##### Analyze Root Causes

The **Five-Whys** is a simple brainstorming tool that can help teams identify the root cause(s) of a problem. Once the problem of practice has been identified, ask “why” questions to reach the specific root cause(s). Teams will know they have reached a root cause when they have identified a reason that is within their control to address, and if the identified cause is addressed it will most likely result in the problem going away.

The Five Whys is closely related to the Fishbone diagram and can be used to complement the analysis necessary to complete a Fishbone diagram.

The Five Whys Worksheet

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| **Purpose:** To determine an actionable root cause to a problem of practice by asking “why”multiple times. |
| **Directions:**1. Record your identified problem of practice.
2. Start asking “why” related to the problem, keep asking why in response to each

suggested cause. Use data to support your reasoning.1. Continue asking “why” (asking five times is typical) until your team arrives at a fundamental root cause that is supported by data, within your control to address, and if the identified cause is addressed the problem will most likely go away.
2. You may discover that you have not found a plausible, evidence-supported root

cause, at which point you might reconsider one or all of your “whys”.**Reminders:*** + You don’t want to list 5 different reasons, you want to go deep on one reason.
	+ If your last answer was something you can’t control, go back up to the previous

answer on one reason.* + The final answer cannot be because of a person.
 |

The Five Whys Worksheet

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| **Problem of Practice:** |

##### Why is it happening?

1.

**How do you know? Supporting Data:**

##### Why is that?

2.

**How do you know? Supporting Data:**

##### Why is that?

3.

**How do you know? Supporting Data:**

##### Why is that?

4.

**How do you know? Supporting Data:**

##### Why is that?

5.

**How do you know? Supporting Data:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Identified Root Cause** |

The Five Whys Worksheet- Example

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| --- |
| **Problem of Practice:**Not all teachers apply consistent high-quality instructional practices in mathematics in PK-3rd grade. |

##### Why is it happening?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Lack of common understanding of what high-quality | **How do you know?** |
| instructional practices in math are and what they like in | **Supporting Data:** |
| practice. | Teacher surveys, Teacher |
|  | interviews, PLC Meeting Minutes |

##### Why is that?

Lack of skill in teaching the current math standards, math curriculum, and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

**How do you know? Supporting Data:** Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Audit

##### Why is that?

We have not received the appropriate Professional Development in these specific areas

**How do you know? Supporting Data:** Professional Development Audit, Professional Development Attendance Records

##### Why is that?

We didn’t know what relevant professional development was needed as we were implementing the new standards and curriculum.

**How do you know? Supporting Data:** Interview and Surveys

##### Why is that?

**How do you know? Supporting Data:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Identified Root Cause:**Lack of specific and relevant professional development that helps to identify the skills and practices needed to deliver high quality instruction in early mathematics. |