

4.2A – Why? Why? Why? Protocol

Introduction:

Identifying root cause in education rarely results in a single factor being identified that can easily be resolved. Protocols such as this one help a group of educators collaboratively discuss the most likely root causes of the problem under investigation. This discussion will help the team come to agreement about what is the most significant factor within the agency/program’s and center’s control to address.

Directions:

1. Write the evidence-based problem developed in **4.1 Problem Statement** on chart paper.
 2. Each member of the team will then write one or more responses to the question: “why might this be happening?” Each response should be written on a separate sticky note.
 3. Place the sticky notes in a row across the chart paper under the problem. Discuss the responses and eliminate any that duplicate the same basic idea. Add any that appear to be missing. Rank-order the ideas from most plausible causes to least plausible. As you do this, think about factors that are under the district’s/school’s control and which, if addressed, will solve the identified problem. If the team has difficulty determining rank order, they may want to consult tool **4.3A Determining Significance and Control**, or **4.3B Interrelationship Protocol** which are designed to help the team determine which root causes are most significant. This should be done after all potential root causes have been suggested.
 4. For the most plausible reason, again write possible explanations of why this is happening on sticky notes. Place these in a row below the most plausible cause. You can revisit the other reasons later.
 5. Again, rank-order the causes. Review all of the causes that you have associated with the initial, most plausible cause, and reach consensus on what the team believes to be the most likely root cause.
 6. Summarize the root cause(s) in row 8 of the separate document titled “**Data Institute Planning Summary**”.
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