



Reform Support Network

Exercise: Developing a Sustainable Theory of Action Across Federal Programs to Accelerate Improved Outcomes for All Students Facilitator Guide

This publication outlines notes for a facilitator to lead a group in developing a theory of action within a particular program or across programs. It is based on an exercise from a break out session at the Collaborative Federal Programs Conference titled "Your Theory of Action: A Foundation to Sustainable Reform," held on July 24, 2014. The exercise is intended to help teams have shared conversations about their collective goals to raise student achievement and close the achievement gaps, and the collaborative strategies they can employ to support all students. It can be used and adapted by any group that is interested in crafting their individual or collective theory of action.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

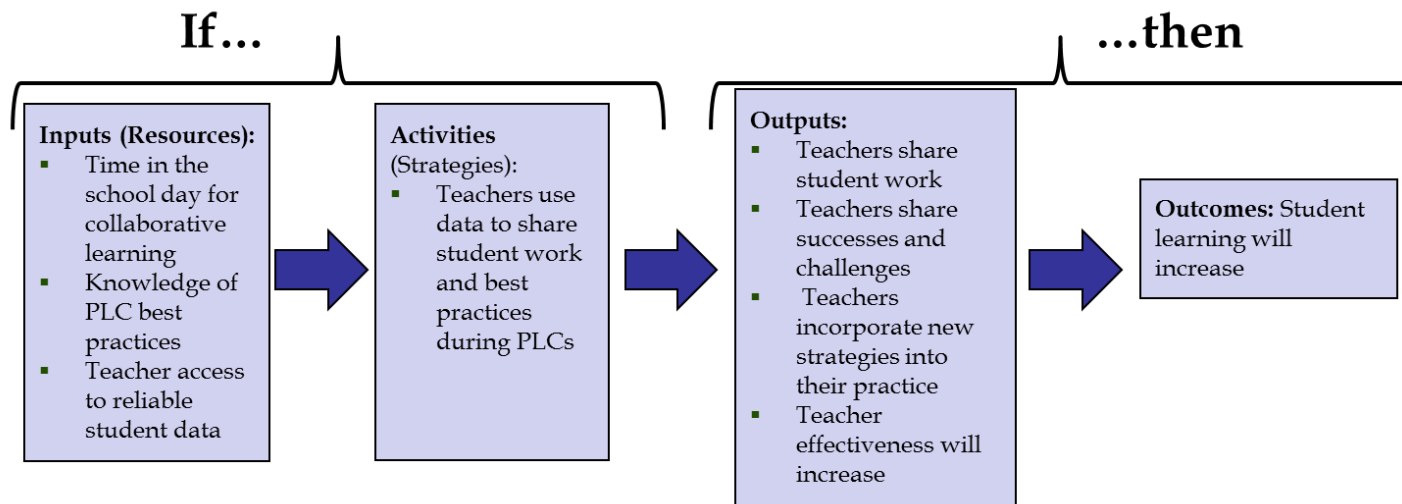
- Identify opportunities to sustain priority reforms to improve student outcomes by creating a collective theory of action across federal programs in your state

ACTIVITY PLAN (90-120 MINUTES)

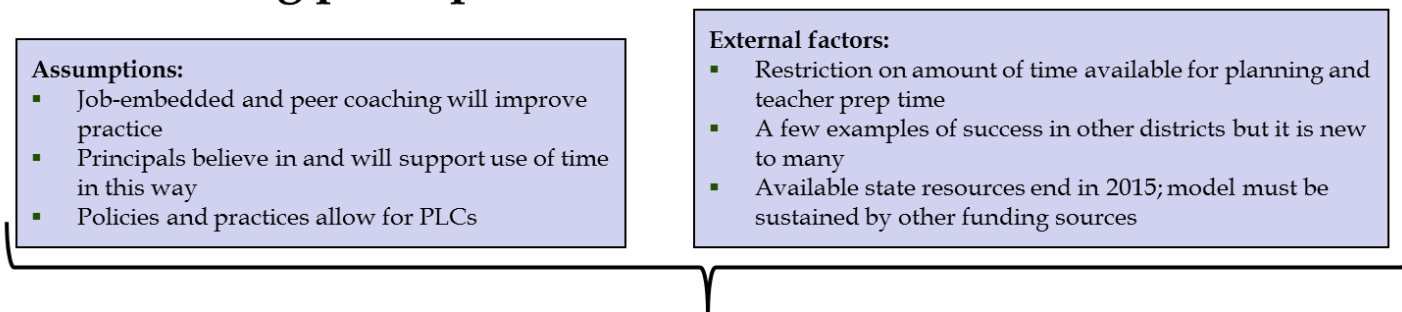
Time	Activities	Materials
0000-0005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Welcome and objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agenda
0005-0050	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Exercise (45): Theory of Action Logic Model Exercise Map out the critical elements of each program's theory of action in the state <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Each federal program uses a different color post-it – Each program maps out their theory of action, using the logic model exercise template (suggest using one flip chart per section) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Inputs □ Activities (strategies) □ Outputs □ Outcomes □ Assumptions □ External Factors ■ Discuss each section briefly after post-its are put up – to clarify the meaning of anything posted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ See example #1 ■ Flip chart paper ■ Post-its, one color per federal program ■ Markers
0050-0120	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gallery walk (5): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Post green dots on items that are similar or resonate – Post orange dots on areas for collaboration ■ Discussion (25): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identify the areas that are common and shared – Identify areas for collaboration based upon the commonalities and strategies – Identify the high impact strategies to sustain (that will impact student achievement) to be the focus of the collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Green and orange dots ■ Flip chart paper ■ Markers
Optional 0120-0150	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Optional Exercise (30): Craft a joint theory of action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Based on the discussion, articulate a joint theory of action for federal programs in your state using the if...then... theory of action structure, considering the logic model inputs in the creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ See example #2 ■ Flip chart paper ■ Markers
0120-0130 OR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify Next Steps (Who, what, by when) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Flip chart paper

Time	Activities	Materials
0150-0200		■ Markers

Example #1: Theory of Action Logic Model Example (Professional Learning Communities - PLCs)



Governing principles



EXAMPLE #2: ARTICULATE THEORY OF ACTION (PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES - PLCs)

- **IF** the LEA has professional learning communities, **THEN** we will have a scheduled time for teachers to discuss their work and the work students produce.
- And **IF** teachers share their work and the results with each other, **THEN** they will be able to learn from each other's successes and draw upon the expertise of their colleagues around common challenges.
- And **IF** teachers draw upon the expertise and successes of their colleagues around common challenges, **THEN** teachers will be able to incorporate new and successful strategies into their practice with support from their colleagues.
- And **IF** teachers incorporate successful strategies into their practice, **THEN** students will benefit from more effective teaching.
- **THEN** student learning will increase.