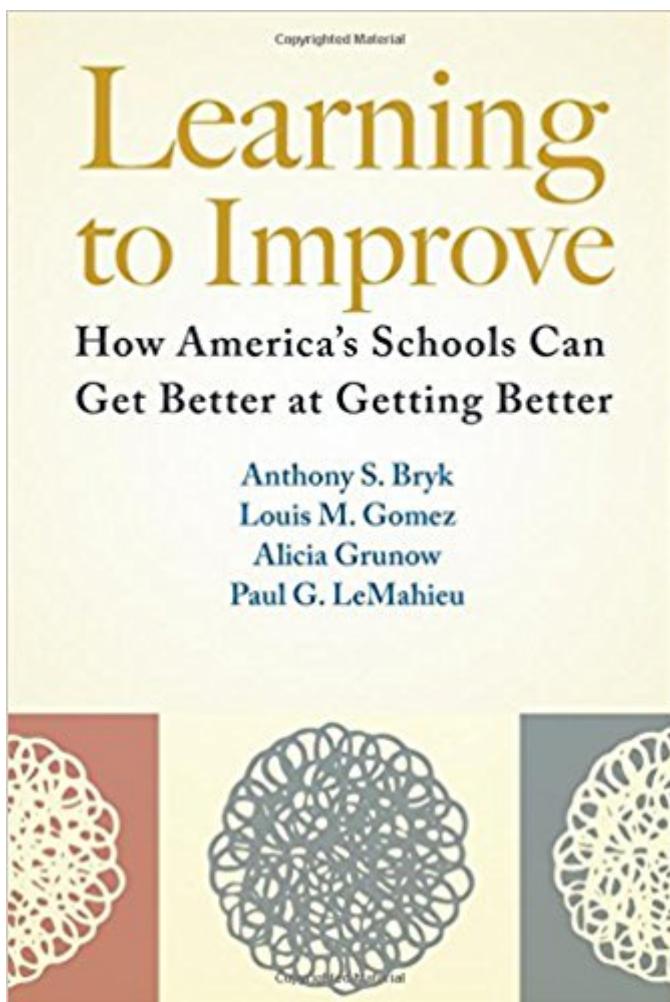


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# Learning To Improve: How America's Schools Can Get Better At Getting Better



## Synopsis

As a field, education has largely failed to learn from experience. Time after time, promising education reforms fall short of their goals and are abandoned as other promising ideas take their place. In *Learning to Improve*, the authors argue for a new approach. Rather than "implementing fast and learning slow," they believe educators should adopt a more rigorous approach to improvement that allows the field to "learn fast to implement well." Using ideas borrowed from improvement science, the authors show how a process of disciplined inquiry can be combined with the use of networks to identify, adapt, and successfully scale up promising interventions in education. Organized around six core principles, the book shows how "networked improvement communities" can bring together researchers and practitioners to accelerate learning in key areas of education. Examples include efforts to address the high rates of failure among students in community college remedial math courses and strategies for improving feedback to novice teachers. *Learning to Improve* offers a new paradigm for research and development in education that promises to be a powerful driver of improvement for the nation's schools and colleges.

## Book Information

Paperback: 280 pages

Publisher: Harvard Education Press (March 1, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1612507913

ISBN-13: 978-1612507910

Product Dimensions: 8.9 x 6 x 0.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 12 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #10,366 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #9 in Books > Textbooks > Education > Administration #14 in Books > Education & Teaching > Schools & Teaching > Education Theory > Administration #25 in Books > Education & Teaching > Schools & Teaching > Education Theory > Reform & Policy

## Customer Reviews

"Extremely interesting throughout, the text suggests a plan-do-study-act cycle in which reform starts small and then gradually expands as educators study their failures and learn from those mistakes." • J.D. Neal, Choice Magazine "Guided by 'improvement science';

pioneered in the medical field, Learning to Improve shows how education could finally stop its reform churn...The book's vision is ambitious--and far more likely to succeed than the reform churn we've tolerated for decades." Lisa Hansel, Thomas B. Fordham Institute"Learning to Improve is a content-rich, thoughtful, practical and well-organized resource for anyone committed to improving schools. It inspires practitioners, researchers and policy analysts to work together in networked improvement communities to learn fast to implement well."--Mary B. Herrmann, School Administrator

Using ideas borrowed from improvement science, Learning to Improve shows how a process of disciplined inquiry can be combined with the use of networks to identify, adapt, and successfully scale up promising interventions in education. Rather than "implementing fast and learning slow," the authors believe educators should adopt a more rigorous approach to improvement that allows the field to "learn fast to implement well." The authors focus on six principles that represent the foundational elements for improvement science carried out in networked communities: Make the work problem-specific and user-centered; Focus on variation in performance; See the system that produces the current outcomes; We cannot improve at scale what we cannot measure; Use disciplined inquiry to drive improvement; Accelerate learning through networked communities. Learning to Improve offers a new paradigm for research and development in education that promises to be a powerful driver of improvement for the nation's schools and colleges. In this hopeful and accessible volume, Bryk and his colleagues describe six tenets for addressing vexing problems of educational practice. Yes, systematic actions guided by serious scientific inquiry can lead to improvements in a vast array of contexts, topics, and settings. Drawing on numerous real life examples and illustrations, the authors demonstrate how to develop and then critically execute good ideas to produce reliably positive outcomes.

John Q. Easton, distinguished senior fellow, Spencer Foundation Anthony S. Bryk is the president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Louis M. Gomez holds the MacArthur Chair in Digital Media and Learning in the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, and is a senior partner at Carnegie. Alicia Grunow is a senior partner and co-director of the Center for Networked Improvement at Carnegie. Paul G. LeMahieu is the senior vice president for programs at Carnegie and the former superintendent of education for the state of Hawaii.

The wisdom and humility conveyed by the authors make this book a standout among so many

others on the topic of school improvement. For anyone interested in what it takes to improve our education system on a larger scale, you are very unlikely to find a clearer, more useful, or more inspiring presentation of research-based principles and practical cases.

This book honors the expertise and passion of those actually leading and learning in our schools. I especially appreciated the powerful anecdotes from both the management world and education sector to highlight the big ideas. This is a great tool for any learning community (school or other sectors) to use as a way to talk about how to begin and lead change. I am excited to bring this into my own work more explicitly and using it to learn alongside others.

A must read for school leaders and university professors. Links design thinking and improvement science through Networked Improvement Communities (NICS). This book changes the paradigm of problem finding and solution.

In my opinion, this is the best book on the market on improving education. The authors have done a masterful job pulling together the critical ideas and weaving them into a compelling story. Do you think the U.S. will ever learn the lessons of failed educational reforms? A good start would be for the stakeholders in school improvement to read this book. It contains an insightful description of the problems we face and the best paths toward lasting solutions.

"Improvement science"--and a methodology to back it up. This book will make you feel kind of bad for every idea you've ever tried to implement without thinking through the actual problem or issue you were trying to address. Great stuff.

Best book I have read about improving education in years!

Great book for educators who are interested in mindful improvement practices.

Well written, well organized, and very practical. But perhaps more interesting is the author's adaptation for improving education of a proven approach used in healthcare. The authors insights to the challenges of scaling up what works are right on. And what they propose as an alternative could transform education. It's not a silver bullet. It's not a piece of cake. But it can work. It's what public education needs. Just what the doctor ordered!

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