



Root Cause Analysis: 5 Whys

November 2022

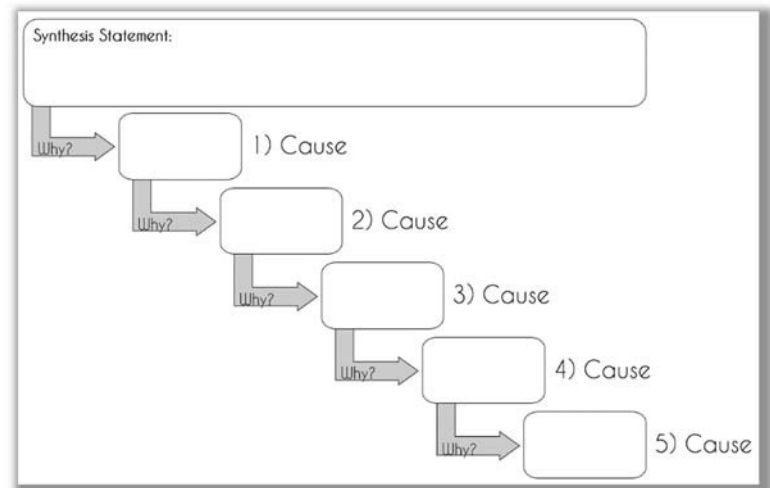
Purpose

The purpose of the conventional 5 Whys technique is to drill down to the underlying cause of an identified Key Conclusion through inquiry. By asking the question "Why?," teams evaluate the cause and effect relationships underlying a priority key conclusion. The primary goal of the technique is to determine an underlying cause by repeating the question "Why?"

Materials

Teams select their preferred mode for engaging in the 5 Whys technique.

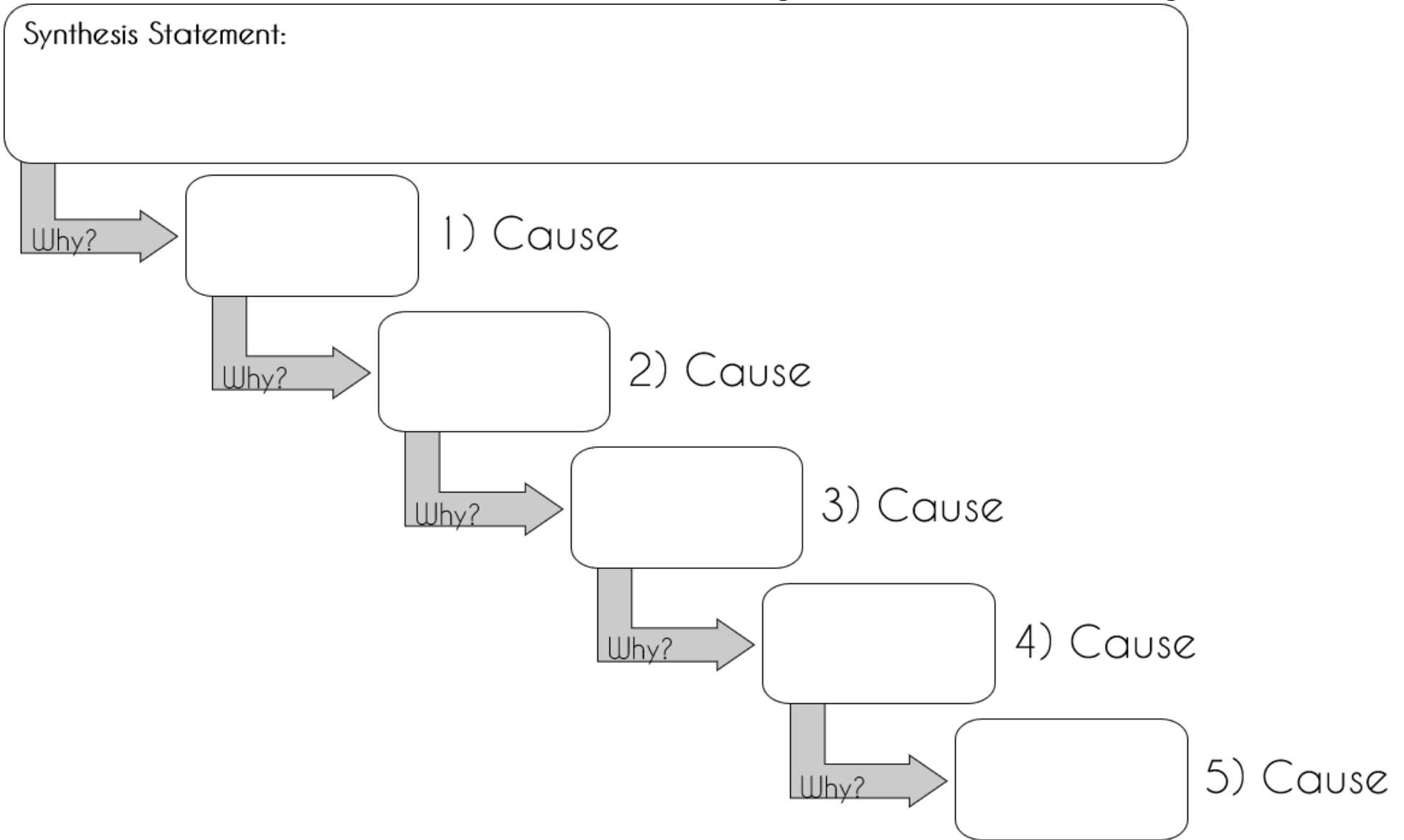
Depending upon the choice, teams use a variety of materials such as: the 5 Whys graphic organizer (fillable PDF provided), chart paper, markers, and technology.



Steps

1. Write your Key Conclusion at the top of the chart paper or 5 Whys graphic organizer.
2. Ask "Why" this problem exists and discuss with your team.
3. Come to consensus on the most likely underlying cause of this problem that is within your control and write the first identified "Cause" in a box below the Key Conclusion statement.
4. Ask "Why" again, in relation to the first identified "Cause" and write your team's response in a box below.
5. Repeat this process at least 3 more times until your team has identified the underlying cause which will become the area of focus for your TAP-IT Action Plan.
6. Validate the identified underlying cause by asking the following questions:
 - Is the cause within your team's control?
 - Is the cause actionable?
 - Does this cause make sense to someone else hearing it for the first time?

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Suggested Citation

The DaSy Center (2022). *Root cause analysis: 5 whys*. SRI International

About Us

The contents of this brief were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #H373Z190002. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officers, Meredith Miceli and Amy Bae.

The DaSy Center is a national technical assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The DaSy Center works with states to support IDEA early intervention and early childhood special education state programs in the development or enhancement of coordinated early childhood longitudinal data systems.

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