

# MINT TOOL: THE FIVE WHY'S

## **Goal:**

This is an old systematic thinking technique which gets beneath the obvious diagnosis of why the problem occurred and gets into more analytic understanding of the problem.

## **Process:**

A person or a group outline her/his own problem and formulates it as a sentence. Then she/he asks WHY five times, each time getting deeper into understanding of the problem. It can be used as an individual or group technique. It depends on the problem.

## **An Example:**

Mentoring in our school/my country doesn't work. Mentors don't attend courses provided for them.

1. WHY? Because they don't find them useful.
2. WHY? Because they see it as something imposed from above and has nothing to do with them.
3. WHY? Because they were never active partners in discussions about mentoring.
4. WHY? Because they think their role is teaching and all the rest is politics.
5. WHY? Because they don't have enough opportunities to discuss their professional role.

## **Comment:**

By using the five Why's a team/an individual has a better understanding of the problem. It is not simply a technical matter but a matter of some significant educational importance. If the team/individual had stopped after the first WHY it would come to a different conclusion. By going beyond the first why, it now realizes that the issue goes to the heart of problem. It is one of the tools that can help avoid fixes that fail.