



Spirals: Stages of Inquiry

Scanning

- **Scanning involves:**
 - a wide perspective on learning, informed by learning principles (OECD)
 - finding out what learners think and feel about their learning and
 - what their families and communities perceive about their learning
- **Scanning is NOT:**
 - seeking evidence to reinforce the status quo
 - only looking at aspects of academic learning that are easily measured
 - exclusively what the professionals think

Focusing

- **Focusing involves:**
 - Using information from the scan to identify an area for concentrated team learning
 - Gathering more information if you need it to understand the situation
 - Building on strengths or positives, as well as clarifying challenges
 - Identifying a common area that the team can work on together
- **Focusing is NOT:**
 - The time to introduce completely new areas disconnected from the scanning process
 - About assuming you have it all figured out and don't need to investigate any further
 - Just about problems or challenges
 - About everyone choosing his/her own area of interest

Developing a Hunch

- **Developing a hunch involves:**
 - Getting deeply held beliefs and assumptions out on the table about your own practices
 - Focusing on things your team can do something about
 - Checking your assumptions for accuracy before moving ahead
- **Developing a hunch is NOT:**
 - A general brainstorm of all possibilities
 - Being obsessed with the actions of others or with issues over which you have limited influence
 - Venting about the past, fuming about the present, or finding someone to blame

Learning

- **New Learning is:**
 - Tailored to the situation
 - Directly linked to the focus identified earlier in the spiral
 - Exploratory “testing how new approaches could be better than previous practices
 - Sustained and supported over time
- **New Learning is NOT:**
 - Pursuing the latest trends
 - Disconnected from the context
 - Uncritically adopting new ways without understanding the purpose
 - A short-term or quick fix

Taking Action

- **Taking action involves:**
 - Learning more deeply about new ways of doing things and then trying them out
 - Evaluating the impact on learners and seeking their feedback
 - Building trust and cultivating a growth mindset
- **Taking action is NOT:**
 - Trying something new without considering its value and relevance in your situation
 - Implementing without monitoring the effects on learners
 - Assuming everyone feels OK about the change

Checking

- **Checking involves:**

- Knowing what you want to accomplish for your learners and having specific ways to determine how you are doing early in the inquiry process
- Setting high expectations that your actions will make a substantial difference for ALL learners
- Setting the stage for what comes next
- **Checking is NOT:**
 - A routine to follow at the end
 - Seeking some difference for some learners
 - Judging the capacity of learners to succeed
 - Justifying your actions