TRANSCRIPT

Prototyping Ideas for Change

NARRATOR

This video is part of a series of Professional Learning Modules designed to support the facilitation of improvement teams. The Regional Educational Laboratory West, or REL West, developed these modules in partnership with the Washoe County School District. This video is aligned with Module 6, Prototyping Ideas for Change. Four key questions guide improvement work: What are our priority needs? What is the problem we're trying to solve? What might we change or introduce and why? And how can we test and build confidence that those changes actually make a difference?

This video is aligned closely with question number 3: What might we change or introduce and why? In this video, you will learn what a change idea is and how to develop an evidence-based change idea into a prototype or artifact that improves instructional practice. So what is a change idea? Change ideas are specific work practices or interventions that represent an alteration or significant modification to how work is currently done. A change idea is what you choose to do differently in order to achieve a desired improvement. Change ideas should be specific and actionable, and should have a high impact compared to the effort it takes to implement them. They should address a problem that's regularly occurring and be used often enough for you to measure the effectiveness of the change. Testing change ideas is at the core of the teacher inquiry cycle, a disciplined approach to improving instruction and learning.

Change ideas can come from a variety of sources. Common sources include: *Research*. When selecting changes to test, it is always a good idea to review the relevant research to see if someone has already come up with a promising solution to your problem. One source of research is the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guides. These guides provide evidence-based practices that have been synthesized from current research and organized for easy access. *Practice knowledge*. You can learn promising practices from peers within your district or through collaboration with other districts. Participating in networks often provides opportunities to learn about what is working in other contexts that may also be effective in yours. *Adaptation*. Adapt a successful solution from a similar issue that you have solved. This could be something from a different content area, school level, or industry. *Design or creative thinking*. Create a new process or tool to fill a gap. In many cases, this is where teams want to begin.

Although creativity is strongly encouraged in education, when trying to solve systemic issues, it should be reserved for problems where evidence-based practices cannot be easily accessed. Some common pitfalls for change ideas are: the change idea's not specific enough; the change idea, instead of being a change, is simply providing more resources, like money or time, to continue doing the same thing; not considering learning from others because you are convinced

your problem is unique; trying to find the perfect solution and never getting started on anything.

Before testing, a change idea needs to be developed beyond the idea stage and into a prototype. A prototype is an early sample or model built to test a concept or process. Prototyping is one of the fundamental processes for design and has been around as long as humans have been creating new things. For our purposes, a prototype is something that is testable, revisable, and sharable. It helps teammates be clear on what exactly they're testing. Some examples of prototypes can be something as simple as a student's self-assessment, a rubric for evaluating student work, a classroom chart, a checklist to monitor a planning process, or a new morning meeting routine. Your prototype concretely represents the change and practice you are trying to improve.

Testing prototypes is at the core of the teacher inquiry cycle. It is a process for trying out new things while documenting your learning. Some data that a team can collect when testing a prototype are: *Usability data*. How usable is the prototype? What worked? What was hard? How easy was it to use? *Completeness data*. How complete is the prototype? Is there anything missing? What might we need to add? *Impact data*. Is it having the intended effect? How does your prototype improve instruction? How does it support improved student outcomes?

Having a specific prototype allows you to collect information and use it to revise your original prototype and thinking until you are getting the intended results. Prototyping is how you shift your changes from ideas to reality.

We would love to hear how you use the modules and the videos. Please contact us at relwest@wested.org. To learn more about prototyping and improving instructional practice, explore the Facilitating Improvement Professional Learning Modules.