

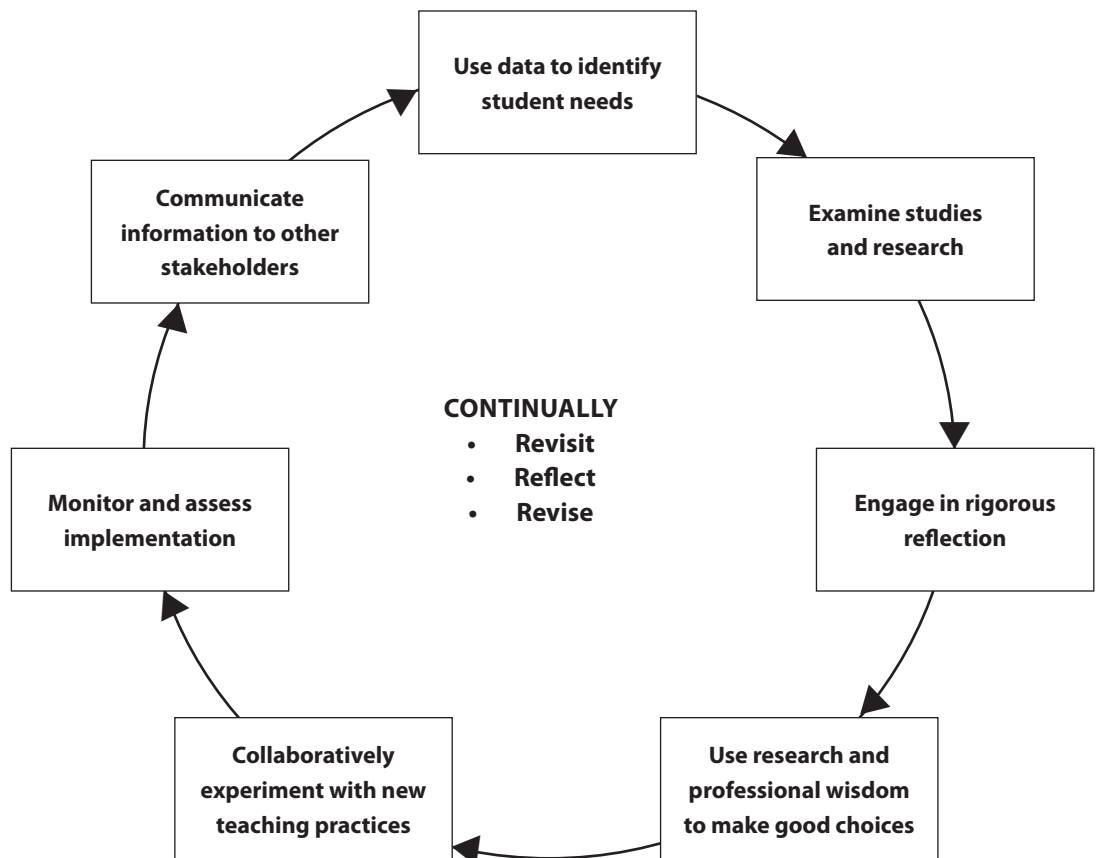
The professional learning team decision-making cycle

PURPOSE: This tool can be a reference throughout the year to help groups keep the professional learning team process in focus and on track during discussions and activities. Team members need autonomy in making decisions about the direction their team will take. Point out that this cycle illustrates the value of team members' professional wisdom in selecting and applying appropriate practices.

TIME: 15 minutes

STEPS:

1. Copy and laminate this tool for each team.
2. Suggest that teams post the cycle in their meeting room where they can easily refer to it during their meetings.
3. Discuss the cycle with teachers.
4. Note its focus on teachers' professional wisdom and judgment and their autonomy to decide what activities will help them better meet student needs.
5. Call attention to their freedom to experiment with new practices, the need to monitor and assess implementation, and the importance of communicating what they are learning schoolwide.
6. Point out that the process is not necessarily linear, that teams will go back and forth among the steps of the cycle throughout the year.



Adapted from the Evidence-Based Decision-Making Cycle, SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Reprinted from *Team to Teach: A Facilitator's Guide to Professional Learning Teams*, by Anne Jolly. Oxford, OH: NSDC, 2008.

Meeting overview checklist

Directions: There is no single way to conduct learning team meetings. This list suggests ideas for some activities. Refer to this list periodically for ideas that might have value for your team. Include as many activities as possible throughout the year.

ALL MEETINGS

- Communicate! Keep records (logs) of all team meetings. Include big ideas from the meeting discussions, decisions made, and plans for the next meeting. After each meeting, e-mail the log or post it on a school wiki. Read logs from other teams and offer insights.
- Plan the next meeting.

INITIAL MEETING(S)

- Take care of team logistics.
- Set team norms.
- Determine a team goal.
 1. Look at a variety of student data and information.
 2. Decide on an area in which teachers need to increase their expertise, based on where students need the most help.
 3. Plan an initial course of action.
 4. Determine what information and resources are needed.

CONTINUING MEETINGS

- Examine research and information (books, articles, etc.).
- Share, develop, and/or modify instructional practices to address student needs.
- Coordinate and systematically apply new instructional practices in classrooms.
- Monitor student responses.
- Reflect on and discuss classroom applications and make needed adjustments.

POSSIBLE MEETING ACTIVITIES

- Develop joint or coordinated lessons.
- Examine student written work.
- Examine videotapes or DVDs of student responses to particular activities.
- Examine teacher assignments.
- Observe other team members or teachers using specific activities with students.
- Observe a videotape or DVD of a colleague implementing a particular strategy.
- Discuss the effectiveness of teaching strategies and approaches.
- Monitor the team's progress toward instructional goals.
- Monitor the team's functioning as a collaborative group.
- Keep the team's work public. Post logs on web sites, e-mail logs and activities school-wide, engage other teachers, run ideas by the faculty, and honor their input.
- Develop a tool kit of information and practices that can serve as a resource for other teachers.
- Modify and improve the professional learning team process throughout the year.

REFLECT: Keep a list of additional activities in which your learning team engages over the course of the year, and make these ideas available to other teams.

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