

Root Cause Analysis

Why:

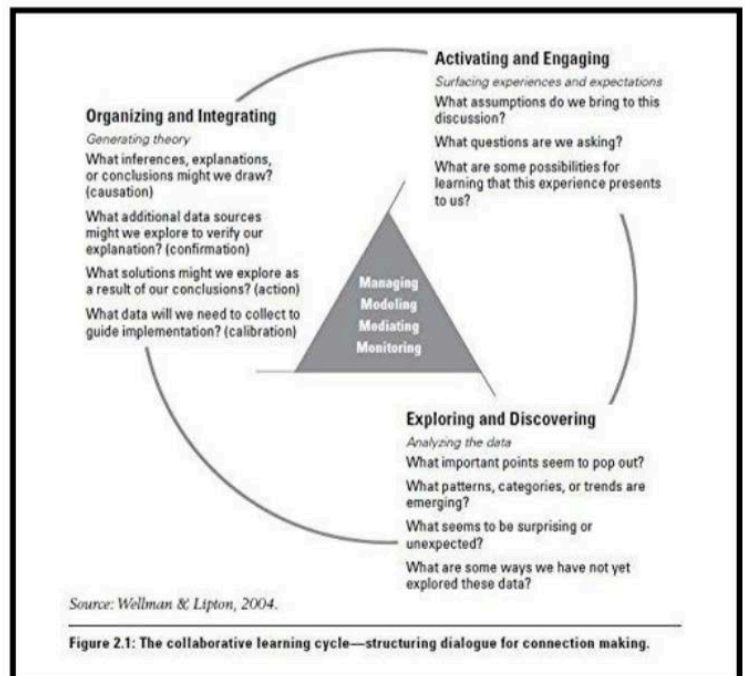
More times than not, teams quickly jump straight into treating the symptoms of an issue in schools. By doing this, we may be forgetting there is actually a deeper problem needing attention. If we only fix the symptoms seen on the surface, the problem will likely return needing fixing over and over. Engaging in a root cause analysis means digging deep to find the underlying causes of a problem and identifying resources and supports needed to reduce the likelihood the problem will occur again. Root cause analysis is a collaborative process educators can use to solve adaptive challenges in a school. The process of root cause analysis is rooted in equitable practice. By deeply studying a problem and the factors contributing to it, a team mitigates its chances of making assumptions and jumping into practices that perpetuate inequities. A root cause analysis prepares teams to engage in the cycle of school improvement.

What:

Root causes are the reasons problems exist. Symptoms are the visible manifestations of the problem. Reducing or eliminating the problem requires identifying and eliminating its causes. Using “*The Collaborative Learning Cycle*” from Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman, participants will uncover potential root causes of a problem. Then, the team will apply what is discovered to repeat successes and prevent future issues in the system.

How:

The Building Leadership Team is the driver of improvement work. Because the BLT is composed of representatives from the school as a whole, the varied perspectives and insights from these members will help in the process of uncovering deep root causes. Data is used as the center of the process to ensure decisions are grounded in fact, not opinions. This process begins with using data to craft a problem statement. The work then moves to identifying possible causal factors and root causes. Once root causes have been identified, a team is ready to move into the cycle of school improvement.



The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) provides the KansaStar online school improvement process to Kansas Schools at no cost. KansaStar is a web-based platform that guides the Leadership Team (district, school, or both) in documenting/tracking its improvement and managing the continuous cycle of assessing, planning, implementing, and progress of evidence based practices. KansaStar houses the Title I Schoolwide Supplemental form, and can be used for your schoolwide improvement plan for Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA). Schools working with the Kansas Learning Network use this tool to navigate the implementation process.