

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP EXPERIMENT EXAMPLE

Context: An educational nonprofit organization has developed an innovative, student-centered curriculum based on the latest developments in child pedagogy. They would like to see it adopted in public schools in their city, however the school system has a long standing model of rote memorization and testing, and some veteran teachers and administrators are resistant to adopting a new model.

A team at this education nonprofit used this as an opportunity for an adaptive leadership experiment. Below, you'll see how they identified their gap, the focus of their experiment, the different factions involved, and determined how they'll measure success. Use this as an example as you and your team work through designing your own adaptive leadership experiment.

My Gap	From “rote learning” and memorization to a student-centered and inquiry-based approach to learning in the classroom
Specific focus of my experiment	To support teachers in Teach for All in successfully implementing our curriculum with their students
Primary factions I'll engage to begin	Partners: Teach for All Fellows (educators)
Behavior change or “request” I want	Change from a curriculum where success is measured by student memorization of information and written test-based assessment, to a curriculum and method of teaching that is inquiry-based, focused on student understanding rather than memorization, and engaging for students.

Experiment: what I will do to begin to engage with factions and narrow the gap?

We have a meeting set with Teach for All Program Coordinators. In that meeting we will propose that we merge our curriculum support with the Teach for All Fellows bimonthly training sessions at their respective schools. This will make it easier for the educators (Teach for All Fellows) to gain continuous support with our curriculum throughout the year, without adding on additional meetings.

How will I account for anticipated losses or risks?

Based on this experiment, we will focus on the “partners” faction, which are the Teach for All Fellows. Their anticipated losses or risks could be the risk of not meeting school or government based targets on mandated testing.

(Note on risks and anticipated losses: In a second stage of this adaptive leadership experiment, the team might choose to engage with the “troublemaker” faction, the older teachers and administrators who may be stuck in “the way things have always been done.” In that case, they would have to consider the losses and risks associated f those resistant to change.)

What will success look like?

Students engaged in fun, inquiry-based learning in the classroom; educators and students completing at least 75% of our curriculum within the school year.