

Problem of Practice Criteria

A Problem of Practice may be:

- Actionable/can be implemented (and measured);
- Connects to a broader strategy of improvement (school, feeder pattern, system).
- is high-leverage (if acted on, it would make a significant difference for student learning).
- Applicable to more than one or a few people; Familiar to the student;
- Solve a problem that closes a gap between current and future state;
- Practical, and observable in some way;
- Without a clear single solution/answer.
- Issue-based;
- Connected to leadership;
- Connected to the School or Workplace;
- A fully developed problem statement that must be framed using theory and literature;
- Politically/strategically viable to address;
- Reasonable to address given the student's own position, sphere of influence, etc.;
- Without a clear single solution/answer.

In short, the problem of practice is something that you care about that would make a difference for student learning if you improved it.

General Considerations / Guiding Questions:

1. What does data (both qualitative and quantitative) tell us?
2. What do we know about this?
3. What is there that, if done by everyone, could serve as an umbrella for a number of the teaching and learning strategies we have in our school plan?
4. What can have the most positive effect on what students do, what teachers do and the quality of the work that students are producing?
5. Is what we are considering as a "problem of practice" something that we can control?
6. Is what we are considering observable?
7. Is the "problem of practice" we are considering supportive of other school and district efforts?
8. How do we know it is a problem?

Examples of Problem of Practice statements:

- 70% of 9th grade students are falling below proficiency on the state math assessment.
- 34% of students feel like they don't belong.
- Communication between families and teachers is infrequent, not consistently actionable, and sometimes not aligned.
- 52% of students received a failing grade in at least one class last semester.
- The diversity of our teaching staff doesn't reflect the diversity of our community.