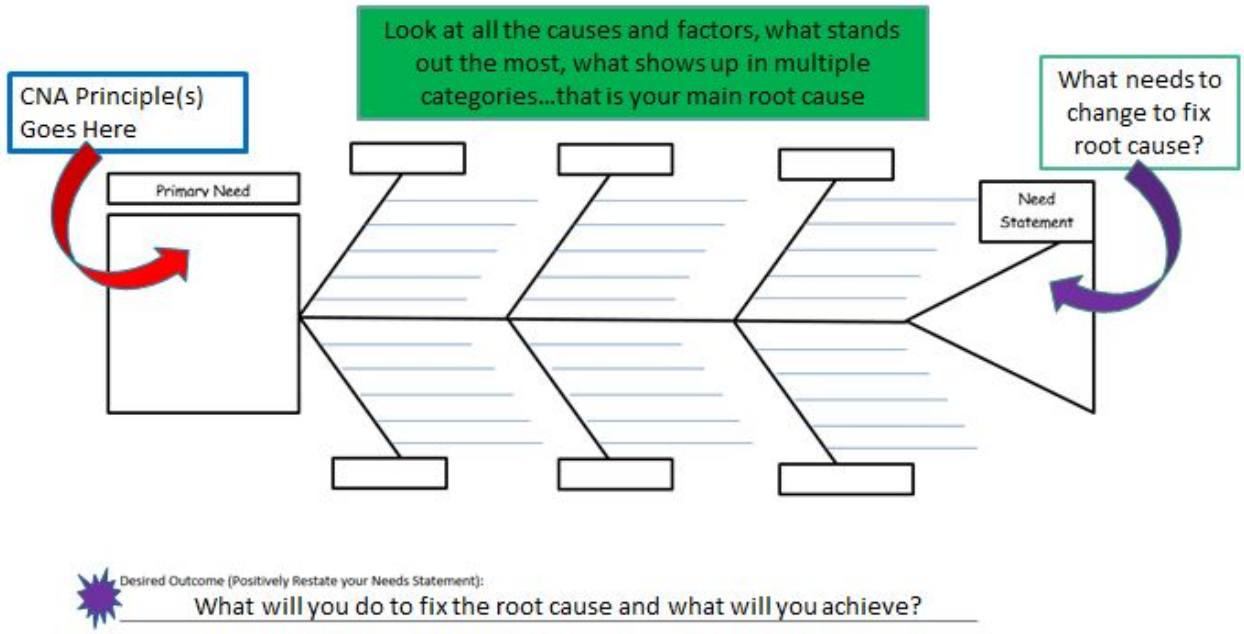
Conduct a Root Cause Analysis, Develop Need Statements and Desired Outcomes

Root cause analysis is a structured team process using a strategic method to dig down into your primary need to determine causes and contributing factors to the problem. During the discussion of causes, different perspectives of the same situation are uncovered for an enhanced picture of the problem. At the end of the root cause analysis, the major cause of the problem is discovered, and what needs to happen to remove the problem is determined. This is time to discuss causes, not solutions. The root cause is the **one major contributing factor.**

Click here for an animated explanation of the fishbone tool.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0c6Gd26Fxw

Here is an overview of the components of the fishbone diagram.



Fishbone Diagram Process Directions:

1. Choose ONE of the primary needs identified in the CNA to address first and write it in the head of the fishbone. This includes the CNA principle and indicator.
2. The team facilitator asks the team, "How do we know that problem exists? What barriers are in place? What are we doing or not doing? Use the root cause analysis questions for support with this.
3. The team recorder documents comments on the fishbone grouping items in like categories, for example: teachers, students, curriculum, assessment, etc. Teams can brainstorm possible causes and then sort the causes into categories or teams can identify several categories first and then brainstorm within each category. Think of the categories as the who, what, and why that are contributing to the primary need problem.
4. After all ideas are documented on the fishbone, reread the ideas on the fishbone.
5. Highlight similar items across categories.
6. Look at the highlighted items. What pattern or trend surfaced? That is your root cause. Ask yourself, if we fix this overall root cause, would the problem continue? Move beyond the obvious, general issue and dig to the less obvious explanations.
7. If you said the problem might continue, you need to dig deeper by asking the 5 whys…asking "Why?" until the root cause has been identified. It often takes three to five whys, but it can take more than five. So, keep going until the team agrees on the root cause.

Click here for an animated explanation of the 5 whys.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7cR2gArCFE

Root Cause guiding questions:

- Would the problem have occurred if the cause had not been present? If no, then it is a root cause. If yes, then it is a contributing cause.
- Will the problem reoccur as the result of the same cause if the cause is corrected or dissolved? If no, then it is a root cause. If yes, then it is a contributing cause.
- Will correction or dissolution of the cause lead to similar events? If no, then it is a root cause? If yes, then it is a contributing cause.

Important note: Focus on causes you can impact, not those out of the school's control.

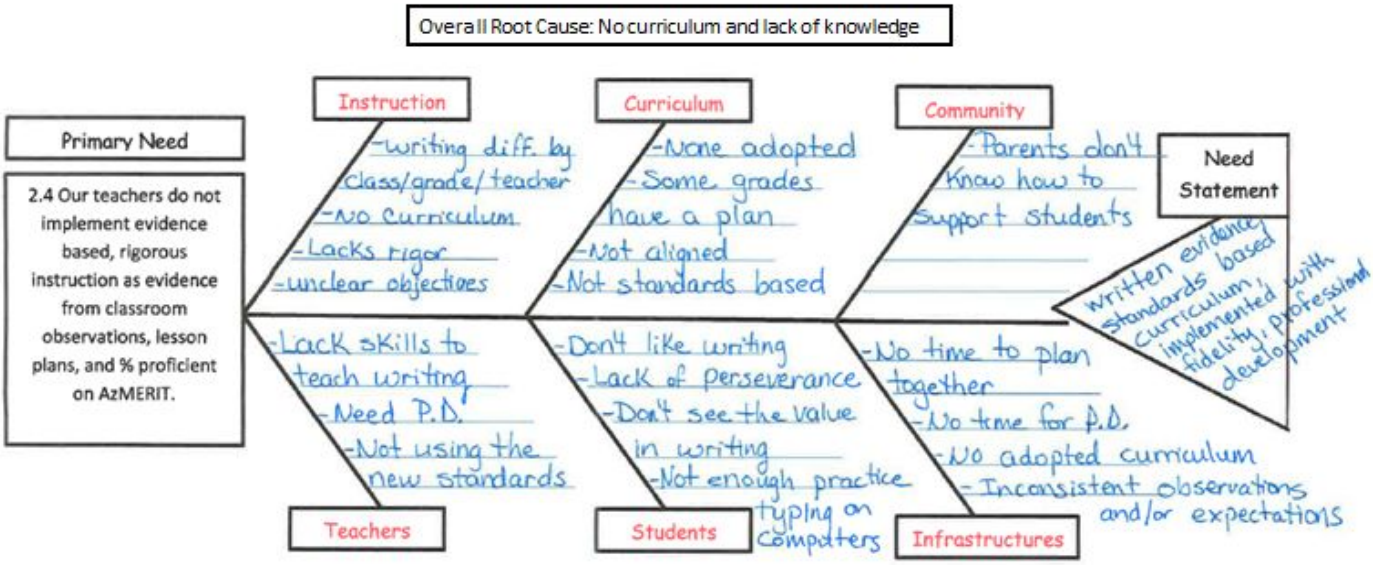
Use the fishbone diagram tool to keep the team focused on the causes of the problem, rather than the symptoms or solutions. Our natural instinct is to fix the problem, but if we jump to solutions without diagnosing the true problem we are only trying to fix something temporarily.

Consider drawing your fish on a flip chart or large dry erase board. Take a picture of your completed diagram.

Make sure to leave enough space between the major categories on the diagram so that you can add minor detailed causes later.

When brainstorming causes, consider having team members write each cause on sticky notes, going around the group asking each person for one cause. Continue going through the rounds, getting more causes, until all ideas are exhausted. Encourage each person to participate in the brainstorming activity and to voice their own opinions.

Example:

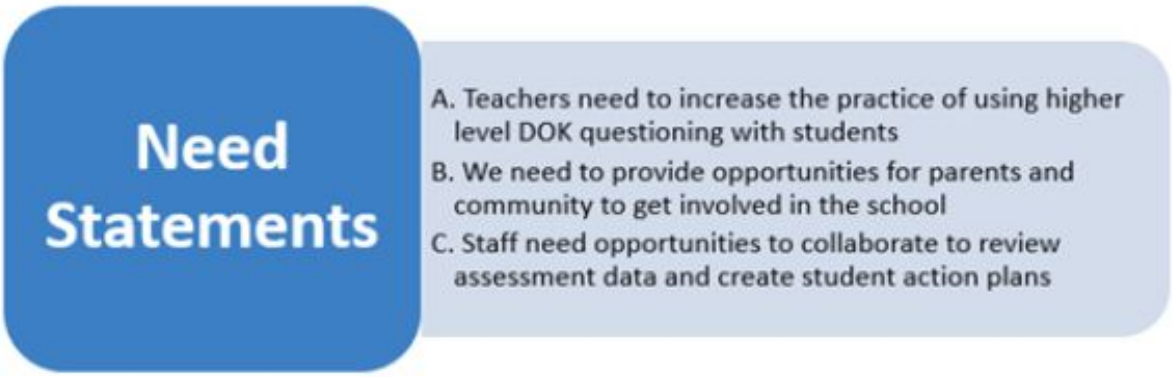


Desired Outcome (Positively Restate your Needs Statement):

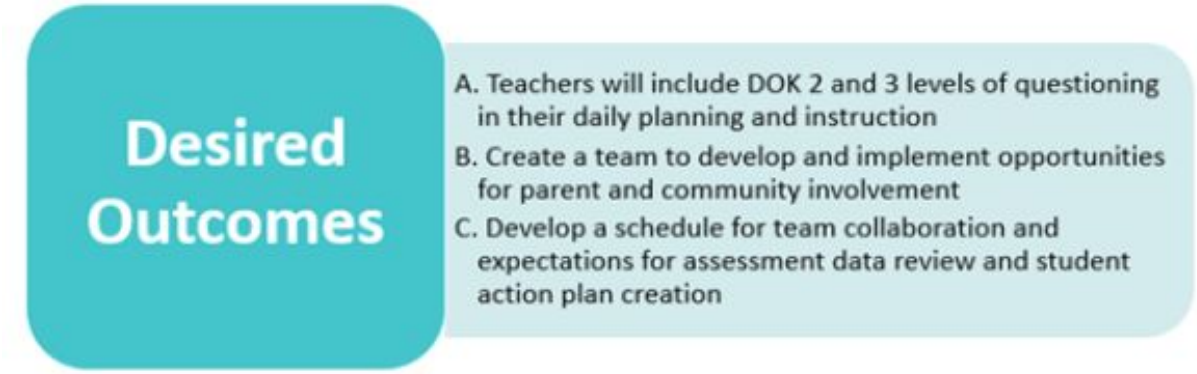
Writing curriculum aligned to grade & content standards, implemented with fidelity to increase % proficient on writing assessment.

Your need statements and desired outcomes are created at the end of your root cause analysis process, as shown below. The need statement is the tail of your fish, and the desired outcome is the final statement at the bottom of the diagram.

After you identify the overall root cause of your problem, you generate a need statement to describe what needs to be done to eliminate the major contributing factor to the problem. This is not a restatement of the primary need, but instead what needs to change in order to fix the problem. See the example need statements below.



After you identify your need statement, you then create a desired outcome to describe what you will do to fix the overall root cause of the problem and what you will achieve. See the example desired outcomes below which correspond to the need statements.



You will repeat this process for each of your 3 primary needs. Be sure that any TSI identified subgroups are considered/represented in your root cause analysis work either through inclusion as a subcategory in a fishbone or its own fishbone diagram.