

Step One: Predict

Purpose: To activate interest and bring out our prior knowledge, preconceptions, and assumptions regarding the data with which we are about to work. Prediction allows dialogue participants to share the frame of reference through which they view the world and lays the foundation for collaborative inquiry.

The steps include:

1. Clarify the questions that can be answered by the data.
2. Make predictions about data.
3. Identify assumptions behind each prediction.

Prediction Sentence Starters:

I predict... I expect to see... I anticipate...

Assumption Questions:

- Why did I make that prediction?
- What is the thinking behind my prediction?
- What do I know that leads me to make that prediction?
- What experiences do I have that are consistent with my prediction?

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Step Three: Explain

The Purpose: Generate theories of causation, keeping multiple voices in the dialogue. Deepen thinking to get to the best explanations and identify additional data to use to validate the best theories. Steps include:

1. Review current status of action steps (implementation benchmarks)
2. Brainstorm explanations
3. Categorize/classify explanations
4. Narrow (based on criteria)
5. Prioritize
6. Get to root causes
7. Validate with other data

Guiding Questions:

- What explains our observations about our data? What might have caused the patterns we see in the data?
- Is this our best thinking? How can we narrow our explanations?
- To what degree does or implementation benchmark data validate our explanation?

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Step Two: Explore

Purpose: Generate fact statements about performance that reflect the best thinking of the group.

Steps include:

1. Focus on a priority performance challenge (and associated performance target(s))
2. Interact with aligned data (highlighting, creating graphical representations, reorganizing).
3. Look for patterns, things that pop out, *trends if appropriate*.
4. Brainstorm a list of fact statements (observations).
5. Prioritize observations.
6. Summarize performance (priority performance challenge area)

Avoid: Statements that use the word “because” or that attempt to identify the causes of patterns or trends in the data.

Sentence starters:

It appears... I see that.... It seems...

The data show...

Step Four: Maintain or Adjust Action Steps

Purpose: Prepare to stay the course, or revise action steps based on analysis of data. The critical steps include:

1. Determine if performance is improving – decide to stay the course or make an adjustment.
2. If adjusting actions steps: review implementation benchmark data to determine the degree to which action steps are being implemented as intended.
3. If action steps are not being implemented appropriately:
 - Do a force field analysis on action steps (identify driving and restraining forces, prioritize restraining forces).
 - Identify steps to eliminate the restraining forces.
 - Make adjustments to the plan.
4. If action steps are being implemented appropriately, consider if more time is needed to fully benefit from improvement strategy, or if the major strategy should be changed.

Cautions

Make sure that there is a direct causal link between the desired change and the action steps that are being taken. Don't be afraid to change course if action steps are not having the desired effect.