

The why, how, and what of professional learning

By Lois Brown Easton

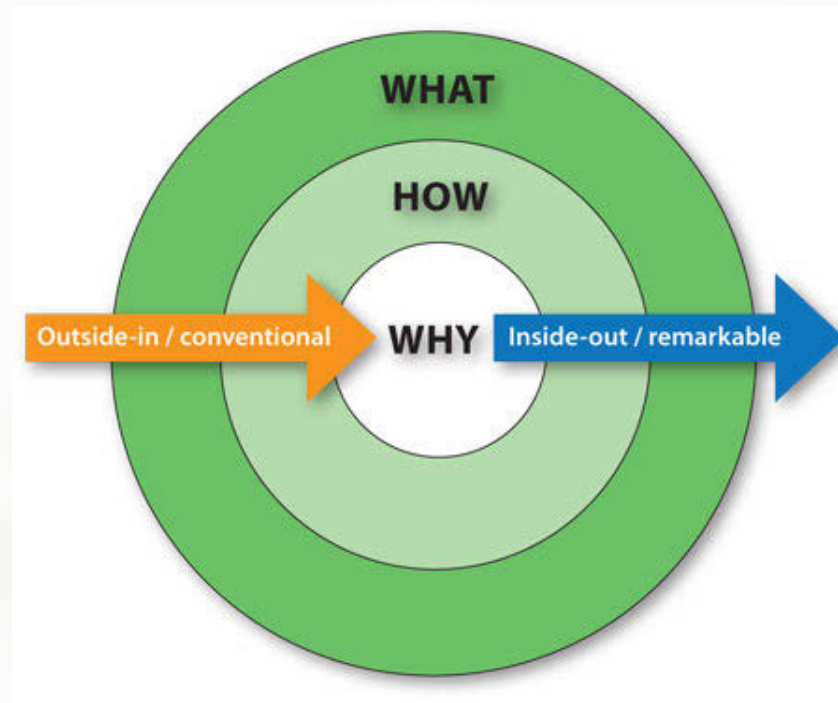
Reverse the order of *what*, *how*, and *why*

According to Simon Sinek, most people think of innovation and change in the order of

1. What - what something does
2. How - how something works
3. Why - why something is needed

Sinek's Golden Circle

The opposite order, he called the Golden Circle. Sinek proposed that leaders begin with *why* first, then address *how*, and, finally, *what*.



Adapted from The why, how, and what of professional learning, published in *Tools for Learning Schools*, available at <http://www.learningforward.org/toolsforschools>.

For example...

Apple, Inc.

- * First addresses *why* people might want something Apple produces: because it makes them seem cool, avant-garde, and savvy
- * Then examines *how* a product makes people seem cool and avant-garde: design, functionality, and leading-edge technology
- * Finally considers *what* the product is

Establish *why* change is needed

The key to *why* is information

- * What do we know? What do our data tell us?
- * Are we satisfied with what we have learned about our students academically, socially, and personally?
- * Is their status quo good enough for us?
- * Are we willing to make change in some way?

Determine *how* by learning about those involved

How requires attention to the people engaged in change:

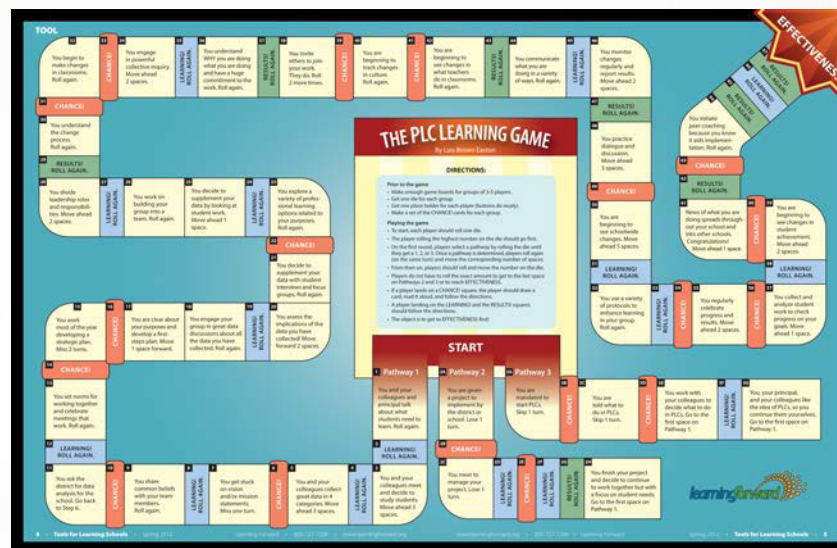
- * Who they are
- * What they need,
- * How they will be affected
- * How they will work together

Find *what* after finding *why* and *how*

Eventually, it will be clear to people in professional learning communities what they need to do, and they will be informed and persuasive advocates for their own work.

Download the article and game

Read Lois Brown Easton's original article, published in *Tools for Learning Schools*, and download Easton's PLC Learning Game at



www.learningforward.org/news/issueDetails.cfm?issueID=349

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