Look-Think-Act

Look > Think > Act

When data are examined within a data decision-making process, the team or practitioner must "ask questions" about what the data might mean while noting the limitations of the data. In addition, the team or practitioner will use multiple data sources to identify and understand the complexity of factors that can influence an issue or concern that might be identified by examining data. Making a decision based on data is best conducted as a team as multiple perspectives are needed to ensure that interpretations of the data are carefully considered during the inquiry process.

The Look-Think-Act is a simple protocol for the process that teams and practitioners might use when analyzing their data. This protocol involves three steps:

1. Look – Examine data for trends, meaningful associations
2. Think – Ask questions related to the data that might help with interpretation
3. Act – Make decisions as a team and identify the action plan needed to put the decision in place

The data analysis process will begin by thinking about the quality of data and noting whether there are concerns about how data were collected, external factors that might affect interpretation of data, and other considerations to keep in mind as data are analyzed. Teams might make notes regarding those data considerations prior to their review of the data displays.

In the "Look" step, teams should refrain from jumping to an inference about the data. In the initial review of the data, teams should identify what they see factually without coming to conclusions. As teams examine the data, they might:

- Identify patterns
- Make comparisons
- Identify commonalities
- Identify discrepancies
- Look for unexpected results
- Identify questions that result from the data review
- Identify the need to access additional data

In the "Think" step, teams engage in a discussion to make interpretations about the data. The team records notes to begin to identify their inferences or conclusions based on the data that offer evidence for those conclusions. During the "Think" step, teams might ask:

- What factors might be associated with the results indicated by the data?
- What areas of the data need more inquiry or additional data to understand?

- What are major themes or conclusions that we are ready to make from our review of the data?

In the "Act" step, teams identify actions that will be implemented in response to conclusions from the data. Team action steps might include multiple actions, the collection of additional data, or a decision to continue to monitor a particular situation or data set. Actions might involve steps related to:

- Changes to policy or procedures
- Providing training
- Providing coaching
- Improving response to crises
- Strengthening family relationships
- Working with collaborators
- Improving leadership team functioning
- Improving data collection and analysis procedures
- Other factors related to the issue or concern

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that Work
Office of Special Education Programs
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This document can be found at:
http://ectacenter.org/sig

ecta Early Childhood
Technical Assistance Center

National Center for
Pyramid Model
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