

## Applying the team learning cycle

A big question for learning teams is how they will schedule their meeting time specifically to work through these five stages. As one option, we offer a six-week cycle, a typical grading period for many school systems, that takes teams through the five stages, and we understand that teams may need to adjust based on the team time they have, the course content they need to cover, and myriad other factors that contribute to the pacing of both adult and student learning.

Our six-week schedule works most ideally with the following supporting conditions and elements:

- Teachers have three or more hours per week to learning collaboratively with their teams.
- Teachers have access to the data they need to understand student learning gaps and set meaningful goals.
- Teachers are motivated to change short- and long-term lessons based on what they learn together.
- Teachers can set their learning schedule so that the application stage has them teaching a new and improved lesson during week five of the cycle.
- Teachers work both individually and collectively on the problems they identify together – the learning doesn't happen solely during team time.
- Teachers have ready access to learning support within the school or district.
- Teachers work in a culture that prioritizes continuous learning for adults with a climate where trust pervades all interactions.
- Teachers know generally where their greatest student learning gaps lie, informed by school and system improvement goals.
- Teachers have the expertise and/or support to collaborate efficiently during their limited collaboration time.

### WEEK 1: EXAMINE DATA.

Teachers arrive with data in hand, ready to pinpoint student learning challenges and differences among classrooms and various groups of students. During their meeting, team members highlight key data points and analyze various sources of data to identify trends. The team's goal is to come to consensus about the student learning gaps that stand out as their next most important challenges.

#### During this stage, individuals may:

- Examine portions of the data on their own and prepare to bring key points to the team.
- Examine their own performance related to the student data.
- Reflect on what they believe the data tell them.

#### During this stage, the team may:

- Ask individual members to share essential data points or trends for discussion.
- Examine data collaboratively, perhaps using a protocol to move efficiently through the information.
- Ensure that all team members speak up with important understandings from the data.
- Reach consensus on the most urgent data to address.

### WEEK 2: SET GOALS.

The learning team has decided on the most urgent data to address, so they use this stage to determine learning outcomes for both students and themselves.

#### During this stage, individuals may:

- Reflect on their individual assumptions about what led to their data findings.
- Consider past and current individual goals for performance, perhaps informed by the educator evaluation process they experience.

**During this stage, the team may:**

- Surface assumptions and beliefs about what contributes to the key data findings they will address.
- Review important connections between teacher learning, teacher practices, and student outcomes.
- Discuss student learning goals that will lead to better outcomes in the data.
- Discuss what adult learning outcomes will lead to better student outcomes.
- Reach consensus on most important goals to set for this period.

**WEEKS 3 AND 4: LEARN INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLABORATIVELY.**

With goals in hand, team members need to engage in professional learning intended to help them achieve outcomes.

**During this stage, teams learn both individually and collectively. As a team, they may:**

- Use expertise and research to identify learning options that will most effectively lead to the outcomes they seek.
- Pause frequently for reflection, allowing time for journaling or discussion to make meaning as they progress.
- Learn collaboratively using any of a range of learning strategies if their individual needs and preferences indicate.

**WEEK 5: APPLY LEARNING.**

In this stage, teachers are taking their learning to the classrooms. In most cases, this will mean teaching new lesson(s) that they've prepared for throughout the earlier stages.

**During this stage, individuals may:**

- Implement learning in classrooms.
- Seek support from peers and coach.
- Gather feedback from students.

**During this stage, teams may:**

- Discuss how learning is going.
- Share successes and challenges.
- Observe colleagues and discuss observations.
- Engage in team conversations with a coach.
- Use innovation configuration maps to assess implementation.

**WEEK 6: MONITOR AND ADJUST PROGRESS.**

With the new professional learning applied, team members gather data in their classroom about what is working and what isn't.

**During this stage, individuals may:**

- Use formative or summative classroom assessments tied to new practices.
- Reflect on their individual learning and application and steps for moving forward with improvement goals.

**During this stage, teams may:**

- Examine student work and other assessment data to determine how new practices worked.
- Discuss successes and challenges.
- Consider modifications to the strategies as well as lessons they created.
- Discuss fidelity of implementation of learning.
- Discuss earlier assumptions about which practices lead to which outcomes.
- Determine next stages.