Understanding the Continuous Improvement Tool and Protocol Reference Guide

"The use of tools relies on the strategic planning of the PLC. **For each tool to be effective, the users need to access collected evidence before completing their work with the tool.** Selection of a tool can help you identify the types of data you will need to collect. With the data and the tool, you can make decisions about how to proceed." - *Peter Senge*

	Description of the Tool or Protocol	Why the Tool is Useful
Problem of Practice Problem of Practice: The Necessary Steps	This is a process to use when a school or district group initially engages in identifying a problem of practice.	This process slows down the initial instinct for "solutionitis". When a problem is clearly identified, theories for addressing the problem can more easily be surfaced.
Problem of Practice Getting On the Same Page With Our Team PoP	Getting On the Same Page With Our Team PoP is a protocol for groups to use to develop a shared and deepened understanding of an identified Problem of Practice (PoP).	This protocol ensures that group members are clear and in agreement on the why and what of the identified PoP. The group's common understanding should lead to a focused and succinct PoP statement.
Root Cause Analysis Fishbone Diagram	The fishbone diagram is a tool that uncovers and organizes potential causes of a problem within a system, at a relatively high level. The fishbone diagram can be used as a way to synthesize information, and can help to identify primary drivers when one begins to develop a theory of improvement (Driver Diagram).	A fishbone diagram provides a visual repre- sentation of the causes of a problem at a high level. It can also be used to summarize current understanding about the causes of a specific problem. Fishbone diagrams can help teams to focus on possible causes of a problem rather than jumping to solution.
Root Cause Analysis 5-Whys	"5 Whys" is a protocol that starts by asking "why" about an outcome or potential cause of a problem, and continues to ask "why" about each response to dig into a problem. In the process, potential root causes are surfaced.	This protocol is helpful when the originally stated causes seem to be at a surface level, and there is a need to dig deeper. It can also uncover aspects of a system that contribute to a problematic outcome, and reveal areas for further investigation or to focus future improvement efforts.
Change Practices/ Theories of Action Driver Diagram	A driver diagram is a tool that helps translate the work from the fishbone diagram—which defined the problem, main factors, and related causes—into a clearly articulated improvement goal, or aim. It has up to four elements: an aim statement, primary drivers, secondary drivers, and change practices.	The driver diagram identifies a logical set of smaller, tangible goals and supports the selection of specific actions, or change practices, to be tested as part of the continuous improvement process. The driver diagram provides a graphic representation of the various actions and change practices a group could test through the

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		continuous improvement effort.
Plan for a PDSA & Data Collection PDSA Template	The PDSA template helps in creating a "roadmap" for implementation as well as identifying the data needed to evaluate whether the change was an improvement or not. It has up to three types of data to be collected: outcome, process and balance data.	Intentional planning serves as a guide for enacting a small test of change. Creating a plan of action ensures the "likelihood" of trying something. Identifying the data to be collected, at this stage, is critical to ensure informed decisions about whether the change was an improvement and worth the effort.
Data Collection & Analysis Data Analysis Flowchart	The Data Analysis Flowchart provides prompts and guiding questions to support a group in thinking about whether they are going to adopt, adapt or abandon the change idea identified for the PDSA.	The Data Analysis Flowchart is a tool to help a group evaluate the results of their PDSA cycle – and how this shapes quality decisions - which is absolutely crucial to the success of the ongoing project and the next PDSA.