



CHAPTER 3 TRY THIS: APPLY DEMING'S PDSA CYCLE TO YOUR OWN LEADERSHIP PRACTICE



It is helpful to try something yourself before you lead others in doing it. This tool is designed to help school and district leaders apply the Plan–Do–Study–Act (PDSA) cycle to improve a specific, personal leadership practice.

Step 1: Identify a Small Leadership Problem of Practice

Choose a minor but meaningful challenge in your leadership practice that could benefit from structured improvement. (Examples: Morning routines, using learning targets in staff meetings, regularly visiting classrooms and departments, reviewing weekly student attendance data, providing timely feedback)

- Problem Statement:

- What is contributing to this problem? (Examples: Gather information by talking to people, looking at data, observing)

Step 2: Plan

- Define the Change Idea: What is one small change you could make to address this leadership problem?



- What outcome do you expect from this change? (Your prediction)

- Who will be involved in implementing this change? (Examples: Students, staff members, leaders, parent group)

- What data or feedback will you collect to measure improvement? (Examples: Observation, feedback)

Timeline for Testing the Change: Start Date: _____

End Date: _____

Step 3: Do

- Implement the Change: Carry out the small test as planned.
- Document Observations:
 - What went well?

- What challenges arose?

- Any unexpected reactions from stakeholders?

Step 4: Study



- Review and Analyze Data: Did the change lead to leadership improvement? Why or why not? How do you know?

- Compare Actual Results to Your Prediction: Was the outcome what you expected? What surprised you?

Step 5: Act

Decide on Next Steps:

- Adopt: The change worked well! Implement it on a larger scale.
- Adapt: The change had some success, but adjustments are needed before expanding or making it permanent.
- Abandon: The change did not work as expected. Try a different approach.

What modifications or next steps will you take?

Step 6: Reflection and Next Steps

- What did you learn about leading change from experiencing this PDSA cycle in your own leadership practice?



- How does it inform your planning to engage staff in applying the PDSA cycle to their own improvement efforts?

Commit to running another PDSA cycle on the same or a new leadership challenge!