



# QUICK TIPS FOR PROMOTING TEAM LEARNING



Team Science Coffee Break Speaker: Chris Myers, PhD

<https://christophergmyers.net/>

Teams learn: Just as individuals develop and grow over the lifespan of their profession, teams can gain experiences, refine their capabilities, and improve their functioning over time. However, ensuring teams efficiently learn good lessons from their experiences requires a deliberate approach to team leadership. This document provides a quick reference on strategies to promote team learning. **View Dr. Myers' videos for more detail.**<sup>1</sup>

## Leverage Vicarious Learning

01

Learning is a highly social process, especially in teams. When we learn from our fellow team members, we can build from everyone's experience and expertise, not just our own learning process. This may happen on its own in some limited cases, but the following strategies can be used to promote this critical process in our teams.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEAM MEMBERS TO INTERACT AND LEARN FROM OTHERS' EXPERIENCES	Make use of physical and virtual spaces to make connections and generate insights.
STRUCTURE THESE INTERACTIONS SO LEARNING CAN HAPPEN RECIPROCALLY	When team members are learning from one another, they perform better and learn more from outside the team.
USE ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTS TO CREATE THE HABITS OF VICARIOUS LEARNING	Create the capacity for learning (e.g., formal goals for doing so), and routines for sharing the lessons learned (e.g., regular presentation of stories of learning).
EXPAND THE RANGE OF STORIES USED FOR LEARNING	Different types of stories serve different functions. Stories of failures, successes, and exceptional successes all play a role in team learning.

1) <https://ictr.johnshopkins.edu/community-engagement/team-science/team-science-trainings/learning-to-accelerate-performance/>

To meet the tough challenges of research, teams must grow their individual and collective capabilities. The complexity and fast-changing nature of the research world complicates this learning process. A culture of team learning means that the team values and prioritizes their collective development.

VALUE EXPLICIT AND TACIT KNOWLEDGE	The research community excels at sharing explicit knowledge, but we may fail to recognize or value harder-to-communicate knowledge that is deeply rooted in experience.
PROMOTE A LEARNING GOAL ORIENTATION	Learning and performance are both important, but individuals and teams that prioritize learning and growth over time actually outperform those fixated on performance alone.
USE "MULTI-MODAL" LEARNING STRATEGIES	Use formal learning opportunities coupled with reflective learning practices and vicarious learning to promote the development of explicit and tacit knowledge for the individual and the team.

We can magnify our own team's experiences by expanding our approach to other teams, organizations, and disciplines. We do this with explicit knowledge through academic publications, but we can build processes to learn more tacit knowledge for others outside our team as well.

EXPLORE OTHER TEAMS' ROUTINES AND USE WHAT WORKS	Use an iterative and inquiry-based approach to identify how other effective teams work, and translate and adopt the lessons to your team's setting, then continue with routines that work for you.
SCALE YOUR APPROACH USING TECHNOLOG.	Technology-mediated interactions, such as virtual collaboratives and social media, provide new opportunities to learn from other teams and organizations.
REFRAME THE VALUE OF OUTSIDE IDEAS.	Good ideas from other fields should be prized. Avoid rejecting an idea based on where it came from.