: How will you demonstrate your impact?

- RELAY: How will we observe and document student progress? Our practice?
- REFLECT: *What does this tell us about our current instructional model? Do we need to stop/start/sustain/shift a current practice or set of practices?*
- REVISE *What are we learning? What should we do next?*

Notes:

Leadership resources

Leadership Tools

[Leadership Tool](#)

[Debrief Questions](#)

Evidence Collection Tools

[Tools](#)

Protocol bank

Need it	See it	Start it	Show it
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fishbone Analysis• Gap Analysis• What? So What? Now What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chalk Talk• Nominal Group Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heat Check• Concentric Circles• Whip Around• Think Pair Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impact Review• World Cafe• Jigsaw• Tuning Protocol• Consultancy Dilemma

Leadership Attribute Analysis

<p>Step 2: Considering your current context, how frequently do you see these attributes being demonstrated?</p>	<p>Step 1: What would we observe each of the following groups DOING and DEMONSTRATING, DOING to lead to a high level of proficiency in this attribute focus area.</p>	<p>STEP 3: Where do we NEED TO GO in this area to help us observe students demonstrate this attribute at a high level of proficiency?</p>																									
<p>FREQUENCY OF OBSERVATION (Consistently Usually Sometimes Rarely)</p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>1.</td><td>C</td><td>U</td><td>S</td><td>R</td></tr> <tr><td>2.</td><td>C</td><td>U</td><td>S</td><td>R</td></tr> <tr><td>3.</td><td>C</td><td>U</td><td>S</td><td>R</td></tr> <tr><td>4.</td><td>C</td><td>U</td><td>S</td><td>R</td></tr> <tr><td>5.</td><td>C</td><td>U</td><td>S</td><td>R</td></tr> </table>	1.	C	U	S	R	2.	C	U	S	R	3.	C	U	S	R	4.	C	U	S	R	5.	C	U	S	R	<p>(S) STUDENTS WOULD BE... (OBSERVABLES - WHICH CAN INCLUDE DATA)</p> <p>1. 2. 3. 4. 5.</p>	
1.	C	U	S	R																							
2.	C	U	S	R																							
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4.	C	U	S	R																							
5.	C	U	S	R																							
ACTION PLANNING																											
<p>IN THE NEXT 72 HOURS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	<p>IN THE NEXT 14 DAYS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	<p>IN THE NEXT SIX WEEKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 																									
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1.	C	U	S	R																							
2.	C	U	S	R																							
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1.	C	U	S	R																							
2.	C	U	S	R																							
3.	C	U	S	R																							
4.	C	U	S	R																							
5.	C	U	S	R																							

FREQUENCY OF OBSERVATION (Consistently Usually Sometimes Rarely)					(L) LEADER WOULD BE...(CULTIVATE)	•	
6.	C	U	S	R			1.
7.	C	U	S	R			2.
8.	C	U	S	R			3.
9.	C	U	S	R			4.
10.	C	U	S	R	5.		

ACTION PLANNING

IN THE NEXT 72 HOURS	IN THE NEXT 14 DAYS	IN THE NEXT SIX WEEKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

Heat Check

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT/TEAM:

INSTRUCTIONAL CHALLENGE/AREA OF FOCUS:

WE BEGAN FOCUSING ON THIS CHALLENGE ON (START DATE):

PREDICTED PROGRESS: "AT THIS POINT, WE WERE HOPING TO OBSERVE..." (LIST SPECIFIC OBSERVABLES)

-
-
-

Heat Check Protocol

Decide which Partner is Partner A and which is Partner B. **This is a crisp, timed meeting** that will take a total of 7 minutes per Partner. Ensure one Partnermate is the timer, and stick to the times below.

1. (1 min) Partner A outlines their current challenge and their current action plan AND WHAT THEY HAD HOPED TO BE OBSERVING AT THIS POINT. This is key!
2. (1 min) Partner B asks Partner A to describe a **SUCCESS** they are having relative to predicted progress, and what they are observing as evidence of success.
3. (1 min) Partner B asks Partner A to describe the biggest **STRUGGLE** they are having relative to predicted progress, and what they are observing as evidence of struggle.
4. (2 min) Partner B and Partner A brainstorm **SUPPORTS** that have the best chance to help the Partner move past their struggle, and who can help them get that support.
5. (1 min) Partner B asks Partner A to detail their next **STEPS** that they will take in the next 72 hours, and how Partner B can help and when Partner B check-in with Partner A to see if they have gotten that support. This informal check (hallway/staff room meet up) is scheduled and put in Partner A and Partner B's calendars as exit ticket)
6. Partner A and Partner B switch roles, reset timer and repeat.



STRENGTH:

STRUGGLE:

SUPPORT:

NEXT STEPS/DATE OF NEXT CHECK IN:

Impact Review

TEAM:	
CHALLENGE(S) WE WANTED TO ADDRESS:	
WHAT WE HOPED TO OBSERVE AS A RESULT OF THIS WORK:	
OUR STORY (BRIEF SUMMARY)	
Pre-Assessment <i>We found...</i>	
Action <i>We decided...</i>	
Mid-Checks <i>We determined...</i>	
Post- Assessment <i>We learned....</i>	
WHAT WE ACTUALLY OBSERVED WHEN DOING THIS WORK (“WHEN...THEN...” PATTERNS)	
WHEN WE DID THIS WHEN USING THIS APPROACH...	THEN WE NOTICED...
LESSONS LEARNED	
OVERALL RATING (CUT AND PASTE UP TO 5 STARS AS NEEDED)	
EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION (5 STARS IS EASIEST)	OVERALL IMPACT (5 STARS IS MOST IMPACTFUL)
	

Summary of Leader Support in ICP

In summary, leaders work with their teacher leaders and teams to engage in the ICP in an ongoing and sustainable manner. **Table X** offers an overview of the entire process.

STEPS	Criteria	Conversion
Need It— Define the Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key areas of need from the team • Focus on evidence that is linked to the instructional core (i.e. student, educator, and task) • The evidence should be a collection of unobtrusive, obtrusive, and student constructed data • Identify instructional challenges from evidence • Prioritize the key instructional challenge to focus on for the next several weeks. 	<p><i>Conversion Point 1 (SHOW IT-NEED IT)</i></p> <p>Leaders ensure teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use protocols to frame discussions, including reflections on the process and outcome (e.g. Instructional challenge focus tool) • Ensure the agenda emphasizes time and space for teams to discuss next steps (e.g. Determine who does what by when to ensure next steps in the process are implemented). • Provide ongoing heat checks to check in on progress (see Heat Check tool)
See It—Clarify the Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine or revisit the ideal state of student learning, teacher practice, and task design (e.g. Observable Impact Generator) • Determine time duration of ideal states for the instructional core 	<p><i>Conversion Point 2 (SEE IT-START IT)</i></p> <p>Leaders ensure teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use protocols to frame discussions to understand observable 'look fors' for the instructional core • Use protocol for teachers to conduct a needs assessment on professional learning support. • Ensure the agenda emphasizes time and space for teams to discuss next steps (e.g. Determine who does what by when to ensure next steps in the process are implemented). • Provide ongoing heat checks to check in on progress (see Heat Check tool)

<p>Start It— Progress toward the Outcome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure practices have a high probability of substantial impact on student learning • Infuse voice and choice into selecting high-impact strategies • Determine teacher needs in instruction, student learning, and task design 	<p><i>Conversion Point 2 (SEE IT-START IT)</i></p> <p>Leaders ensure teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss implementation and inspection of practice and take notes on any changes or findings in light of evidence • Monitor changes in student progress, teacher practice, and tasks • Confer on implementation and impact over time • Provide ongoing heat checks to check in on progress (see Heat Check tool)
<p>Show It— Review, Repeat, and Reset</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present findings of impact • Reflect to connect teacher action to student impact • Evaluate instructional model in light of the change in student learning • Prepare for next cycle 	<p><i>Conversion Point 3 (START IT- SHOW IT)</i></p> <p>Leaders ensure teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review their findings and prepare to repeat the cycle

Laying Out the ICP

The ICP is laid out in detail in the following manner:

<i>Rationale</i>	The core purpose of each step
<i>Success Criteria</i>	The expectations for successfully meeting each step
<i>Deliverable</i>	The expected outcome of this step in the ICP
<i>Driving Question</i>	Key question that drives team discussions to meet each success criteria
<i>Support Questions</i>	Questions that enable teams to meet each driving question
<i>Tools</i>	Specific templates and processes that enable teams to document the work in the phase
<i>Facilitation Guidance</i>	Specific protocols for facilitating this work with others
<i>Tips</i>	Additional resources and guidance for each phase

Need it: Define the Problem

RATIONALE

Guskey (2022) shares that teacher efficacy is developed when teachers see their impact on student learning as opposed to when they're engaging in professional learning and implementing new strategies. In other words, we gain energy and efficacy when we can see the through line from our instruction to student performance. We also gain time! When we discover the right teaching actions and strategies, that secret sauce that leads to more of our students being able to demonstrate our vision for number sense, independent learning, or reading comprehension, we get more efficient. It is therefore paramount that leaders do everything in their power to support teachers in building efficacy in their teaching and learning. This conversion point from showing our impact and determining next steps is critical.

In schools, a staff or teams of teachers should be reviewing student evidence to determine current performance relative to the observable vision and identifying steps they need to take to meet those expectations. While there are plenty of "knowing" meetings, such as reviewing the curriculum and planning the next unit, the types of meetings that matter for making progress are those associated with taking evidence of student learning, connecting the teaching moves and tasks to the evidence observed, and translating that knowledge into doable next steps that enhance that learning even further.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- Identify instructional challenges using multiple forms of evidence.
- Focus on a challenge that represents a significant need for students and educators.
- Evaluate evidence of impact (pre-/formative/post-assessment).

DELIVERABLE

Develop an agreed-on instructional challenge.

DRIVING QUESTION

What is a compelling challenge for you and your team right now?

SUPPORT QUESTIONS

To address the driving question and meet success criteria, teachers should work together to identify the specific instructional challenge that continues to perplex them. This can be done by asking staff to answer the following set of questions:

- CHALLENGE: What is a problem that is compelling to you and your team?
- SHARED UNDERSTANDING: What do key terms look like, sound like, and feel like for us? How do we make those terms observable?
- EVIDENCE: What evidence brings this problem into focus?

TOOLS

An important point to note—evidence must include all aspects of the instructional core. If teams are stuck on working through the instructional challenge inquiry, then we suggest using the **Instructional Challenge Focus Tool**. What we are observing from our students is important; however, it is equally important to consider the teaching moves and the tasks in the classroom that contribute to what we are observing to get a high-resolution picture of the classroom that guides our next steps.

One other tool that is helpful to meet the need for success criteria is the **Attribute Analysis Tool**. Consider both of these tools as you begin navigating the ICP.

Other tools that may be helpful to facilitate this discussion include:

- [Fishbone Analysis](#)
- [Gap Analysis](#)
- [What? So What? Now What?](#)

FACILITATION GUIDANCE

To support a team in engaging in this process, leaders should encourage teacher leaders to use structured protocols for dialogue, problem-solving, and decision-making.

Protocols are helpful at this stage because they enable a collective group to identify an instructional challenge. For instance, the What? So What? Now What? protocol enables teachers to work together to understand the data (what?), generate inferences or the themes and patterns (so what?), and identify the problem of practice. Other protocols, such as chalk talk protocol, the Instructional Challenge Focus Tool, Deep Dive Observation Analysis Tool, Data-Driven Dialogue, the Data Storyteller, and Focusing Four, are also helpful during this phase.

TIPS

As teachers are answering these questions, it is important for leaders to encourage teams to find evidence to support their assertions. Of course, we are awash with data. Teachers usually have endless amounts of data. However, if the data doesn't lead to changes in practice, it's hardly worth the paper it's printed on. In order to help leaders and teachers design and implement next steps for learning, data must be CLEAN:

Compelling: It must be within or close to our classroom/teaching.

Longitudinal: It must be collected over time.

Equitable: It must make all students' learning observable to us.

Accessible: It must be easy to use and understand.

Next steps: It must point us toward what we need to do next.

Assessment Criteria	'CLEAN'er evidence	Less 'CLEAN' evidence
Compelling: It must be within or close to our classroom/teaching.	Includes pre- and post data from the classroom grade level; recent classroom-based data trends	End-of-the-semester summative data; data that compares schools/districts/ states/countries; aggregated information
Longitudinal: It must be collected over time.	Ongoing task/assessment sampling; assessments that contain recurring tasks / circle back to previous content	Single, one-shot assessments
Equitable: It must make all students' learning observable to us.	Allows students to demonstrate their learning of a standard in multiple ways / at different times	Summative, standardized tasks and assessments; units with standardized "testing windows"; multiple-choice tests;
Accessible: It must be easy to use and understand.	Provides detailed, disaggregated information about each student—proficiencies, challenges	Provides scores, pass/fail rates, aggregated information
Next steps: It must point us toward what we need to do next.	Provides information and a pathway that allows students to revisit/deepen content knowledge and educators to reflect on/ adapt practice	Provides an overall score or ranking

When we are exploring evidence associated with surface, deep, and transfer learning, it is helpful to discuss ways to assess student learning. **Table X** illustrates a strategy for mapping out ways to evaluate student learning—when we stop the learning and assess students (called *obtrusive assessments*), when we assess learning while students are in action (called *unobtrusive assessment*), and when students develop ways to showcase their learning (called *student-constructed assessment*).

TYPE→ LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY 	Unobtrusive (Evaluate without Stopping the Learning)	Obtrusive (Evaluate When Stopping the Learning)	Student Constructed (Evaluate Using Student Assessment Choice)
SURFACE	Students complete math problems.	Students take a quiz on a number of math problems.	Students suggest that the teacher interviews them on a number of math questions.
DEEP	Students discuss the theme of a story.	Students are tasked with writing short or open-response questions on the theme of a text.	Students produce a role-play that involves discourse between characters illustrating the central points of a book or theme.
TRANSFER	Students solve one or more problems across contexts in relationship to a social studies topic, such as colonialism.	Students are tasked with presenting a solution to a real-world problem that connects to a key set topic, such as imperialism.	Students generate a new problem that connects to the same topic, such as fascism.

Table X Type and level of assessment

As teachers are evaluating evidence, they may want to consider the type of instructional challenges they are working toward. **Table X** offers five types of instructional challenges that may help frame discussions for teachers.

Type	Description	Example
<p>Not Yet Vision Not Yet Observed</p>	<p>Relative to our vision for students engaging, monitoring progress, and reflecting on tasks that require them to apply content processes to novel tasks, we are not observing any aspects of the desired impact stated in our theory of impact.</p>	<p>INSTRUCTIONAL CHALLENGE: We struggle with getting students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set goals • Start and complete tasks • Articulate where they are and need to go next in their learning • Connect their learning in <CONTENT AREA UNIT> to a new context <p>when they are given activities and assessments that require them to apply content processes to novel or non-content-area-focused tasks.</p> <p>THEORY OF IMPACT: If we design and implement <ITEM(S) FROM E and T from the SET>, then we will observe <ITEM(S) FROM S from the SET>.</p>
<p>Nearing Some Aspects of Vision Observed</p>	<p>Relative to our vision for students engaging, monitoring progress, and reflecting on tasks that require them to apply content processes to novel tasks, we are observing two aspects of the desired impact stated in our theory of impact.</p> <p>After our first impact cycle, we have observed that our students are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently (C) able to set goals • Usually (U) able to start and complete tasks <p>We have also observed our that our students are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes (S) able to articulate where they are and need to go next • Rarely (R) able to connect their learning to a new context 	<p>INSTRUCTIONAL CHALLENGE: We struggle with getting students to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate where they are and need to go next in their learning • Connect their learning in <CONTENT AREA UNIT> to a new context <p>when they are given activities and assessments that require them to apply content processes to novel or non-content-area-focused tasks.</p> <p>THEORY OF IMPACT: If we design and implement <ITEM(S) FROM E and T from the SET>, then we will observe our students are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate where they are and need to go next • Connect their learning to a new context

<p>Nuanced</p> <p>More/All Aspects of Vision Observed</p>	<p>Relative to our vision for students engaging, monitoring progress, and reflecting on tasks that require them to apply content processes to novel tasks, we are observing all aspects of the desired impact stated in our theory of impact.</p> <p>After three impact cycles, we have observed that our students are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently (C) able to set goals • Consistently (C) able to start and complete tasks • Usually (U) able to articulate where they are and need to go next • Consistently (U) able to connect their learning to a new context <p>During our impact cycle, our team noticed a “When ... then ...” pattern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When</i> we gave students opportunities to give, receive, and utilize peer feedback, <i>then</i> we observed more students were able (1) to articulate where they are and need to go next and (2) to connect their learning to a new context <p>As a result of our observations, we are modifying our theory of impact to bring us closer to our vision based on our observations.</p>	<p>INSTRUCTIONAL CHALLENGE: We struggle with getting students to <i>consistently</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate where they are and need to go next in their learning • Connect their learning in <CONTENT AREA UNIT> to a new context <p>when they are given activities and assessments that require them to apply content processes to novel or non-content-area-focused tasks.</p> <p>THEORY OF IMPACT:</p> <p>If we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement co-created peer-feedback protocols • Use multiple scheduled checkpoints in the next two content units where students are required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give, receive, and use feedback to meet additional task criteria • Articulate next steps • Design and implement two tasks in each of the next two units that require more than one draft <p>then we will observe our students <i>consistently</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulating where they are and need to go next in their learning • Connecting their learning in <CONTENT AREA UNIT> to a new context
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<p>Novel Application / New Venture</p>	<p>Relative to our vision for students engaging, monitoring progress, and reflecting on tasks that require them to apply content processes to novel tasks, we consistently are observing all aspects of the desired impact stated in our theory of impact.</p> <p>We have connected our actions to the impact we have observed, and are referring back to our observable vision to determine the next instructional challenge / team learning that will have the highest impact on teaching and learning in our classrooms.</p>	<p>CONNECTION OUR ACTIONS TO IMPACT: When we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design and implement co-created peer-feedback protocols - Use multiple scheduled checkpoints in the next two content units where students are required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give, receive, and use feedback to meet additional task criteria - Articulate next steps - Design and implement two tasks in each of the next two units that require more than one draft <p>then we <i>consistently</i> observe our students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulating where they are and need to go next in their learning • Connecting their learning in <CONTENT AREA UNIT> to a new context <p>CLOSING THE LOOP: As a result, we will use the Strategy Review Tool to share our findings, peer-feedback templates, checkpoint schedules, and sample tasks with teams in other content areas, as well as tips and tricks for implementation, in order to relay our practice to other classrooms.</p>
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Table X Types of problems of practice

See it: Clarity the Outcome

RATIONALE

As a part of their pretraining and preflight checklist, personal trainers and airline pilots need to make sure they know their destination and what will need to be put in place to make sure they reach that destination. In school, teams need to do the same. We need to ensure we have clarity of our destination long term and short term. Chapter 2 outlined the ideas of clarity in detail. We suggest you go back to that chapter and review it before proceeding further.

CRITERIA

- Determine or revisit the ideal state of student learning, teacher practice, and task design.
- Break down the ideal state into a shorter time frame.

DRIVING QUESTION

How will you make sure what you want to improve is observable in the next few weeks and over time?

SUPPORT QUESTIONS

To meet the driving question and success criteria, teachers answer the following questions:

- **STUDENT:** If we were meeting the needs of students at the highest level of proficiency in our school, what would we observe students demonstrating in the classroom?
- **TEACHER:** What is the educator doing to make these things happen, and at what frequency?
- **TASK:** What are the types of tasks, activities, and assessments that we would see in the classroom that meets the needs of our learners?
- **SCALE:** What would we observe in our students, ourselves, and our tasks in six weeks? What is our theory of impact for this time frame?

TOOLS

An important point to note—we need to ensure that both our short and long term aspirational future is demonstrable. We need to be able ensure that we know exactly what we will observe in regards to the student, the educator, the task, and the leader. If teams are stuck on working through identifying an observable future, then we suggest using the **Observable Impact Generator**. What we are observing from our students is important; however, it is equally important to consider the teaching moves and the tasks in the classroom that contribute to what we are observing to get a high-resolution picture of the classroom that guides our next steps.

Other tools that may be helpful to facilitate this discussion include:

- [Chalk Talk](#)
- [Nominal Group Technique](#)

FACILITATION GUIDANCE

To support a team in engaging in this process, leaders should encourage teacher leaders to use structured protocols for dialogue, problem-solving, and decision-making.

Protocols are helpful at this stage because they enable a collective group to identify an instructional challenge. For instance, the Chalk Talk and Nominal Group Technique are excellent tools to determine an ideal future and to make decisions on next steps in what to focus on as a team.

TIPS

To assist in the next part of the conversion process, leaders can help teachers to answer these questions by filling out the first three steps in the table. The last two steps would be completed during the “start it” aspect of the conversion process.

Suggested Steps	Prompts
Ideal state of student and educator performance	If we were meeting the needs of students at the highest level, we would see our students, ourselves, and our tasks ... and When we have seen this in the past ... Students were ... We were ... Tasks were designed like ...
Current reality	Using our ideal state as our reference point, what are we actually seeing?
Next learning	Given what we hope to see and what we’re actually seeing from our students, ourselves, and our tasks, as well as our prior knowledge, we need ...
New theory of impact within short time frame	If we do the following in the next six weeks ... We will observe ... Evidence we will collect includes ...
Checkpoints	We will maintain momentum and support each other by ...

Table X Creating a theory of impact

Note: Once the team has completed the “Start It” portion of the Impact Conversion Process, they would complete the following table.

Start it: Progress toward the Outcome

RATIONALE

Here teachers are moving from having a plan to acting on that plan. As we discussed earlier, moving from planning (remember motion habits?) action to taking action is easier said than done! In her best-selling book *The Biggest Bluff*, Konnikova (2021) reflects on a piece of advice she received from professional poker player Phil Galfond: “‘Too much studying without playing makes it hard to fully absorb knowledge,’ he tells me. It will leave me with a head full of statistics and facts—and a mess when it comes time to execute ... You need experience to balance out the descriptions” (p. 161). Here leaders need to ensure that the threshold for implementing and inspecting practice is doable for busy teachers. The criteria for this process include the following.

CRITERIA

- Ensure practices have a high probability of substantial impact on student learning
- Infuse voice and choice into selecting high-impact strategies
- Determine teacher needs in instruction, student learning, and task design

DELIVERABLES

The team will begin implementing a new action or set of actions and then checking in routinely to determine their progress.

DRIVING QUESTION

How can you lower the threshold to move from evidence and ideas into action?

SUPPORT QUESTIONS

- **IMPACT** To what extent are we selecting and engaging in practices that have a high probability of making a substantial impact?
- **ACTION:** What do we need to do to continually improve/enhance our practices? Student practices?
- **DOABLE** To what extent are we engaging in a habit that is manageable? How will I implement the habit? Who will support me in implementing this habit?

TOOLS

An important point to note—we need to ensure that the threshold for implementing a new action is doable for the entire team. We need to be able to ensure that everyone is prepared to implement. If teams are stuck on working through identifying an action and ensuring its doable, then we suggest using the **Lowering the threshold tool**. This tool supports teams in planning for action by ensuring that the action has a high probability of making an impact on student learning, the team has the tools they need, they have discussed how to make the implementation manageable, and they have

determined ways to discuss any and all learning.

Other tools that may be helpful to facilitate this discussion include:

- [Heat Check](#)
- [Concentric Circles](#)
- [Whip Around](#)
- [Think Pair Share](#)

FACILITATION GUIDANCE

To support a team in engaging in this process, leaders should encourage teacher leaders to use structured protocols for dialogue, problem-solving, and decision-making.

Protocols are helpful at this stage because they enable a collective group to identify an instructional challenge. For instance, the Heat Check is a great tool for teams to reflect on their progress over time. The Concentric Circles, Whip around, and Think-Pair-Share are easy to use tools for structuring the dialogue to address the questions on Lowering the Threshold.

Other tools that can be helpful for a facilitator to support making the work manageable include engaging teams in using the [Planning Document for Taking Action on High-Impact Practices](#) which provides a scaffold for making high impact strategies manageable for staff. The tool has been set up for high impact areas of focus including:

- [Clarity](#)
- [Feedback](#)
- [Assessment Capabilities](#)
- [Deep Learning](#)
- [Transfer Learning](#)
- [Collective Teacher Efficacy](#)

TIPS

To support this portion of the Impact Conversion Process, the following recommendations should be considered.

1. Create a Theory of Action

Teachers should create a theory of impact illustrating what they need to do to meet an observable outcome. This is typically written as an if-then statement. This tool helps align the previous work with what they are planning on implementing. Moreover, this is a great tool to use when reflecting on impact over time.

IF ...	THEN ...	AS ...
<i>If we do the following in the next six weeks ...</i>	<i>Then will observe ...</i>	<i>As evidenced by ...</i>
Strategy	Observable Impact Student Educator Task	Evidence

Table X Creating a theory of impact

2. Determine Team Instructional Needs

To prepare for the team’s plan of action, teams should evaluate how they will prepare for implementation. The following questions may be helpful for a facilitator to consider in meeting those outcomes

Questions	Considerations
What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy that the team will focus on • Level of strategy for each team member
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching • Professional learning sessions • Modeling and fading • Book study
When?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff meeting time • Department time • Conference • Other
Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise and experience in our team • Expertise and experience in our school or system • Expertise and experience outside our school or system

Table X Professional learning checklist; *quick check-in on being prepared for implementation*

3. Ensure the strategy that is selected has a high probability of making an impact

As we go through the process, we need to ensure that our decisions are anchored to core criteria for making a substantial impact on student learning. While this may seem obvious, it is an important reminder as we move toward the *start phase* of the work. When making a decision on what to do as a means for making an impact, consider the following criteria established by Reeves (2010):

- **Impact:** A habit worth doing has potential to make a significant difference in student learning. We're not going for a little; we're going for a lot. As Reeves (2010) shares, "Because 95% of interventions result in some gain in achievement ... the criterion for 'impact' must be more than 'better than nothing.' It must surpass a benchmark of real-world change" (p.2). The habits selected here are focused on making a substantial impact on student learning.
- **Leverage:** A habit worth doing improves a number of student outcomes. Teachers are busy; we need to get the most out of our efforts. For instance, ensuring students are clear on the learning intention and success criteria offers opportunities for students to engage in effective peer-to-peer feedback.
- **Implementation:** A habit worth doing can get *even better* over time. It must follow a continuum of development, mastery, and iteration. In Chapter 4, we discuss the power of improvement.

We add a fourth criteria for making a decision:

- **Innovation:** A habit that pushes teams toward deep and transfer learning. Research has illustrated that deep and transfer learning are largely absent from K–12 classrooms.

4. Ensure the strategy that is anchored to habit formation

Once selected, the team has to find a way to make the strategy doable.

<i>Doability Criteria</i>	<i>Key Questions</i>	<i>Considerations</i>
<i>Sustain and Stack</i>	<i>How do I break this habit down so that I can consistently implement the habit on a routine basis? How do I link this habit to something I'm already doing?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress test whether this strategy could be done midyear, last period, on a Friday • Link the habit to current practice
<i>Set Plays and Sticky</i>	<i>How do I set a time to try this habit in class and focus on developing that specific practice? How will I get feedback on this practice? How will I make this habit obvious and easy?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set time to focus only on the habit that is being changed • Find cues to make the habit sticky (let students know, create a sign on the door)
<i>Sprint and Relay</i>	<i>How will I test this habit with others over a short period of time?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt one habit with a small group of students (e.g., one class, one discipline) • Check in with team on progress
<i>Suggestions and Final Say</i>	<i>How do we ensure teachers have voice and choice in the strategy they develop in the business of their work?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a menu of options to support educators in their work • Focus teams on integrity to the focus area and ensure autonomy on the specific practice required to meet that need

Table X Making habits stick to lower the threshold

5. Bring evidence to status checks or heat checks

Teams **must** engage in ongoing status checks with their team. Status checks are short debriefs on current progress of implementing strategies and the impact of those strategies on student learning. The **heat check tool** is critical to structure these dialogues.

When teams provide updates (i.e., status checks), it is important they bring evidence of their impact. To ensure this, we have to reduce the threshold of gathering evidence.

Sweeney (2016) offers sage advice that should be the facilitator's mantra:

In order for the student evidence to be useful, it must allow us to see what students know and understand, or to make their thinking *visible* ... They [teachers] should collect evidence that can be analyzed and sorted in a short amount of time. Lengthy written assignments, projects and end of unit tests all have their place in classroom teaching. But when thinking about *sorting student work* to plan for instruction in the short term, this group of coaches quickly realized that less time creating, generating, and analyzing is the way to go to make this an effective and sustainable practice. (p. 108)

Show it: Reflect, Repeat, Relay, and Reset

RATIONALE

Here we are learning about the overall impact of our individual and collective practice as well as the impact of others on student learning. Moreover, we are developing an understanding of our potential next conversion. Akin to a personal trainer finishing a training session with a client, they may collect some data (weight, heart rate, blood pressure, sleep cycles) after starting any workouts. Similarly, during a postflight check, pilots are working with their team to review the flight log (anything we need to know about the last trip?), their performance relative to their initial plans. This stage is *critical* as it builds individual and collective accountability, support, or overall learning for how to improve and enhance teaching and learning within the context of the classroom and school.

CRITERIA

- Present findings of impact.
- Evaluate instructional model in light of the change in student learning.
- Prepare for next cycle.

DELIVERABLE

Teams deliver key findings from the ICP. During this process, they may give and receive feedback and learn from other teams across the school or schools.

DRIVING QUESTION

How will you demonstrate your impact?

SUPPORT QUESTIONS

- RELAY: How will we observe and document student progress? Our practice?
- REFLECT: *What does this tell us about our current instructional model? Do we need to stop/start/sustain/shift a current practice or set of practices?*
- REVISE *What are we learning? What should we do next?*

TOOLS

To structure dialogue that ensures teams demonstrate their learning (e.g., observations and documentation), the team should consider using **Lessons Learned Tool**. Secondly, the team should consider ways to showcase their learning with others. Here are a few tools to consider:

- **Team Jigsaw / Educational Tripadvisor Protocol**

Teams atomize into heterogeneous, cross-grade groups and use the Strategy Review Tool to share their challenge; the impact they hoped to see; what they actually observed; and tips,

tricks, and pitfalls, as well as their “five-star review” in terms of ease of implementation and classroom impact.

- **Consultancy Protocol**

One or more teachers present a dilemma or question to be discussed, and then colleagues talk to each other about it.

- **Tuning Protocol**

One or more teachers share an artifact of work to be discussed, and the other staff members provide warm and cool feedback, wonders, ideas, and takeaways.

- **Think-Pair-Share**

Teachers have time to individually reflect on their responses before sharing them with one other colleague. Pairs report on their conversations to the larger group.

- **I Used to Think ... Now I Think ...**

Teachers write down what they thought about the instructional challenge and the theory of impact when they started and then compare this statement with their current reality. Teachers discuss their writing using the think-pair-share discussion format.

- **Data-Driven Dialogue**

Teachers examine data or other artifacts using four phases: predict, make a visual, observe, and infer.

- **Looking at Student Work**

Teachers examine the results of an assessment or project to reflect on learning and generating next steps or implications.

Other tools that may be helpful to facilitate this discussion include:

- [Impact Review](#)
- [World Cafe](#)
- [Jigsaw](#)
- [Tuning Protocol](#)
- [Consultancy Dilemma](#)

FACILITATION GUIDANCE

To support a team in engaging in this process, leaders should encourage teacher leaders to use structured protocols for dialogue, problem-solving, and decision-making.

Protocols are helpful at this stage because they enable a collective group to identify an instructional challenge. For instance, the Impact Review Tool is a helpful resource to process the learning from the conversion process. The Jigsaw and World Cafe is a wonderful way to learn from the conversion

processes of others. Finally, the tuning protocol and the consultancy protocol are fantastic ways to structure feedback to others on their progress.

TIPS

There are two main pulls at this stage. First, there is a desire to make the “show it” step informal and second to skip it all together. We believe that the individual and collective learning from the Impact Conversion Process is critical. As such, we strongly suggest that you schedule specific days for the showcase and that facilitators stick to structured protocols.

Planning Document for Taking Action on High-Impact Practices

Clarity

Influence	Motion—What will we set up for success? Think “I do”	Action—What will I do with students to learn this habit? Think “we do”
Distinguishing between activities, context, and outcomes		
Comparing and contrasting expectations and prior knowledge		
Monitoring expectations with others to ensure clarity		

Table X Clarity motion and action planning resource

Is this a strategy that we will start/sustain/shift?

What does this mean for my/our planning and action?

Is this a known, nuanced, or novel strategy for my students? What does this mean for my planning and action?

How will I make this doable for me?

5 Steps	What am I going to give a go?
Sustained (small/doable): How do I break this habit down so that I can consistently implement the habit on a routine basis?	
Stacking (link to what I’m already doing): How do I link this habit to something I’m already doing?	
Set Plays (stop everything else for this): How do I set a time to try this habit in class and focus on fidelity to the practice? How will I get feedback on this practice?	
Sticky (how do I make this memorable to me?): How will I get this habit to stick over time?	
Sprint Together (how can I engage in this with others?): How will I test this habit out with others over a short period of time? How will I know whether it’s worth it? What evidence will I use to see progress?	

Table X Clarity implementation guide

Feedback

Influence	Motion—What will we set up for success? Think “I do”	Action—What will I do with students to learn this habit? Think “we do”
Giving accurate feedback		
Receiving accurate feedback		
Using feedback to improve learning		
Maintaining a learning mindset		

Table X Feedback motion and action planning resource

Is this a strategy that we will start/sustain/shift?

Is this a known, nuanced, or novel strategy for my students? What does this mean for my planning and action?

How will I make this doable for me?

5 Steps	What am I going to give a go?
Sustained (small/doable): How do I break this habit down so that I can consistently implement the habit on a routine basis?	
Stacking (link to what I’m already doing): How do I link this habit to something I’m already doing?	
Set Plays (stop everything else for this): How do I set a time to try this habit in class and focus on fidelity to the practice? How will I get feedback on this practice?	
Sticky (how do I make this memorable to me?): How will I get this habit to stick over time?	
Sprint Together (how can I engage in this with others?): How will I test this habit out with others over a short period of time? How will I know whether it’s worth it? What evidence will I use to see progress?	

Table X Feedback implementation guide

Is this a strategy that we will start/sustain/shift?

What does this mean for my/our planning and action?

Is this a known, nuanced, or novel strategy for my students? What does this mean for my planning and action?

Assessment Capabilities

Influence	Motion—What will we set up for success? Think “I do”	Action—What will I do with students to learn this habit? Think “we do”
Comparing and contrasting previous learning with current learning		
Using the appropriate mindset in and across different situations		
Identifying next steps in my learning		
Organizing and transforming information		
Self-instruction		
Self-evaluation		

Table X Assessment capabilities motion and action planning resource

Is this a strategy that we will start/sustain/shift?

What does this mean for my/our planning and action?

Is this a known, nuanced, or novel strategy for my students? What does this mean for my planning and action?

How will I make this doable for me?

5 Steps	What am I going to give a go?
Sustained (small/doable): How do I break this habit down so that I can consistently implement the habit on a routine basis?	
Stacking (link to what I'm already doing): How do I link this habit to something I'm already doing?	
Set Plays (stop everything else for this): How do I set a time to try this habit in class and focus on fidelity to the practice? How will I get feedback on this practice?	
Sticky (how do I make this memorable to me?): How will I get this habit to stick over time?	
Sprint Together (how can I engage in this with others?): How will I test this habit out with others over a short period of time? How will I know whether it's worth it? What evidence will I use to see progress?	

Table X Assessment capabilities implementation guide

Deep Learning

Influence	Motion—What will we set up for success? Think “I do”	Action—What will I do with students to learn this habit? Think “we do”
Seeking help from peers		
Classroom discussion		
Evaluation and reflection		

Table X Deep learning motion and action planning resource

Is this a strategy that we will start/sustain/shift?

What does this mean for my/our planning and action?

Is this a known, nuanced, or novel strategy for my students? What does this mean for my planning and action?

How will I make this doable for me?

5 Steps	What am I going to give a go?
Sustained (small/doable): How do I break this habit down so that I can consistently implement the habit on a routine basis?	
Stacking (link to what I'm already doing): How do I link this habit to something I'm already doing?	
Set Plays (stop everything else for this): How do I set a time to try this habit in class and focus on fidelity to the practice? How will I get feedback on this practice?	
Sticky (how do I make this memorable to me?): How will I get this habit to stick over time?	
Sprint Together (how can I engage in this with others?): How will I test this habit out with others over a short period of time? How will I know whether it's worth it? What evidence will I use to see progress?	

Table X Deep learning implementation guide

Transfer Learning

Influence	Motion—What will we set up for success? Think “I do”	Action—What will I do with students to learn this habit? Think “we do”
Comparing contexts		
Solving problems in new situations		
Seeing patterns across situations		

Table X Transfer learning motion and action planning resource

Is this a strategy that we will start/sustain/shift?

What does this mean for my/our planning and action?

Is this a known, nuanced, or novel strategy for my students? What does this mean for my planning and action?

How will I make this doable for me?

5 Steps	What am I going to give a go?
Sustained (small/doable): How do I break this habit down so that I can consistently implement the habit on a routine basis?	
Stacking (link to what I'm already doing): How do I link this habit to something I'm already doing?	
Set Plays (stop everything else for this): How do I set a time to try this habit in class and focus on fidelity to the practice? How will I get feedback on this practice?	
Sticky (how do I make this memorable to me?): How will I get this habit to stick over time?	
Sprint Together (how can I engage in this with others?): How will I test this habit out with others over a short period of time? How will I know whether it's worth it? What evidence will I use to see progress?	

Table X Transfer learning implementation guide

Collective Teacher Efficacy

Influence	How do we structure this meeting?	What will we do in this meeting?
Converting knowledge of an initiative into action in the classroom (M → A)		
Translating the action in the classroom to efficacy of the practice (A → M)		
Translating the action in the classroom to efficacy on student learning (A → M)		
Converting knowledge of our impact into new learning on initiatives and next steps (M → A)		

Table X Collective teacher efficacy motion and action planning resource

Is this a strategy that we will start/sustain/shift?

What does this mean for my/our planning and action?

Is this a known, nuanced, or novel strategy for my students? What does this mean for my planning and action?

How will I make this doable for me?

5 Steps	What am I going to give a go?
Sustained (small/doable): How do I break this habit down so that I can consistently implement the habit on a routine basis?	
Stacking (link to what I'm already doing): How do I link this habit to something I'm already doing?	
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Sticky (how do I make this memorable to me?): How will I get this habit to stick over time?	
Sprint Together (how can I engage in this with others?): How will I test this habit out with others over a short period of time? How will I know whether it's worth it?	

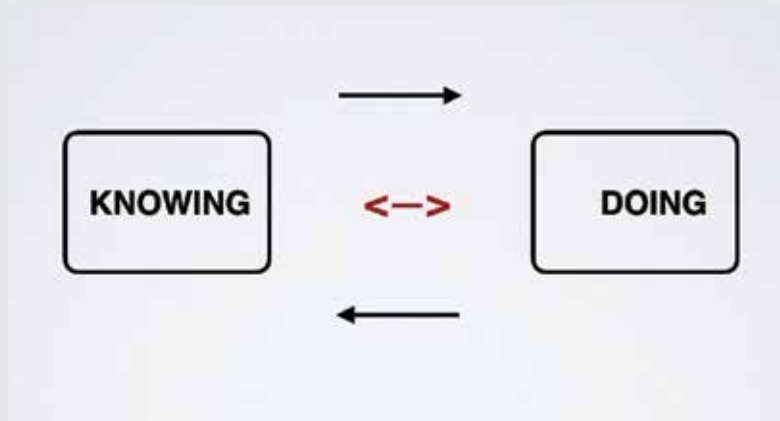
Table X Collective teacher implementation guide

Reflection Exercises

Leadership Considerations

You possess a wealth of knowledge about what your team needs to learn and do in classrooms. To ensure you don't fall into the tragic and improvement trap, remember that you possess expertise and there are times where you can and should share that expertise. But do not view yourself as an expert. View yourself as the lead learner. Think of expertise as the development and execution of experience and knowledge that has produced a meaningful impact. While this expertise travels with you, it does not work in every context, and it is others who must do the work in the classroom. As such, remember the following when you are leading:

- Your suggestions are perceived as directives. As such, when offering a suggestion, tie it specifically to your own experience. "In my experience, this strategy worked [here]."
- Once you start to drift, think about how you will get back to the middle. Invite others into a shared experience.
 - Questions to consider: "Have others had that same experience? What are strategies others have had to notice drifting and what can we do to move back into the middle of our leadership?"



Got Professional Learning?

When and if there is needed time to build new knowledge that leads to action, we need to consider how we engage in professional learning. Before teachers engage in professional learning, we need to support teachers in seeing the connection between the evidence of student learning and their actions (doing → knowing) to build new knowledge.

This is a place where we should ask teachers the following:

- What evidence has led us to needing this training?
- What are we anticipating we will learn that will build our knowledge to create new actions in the classroom?
- How will we prepare to let other strategies go (for the time being) while we try out a new strategy?
- How will we stay small and stay focused on one or two ideas and engage with a small group of students before we try to scale our work?

In addition, when we engage as professional leaders, we need to ask the teachers, consultants, trainers, and coaches the following:

- What are the biggest tension points for faculty during this training?
- What are the expected next steps in the day or week following?
- Where are there times in professional learning that I can listen in on teachers planning for next steps?

A tool you can try to help support this conversation is the [PROACTIVE PD PLANNER](#)

Vision and Reality of a Leader

The following activity walks leaders through a vision of a leader, the current reality of a leader, and next steps a leader can take to meet the established vision.

PART 1 - Co-constructing an observable vision

If leaders were standing in the tragic gap, what would we observe them doing and demonstrating? What would we observe those they lead doing and demonstrating as a result?

If leaders were standing in the improvement gap, what would we observe them doing and demonstrating? What would we observe those they lead doing and demonstrating as a result?

If leaders were standing in the middle of both gaps, what would we observe them doing and demonstrating? What would we observe those they lead doing and demonstrating as a result?

PART 2 - Co-Constructing the observable impact in times of challenge

What would these dispositions look like in daily habits of practice (especially in times of stress. Think about times when emotions are high and opinions vary)?

What would we observe when leaders drift (see Figure X below)?

Drift Point 1

[Empty rectangular box]

Drift Point 2

[Empty rectangular box]

Drift Point 3

[Empty rectangular box]

Drift Point 4

[Empty rectangular box]

<p>DRIFT POINT 1</p>	<p>Idyllic Future</p> <p><i>One we never fully reach because it is not an actual future that is achievable. We never arrive.</i></p>	<p>DRIFT POINT 2</p>
<p>Knowing (Converting Action into Motion)</p> <p><i>Staff and leaders are working together to look at evidence of student learning and teacher practice (habit implementation) and determining tangible next steps that move toward a better observable future. The team discerns next steps and how to lower the threshold for implementation and means for measuring impact. The team also looks at the scale of the work, along with opportunities to balance tried-and-true strategies with creative opportunities to deviate from the past.</i></p>	<p>Leading in the Middle</p>	<p>Doing (Converting Motion into Action)</p> <p><i>Leaders and staff are implementing the work in classrooms, staff rooms, and department meetings and giving and receiving feedback that supports refinement and encouragement to keep trying in the midst of learning new skills.</i></p>
<p>DRIFT POINT 3</p>	<p>Current Reality</p> <p><i>A reality filled with so much internal and external challenge that we become paralyzed by the roadblocks in our way.</i></p>	<p>DRIFT POINT 4</p>

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<p>DRIFT POINT 3</p>	<p>Current Reality</p> <p><i>A reality filled with so much internal and external challenge that we become paralyzed by the roadblocks in our way.</i></p>	<p>DRIFT POINT 4</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">“The Thespian”</p> <p>This leader has drifted to focusing on building an idyllic future and doing so with the power of knowledge. They demonstrate a form of leadership theater composed of preaching and pontificating the way forward regardless of the past. Through these behaviors they push away stakeholders who attempt to tether strategies to their current reality. Because of a lack of reality and inaction, nothing gets done.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Idyllic Future</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>One we never fully reach because it is not an actual future that is achievable. We never arrive.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">“The Innovator”</p> <p>This leader brings in a myriad of innovative strategies, including building new schools, new programs, and new initiatives that are focused on innovation. It’s a portfolio of initiatives that are tied to a bold new future, but it lacks high-quality research, means for inspecting impact, strategies for building knowledge around the work, and clarity on how it fits in with the work of the team. More importantly, it doesn’t reflect an engagement with staff to tackle this work collectively.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Knowing (Converting Action into Motion)</p> <p><i>Staff and leaders are working together to look at evidence of student learning and teacher practice (habit implementation) and determining tangible next steps that move toward a better observable future. The team discerns next steps and how to lower the threshold for implementation and means for measuring impact. The team also looks at the scale of the work, along with opportunities to balance tried-and-true strategies with creative opportunities to deviate from the past.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Leading in the Middle</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The leader in the middle co-creates an observable future and current reality, works with others to engage in conversion processes to improve student learning across rigorous levels of learning, and creates conditions to enable school and systems to thrive. They avoid drifting out of the middle of their leadership by utilizing the habits of courage, creativity, and compassion in everyday practice.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Doing (Converting Motion into Action)</p> <p><i>Leaders and staff are implementing the work in classrooms, staff rooms, and department meetings and giving and receiving feedback that supports refinement and encouragement to keep trying in the midst of learning new skills.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">“The Prophet”</p> <p>Utilizes a high level of data to prove points on the challenging current conditions the school faces—that more resources, better working conditions, and better staff would be critical to move the school forward. Mired in discussions of interventions and the need for complete changes that are out of their control leads to a lack of action, and data becomes a comfort blanket for inaction, leading to continual self-fulfilling prophecies.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Current Reality</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A reality filled with so much internal and external challenge that we become paralyzed by the roadblocks in our way.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">“The Drill Sergeant”</p> <p>This leader is focusing on taking action every day by attempting to take responsibility for everyone on campus to fight against the current reality. They model an expectation that teachers perform perfectly every day and follow exactly what the leaders do.</p>

PART 3 - Identifying our current reality

Complete the following [Leadership Survey](#) and reflect on your own leadership in times of stress.

What leadership habits are areas of strength for you? What do you observe from yourself and those you lead as a result of these areas of strength?

What leadership habits are areas of growth for you? What do you observe from yourself and those you lead that tells you this might be an area for growth?

Where do you find yourself drifting when you are in times of stress?

How do you calibrate your own perceptions with that of those in your charge?

PART 4 - Identifying next steps

Given your current reality and the co-constructed vision of a leader, what are key next steps for you?

How will you be supported on this journey? Which supports are most likely to make a difference for you?

Who is the person that can best provide you with the above support?

What will others observe in you as a result of the changes you make? How will you be held accountable for your actions?

Leading in the Middle Behavior Check

When working with leaders on their own dispositions, ask them the following reflection questions:

General

- When you're in challenging situations, what are your typical go-to strategies to handle my thoughts and feelings?
- When you're in challenging situations, what are your typical go-to strategies to handle my actions?
- How do you currently assess your thoughts, feelings, and actions in challenging situations?

In difficult situations do you state *views and ask genuine questions*?

In the most recent difficult situation...

- Did you ask genuine questions?
- How many times did you use questions today? How many times did you state your views? How many times did you go back and forth between views and questions?
- To what degree did you blend passion with compassion?

In difficult situations do you state *share all relevant information*?

In the most recent difficult situation...

- Did you share information that doesn't support your view?
- Did you share information even if it might be challenging to others (e.g., negative feedback)?
- Did you share your feelings?
- Were you timely in sharing information?
- Were you transparent about your inability to be transparent when issues came up?

In difficult situations do you *use specific examples and agree on what important words mean*?

In the most recent difficult situation...

- Did you seek clarification on what important words mean to colleagues?
- How did you create a shared understanding of important words? To what extent did you use research and concrete examples in the school to ensure clarity of concepts, problems, and processes?

In difficult situations do you explain *your reasoning and intent*?

In the most recent difficult situation...

- How did you seek the reasoning and intent of others when they shared opinions?
- How did you demonstrate your own reasoning and intent when making statements?

- What questions did you ask to show intent and rationale for opinions?
- How did you ensure there was clarity among the group?

Behavior 5. Focus on interests, not positions

In difficult situations *do you focus on interests, not positions?*

In the most recent difficult situation...

- What did you do to ensure teams focused on outcomes rather than particular solutions?
- How did you demonstrate your value in autonomy of approach and vested need for pursuing a common outcome?
- How did you stay in the middle when you faced pushback?

In difficult situations *do you test assumptions and inferences?*

In the most recent difficult situation...

- How did you mine for assumptions and inferences when looking at data?
- How did you mine for assumptions and inferences when looking at identifying solutions?
- How did you mine for assumptions and inferences when looking at reviewing progress?

In difficult situations *do you jointly design next steps?*

In the most recent difficult situation...

- How did you promote designing next steps with others?
- How did you blend inquiry and advocacy?
- How did you stay in the middle when next steps were identified that were not the ones you preferred?

In difficult situations *do you discuss undiscussables?*

In the most recent difficult situation...

- How do you navigate comments that were potentially negative about your leadership, about students, or about a situation not in your control?
- How do you frame discussions that are often hidden from view?
- How do you bring others into the conversation to move forward in a positive direction

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