



## Data-Based Decision-Making Protocol

This Data-based Decision-Making protocol is designed to support the four-step problem solving process (identify, analyze, implement, evaluate) by examining data in a structured manner. The information gathered from completing the protocol is then used to inform decision making and action planning. The activities are designed to surface predictions about the data, examine the trends and patterns in the data, consider contributing factors and root cause leading to the identification of prioritized goals. All participants have equal voice while engaging with this protocol.

**Activities in the Protocol are aligned to the first two steps problem solving process (Identify and Analyze).**

### Activity 1. Identify the Problem of Practice (20 minutes)

- a. Make predictions
- b. Organize Observations using the [Data Connections Document](#)
- c. Create a [Precise Problem Statement](#)

### Activity 2. Analyze the Problem of Practice (50 minutes)

- a. [Identify Contributing Factors](#)
- b. [Root Cause Analysis \(Why is this happening?\)](#)
- c. Add the “Why” to the [Precise Problem Statement](#)

### Activity 3. Write a Prioritized Goal Statement (20 minutes)

- a. Connect the [Goal Statement](#) to the [Precise Problem Statement](#)

### Activity 4. Conduct an Initiative Inventory Aligned to the Goal Statement (60 minutes)

- a. Brainstorm Efforts That are Already Being Conducted That Relate to the Goal Statement

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### Activity 1. Identify the Problem Of Practice (20 minutes)

**a. Make Predictions:** Individually activate prior knowledge and make predictions.

Thought-starters include:

- I predict...
- I assume...
- I wonder...
- My predictions are based on...
- Some possibilities for learning that this data may present...

**b. Observations:** Examine the data for patterns and trends - suspending judgment and assumptions.

Each team member reviews the data set on their own and records noticings, patterns, trends, and factual statements that come to mind.

1. What items stick out?
2. What do the scores tell you?

### 3. What is the story within the data?

Team members share their thinking and sense making with the rest of the team. Some helpful prompts to lead the discussion:

- I observe that...
- Some patterns/trends that I notice...
- I can count...
- I'm surprised that I see...

Use the questions found on the [Data Connections Document](#) to capture the collective thinking of the team. This document will end with 1-3 priority statements about the problem of practice.

#### c. Precise Problem statement

Use the questions found on the [Precise Problem Statement](#) document to capture as much detail as you can about the chosen problem(s) of practice. For example, where, when, who, how often, and the what of the problem.

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## Activity 2. Analyze the Problem of Practice (50 minutes)

**a. Identify Contributing Factors:** Identifies group conclusions based on the data. What are some of the contributing factors that the team can identify about why the prioritized problem statements exist? (What are some factors that contribute to why the scores are what they are?)

Consider the explanation above, what data or evidence would confirm or disconfirm this possibility?

Some prompts to help:

- I believe the data suggests... because...
- Additional data that would help me verify/confirm my explanations is...
- Additional data that would help guide implementation of the solutions/responses and determine if they are working...

**b. Root Cause Analysis (Why is this happening?):** Select one of the contributing factors that seems to have consensus and engage in root cause analysis using the [5 Why's Worksheet](#)

What hypothesis does the team have about why the problem of practice exists?

As you progress through the “whys,” focus on alterable variables (i.e., curriculum, instruction, and environment).

If the last answer is something that you cannot control or is “outside of your sphere of influence”, go back up to the previous layer and ask “why” again to come to a different response. The final “why” must be alterable or changeable.

- c. Add the “Why” to the [Precise Problem Statement](#)

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**Activity 3. Write a Prioritized Goal Statement (20 minutes)**

Use the [Precise Problem Statement Document](#) to record your thinking.

- a. The precise problem statement should drive the creation of your [goal statement](#)

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**Activity 4. Conduct an Initiative Inventory Aligned to the Goal Statement (60 minutes)**

- a. Brainstorm Efforts That are Already Being Conducted Aligned to the Goal Statement using the [initiative inventory protocol](#).

**Next Step:** Create an Implementation Plan (Action Plan). NOTE: Activities listed in your action plan should address the root cause and contributing factors.

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# Data Connections Document

**Use your data set to inform your answers.**

What connections do you notice?  
What patterns do you see?

What needs do you see?  
What gaps exist?

Prioritize two or three items to begin your action planning considerations. Think about:

- Which items would lead to the greatest gains?
- What need would it meet?
- What overlaps/gaps need to be addressed?
- What outcomes would you like to see?

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**Activity 1c) Identify the Problem of Practice  
Create a Precise Problem Statement**

Identify Primary Problem Statement or Problem Area using one or more of the following:

**Problem Identified:** \_\_\_\_\_

- **What** is the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

- **How often** is the problem occurring? \_\_\_\_\_

- **Where** is the problem occurring? \_\_\_\_\_

- **Who** is engaged in the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

- **When** is the problem most likely to occur? \_\_\_\_\_

- **Other** pertinent information: \_\_\_\_\_

**Precise problem statement:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Example:**

- **What** is the problem? **Teachers are writing discipline referrals for behaviors that could be managed in classrooms.**

- **How often** is the problem occurring? **Consistently**

- **Where** is the problem occurring? **Classrooms**

- **Who** is engaged in the problem? **70% of teachers (no trends seen by grade level or content area)**

- **When** is the problem most likely to occur? **No trends seen**

- **Other** pertinent information: **Behaviors could be managed in the classroom**

**Precise problem statement:**

70% of teachers consistently send students to the office for behaviors that could be managed in the classroom

(who)

(how often)

(what) (where)

(other)

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### **Activity 2a) Analyze the Problem of Practice**

Identify Contributing Factors: Identifies group conclusions based on the data

What are some of the contributing factors that the team can identify about why the prioritized problem statements exist? (What are some factors that contribute to why the scores are what they are?)

Precise Problem Statement:

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Brainstorm Contributing Factors That Are Alterable:

Select 1-3 Factors from the List That If Targeted Would Lead to Greatest Change:

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**Activity 2b) Root Cause Analysis (Why is this happening? What factors within instruction, curriculum, and environment contribute to the problem?)**

5 Whys Worksheet

List the Precise Problem Statement:

Why is it happening?

1. Identified contributing factor (1) from above:

→ Why is that?

2.

→ Why is that?

3.

→ Why is that?

4.

→ Why is that?

5. (add the final why to the precise problem statement)

Note: This process may not take “5 whys” or may take more than five. As you progress through the “whys,” focus on alterable variables (i.e., curriculum, instruction, and environment). If the last answer is something that you cannot control or is “outside of your sphere of influence”, go back up to the previous layer and ask “why” again to come to a different response. As you complete this activity as a team, ensure everyone has an opportunity to contribute to achieve consensus.

**Revised Precise Problem Statement with *why*:**

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### Activity 3. Write a Prioritized Goal Statement

(How will you know the problem is resolved? What student outcome do you want?)

Based on your precise problem statement and five why's, write a prioritized goal statement.

Precise Problem Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

- **Who?** Individual(s) expected to meet the outcome \_\_\_\_\_
- **What?** Specific behavior or action \_\_\_\_\_
- **How Much?** Criteria for success \_\_\_\_\_
- **Where, By When?** Conditions under which the outcome will be achieved

\_\_\_\_\_

**Prioritized Goal Statement template:**

\_\_\_\_\_

(who?)                      (what?)                      (how much?)                      (by when, where?)

Example:

After training and coaching support from 2023-2026 during the school year, 90% of teachers will feel more confident managing disruptive student behavior in their classrooms and decrease the number of discipline referrals they write by 10% by the end of the year, each year. .

Prioritized Goal Statement:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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