

Collaborative Inquiry

Table 5.1. Scaling Collaborative Inquiry¹

Key Elements of Collaborative Inquiry	Guiding Questions of Collaborative Inquiry as Adaptive Action	Implications for Scaling
Investigate shared questions of problems of practice.	<p>What actions have been taken previously to resolve the student learning problem? What happened? What's working/not working? In what circumstances were previous actions successful? How do we know? Why is this problem important and meaningful to us? How is solving this problem related to our school/district priorities?</p>	<p>Meaning and importance of the question/problem to participants and the school/district How broadly the question/problem is held Likelihood that the question/problem will challenge assumptions about students, their learning, and effective instructional and leadership practices, and underlying conditions affecting teaching and learning</p>
Learn with and from colleagues.	<p>Who (else) has a stake in or responsibility for resolving the student learning problem? What will each of us commit to learn about, try, and share with others in our inquiry group?</p>	<p>Participation of teachers, site/district/ program leaders, and others in roles supporting instruction Participation of those who have a stake in solving the problem and those whose work could be affected by its resolution</p>
Seek expertise and perspectives of others.	<p>What else do we need to know to help us understand the student learning problem and how others have attempted to resolve it? What underlying conditions-assumptions about students, student learning, and effective instructional practices we hold and enact individually and collectively, and agreements about effective instruction and conditions that support learning and teaching-contribute to the pattern we see?</p>	<p>Inclusion of others who hold expertise related to the question/problem, may see the issue or problem differently, or who have grappled with it previously Consideration of research, theory, and practice others have found effective</p>
Use evidence and data.	<p>What evidence (e.g., patterns in data, observations, student work samples) describes the student learning problem? What will we look for as evidence of the impact of our actions on student learning? What will we look for as evidence of underlying conditions that support learning and teaching?</p>	<p>Multiple sources of data about students, their performance, and organizational conditions that support teaching and learning Recognition and understanding of patterns in data, observations, and student work</p>
Act, reflect, and refine practice.	<p>How has what happened confirmed or challenged (1) our assumptions about students (2) agreements about effective instructional practices? (3) the findings of others? What patterns of student performance and learning behaviors do we observe? What questions arise from what we learned?</p>	<p>Patterns in student learning behaviors and results related to actions taken as part of the inquiry Actions participants will take to amplify desired patterns and diminish others Subsequent actions and their impact</p>
Share and connect learning.	<p>How will we share our learning with others beyond our group? How might what we learned inform school or district priorities?</p>	<p>Connections made between inquiries and inquirers Publication of inquiry findings Invitations to others in subsequent interactions</p>

¹ Palmisano, M. (n.d.). Chapter 5. *Taking inquiry to scale: An alternative to traditional approaches to education reform.*

Key Questions

- What assumptions have we made about students, their learning, effective instructional practices, and our contexts, as we define our problem of practice?
- What evidence do we have of the current state of our problem of practice?
- In what ways are we using the research we found? In what ways does the research we found fit our contexts, and in what ways does it not fit our contexts?
- What do we wonder about that has not been answered by the research we found? (There will always be 'holes' in the research.)
- What can we learn from our own and each others' sectors as we create and try our toolkit item?
- What kind of intervention can we design to 'solve' our problem of practice?
- What evidence will we look for to see the impact of our intervention?
- Is the work doable in the time we have, and does it require similar efforts from each member of our cohort?