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Using Instructional Rounds at the School Level to Improve Classroom Instruction

By
John Follin Melvin Jr.

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of
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in the
Graduate Division
of the
University of California, Berkeley
Committee in charge:
Dr. Judith Warren Little
Dr. Heinrich Mintrop
Dr. Chris Ansell
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Using Instructional Rounds at the School Level to Improve Classroom Instruction

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ABSTRACT

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Doctor of Education

University of California, Berkeley

Judith Warren Little, Ph.D., Chair

Despite the growing descriptions of effective teacher community —and lessons about the conditions needed for them to survive — more research has been done on exemplars of strong professional community than on efforts to produce professional community where it doesn't already exist. Building professional community is important to school improvement as it promotes cooperative, job-embedded learning where teachers engage in serious discussions about teaching that could lead to shift in instructional practice. Research on individual and group change suggests that these shifts are unlikely to occur without a supportive environment that includes positive pressure for change. The introduction of organizational routines designed to make teaching more public and collaborative is one solution. Instructional Rounds is a collegial network based approach to improving teaching and learning. At the school site level, Instructional Rounds can create a system and structure where teachers engage in professional dialogue and take collective action in their schools.

Using a modified design development format (with an action research component), this study focuses on the implementation of Instructional Rounds at a school site. The study documents teacher experience with Rounds and documents a second iteration of Rounds that more resembled the protocol of Lesson Study. The participants were 24 teachers from an urban elementary school in the Bay Area of California where I serve as Principal. The findings of this study indicate that Instructional Rounds is a promising practice at a school site that can further the goal of making teaching more public and collaborative. The findings also indicate that, due to embedded norms of privacy and a culture of isolation, teachers will receive Rounds with some resistance as it opens up a focus on classroom practice. A key component of the initial success of Rounds was the role played by a site instructional leadership team, which led the planning and endorsed the approach. A second implementation of the intervention, grade-level rounds that resembled Lesson Study, did not have sufficient buy-in and contained many competing foci, and was not as effective. Nonetheless, for the teachers who did complete the full parameters of the Lesson Study, there was evidence documenting the promise of this practice to promote in-depth conversations of instructional practice.

Overall, the findings in this study demonstrate the complexity in the introduction of organizational routines designed to make teaching more public and collective at a school site. From a perspective of distributed leadership, all leadership entities (teachers, administration, outside partners) need to be aligned and all potential resources in the school need to be sufficient for the introduction of the new routine to be successful.

DEDICATION

Writing this dissertation has been a long and grueling process and I never would have made it without the support of my wife Sharon and my children Tobias and Lilah. Sharon and I were married at the end of my first month of classes in LEEP almost five years ago, and my work in this program has been a part of our lives since. During this time our children Tobias and Lilah were born and we've grown our family. You've sacrificed countless evenings, weekends and vacations as I have had to immerse myself in classes, study groups and writing in cafes. You've been incredible. For Tobias, you are now four and you too have known your Daddy only in his life as a graduate student. I have looked forward to our days and moments together and was so happy to share a ski run together this past winter. To Lilah, you are one year old at the time of this writing and I am so much looking forward to spending more time with you. Finally to my parents John Sr. and Tessa: you have always been there for me, supporting me along my many journeys. I love you both.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are expected to improve on their classroom practice. Research suggests that teaching practices are a primary factor in the academic underperformance of large percentage of students, especially those who are low-income and students of color (Cantrell, S., and Kane, 2013; Rivkin, S., Hanushek, E., Kain, 2005). There is extensive evidence that enhancing instructional quality is essential to improving student learning (Newmann, Bryk, & Nagaoka, 2001; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Teddlie, et al., 1989). The quality of teacher instruction has a large influence on student achievement and a single teacher can impact a student's academic trajectory many years into the future (Leithwood et. al, 2004; Hattie, 2009; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005, Brophy, 1986, Dinham, 2008). Looking at measures of teacher effectiveness within the United States K-12 public school system, it is clear that there are some excellent teachers, but teacher quality is inconsistent.

One explanation for the poor teaching practice for minority students is that teachers work in isolation and a norm of privacy limits their opportunity to learn. Teacher communities in American secondary and elementary schools generally are weak (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). There is a tradition of autonomy in teaching that inhibits the creation of a shared technical culture and teachers avoid discussing teaching and learning and do not attempt to involve themselves in each other's classrooms (Little, 1982; Lortie, 1975; Smylie, 1994). To counter the negative effects of a norm of privacy and isolation, schools have introduced initiatives to promote teacher collegiality and collaboration. A body of research demonstrates the significance of teachers' collegial relationships as a factor in school improvement (Little, 1982; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001, Little & Horn, 2010). Kruse et al. (1994) presented a framework of School-Based Professional Community, describing its benefits and characteristics and also describing the structural conditions and social and human resources needed to support these communities. Little (1982) was in the forefront of investigation into practices of talking frequently and in detail about classroom teaching and learning; sharing ideas and materials; observing one another; and learning with and from one another.

This dissertation details the implementation and evaluation of a design development study in an elementary school in Santa Fe Unified School District (pseudonym), a medium sized urban school district in the Bay Area of California. The student population of this school is predominantly low-income students of color. This design study attempted to address the problem of privacy of practice by developing a protocol for teachers to visit each other's classrooms, articulate patterns of practice, and set collective goals for improvement. Ultimately the goal was for teachers within the school community to engage in conversations about instructional practice in greater depth. The new Common Core Standards place emphasis on higher order dimensions of learning which requires teachers themselves to engage in higher order thinking in adjusting their lessons (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Desimone, Smith, & Ueno, 2006; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Little, 1993; Wilson & Berne, 1999). The cognitive challenge of the new standards will require self-determination and self-directed learning from teachers and colleagues are an important resource.

As the current principal of this elementary school, I am familiar with the organizational culture of the schools in this district. I have found that there is a prevailing norm of privacy. Norms of privacy around teaching practices predominate and teachers do not easily share

instructional practices, nor are most aware of what instructional practices are occurring in classrooms around them. There is a long history of conflict between the teachers' union and the central administration in this district that may contribute to resistance towards learning and/or sharing practice. Teachers frame this resistance as fear of unfair evaluation.

Research Goal

The primary goal of this study was to improve the frequency and depth of conversations teachers have about instructional practice. Drawing on prior research, I envisioned that the intervention would enable teachers to engage in deeper and richer conversations about instructional practice. These conversations would build shared understanding of effective instruction and entail the exchange of ideas for how to meet this standard. The challenge of this design was to transform practices of teacher-to-teacher interaction in ways that would support their own adult learning.

Literature review

The tradition of privacy and independence within the American teaching profession has been well documented in the educational literature. Although there are various explanations as to how and why these norms developed, many researchers have described their existence (Lortie, 1975, Little, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1989; Hargreaves, 1994; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994). Lortie (1975) described that the endemic uncertainties of teaching lead to a professional culture that is individualistic, present-oriented and conservative. Traditionally, the criteria for success in teaching has been unclear and has led teachers to rely on psychic rewards based on their own interpretation. Teachers receive brief training, are abruptly tossed into the classroom and are forced to rely on their own educational experiences to survive the entry into the profession. These conditions create an individualistic and conservative culture where teachers focus on short-term goals and work in isolation (Lortie, 1975). Some have hypothesized that teachers accept challenges such as difficult working conditions and low pay in exchange for autonomy (Cuban, 1984). Strong privacy norms can inhibit teachers' intrusions into one another's professional space and define as illegitimate a teacher's attempt to promote collegial standards (Little, 1990). Bad teaching, while disapproved, is typically noticed silently.

Especially in the 1980's and 1990's, following publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 and the growth of successive whole-school reform movements, concern about the negative effect of privacy and non-interference led to call for greater teacher collaboration. A recent systematic review of literature on teacher collaboration (Vangrieken et al., 2015) presents a framework of conditions that support teacher collaboration which are: personal characteristics of team members (i.e. -willingness to collaborate, skills and experience in teaming), structural characteristics (team structure, time), group characteristics (team structure), process characteristics (norms and meetings), organizational characteristics (school culture), and guidance (training and support for team) (Vangrieken et al., 2015). Kruse et al. (1995) presented a framework of School-Based Professional Community, describing its benefits and characteristics and also describing the structural conditions and social and human resources needed to support these communities. They describe the characteristics of Professional Community as: shared values, reflective dialogue, de-privatization of practice, focus on student learning and collaboration (Kruse et al., 1995). Van Maanen and Barley (1984) describe a professional community as "a group of people across a school who are engaged in common work; share to a certain degree a set of values, norms, and orientations towards teaching,

students, and schooling; and operate collaboratively with structures that foster interdependence” (p. 422).

Although the benefits of teacher collaboration are widely accepted, some questioned the effectiveness of mandating collaboration as an improvement strategy as it could lead to “contrived” (Hargreaves, 1990) or “bureaucratic” (Talbert et. al, 2008) collaboration. In these cases, teachers go through the motions of collaboration and not much is gained from the endeavor. On the other hand, intentional efforts to spur greater teacher collaboration are warranted when there exists a prevailing culture of isolation and demonstrable need for school improvement. Hargreaves (2013) suggested efforts to promote collaboration balance a combination of pushing (demand) and pulling and nudging (encouragement). Other education researchers have focused on principals of organizational change as a means for shifting the cultures of schools from one of independence and privacy to one of collaboration (Fullan, 2007; Elmore 2009; Dufour & Fullan, 2013).

Several studies have found a correlation between strong teacher collaboration and increased student achievement (Rosenholtz, 1991; Vescio et. al, 2006; Louis et. al, 1996, Bryk et al., 2010). In an exhaustive study of over 150 elementary schools involved in the Chicago school reform of the 1990’s, researchers found that strong professional community, coupled with access to professional development, was one of five key elements associated with academic performance and attendance (Bryk et al., 2010). One study contrasted two high school departments defining their interactions as either weak or strong community (McLaughlin and Talbert, 2001). Weak teacher communities were dominated by individual values and beliefs, often those that reinforce traditional forms of instruction and/or lower expectations of students; where innovation occurred, it was confined to individual teachers working alone. However, strong teacher communities, with collectively held values and beliefs, were not necessarily innovative and improvement-oriented. Rather, two types of strong teacher communities were found, and they were differentiated in part by their response to student struggles or failure. Teachers in “traditional” strong communities tended to blame students or families for failure, and hold to their established ways of teaching. Teachers in what McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) termed “teacher learning communities” responded to student failure by questioning their own practice and seeking ways to reinvent their teaching practice.

Researchers have documented specific practices that characterize a strong norm of collegiality. Little (1982) documented that practices of talking frequently and in detail about classroom teaching and learning; sharing ideas and materials; observing one another; and learning with and from one another were associated with increased student achievement. Studies conducted by the Center for Research on Contexts of Teaching (CRC), e.g., McLaughlin & Talbert 2001, confirmed the earlier Little (also Rosenholtz, 1989) findings and added teachers’ disposition to ask questions about their own practice when confronted with student failure (rather than blaming students).

These studies present the kinds of practices that need to be fostered to create a strong professional community. Yet such forms of teacher community have been found to be relatively rare. The persistence of a norm of privacy and isolation in teaching can be attributed to the structure of schools. Schools aren’t typically organized, either physically or socially, for collegiality. Lortie (1975) described the structure of schools as an egg carton where individual teachers teach and co-exist in isolation. Some argue that teachers thrive as “artisans” with the freedom to innovate and adapt their practice independently; attempts to impose collaboration

only restrict creativity and effective practice (Huberman, 1993). Collegial groups within schools often have to work “against the grain,” even to find time and space together. Also, strong professional community is vulnerable to organizational changes that can undermine it (e.g., changes in teaching schedules or restrictions on the use of subs). A study of one high school mathematics department (Nasir et al., 2014) details the ascension of a group of educators who championed progressive, equity-oriented practices for minority students, with positive results for student achievement. The successful reform effort eventually collapsed as the founding teachers confronted significant changes in district policies regarding curriculum, assessment, and student placement practices — all of which undermined the approaches they had developed.

Despite the growing descriptions of effective teacher community —and lessons about the conditions needed for them to survive — more research has been done on exemplars of strong professional community than on efforts to produce professional community where it doesn’t already exist. Building professional community is important to school improvement as it promotes cooperative, job-embedded learning where teachers engage in serious discussions about teaching that could lead to shift in instructional practice (Spillane & Louis, 2002). It can empower teachers, increase satisfaction with the personal dignity of work, and build collective responsibility for student learning (Kruse et. al, 1995) Change in fundamental practice could cause teachers to question, unlearn, and discard much of their current understandings of teaching, learning, and subject matter which can be a complex and troubling process (Cohen & Barnes, 1993). Research on individual and group change suggests that these shifts are unlikely to occur without a supportive environment that includes positive pressure for change (Huberman & Miles, 1994; Schmuck & Runkel, 1985). In addition, studies from documenting successive collaborative governance show the importance of both a social learning cycle (commitment to work collaboratively) and a problem-solving cycle (how people work together to solve problems) (Ansell, 2012). Successful group change can occur when people are motivated and see benefit in working together.

It is my hope that this study can add to the knowledge base of promoting professional community in more traditional school professional communities.

Conceptual Frame / Theory of Action

As mentioned above, an impediment to the improvement of teacher practice is that some teachers prefer to deal with instructional challenges privately and this practice and belief can become collectively reinforced. Most explanations of this resistance point to the development of norms of privacy, independence, and non-interference within the teaching culture of American schools (Lortie, 1975; Little, 1982, 1987, 1990). Within traditional school cultures, teaching is viewed as an easy, non-technical practice that requires predominantly interpersonal skills (Elmore, ix, 2013). Within this perspective, when teachers encounter instructional difficulties, they might attribute them to low student ability or background. Teachers may have deficit views of minority students which can lead to low expectations of their students and can further lead to a reduced responsibility for student learning. With a deficit view of students, teachers can perceive the success of underperforming students as outside of their sphere of control and consequently not feel responsible for student learning. An additional factor that exacerbates this problem is a tradition of autonomy within the teaching profession that inhibits the sharing of teaching practices.

As principal of Kelly Elementary School (pseudonym), I have observed a widespread norm of privacy in the school; however there are also indications of openness to change. The theory of action centers on the introduction of new organizational routines that would create structured opportunities for teacher interaction based on aspects of instructional practice.

Table 1 summarizes the Theory of Action for this design development study.

Table 1 Theory of Action

Problem	Persistent low academic achievement in schools with children from minority and low-income backgrounds demonstrate the need for instructional improvement. Teachers in Santa Fe Unified School District prefer to deal with instructional challenges privately. Such beliefs can become widespread within an organization.
Problem Description	Teachers prefer to cope with instructional challenges privately. Norms of privacy and non-interference prevent teachers from working together on instructional challenges. Teacher professional learning is disconnected from the classroom context.
Theory of Change	If teachers have the chance to visit and observe their colleagues' classrooms, they will understand their own and their colleagues' instructional challenges more clearly. They will want to work more closely together. If teachers have the chance to discuss their observations in a collective, non-judgmental format guided by a shared understanding of effective teaching, they will feel more inclined to work together. Teachers will experience professional learning embedded in their real work context.
Theory of Intervention	Teachers will participate in series of facilitated "Instructional Rounds", where they visit a series of classrooms in their school with a group of their colleagues. Through a collective process, teachers in the school will pick a focal area for the classroom observations and the participants will debrief and share non-judgmental observations. Based on these observations, participants will identify patterns in the observations and then determine "the next level of work" for the school staff. Teacher leaders will guide the implementation of the next level of work in collaborative teams and will model reflection on practice and a learning mindset.
Conditions	Staff are willing to participate in group observations. Facilitator is available to guide post-observation discussion. Financial resources are available to support release of teachers to participate in Rounds process.
Outcome	The depth of conversations about instructional practice will increase.

Theory of change and intervention

In order address this problem, teachers within a school community need to have a learning experience that can be a spark to initiate deeper conversations about instructional practice. From the perspective of a social theory of learning (Bandura, 1977), teachers need to engage in a group process where they can observe the teaching practices of their colleagues and collectively discuss their observations. Bandura believed that, "most human behavior is learned

observationally through modeling. From observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action” (p.22).

Teachers have many opportunities to learn together through professional development workshops and team collaboration meetings; however, teachers are challenged in these settings to share the essential context of their work, the classroom. By observing the classrooms of their colleagues and discussing these observations, teachers will identify the qualities of effective teaching strategies within their school.

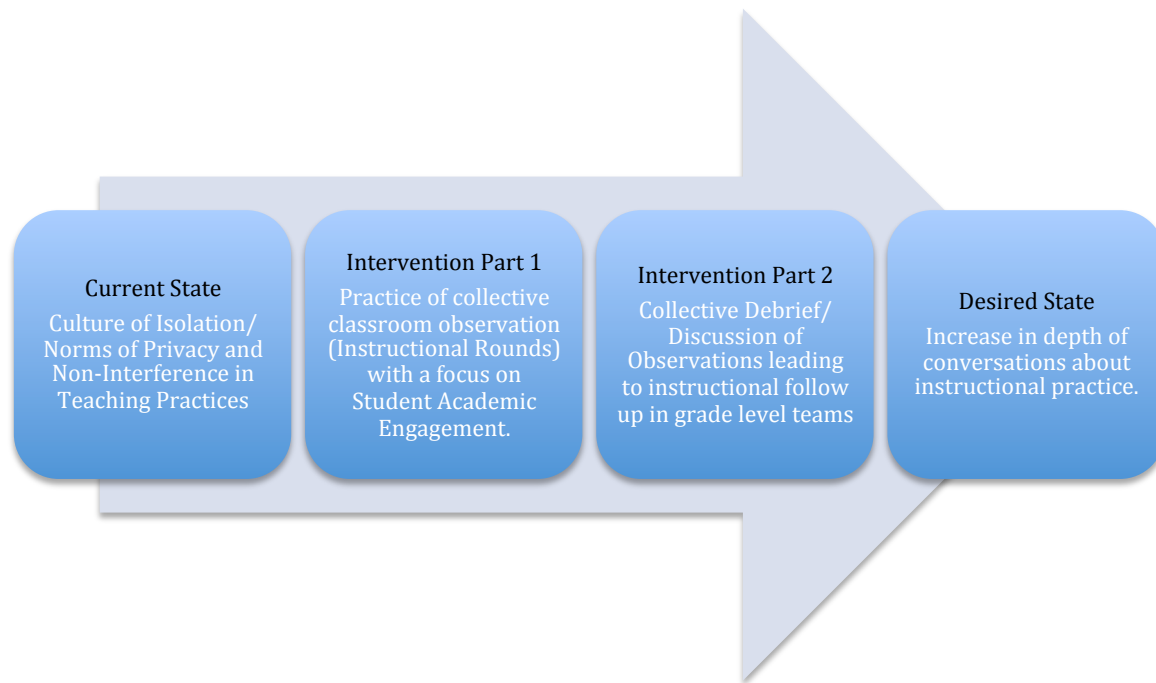
According to Elmore (2004), “the problem is that there is no opportunity for teachers to engage in continuous and sustained learning about their practice in the settings in which they actually work, observing and being observed by their colleagues in their own classrooms and classrooms of other teachers in other schools confronting similar problems” (p. 73).

Sociocultural learning perspectives describe how interactions among teachers that are embedded in the school context can support learning and change (Camburn & Han, 2014). These perspectives contend that knowledge about practice is not simply located “in the heads” of individuals, but instead, is distributed across people, artifacts and tools (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Salomon et. al, 1997). Because knowledge is distributed in this manner, the social context is believed to play an integral role in the learning process (Brown et al., 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991). These perspectives imply that day-to-day interactions in teachers’ workplaces can be an important venue for reflection and learning. “Embedded” learning experiences involving peer collaboration and work with instruction experts will be more strongly associated with teacher reflection than traditional professional development opportunities (Camburn & Han, 2014). In addition, peer interaction around a shared understanding of good instruction can also lead to lasting improvement in teacher practice (Teitel, 2013). One could imagine how teacher collaboration and peer observation around poor instructional practices could collectively reinforce poor instruction. The involvement of a shared framework of effective teaching and acknowledged instructional experts are thus essential in a sociocultural learning process. Table 2 and Figure 1 below explain the theory of learning in this intervention in more detail.

Table 2 - Theory of Learning

Input through intervention	Outcome of Intervention
If teachers have opportunity to view the instructional practice of their colleagues	Then teachers will begin to converse with their colleagues about their practice
If teachers have a common frame of reference when discussing good teaching	Then teachers will be able to provide each other more effective feedback
If teachers are able to participate in a group debrief of their classroom observations	Then teachers will develop a shared understanding of instructional practice
If learning experiences are embedded in the context of teacher work	Then the work of professional learning communities will be more effective (will lead to teachers becoming more reflective)

Figure 1 -Graphic of Theory of Learning



In the case of this study, teachers would be recruited to engage in a group learning process known as “Instructional Rounds” (City et al., 2009; Teitel, 2013). The goal of Instructional Rounds is for participants to develop a shared understanding of an element of instructional practice by having district staff, principals, and/or teachers collectively observe classroom practice and discuss their observations. Initially, Instructional Rounds were developed as a district wide improvement strategy where principals and district level leaders would visit a cross section of schools to learn patterns of teaching across schools. However, in recent years, individual schools have undertaken rounds within a single school setting with teachers, administration and school staff as the participants (Teitel, 2013). This intervention followed that model.

One additional feature of the Instructional Rounds intervention was that participants would be guided in their observations by a shared framework of an effective lesson that includes a focus on student academic engagement. Teachers who foster student academic engagement know how to teach lessons in which students make meaningful connections between new concepts and their own understandings (Hart, Alston, & Murata, 2011; Turner, Christensen, Kackar-Cam, Trucano, & Fulmer, 2014). One critique of the Instructional Rounds process is that, although teachers are enthusiastic to visit each other’s classrooms, it does not lead to lasting changes in instructional practice (Teitel, 2013). Having the discussion of classroom practices framed by a shared understanding of effective instruction supports teachers in identifying areas of improvement.

Through observing instructional practice, recording observations through descriptive notes, and reflecting on observations, I envisioned that participants collectively would develop a shared understanding of a specific aspect of instructional practice. In preparation for engaging in

Rounds, participants would create a focus of their observations by choosing a “problem of practice” in relation to their school goals and their district’s instructional framework. At the end of the Instructional Rounds process, teachers would have a greater shared understanding of a particular component of high quality teaching and learning. In a safe environment where the performance of individual teachers was not discussed, I theorized that teachers would feel safe to raise questions and problematize their teaching practice. In the end, through this collective endeavor, I posited that the depth of conversation among teachers about instructional practice would increase. A summary of this theory of action is shown in Table 1. The three components of rounds: collegial network learning through classroom observations around a problem related to an existing improvement strategy work together in a powerful synergy to support system-wide improvement.

Desired Outcome

Therefore, through this design development study, the desired behavioral outcome was that teachers would engage in deeper, richer conversations about instructional practice. Teachers engaging in rich conversation about instructional practice would indicate they are reflecting on their practice and are open to learning new practices. The desired outcome would be in line with a vision articulated by Deborah Meier, “At the very least, one must imagine schools in which teachers are in frequent conversation with each other about their work, have easy and necessary access to each other’s classrooms, take it for granted that they should comment on each other’s work, and have the time to develop common standards for student work” (Meier, 1992, p.602-603).

The Intervention and its Modifications

To cultivate a more collaborative environment, the teachers at Kelly agreed to pursue an intervention that took the form of a new organizational routine (Feldman & Pentland, 2003). As Sherer & Spillane (2011) report, organizational routines may be deliberately designed and introduced to pursue particular improvement or reform goals. In this case, the intervention was modeled on the idea of Instructional Rounds, which were themselves modeled on the tradition of Grand Rounds in medical education and which had been developed by Harvard in collaboration with local school districts as a means for district staff to become familiar with instructional practice and quality in schools. Instructional Rounds has begun to be used by individual schools as a means for the school to get feedback on its instructional practices. When teachers are involved as full professional participants (not just those being observed), Rounds creates opportunities for ownership, growth in perspective, learning, and overall development. Rounds can create collective efficacy that can shift members’ individual responsibility, the expectations they have for students and their work, and their development of a mutual and collective form of accountability (Teitel, 2013).

Adapted to the school level, Instructional Rounds would involve teachers analyzing instructional practice across the school with a focus on a problem of practice. The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) at Kelly looked to the volume *Instructional Rounds in Education* (City et al., 2009) for guidance on setting up Instructional Rounds and created the classroom visit and debrief protocol from their model. For its problem of practice, teachers considered the investment of time and resources in recent years to learn and strengthen practices of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy (CLRP) and they expressed curiosity regarding how the practices were showing up in the school. In addition, for the past two school years, the school

had been exploring the presence of “student academic engagement” in its classrooms through a partnership with a local university. The problem of practice statement developed by the school’s Instructional Leadership Team and endorsed by the greater staff was “How do culturally and linguistically responsive practices impact student academic engagement?”

During an orientation to Instructional Rounds, participants are guided to record “low-inference”, specific and objective observations (refraining from judgment and avoiding generalities). Observers are also guided to focus their attention on students in the classroom and to record observation about what students are doing and saying. Creators of the Instructional Rounds protocol chose this focus as participating teachers generally have limited experience observing others’ classrooms and are apt to quickly jump to judgment when observing a classroom. The focus on collecting specific evidence of classroom activity allows for a more focused group discussion afterwards. Following the observations, the small groups met to share their observations, identify patterns, and reflect on the implications for the school (recommending “Next Level of Work”). By being a participant in developing goals, teachers will be more likely to follow through on reaching them. Gradually, norms of privacy around instructional practice will shift to sharing of practice.

In spring 2015, staff engaged in two instantiations of Instructional Rounds, with nearly full teacher participation. The implementation of Instructional Rounds is the focus of Chapter 3. The Instructional Rounds implementation experience gave rise to an adaptation of the routine in Fall 2016, with more of a focus on grade-specific interests, a shift in focus from “culturally relevant pedagogy” to the use of a particular reading instruction strategy, and a process more aligned with what has been termed “Lesson Study.” That adaptation is the focus of Chapter 4.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study was a single-case study employing an action research methodology “framed in terms of managing change or solving a problem: it is directed at confronting and resolving a pre-identified issue” (Coghlan and Brannick, 2007, p. 65). While I was the lead developer, I involved teachers in the design and this is typical of insider action research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2007). In addition, teachers influenced the learning that took place during the intervention. The initial goal of the intervention was that the depth of teachers’ conversation about instructional practice would improve. As teachers experienced Instructional Rounds, they contributed to the evolution of the design. Their feedback was incorporated when they indicated that certain aspects of the process operated counter to the goals of intervention. Together we engaged in the action research cycle of diagnosing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action (Coghlan & Brannick, 2007). Together we further developed the protocol. The use of action research enabled me to adjust and adapt to the specific context of the study as intervention unfolded.

My role can be described as participant and change agent. In this action research study, the researcher is both the design developer and the evaluator of its implementation. I am also a change agent as I developed this design and guided teachers through a process that is helpful to them and their students. I am a concerned practitioner-researcher who wanted teachers and students to benefit from the Instructional Rounds process. My experiences as a classroom teacher and principal in three various school settings contributed to my role in the Instructional Rounds process as a facilitator.

Van den Akker (1999) asserts that design research, also referred to as development research, is initiated for complex innovative tasks for which only a few validated principles are available to structure and support the design and development activities. In those instances the image and impact of the intervention to be developed are often unclear; consequently, the research focuses on realizing limited but promising examples of those interventions. The aim is not to elaborate and implement complete interventions but to arrive at prototypes that increasingly meet the innovation purposes and requirements. The process is often cyclical: analysis, design evaluation and revision activities are iterated until an acceptable balance between ideals and realization has been achieved (van den Akker, 1999).

This design development study also included an action research component. Design development studies are similar to action research methodology in that they both are concerned with developing practical knowledge to solve problems, are research *in* action rather than research about action, are concurrent with action, and are collaborative (Coghlan & Brannick, 2007). This design development study has two main research components: assessment of the design’s impact and investigation of the design development.

Action Research. The action research component is best characterized as “insider action research [which is] ... mechanistic-oriented action research that is framed in terms of managing change or solving a problem: it is directed at confronting and resolving a pre-identified issue” (Coghlan and Brannick, 2007, p. 65). While I was the lead developer, I also involved teachers in the design and this is typical of insider action research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2007). In addition, teachers influenced the learning that took place during the intervention. I took feedback from the participants during the course of the study and integrated this feedback into the design of future Rounds sessions. The goal of the intervention was that the depth of teachers’ conversation about

instructional practice would improve. It was theorized here that the facilitated, collective debrief of observations would serve to calibrate participants around effective instructional qualities. This shift could begin with the collaborative nature of the Rounds process itself, but could increase as teachers reflect on the initial Rounds experiences and implement new practices in their classroom and reflect on them with their colleagues. As teachers experienced Instructional Rounds, they contributed to the evolution of the design. When they indicated that certain aspects of the process operated counter to the goals of intervention, their feedback was incorporated. Together we engaged in the action research cycle of diagnosing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action (Coghlan & Brannick, 2007). Together we further developed the protocol for the design.

Research Design

In the next section, I explain the details of my research design. I describe the setting and research participants. I identify my unit of analysis and research methods. Next, I describe my data collection strategies and a description of my data analysis process. Then I address rigor and bias. Finally, I conclude with concerns around validity, transferability, and reliability.

Setting: The Kelly School Context

The setting for this design study is an elementary school in an urban school district in the Bay Area. At this elementary school 24 teachers and a principal participated in two sessions of Instructional Rounds as well as an orientation session and a final wrap-up debriefing session. The student population of this school is primarily low-income students of color.

Kelly has a few school leadership entities that allow teachers and staff to have input into school operations and instructional focus. The Site Based Decision Making (SBDM) team is comprised of eight school staff (including teachers, support staff and administration) and makes decisions regarding school operations. The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) is comprised of teacher representatives from each grade (K-6) is responsible for setting instructional goals and priorities and leading the school's focus on Professional Learning Communities (PLC).

The ILT had also led to the decision to implement Instructional Rounds. A teacher representative and myself proposed Instructional Rounds as a promising strategy in our school Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). This teacher had mentioned Instructional Rounds as a strategy she had heard of that would allow colleagues to visit each other's classrooms to observe instructional practice. She saw Rounds as a way measure how many of the teachers were utilizing strategies of Culturally, Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy (CLRP). In the four years prior to the start of Instructional Rounds, all of the teachers had received training on CLRP. A group of teachers on the ILT, on the school Equity Team viewed CLRP as a means to achieve more equitable outcomes for its students of color. Informal conversation revealed that these teachers believed there was resistance to such strategies as a manifestation of racism within other teachers.

An additional leadership entity at Kelly is the Site Based Decision Making Team (SBDM). The SBDM is comprised of five teachers, two classified staff, one parent and the school principal and is responsible for making decisions about ongoing school operations. SBDM is formed to ensure that staff and parents at school sites have a vehicle for engaging in the decision-making that most affected their own sites. The school ILT is responsible for setting instructional priorities and the SBDM determines whether the school will participate in larger

initiatives.

Unit of “Treatment” and Analysis

My design is an intervention to improve the depth of conversation about instructional practice. The unit of analysis is both at the individual level of teachers and at the level of the whole school. The cases of teachers provided an opportunity for in-depth analysis. The school group process data (which will be explained in more detail below) served to illuminate the connections between intervention, teacher learning and impact. Additionally, the intervention is just one of many professional activities that may have contributed to teachers’ change in practice and in attitude throughout the intervention. Isolating the additional activities as a factor in teacher learning is beyond the scope of this study.

Research Participants

As stated above, the research participants were elementary school teachers from Kelly Elementary School. For the Instructional Rounds intervention, 24 teachers across a range of grade levels participated. Also, an Instructional Coach participated in the Instructional Rounds and served as facilitator of lesson observation debrief conversations. In addition, a graduate student researcher from a local university participated in the Instructional Rounds visits and in the debrief conversations.

As researcher and co-facilitator, I met with the school staff to introduce the Instructional Rounds process. Specific written guidelines were developed to govern the Rounds process and issues of confidentiality.

For the Lesson Study intervention, nine teachers across three grade levels participated. Also, an Instructional Coach participated in lesson observations and served as facilitator of lesson debrief conversations. In addition, three graduate student researchers from the university partnership attended lesson planning sessions and participated in lesson observations and lesson debrief conversations.

Conditions

In order for this intervention to work, several conditions needed to be in place. I needed the cooperation of a school community for my design to be successful. I implemented this Instructional Rounds intervention with teachers at an elementary school where I served as Principal. These teachers needed to see the investment of time in the Instructional Rounds process as valuable and worthwhile. I needed the cooperation of teachers to participate in the process and I needed their agreement to participate in interviews and complete surveys. I also needed the support of the school district to provide financial resources to allow the participants to be released from their classrooms during the Instructional Rounds.

I believe this intervention was feasible as I established the cooperation of an elementary school within this school district. In addition, the school district central office leadership was committed to supporting this intervention.

Data types and sources

Research for design development has two functions: assessing the design’s impact and investigating the process of design implementation, in order to better understand how outcomes were influenced by the process. In this study, I use process data to investigate the process of design implementation.

Process data. Process data are more qualitative to capture the complexity of the development of the change elicited by the design. Qualitative research methods are the most appropriate to gather such rich information.

The principal concern of qualitative methods is to understand the meanings people have constructed from their experiences (Creswell, 2007). Each session began with teachers sharing their reflections of the previous sessions and the successes and problems from each session, and they shared the implementation of their learning in their instruction and understanding students' learning. This process gave teachers an opportunity to uncover and share the meanings they were creating as members of the study team. The researcher was actively contributing in this meaning making activity. Part of my responsibility as the facilitator supporting participants' learning was to give them strategies to unpack their metacognitive process. Using multiple qualitative data sources including audio recordings, my field notes, teacher surveys, and minutes from leadership team meetings, I determined in what ways the experience of Instructional Rounds may have lead to teacher growth from the perspective of the teacher and myself.

The primary source of data for this study was audio-recordings of lesson observation debrief sessions. These sessions occurred after the lesson observations during both the Instructional and Lesson Study. There were seven lesson debrief sessions after the Instructional Rounds classroom visits and four debrief sessions after the Lesson Study observations. By recording these conversations, I intended to collect evidence of changes in the depth of conversation during analysis of lessons over the course of the intervention.

In addition, I recorded field notes throughout the course of the two phases of the study. I recorded these field notes to record thoughts and observations related to all aspects of my research. As the study progressed, I looked through my field notes in order to identify patterns that could provide insight into any needed modifications. After the study concluded, I returned to my field notes again to look for patterns in my reflections that could add insight to the study findings and conclusions.

Another source of data was teacher survey responses. These surveys were administered after each of the Instructional Rounds sessions and were intended to capture teacher perspectives of their experience participating in the Instructional Rounds. I had intended to administer a survey at the end of the Lesson Study process; however, because the Lesson Study intervention ended prematurely, I was not able to collect information on teacher experiences.

Finally, I collected minutes from Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) meetings as a means for providing evidence of team discussions and perspectives of individual members. The ILT at Kelly provided a key leadership voice in the direction of both interventions.

According to Coghlan & Brannick (2005), data analysis in design development research occurs concurrently with the design unfolding and after the final data collection. Analysis during data collection will help shape the action research process. As this will be a six-month data collection process, it was challenging to revise the design greatly during the implementation of the intervention. However, I collected feedback from Rounds participants after each of the Rounds sessions. I incorporated feedback from the first session into planning for subsequent sessions. I began my analysis of the process data with an informal analysis of the design development after each session to consider adjustments and changes to the design. I reflected on the data asking analytical questions and making marginal notes and share my informal analysis with the teachers in the study group for in-pup and to adjust, if necessary, the design protocol.

Data Analysis

Data analysis generally followed Creswell's steps for analyzing data in a qualitative study. The first step is to organize and prepare the data for analysis (Creswell, 2009). As the primary source of data in this study was the audio-recording of teacher conversations, I read through the transcriptions of the seven Instruction Rounds lesson debriefs and the four Lesson Study debrief conversations. I also listened to audio-tapes of the debrief conversations as listening to the actual conversation added context and at times provided additional information missed in the transcription. In both cases – reading the transcripts and listening to the audiotape - I noted salient moments and patterns that emerged in the conversations. I read through other data sources: field notes, observations, surveys, and meeting minutes and made summary data sheets that noted preliminary patterns and new questions in an on-going manner throughout the Rounds process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In general, I read through the data to obtain a general sense of the findings (Creswell, 2007). I then wrote preliminary descriptive narratives utilizing tables and graphics when appropriate. In partnership with critical friends and academic advisors, I further analyzed these narratives in order to arrive at a set of findings that are detailed in this dissertation. In this analysis, I regularly returned to the source data in order to provide the clearest evidence for my conclusions.

Reliability – Regarding reliability, my design has detailed a clear set of procedures that can be clearly understood by outside researchers. The sequence of events of the Instructional Rounds process is detailed in Appendix A. These steps detail the order of events in preparing for a Rounds intervention.

Reliability is established in this study through the use of common research methods that can be followed by others. My process data come from observations that have that followed clear protocols. In this design development study, the main concepts are carefully operationalized and the learning goals and detailed data collection strategies set for each Rounds session.

For each Rounds session, I conducted routine process data collection strategies that repeated themselves reliably. They are audiotapes of lesson debrief conversations, teacher survey responses, my field notes and my reflections.

Validity – There are three types of validity: internal validity, external validity and construct validity. This design development study has internal validity as I have established a clear theory of action and detailed the specific intervention that will bring about a desired outcome. These are important elements of internal validity within a design development study. The action research component, where I shared my findings with co-designers and participants, allowed me to identify other variables affecting the study results that might be outside the scope of the study. Some unanticipated events may have impacted the internal validity of this study. For example, participation in the second phase of the study (Lesson Study) declined and ultimately some phases of the intervention were not completed. This design development study has external validity as it relates to the very real world educational problem of teachers being resistant to learn and to share practice. Consequently, the research findings are applicable to the contexts of teachers in other urban school districts. The study also has construct validity as the tools and metrics that have been used are trustworthy and measure clearly stated variables of interest in this study. To measure improvement in the depth of conversation, I used methods used by other researchers to measure this construct. Bryk et al. (2009), in particular developed survey questions designed to measure professional community in its study of Chicago schools.

Validity is established by collecting multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2009). In my study, as previously discussed, I have multiple sources for process data. Internal validity seeks to establish a causal relationship whereby certain conditions are believed to lead to other conditions (Yin, 2009). In this design study, I hoped to establish a relationship between the intervention and growth in the depth of conversation. I have detailed specific goals to indicate learning as the Rounds process unfolds. I will review the analysis of the process data for each session to organize data based on their relevance to each design element.

Transferability –Transferability in design studies refers to the extent to which an intervention can potentially be transferred to a different context and result in similar findings (Van den Akker, 1999). The process-in-context is described so the “ecological validity” of the findings can increase so that others can estimate in what respects and to what extent transfer from the reported situation to their own is possible (van den Akker, 1999). I am confident about the transferability of this design as I based my design on other school-based “Instructional Rounds” interventions that have been tried in other school contexts. The concept of “Instructional Rounds” was first described in a book by Elmore et al. (2007) and was presented as a network improvement strategy. In this case, teams of central office leaders and site administrators would visit schools to determine the effectiveness and impact of district improvement strategies at the classroom level. Overtime, schools began to adapt the network approach to the school level. Teitel (2013) documents the adaptations of Rounds made by several schools to individual contexts. In my study, I designed an adaptation of the Rounds model to the school site level for the purpose of increasing habits of sharing instructional practice. Nonetheless, I took efforts to document the context of my cases taking note to highlight any peculiarities of my study.

Having a knowledgeable facilitator for Instructional Rounds is an essential element in the design. Having said this, transferability could be viewed as limited because of in both cases of the interventions described in this study, there were facilitators leading the session for the first time. In addition, in addition to being lead designer and researcher, I participated in both interventions and due to my background knowledge, acted as co-facilitator. I worked with my colleagues reviewing my field notes and reflections to disentangle these my roles and expertise from the design and provide descriptions and details that allow readers to make decisions about transferability.

Rigor – Design studies by their nature are subject to challenges of bias and questions about rigor for several reasons. These include the tension in role division between development and research (van den Akker, 1999), the potential for advocacy bias (Stake, 2006), and reactions of the participants to the presence of the researcher (Patton, 1990). For each issue, I explain the potential challenge particular to this design study and how I addressed that challenge.

A typical design study would have a designer and a researcher to evaluate the implementation of the design. In the case of this study, I am both the designer of the intervention and the evaluator of the implementation. A researcher playing these dual roles creates tension and warrants the need for an action research component.

This tension can lead to conflict between the desire to pursue an innovative design and the need to critically seek corrections of decisions and empirical proof of outcomes (van den Akker, 1999). In this design development study, research procedures were established ahead of implementation of the intervention. I was aware of these possible challenges and decided when

design elements should guide my decisions and when research considerations should determine the response. Member checking and peer debriefing helped maintain the distinction of these roles to ensure rigor.

My multiple roles (designer, researcher, and actor) moreover could lead to the possibility of advocacy bias. Advocacy bias occurs when the values of the researcher affect the conduct of the study or the findings (Stake, 2006). Among the factors that can contribute to an advocacy bias are the researcher's hope of finding the program or phenomena that is working, the desire to reach conclusions that are useful to others, and the desire to generate findings that will stimulate action (Stake, 2006). I began this development design study with the intent of developing a protocol to increase teacher disposition towards learning and I am certainly inclined to want it to be successful. Actively seeking in the data and presenting disconfirming information can help avoid this potential bias (Creswell, 2007). Throughout the research process, I reflectively examined and discussed how my background as a practitioner could shape my findings by reviewing jotting notes of my feelings, impressions, and thoughts in a reflection journal after each session. I then worked with fellow doctoral students who served as critical friends and sounding board to help me understand what is happening (Creswell, 2007).

Finally, my presence as the design developer and evaluator had the potential to make a difference in how the intervention was implemented and on its outcomes. The fact that a study is being conducted may create a halo effect so that teachers perform in an exemplary fashion and participants are motivated to "show off" (Patton, 1990). I was aware of these issues by documenting our conversations through oral and written reflections throughout the process, checking with my critical friends and triangulating this with end of the series survey data, classroom observations, and interviews.

Because of my own background as a teacher and principal in urban schools where I have witnessed the beneficial impact of teacher learning on teacher practice in the classroom, I am very committed to the success of my design. I especially needed to take into account my personal beliefs and experiences and to consciously interact with participants as a facilitator with knowledge, but not as the authority. I consciously worked to avoid bias and addressed questions of rigor by sharing my reflection notes and preliminary analysis with critical friends to review for potential bias, and to identify potential inconsistencies in data collection, and my potential influence on the design (Creswell, 2007). Also, throughout the research process I reflectively examined and discussed how my background as a practitioner shaped my findings (Creswell, 2007). Continual reflection with critical friends was necessary so that I was aware when these issues emerged (Coghlan & Brannick, 2007).

Study Limitations

There are several limitations worth noting in this study. First, this study is focused on the case of one school in California. Because the information is only from one school, it is difficult to generalize the results to a greater audience.

Second, this study was originally designed as a "design development study," meant to capture both quantitative and qualitative data on the impact of the intervention. In the case of the first intervention, Instructional Rounds, participants undertook two iterations of Rounds (as was part of the design), but did not sufficiently define "next level of work" to occur between iterations and therefore no action was taken based on the patterns generated and identified after

the first Rounds. Therefore a key element of Rounds was not completed making measuring impact difficult.

The second intervention cycle (Lesson Study) faced a similar problem as participants did not complete the final phases of the cycle. This also made collecting qualitative impact data measuring the effect of the intervention difficult.

Therefore, process data is used in both iterations to measure the impact of the intervention. The process data tells a story of what occurred, but is lacking quantitative measurement of the impact.

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS

CYCLE 1 – INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS

Introduction

In this study, I endeavored to create a series of intervention activities designed to engage a group of teachers in strengthening their collaborative ties and de-privatizing their instructional practice. I proposed to use the protocol of Instructional Rounds and adapt it to the school site level. Instructional Rounds is a protocol that was initially designed for district and school level leaders to gain insight into instructional patterns across schools. Instructional Rounds were developed to inform leaders and to focus their attention on instruction, and were not explicitly designed to stimulate teachers' own discussion about instruction or to support teacher development. Because of its success in promoting conversation about instructional practice, however, some schools have attempted to use Instructional Rounds at the site level to involve teachers collectively in instructional improvement (Teitel, 2013).

The intervention plan for the study was to adapt the routine of Instructional Rounds, with participating teachers, as a format for collective classroom observation best suited to the school site. This chapter presents the findings from two iterations of Instructional Rounds at the school site level in the spring of 2015. The first iteration in March 2015 followed closely the "traditional" Instructional Rounds protocol, involving short classroom visits across the full range of grade levels. The second iteration began as modified Instructional Rounds and eventually changed to more resemble the protocol of Lesson Study. In this chapter, I analyze data collected principally in the planning meetings of the Instructional Leadership Team, in the debriefing conversations that followed each iteration, and in written surveys administered to participating teachers.

Several literatures inform this section. First, there is the literature of sense-making and cognitive frameworks. The cognitive approach to policy implementation has tended to focus primarily on the micro-processes that characterize teachers' implementation of instructional policy. Drawing on sociological theories of sense-making (Vaughan, 1996; Weick, 1995), researchers have argued that how teachers come to understand and enact instructional policy is influenced by prior knowledge, the social context within which they work, and the nature of their connections to the policy or reform message (Coburn, 2001a; Spillane et al., 2002a).

Teachers do so by placing new information into preexisting cognitive frameworks, also called "worldviews" (Porac et al., 1989; Vaughan, 1996; Weick, 1995) or "working knowledge" (Kennedy, 1982) by some theorists. Kennedy (1982) defined working knowledge in the following way:

Working knowledge is the organized body of knowledge that [people] use spontaneously and routinely in the context of their work. It includes the entire array of beliefs, assumptions, interests, and experiences that influence the behavior of individuals at work. It also includes social science knowledge. The term working, as used here, has two meanings. First, it means that this is a special domain of knowledge that is relevant to one's job. Second, it means that the knowledge itself is tentative, subject to change as the worker encounters new situations or new evidence. (p. 2, emphasis in original)

Another literature that informs this section is that of routines. An organizational routine is a repetitive, recognizable pattern of interdependent actions involving multiple actors (Feldman &

Pentland, 2003). Organizational routines structure work practice, stabilizing it over time, even in the face of considerable change. They represent one mechanism for sustaining leadership. In addition, routines can be a source of both episodic and continuous change in the work place. New routines can serve as a mechanism to build instructional coherence, internal accountability, and professional community (Spillane & Sherer, 2011).

According to Feldman and Pentland (2003, p. 101), routines have ostensive and performative aspects. The ostensive aspect is “the ideal or schematic form of a routine . . . the abstract, generalized idea of the routine.” The performative aspect refers to “specific actions, by specific people, in specific places and at specific times. It is the routine in practice” (Feldman & Pentland, 2003, p. 101). Routines are not simply actions but are also interactions. Teachers at Kelly began their use of the Instructional Rounds protocol in its ostensive aspect and they had strong and multi-faceted responses to the protocol. Their responses to the protocol and suggested modifications indicate how the routine changed in its performative aspect.

Finally, this section is informed by literature regarding teacher collaboration. Supports for collaboration can be personal characteristics (teacher disposition), structural characteristics (i.e.- adequate time), group characteristics (team relations), process characteristics (meeting process and norms) and organizational characteristics (administrative support) (Vangrieken, 2015). The Instructional Rounds protocol was designed to support teacher growth through reflective dialogue specifically related to the content of every day teacher lived experience (the classroom). The experience provided structural, process and organizational support for collaboration. A challenge would be how new collaborative norms might institutionalized afterwards.

Focusing Instructional Rounds on a Problem of Practice

The purpose of the initial Instructional Rounds at Kelly was to gather data related to a school wide collaborative inquiry or “problem of practice”. Notes from a meeting of the school Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) describes the introduction of Instructional Rounds:

“A power point on Instructional Rounds is handed out. ‘The idea behind instructional rounds is that everyone involved is working on their practice, everyone is obliged to be knowledgeable about the common task of instructional improvement, and everyone’s practice should be subject to scrutiny, critique, and improvement’ (City, et. al, 2009).” (Notes from 1/26/15 team meeting)

The problem of practice statement developed by the school’s Instructional Leadership Team and endorsed by the greater staff was “How do culturally and linguistically responsive practices impact student academic engagement?” The protocol of Instructional Rounds was intentionally introduced as a mechanism for school improvement.

The school had invested time and resources in recent years to learn and strengthen practices of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy (CLRP) and teachers were curious to know how the practices were showing up in the school. In addition, for the past two school years, the school had been exploring the presence of “student academic engagement” in its classrooms through a partnership with a local university. In documents describing the goal of the partnership, “student academic engagement” is defined as, “when students dig into the ideas of the instruction. They struggle to express new ideas in their own language. They verbalize their own thoughts. They connect to the materials, teacher talk, or student talk that expresses these new ideas. They strive to become thinkers in important ideas of the subject matter domain.” A key feature of this concept is to distinguish basic “engagement” from “academic engagement”;

meaning that students may show excitement and engagement in the classroom, but may not be engaged with academic content. Teachers had honed their understanding of student academic engagement by observing classroom videos and making notes regarding evidence of student academic engagement. The ILT developed the problem of practice as a means to gather more information how the CLRP practices were impacting students' academic engagement.

The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) at Kelly looked to the volume *Instructional Rounds in Education* (City et al., 2009) for guidance on setting up Instructional Rounds and created the classroom visit and debrief protocol from their model. The basic structure includes the identification of a “problem of practice”—questions or issues related to instructional practice identified by the host school—that serves as the focus of observations. During orientation, participants are guided to record “low-inference”, specific and objective observations (refraining from judgment and avoiding generalities). Observers are also guided to focus their attention on students in the classroom and to record observation about what students are doing and saying.

The observations consisted of five to ten minute visits by small groups to a series of classrooms (generally four to six classes with some overlap among the classes visited by different groups). Following the observations, the small groups met to share their observations, identify patterns, and reflect on the implications for the school (recommending “Next Level of Work”). During debrief conversations, observed classrooms or teachers are not referred to specifically, rather participants use vague language such as “in one classroom, I observed a student...” when speaking of a classroom. This is done to keep the focus on the identifying school wide patterns.

Many of the teacher responses to Instructional Rounds were related to the format of the protocol used for conducting the Rounds process (pre-meeting, lesson observation and lesson debrief). In advance of beginning Instructional Rounds, teachers on the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) developed the following goals related to use of the protocol: “to develop skills observing learning in action by focusing on student engagement”, and “to notice what students are doing in class and capture evidence by being specific and descriptive.”

Results

Process data, as it relates to this study, includes the observation and analysis of eight one-hour classroom visit debrief sessions with teachers who participated in Instructional Rounds visits. Observational data were supplemented by two rounds of written feedback and a one-time end-of-semester survey. The analyzed data produced three findings: 1) There was a tension between optimism and worry in teachers' response to Instructional Rounds, 2) There was a tension between the focus on a problem of practice and the norm of being non-judgmental, and 3) Wide-spread participation in the Rounds allowed participants to identify limitations that contributed to the next iteration of the intervention.

After recounting the critical incidents of the intervention series using specific and descriptive language, I analyze these events to infer a plausible connection between the intervention process and its outcomes. Utilizing teacher responses from the lesson debrief conversations, the following tells a story of teacher learning resulting from this study.

Finding #1 –Teachers' responses to Instructional Rounds demonstrated a tension between optimism and worry

Examining teacher responses to the implementation of Instructional Rounds at Kelly Elementary School, it is apparent that there was a tension between optimism and worry. In group conversations about the experience and in their reflections, teachers share that they were inspired by the potential of Instructional Rounds to change their practice, overall school culture and student outcomes, but also expressed reservations and skepticism about opening up their classroom instructional practice to scrutiny.

In planning for the implementation of Instructional Rounds, teachers had determined that a goal was “to build community by: introducing the protocol, organizing classroom visits, and having collaborative conversations around practice” (Instructional Leadership Team Notes-March 9, 2015). Teachers had articulated a desire to improve their professional community through this practice. At the outset, this teacher leadership entity (ILT) expressed faith in Instructional Rounds as a social learning cycle – a cycle to encourage collaborative practice.

In some of their responses to Instructional Rounds, teachers expressed receptivity and enthusiasm to being observed and observing others. They expressed enjoyment at the opportunity to watch their colleagues teach and to show them appreciation; yet, they also expressed worry about these practices due to past negative experiences with having observers in their classrooms. Their responses reflect a tension between optimism and worry about this practice.

The tension surfaced early in the process. After the Instructional Leadership Team decided to use the protocol Instructional Rounds as a professional inquiry, some teachers conveyed to their colleagues in private that they were worried about having observers in the classroom. These concerns were shared publically in site leadership committee meetings (such as during ILT and in another site leadership entity the “Site Based Decision Making Team”) and also in private conversations to me (such as with our Instructional Coach). In these meetings, team members revealed that some teachers had expressed reservations about participating (or had indicated they did not plan to participate). When presented with this information during the meetings, I indicated that I believed everyone should participate as part of our commitment with the university partnership and the team members agreed. I avoided using the forceful language of a directive.

The actual Instructional Rounds process began in February of 2015 during a day of professional development designed to continue earlier inquiry into “student academic engagement” in lesson videos and to introduce Instructional Rounds. On the day of the training, I distributed an observation schedule for Instructional Rounds that included all teachers as observers and observed classrooms. At that point, the teachers’ union representative interjected stating that under the teachers’ contract, teachers had “instructional freedom” and they could decide whether to participate or not. It appeared that some teachers had spoken to the representative about their reservations in participating. The section on “Academic Freedom” in the Hayward teachers’ contract states, “*The teacher must be free to think and express ideas, free to select and employ materials, and follow methods and educationally acceptable learning styles of instruction, free from undue pressures of authority, and free to act within his/her professional group.*” (Santa Fe District Teachers’ Contract. p. 119)

The contract statement is explicit regarding a teacher’s latitude to exercise instructional judgment in the classroom, but somewhat ambiguous about whether a teacher could refrain from participation in a school wide professional development initiative. Based on that lack of clarity, I

decided not to contest the assertion. I also discussed the situation with an outside Instructional Rounds coach and facilitator, and she counseled me to encourage participation in Instructional Rounds on a voluntary basis. As having visitors enter one's classroom can evoke feelings of vulnerability (perhaps due to past negative experience), it is better to allow teachers to enter this work slowly. I agreed with this and indicated that participation could be voluntary. During the two iterations of traditional Instructional Rounds, almost all teachers ended up volunteering to participate (see Table 1 below). Nonetheless, this experience demonstrated the trepidation felt by some in participating in a process where they would be observed by and also observers of their colleagues. This also illustrates the importance of ensuring that stakeholders are willing to participate in a collective organizational change effort (Ansell, 2012).

Based on teacher feedback during debrief conversations and on feedback from teachers after the Instructional Rounds, teachers expressed enthusiasm and expressed a desire to continue with similar processes. During the debrief conversations, teacher overall response to Instructional Rounds was favorable. It is possible that teachers chose to keep any reservations private during the discussions of observations; yet when given the opportunity to critique the process, most contributed constructive feedback to improve the process rather than dismissing it outright. Teachers expressed appreciation being able to see the classrooms of their colleagues. Some expressed desire to hear more direct feedback. There was no evidence that the concerns and worries of some were realized in the experience. Overall, almost all of the teachers participated.

The table below shows the number of teachers who participated in the two series of Instructional Rounds.

Table 1: Instructional Rounds Participation

	Participated as observers and observed	Participated only as observers	Total	Did not participate
1 st Rounds- March	18	1	19	6*
2 nd Rounds - May	20	2	22	3

*- Five of the six teachers who did not participate in the 1st Rounds participated in the 2nd Rounds. In total, only one teacher of 25 did not participate in either iteration of Instructional Rounds.

After each set of Rounds, teachers expressed various types of positive feedback about the experience. The feedback can be distinguished by overall general response to the experience, and positive experience specific to the protocol of Instructional Rounds. Below is a summary of the general feedback from participants about Instructional Rounds. Note: because the written feedback was anonymously collected, it is not possible to attribute comments to particular teachers. Table 2 below summarizes written teacher responses after the 1st and 2nd set of Rounds.

Table 2: Comments Made By Participants – General response to Rounds

After 1 st Rounds (What I liked?) (N=18) (numbers in parentheses indicate same response made by multiple participants)	After 2 nd Rounds (What worked well?) (N=20) (numbers in parentheses indicate same response made by multiple participants)
<i>"It was impactful going into colleague's classrooms"</i>	<i>"the discussion and debrief" * (4)</i>

<p><i>"I liked the opportunity to see my peers in action" (3)</i></p> <p><i>"I liked being able to see my colleagues teach" (3)</i></p> <p><i>"I liked the collaborative efforts and discussion"</i></p> <p><i>"I liked collegial time and reflection"</i></p> <p><i>"I liked everyone's openness and eagerness to participate in activities"</i></p> <p><i>"I liked visiting other classes and seeing the learning that is going on" (2)</i></p> <p><i>"I liked going to other classes and observing another teachers' practice" (4)</i></p> <p><i>"It was a good exercise in discussing practice"</i></p> <p><i>"I liked getting the opportunity to observe other classes"</i></p>	<p><i>"time to collaborate, the positivity"</i></p> <p><i>"Great debrief conversations" * (4)</i></p> <p><i>"group discussion at the end of the observations"*</i></p> <p><i>"the conversations during the debrief and looking into the classrooms"*</i></p> <p><i>"discussing observations and sharing across groups"*</i></p> <p><i>"watching all of the teachers with various lessons. I liked seeing all the various CLR techniques used throughout the school"</i></p> <p><i>"organization of subs and groups and that it was planned for well in advance"</i></p> <p><i>"Its great seeing other students"</i></p> <p><i>"I enjoyed going to other classes and learning from other teachers' practice"</i></p> <p><i>"Seeing the classrooms in action"</i></p> <p><i>"Having time to discuss and share"* (3)</i></p> <p><i>"Seeing an increase in discussion, student choice and voice"</i></p> <p><i>"High accountability to each other"</i></p>
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* Although these responses are characterized as general responses to the experience, they reflect responses specific to the Instructional Rounds protocol that was used.

In the Instructional Rounds protocol, teachers visit classrooms in teams and then meet afterwards to discuss their observations. At the end of each lesson debrief session, teachers had an opportunity to express their opinions about the process. At Kelly, teachers expressed appreciation for the protocol in creating a feeling of safety that led to greater comfort in having observers in the classroom. In the Instructional Rounds protocol, participants record low-inferential data in classroom observations and later have discussions without reference to specific teachers. The goal of the Instructional Rounds is to reveal school-wide patterns across classrooms, not provide feedback to individual teachers.

During one of the four observation discussion sessions after the first Instructional Rounds at Kelly, Ashley and Mark (pseudonyms), two experienced teachers who have each taught at Kelly for over ten years contrasted the emphasis on "non-judgmental" observation with the more judgmental stance that district administrators seem to have adopted in earlier district-level approaches to Instructional Rounds. Mark also serves as a member of the school's ILT.

Ashley: The nice thing about this, I just want to say that it creates this transparency, where I know this teacher and not only do I know her during lunch hour, now I know her teaching. It's a picture. I've worked with her ten years, but I've never been to her class. So that's what I'm excited about because some teachers I've never been in their classrooms and I'd like to see more of the other classrooms.

Mark: Just to improve my practice.

Ashley: Right.

(Observation debrief session, March 12, 2015)

In her comment, Ashley speaks to the potential of Instructional Rounds to build professional community amongst teachers at the same school. Mark responds that seeing instruction in each other's classroom would be understood as getting support. Mark continues:

Mark: I like that this creates that transparency that the District's been getting at for the past nine years. We started with these type of rounds but it was more, "OK, what are you learning? Why are you learning it? How do you know you've got them there?" So it's not as in-your-face, and we're able to go in and see, "Yes, there's a lot of great things that our school does have to offer." So that's a nice shift in our own mentality, to try to dispel some toxicity that's happening at our school. (Observation debrief session, March 12, 2015)

Mark's response to Ashley indicates several positive aspects of Instructional Rounds specifically in the affective realm. He recalled a period when the school had been subject to a state audit due to sanctions imposed from the school being under "Program Improvement." Outside auditors visited classrooms for brief visits where they recorded notes based on their own observations and conversations with students. Each teacher was assigned a rating after each visit. Teachers reported that these visits created distrust of classroom observation and Mark shares his insight that Instructional Rounds could rebuild trust in having visitors in one's classroom. In addition, he felt that this effort of Instructional Rounds could be a means to provide the same transparency and oversight that previous sanctions-based monitoring attempted to accomplish. In this, Mark calls out the potential of Instructional Rounds to create "lateral accountability" within a school where teachers begin to hold each other accountable for instructional improvement (Lortie, 1975, City et al., 2009; Teitel, 2013). Throughout the process, teachers who had assumed various leadership roles in the school expressed a desired outcome of Instructional Rounds would be increased transparency in terms knowing what is occurring inside individual classrooms.

Ashley responds to Mark by speaking to the element of the protocol that emphasizes low-inference observations (specific and non-judgmental) and its impact on teachers.

Ashley: Right. And also, being the way it is, without judgment, it's allowing the teachers to relax and do what they do daily.

Mark: Absolutely.

Ashley: Like yesterday, when John said, "We would like to visit your classroom tomorrow," I'm like, "Do I need to prepare for it?" then I'm like, "No! I'm going to do what I do anyway." So that's good.

Mark: I liked it.

Ashley: Me too, and I'd like to see more.

Observation debrief session, March 12, 2015

The perceived potential in Instructional Rounds was not limited to members of the ILT, but it was not clear whether "lateral accountability" would take the form of feedback on individual practice. In the second set of Instructional Rounds in May 2015, Brandon, a teacher new to the school, consistently expressed enthusiasm for being observed by others and hearing feedback on his teaching.

Brandon: I would like to hear more direct feedback from the process. Perhaps I could hear one wondering and one praise about my classroom? Perhaps those whose want individual feedback could opt-in to hear it? (Observational Debrief Session, May 20, 2015)

In the Instructional Rounds protocol, it is explicitly stated the purpose of Rounds is to collect data on school wide trends and is not designed as a mechanism to provide individual feedback to teachers; the focus must be on teaching, not the teachers (Teitel, 2013). In one case study of Instructional Rounds used at school sites over a period of time, teachers over time did grow more interested in hearing individual feedback about their classrooms (Teitel, 2013). This would indicate that the Rounds process could build trust over time leading teachers to seek more feedback about their practice. This element of the Instructional Rounds protocol will be explored further below when adaptations to the protocol are discussed.

The optimism and worry about Instructional Rounds revolved around the openness and sensitivity to being observed teaching and to receiving feedback. After conducting an initial Instructional Rounds in March 2015, teachers at Kelly conducted a follow-up Instructional Rounds in May 2015. During one of the three debrief conversations, three experienced Kindergarten teachers discussed their attitudes about being observed. These teachers expressed their interest to learn from being observed (either seeing themselves teach through videotape or being observed by others).

Heidi: Once I videoed myself teaching and it was a horrifying experience, but I learned from it.

Gail: We could support each other by observing each other.

Heidi: I do culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy and think its going to be great, but then the kids are like 'ugh'. If someone were there to say, 'you were trying to do it this way, but it looked like this.' If someone gave me a wall to back off of, that would be really helpful for me to grow. (Observational Debrief Session, May 19, 2015)

These teachers reflect an optimism that protocols such as Instructional Rounds other types of peer observation protocols would be supportive in improving instructional practice. While this excerpt demonstrates views from teachers expressing readiness and interest to hear more direct feedback, others expressed more trepidation, such as the few teachers who expressed discomfort with having observers in their classrooms at all.

Table 3 below shows the results of a survey given to participants at the end of the Instructional Rounds in June 2016. Only 13 of the 25 participants in the Instructional Rounds completed the survey, so the results cannot represent the whole teaching staff; however, these limited results do demonstrate that a majority of those surveyed favored practices of observing and being observed by colleagues. It is notable that the lowest average of any question was in response to "I feel comfortable having observers in my classroom while I am teaching."

Table 3 : Teacher Survey at the end of Instructional Rounds

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Average
Watching my colleagues helps me improve my practice.	0	1	2	5	5	4.08
If I am observed by my colleagues, I want to hear their feedback	0	1	2	5	5	4.08
I feel comfortable observing the lessons of my colleagues	0	1	1	9	2	3.92
If I observe or am observed, I think	1	1	2	3	6	3.92

it is important to debrief the observation as a group						
I feel comfortable receiving feedback from my colleagues on my teaching	0	1	4	4	4	3.85
I feel comfortable giving feedback on teaching to my colleagues	0	2	2	5	4	3.85
I feel comfortable having observers in my classroom while I am teaching	1	3	3	4	2	3.23

These results do demonstrate the presence of optimism and worry regarding within the teachers about opening up classroom practice to scrutiny.

Finding #2 – In teacher response to Instructional Rounds, a tension arose between an investigation into a Problem of Practice and remaining in a non-judgmental stance in recording observations.

A second finding of the analysis of Instructional Rounds is that there was a tension between the investigation of the problem of practice and remaining in a non-judgmental stance in recording data. Teacher responses demonstrate the difficulty in constructing non-judgmental observations. They also had difficulty moving from low-inference descriptions to a shared view of what improvements to pursue. This necessitates a judgment about the patterns even if it doesn't involve conveying a judgment about individual teachers.

As discussed above, teachers endorsed the focus within Instructional Rounds on conducting classroom observations in a low-inference, non-judgmental manner. In one survey response, a participant indicated, "I liked collecting data/observations without judgment." Teachers expressed that the protocol created a feeling of safety where those observed were not intimidated by having visitors in their classroom. This was due to the fact that names of teachers in observed classrooms were not mentioned during the debrief discussion.

During the debrief discussions, some teachers struggled in making observations without judgment. In one discussion, when a teacher began by sharing an observation that included an interpretation, the facilitator, Margaret stopped him.

Steve: I observed a teacher calling various students "sweetheart" which is from a cultural point of view especially in African American families. It conveys more of a family feeling rather than a dictator, "I'm in control of you" mentality.

Margaret: I'm gonna stop you there because I think you are making a judgment. I would indicate that the teacher called the student "sweetheart" and make that your observation. What you share later would be your interpretation of your observation. But, thank you for sharing.

Margaret then continued and shared one her own observations:

Margaret: (reading from her notes) 'The students indicate challenging vocabulary..' – see, I have the word 'challenging'. I used a judgment! Let's say, 'Students indicate Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary words in a piece on Ellis Island.' (Observational Debrief Session, May 19, 2016)

This exchange between Margaret and Steve indicates the difficulty that Kelly teachers encountered in understanding the protocol and refraining from judgment during their observations.

During another lesson observation debrief discussion, a Kindergarten teacher Heidi asked, “How can we measure what we are seeing without judgment?” This comment relates again to the parameters of the protocol. In an orientation, teachers are guided on taking specific, non-judgmental notes in classroom observations. In general, I observed that teachers both appreciated and struggled with the parameters around observation and judgment within the protocol.

As discussed earlier, the Instructional Rounds protocol emphasizes the collection of specific and descriptive data from classroom observations in relation to a problem of practice. In the debrief session, participants share observation notes and attempt to identify patterns from the collection of notes from multiple classrooms. At this point, participants are to recommend “Next Level of Work” for the school community. When Instructional Rounds is traditionally done by outside visitors to the school, the Next Level of Work recommendations will be left by the visitors. In the case of school-based Instructional Rounds, participants recommend Next Level of Work for themselves. In developing Next Level of Work, participants begin to use their judgment to make recommendations based on the patterns that have emerged.

The Next Level of Work step in the process did not flow easily at Kelly as seen in an interaction between Heidi and Margaret, the Instructional Coach and facilitator. During the lesson observation debrief, the group was still in the “identify patterns” phase and Margaret asked the participants in this group if they had any questions.

Heidi: I'll ask a question. How do you guys feel like the overall classes that you got to visit? Do you feel like Kelly is using in-depth CLR? Mild CLR? Splashing CLR?

Margaret: I'm going to stop with that question and this is the reason why. If someone wants to override me, John, feel free. But there's a whole lot of judgment and we really want these walk-ins to be a place where we are using our observation skills. In this context, for us to make a judgment, we might be extending our evaluation of where we are with CLR. However, we're going to go into next steps, so maybe in your small group, it might be like, "How do we determine where we are in the continuum of CLR implementation?" Right now, we're going to be in small groups, coming up with our wonderings. And that way, we're not trying to answer a question that is as large as that. Does that make sense? Is that OK? Does anyone have a different view? (silence) In the interest of time, maybe we will go to the small group wonderings. (Observational Debrief Session, May 19, 2015)

In this case, Margaret interjected to request that Heidi's question be taken up in the next phase of the protocol. Their interaction shows the difficulty participants had in navigating the flow of the protocol and knowing when to turn to judgment.

Analysis of classroom observation debrief discussions show that many teachers approached these classroom observations looking for fidelity to the practices associated with Culturally Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy (CLRP), giving less attention to authentic student engagement. In this case, teachers may have adopted the role of previous monitors who conducted compliance checks for mandated instructional approaches.

Heidi, a follows up on her question in the small group discussion by asking “*Where are we as a school? Are we wading, splashing, or swimming? Is there a rubric for CLRP?*” In her comment, Heidi refers to a swimming analogy used by Dr. Sharroky Hollie (creator of this version of culturally responsive pedagogy) to describe the stages of development in knowledge of CLRP (someone swimming would be more proficient than someone wading). Heidi suggests

locating a rubric to use when entering a classroom to gauge the CLRP proficiency level of a teacher.

In another observation debrief conversation during the second set of Instructional Rounds, Irene — a 2nd grade teacher committed to CLRP — argued that all teachers should all be “doing CLRP,” as she observed only some teachers are using these strategies. She stated, “Some of us are doing it. How can we get to 100% of us doing CLRP – tweaking what we have? How to gauge these practices school-wide? And where do we need support?” Irene is one of the original teachers trained by Dr. Hollie and is considered an expert in the school in the approach. In the same conversation, Irene continues in the same theme, “Can we talk about (assessing) CLRP objectively? Is it something you check off or something you feel? At its deepest level CLRP is natural and flowing and not about attention signals and strategies.”

In her comment, Irene refers to the shift in mindset that Dr. Hollie indicates is needed for a teacher to become proficient in CLRP. Teachers can receive training in specific strategies, but the training for CLRP suggests an overall mindset shift is required as well.

Although discussion groups were not able to formally agree on specific recommendations for “Next Level of Work”, a majority of the suggestions were related to providing the staff additional support on implementing CLRP strategies (see Table 4).

Table 4: Suggestions for “Next Level of Work” related to CLRP strategies in the seven Instructional Round debrief sessions*

Debrief Session	Suggested CLRP Next Level of Work
March 12 - AM	<i>Teaching more CLRP protocols/strategies</i>
March 12 - PM	<i>“Getting 100% of us doing CLRP”</i>
March 17 - AM	<i>Pick 5 high leverage CLRP strategies that can hook academically</i> <i>Share one CLRP strategy each week in weekly bulletin</i> <i>Teachers complete self-reflection where they are in CLRP</i>
March 17- PM	<i>Pick one high leverage CLRP strategy and make sure the whole staff knows it</i>
May 19 - AM	<i>Teachers less proficient in CLRP observe more knowledgeable teachers</i>
May 19 - PM	<i>Use a rubric for CLRP to assess classrooms –(either through self, peer or administration assessment)</i> <i>Provide demo lessons for CLRP strategies</i>
May 20 –AM	<i>Provide strategies to integrate culturally responsive literature into classrooms.</i>

* - These suggestions were discussed and shown approval in small group discussions, but, due to a lack of time, were not discussed by the larger group in the debrief conversations.

In these cases, teachers question how to better measure where the school and individual teachers stand with regards to their knowledge and skills of CLRP (perhaps using a rubric). This would suggest future classroom visits where observers use a rubric to rate a classroom according to criteria indicating a model CLRP classroom. This type of visit would resemble a compliance check for a specific instructional strategy or approach and would introduce judgment into the observation process. This would differ from the inquiry focus of Instructional Rounds. This focus on teacher implementation of a strategy also differs from the focus of the problem of practice, which was to observe how CLRP practices impact student academic engagement.

Highlighting this tension, teachers disagreed on whether a lesson could be effective without using the Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices shown by Dr. Hollie. In an observation debrief conversation, three Kindergarten teachers debated whether Culturally Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy is essential an effective lesson. One teacher, Maria wonders if it is possible to have an effective lesson with student academic engagement without integration of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy.

Maria: "I don't think about CLRP all of the time. A good lesson is a good lesson and doesn't need to integrate CLRP. Am I doing CLRP practices just for show?"

Heidi: "I think you can have a great lesson that is not culturally and linguistically responsive."

Gail: "Yes you can. Historically students of color have succeeded academically without CLRP, but they need validation of heritage. I can do an engaging lesson without CLRP. You need a mind shift change. CLRP changes how we look at students. You could be at this school and not believe in it. You could just do it for show."

(Observation Debrief Session, May 19, 2015)

This exchange highlights some important ideas from these Instructional Rounds visits. First, there was a tendency for the visits to be a fidelity check on the use of CLRP strategies without regards to the impact on students (and noticing whether they were academically engaged by the strategies). Maria maintains that she can create a lesson with high student academic engagement without use of CLRP strategies. Gail agrees with this, but she states that that CLRP should still be a part of the practices at the school in order to validate students.

Overall, the tendency of several teachers to approach the observation of their colleagues' classrooms as a "compliance check" could be influenced by several factors. Teachers may have drawn on past experience of being checked or audited for a particular approach and they may have been driven by their commitments to CLRP practice. It also indicates the difficulty of recording low-inferential observations and suspending judgment during a classroom observation. Teacher responses demonstrated the difficulty in constructing non-judgmental observations. They also had difficulty getting from low-inference descriptions to a shared view of what improvements to pursue. This necessitates a judgment about the patterns even if it doesn't involve conveying a judgment about individual teachers

Finding # 3: Wide-spread participation in the Instructional Rounds allowed participants to identify limitations that contributed to the next iteration of the intervention, and to marshal support for adaptation

At the end of each of the two iterations of Instructional Rounds (in March and May of 2015), participants shared written feedback regarding how to improve the protocol to better serve their needs and interests. In addition, they also shared what they appreciated and wanted to maintain in future iterations of Instructional Rounds. Many of the teachers shared similar

responses and areas of feedback both in praise and in suggestions for improvement. Because nearly all of the teachers participated in the Instructional Rounds process (see Table 1), the feedback represented a collective voice that led to the implementation of a next iteration.

What worked well about the Instructional Rounds Routine and Protocol

In their responses to Instructional Rounds, teachers reveal clues to the performative aspect of the routine. Beginning with a summary of what teachers noted as positives aspects of the protocol, teachers expressed appreciation for the structure and quality of the debrief conversations. In response to the question, “What worked well?” teachers’ responses were as follows:

“the discussion and debrief session” (4)

“Great debrief conversations” (4)

“group discussion at the end of the observations”

“the conversations during the debrief and looking into the classrooms”

“discussing observations and sharing across groups”

“briefing prior to visits that outlined what we would be looking for”

“process seemed collaborative rather than competitive”

(14 total responses)

Although these brief responses do not allow for a more detailed explanation of what they valued from the debrief conversations, the appreciation for the conversations themselves was wide spread and this can be partially attributed to the effectiveness of the protocol.

Teachers also expressed approval for the structure of the Rounds (in response to the question “What worked well?”).

“The grade level span was sufficient; the amount of time was good”

“The amount of time allowed in each classroom”

“small group of teachers in rooms; I liked seeing snapshot in six different classrooms”

“organization of subs and groups and that it was planned for well in advance”

What worked well about the focus on a problem of practice

Some teachers also expressed approval for the choice of the problem of practice. The adopted problem of practice for the Instructional Rounds visits was, “How does Culturally Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy impact Student Academic Engagement?” The goal of this focus question was to draw attention to the link between specific practices of CLRP and student academic learning. As discussed above, there was tension between the focus of this problem of practice and the effort to remain non-judgmental. These responses here may come from the teachers more passionate about CLRP. Two teachers made the following comments:

“I liked our focus question (problem of practice). This helped to focus when observing.”

“I liked the short time periods in each classroom and also the guiding question and focus.”

What could be improved about the routine (including limitations of the Instructional Rounds routine as experienced);

In addition to expressing what they appreciated about the Instructional Rounds protocol, teachers also expressed what they would like to change in order to best adapt the protocol to their

own needs. I will now detail areas of feedback that led to formation of a revised iteration of Instructional Rounds.

In teacher feedback about the Instructional Rounds, there were a series of observations that related to shifting to a “lesson study” approach. At the conclusion of the second iteration of traditional Instructional Rounds, a teacher Barbara stated:

“We should have a cycle of inquiry like a lesson study. There should be a demo lesson that everyone tries and is observed. It would be an inquiry on our own practice, not on student learning. There should be a pre-assessment where I observe a lesson. There should also be a self-reflection tool to start.” (Observation Debrief Session, May 20, 2015)

This comment was made by one of the teacher who attended the original training with Dr. Hollie. I note that this recommendation did turn into action by the teachers in the fall of 2015. The idea behind switching to a lesson study model was that classroom visits could be longer and more in depth. Also teachers expressed a desire to work with their colleagues in planning lessons.

The following comments were made by teachers in their feedback on Instructional Rounds related to shifting from a school-wide to grade level focus.

“When can I spend time with other classes at my grade level to observe?”

“Can we do grade level instructional rounds next time?”

“It would be nice to do the Rounds on a smaller level (possibly grade level) focused on cycle of inquiry”

These comments further support the stance that teachers preferred to have classroom visits focused on classrooms at or near their grade level.

Another element of teacher feedback was related to the length of time of visits in the classrooms. Instructional Rounds was developed as a strategy to visit a cross-section of classrooms across a school. It was designed for outside visitors (central office staff, other district administrators) to get a snapshot of instructional patterns occurring within a school and across a district. The benefit of short classroom visits (5-10 minutes) is that one can visit multiple classrooms within a block of time. The downside is that an observer can gain only a limited perspective on a lesson in a short visit. The teachers here respond that they felt limited seeing a classroom for only a short visit. One teacher (Brandon), made the following comment during a debrief session,

For people to come in and see stuff—and part of the problem is ten minutes. You don’t know what the lesson is and you don’t know that you’re getting out. We as educators can kind of make a guess and an idea of what’s going on, but it’s really important to know what happened before and what’s happening after and where is it in that spectrum of the lesson. (Observation Debrief Session, May 20, 2015)

The following comments were made by teachers in their feedback on Instructional Rounds related to the length of time of the observation.

“I wish we looked more closely/deeply at fewer lessons”

“Short observation session; it seemed rushed”

“Seemed too short in some classes; too long in others”

“The timing of the lesson observed was too short; I would have wanted to see more”

“Maybe we could have more time to observe in a class?”

Another element of feedback is related to the desire for participation of the observed teacher. In the Instructional Rounds protocol, teachers visit a series of classrooms and then meet to discuss their observations. Using the protocol, teachers make specific, low-inference observations without mentioning a specific teachers' name. All of the observations are synthesized into patterns. From these patterns, next steps for the school as a whole are determined. Through this protocol, observed teachers do not receive individual feedback from observers. Some of the participants expressed relief knowing that individual classrooms and teachers would not be discussed by name in the protocol, but others expressed a desire to receive individual feedback and to be able to discuss the observation with the observed teacher.

The following comments were made by teachers in their feedback on Instructional Rounds related to the involvement of the teacher delivering the lesson. Teachers commented that the observed teacher should receive some type of specific feedback on their teaching and/or should be involved in the debrief discussion.

"Will observed teachers receive feedback?"

"Since there is no feedback going to teachers observed, how will the teachers tweak their methods or be affirmed in the areas where they did well?"

"Can there be optional feedback to those observed? I know that adds an evaluative piece, but I can't improve in seclusion. Let me know, "Hey, this was good", and "maybe try this?"

"Give direct feedback to teachers"

"Feedback for all participants"

"Would like to talk to teachers who delivered lessons"

A conversation between two teachers and myself in a discussion during the second iteration of Instructional Rounds highlights this further. This is a small group discussion amongst the four of us.

Brandon: I don't know if this is a small thing, but if it's possible or even a good idea to have something where you give feedback to each teacher. Like one thing you appreciated and a question you have. Like, "Where did you get all the information on the planet thing?" When people came into my room, I was like, "What did they think?"

John: Yeah, the hope is that you share the macro level trends, like across classrooms. For people who are concerned about that individual level, that's safe for them. But once we've done it a little while, I've heard of situations where it can evolve to giving individual feedback.

Brenda: I mean I went out and sought my individual feedback after the first Rounds, but I know some people are like, "I don't want people coming in. I don't know..."

John: Right, that's the balance, but we can talk about the process too and modifying it.

Brenda: I would be interested to hear what people who don't like it would like. What else would make people more open? I think we should cater to people who are less interested.

(Debrief Conversation, May 20, 2015)

Brenda and Brandon here discuss the potential value to the observed teacher in receiving feedback contrasted with the need to maintain safety for those who are less comfortable with visitors.

Brandon speaks at length about this issue when the whole group discusses areas of feedback.

I think next time we do Rounds, one thing that I personally would like to have is feedback from the people who came and observed me. And to keep people safe, I don't know if what we do, is there some form of check-in or check-out. "I would like the feedback, whatever feedback you want to give me." Or, "Please don't give me any kind of feedback. Just come and make your observations."

So there's all sorts of different things that can come out of that conversation and that feedback that will help me think about my practice. To me, this is about this discussion. All that observation is about what we're discussing and creating in our minds right now of the understanding of, "What can I bring back to my classroom now? How can I make my classroom better?" And I think it's a little empty without that last piece coming back to me or us discussing what are our macro ideas and then what am I going to put into practice from that? So I would like that. (Debrief Conversation, May 20, 2015)

Brandon proposes a means whereby individual teachers could opt-in to receiving feedback. He also shares his feeling that Rounds can feel “empty” without being able to receive specific feedback on his own teaching practice.

In the limited literature on Instructional Rounds, the option to give individual feedback to teachers is discussed (City et al., 2009, Teitel, 2013). Generally, in traditional Instructional Rounds, outside visitors to a school will leave general feedback to the school on trends they observed across classrooms. In certain cases, teachers in a school that is visited may request individual feedback and the rounds protocol could be adjusted to allow for this; however, it is noted that this can detract from the greater goal of drawing attention to a greater overall goal of the school (City et al., 2009). In terms of the very limited experience of rounds led by teachers in a single school, Teitel (2013) observes that some schools have modified the protocol to allow for specific feedback in instances where they had longer experience with Rounds. In discussions about next steps for the school, it was suggested that a benefit of a lesson study or grade level instructional rounds is that it would allow for the participation of the observed teacher.

Another area of feedback was related to length of time for the classroom debrief discussion. In the Rounds protocol, a significant length of time is left for debrief (one hour), but that was often cut short because of time delays in the many logistical steps of rounds. The Instructional Rounds structure in this study involved 24 participants with a group of 10-12 observers split into morning and afternoon sessions. It is a large logistical undertaking, placing substitute teachers into different classrooms and coordinating lunch sessions and other considerations. Therefore, the timing of the sessions often was different and the length of time for discussion was impacted. The comments from seven teachers in this area were as follows:

“Make it a full day, because the afternoon is crunch time”

“I would have longer debrief; time to dig more deeply into student academic engagement”

“I would have more time to debrief”

“I would change the timing of the day to have more debrief time”

“I would change having more time to discuss in the debrief”

“Always seems to have time impacted; I could have talked at length about practice”

“How can we create more time for discussion/debrief?”

Kelly's ILT met in late May and June of 2015 to review the school's entire experience with Instructional Rounds. The points of feedback discussed in this section (regarding limitations) informed a revised protocol of “Grade Level Instructional Rounds” that ultimately

closely resembled Lesson Study. The revised protocol would allow teachers to focus at their grade level with classroom observations longer in duration. The revised protocol would allow the participation of the observed teacher in the lesson debrief discussion and this teacher could receive feedback.

In the feedback about the Instructional Rounds, teachers expressed concern about the lack of follow-through and uncertainty about next steps in the process. A majority of the feedback from teachers concentrated on the question about follow-up to the Rounds. What would be the next steps? Lack of follow-through and communication of follow-through on next steps of the rounds left participants wondering about the benefit.

The following comments were made by Brandon, a teacher new to the school. He had expressed enthusiasm for observing other classrooms and being observed.

Brandon: At the first Instructional Rounds, there was not enough time for a full debrief discussion. Also, I wasn't clear on next steps. The debrief provides umbrella thinking – what am I going to do differently? What are we all going to do differently? So that we're all on the same page. So that there is continuity. We have this beautiful chance and without that reflection it is a little empty."

Brandon: We missed understanding what are our macro ideas. What am I going to put in place for that? (Lesson Observation Debrief, May 20, 2015)

Brandon and Mark continued this discussion in their smaller group.

Brandon: I thought that not having the breakdown... I felt like the last times we did the Rounds, that this critical important part of the breakdown was kind of skipped over just because of time. It wasn't anyone's fault, that's just what it was. I know we were scheduled to be done at 11. If we went from 8:30 to 11, we wouldn't have had this time. And to me, this is the most important time. We kind of hear the bigger picture, that kind of umbrella thinking that covers everything that we're talking about and how are we going to unify it? Because it's all nice and good that I went and watched a bunch of people last time, but without walking away with, "What am I going to be doing differently?" Or, "What are we all going to be doing differently so that we're all on the same page, so that there's some continuity between the classes?" It's a little empty from what it could be. We have this beautiful chance, the three of us, to take something back to our class, even the last couple of weeks, and have a little bit more continuity of what a Kelly education should be. But without that reflection time, we don't have that. So I'm very thankful that we actually have more time today to do that.

Mark: My big take-away was what Brandon just said about having that reflection and closure piece. It's great going in and seeing the different teachers and students and where they're at and getting that snapshot. But without that closure to really take it away, it's the same as in our lessons. That's the one part that I need to work on in my own personal lessons is the closure for the kids. That's always the part that's sacrificed because of time. Just being thankful that we're able to continue to talk about this. I think that's where it really cements in our mind and we grow is in that final feedback. It's like, "OK, this is really good, this is what we need to improve on." That reflection doesn't necessarily happen if we don't have that closing time. Which kind of invalidates, to a point, some of the stuff that we were working on. (Lesson Observation Debrief, May 20, 2015)

In their comments, the teachers highlight that we did not follow the Instructional Rounds protocol effectively in the area of "Next Level of Work." This is the point of the protocol where the results of the collective observations are synthesized and participants develop a collective professional learning goal/s based on what has been revealed as an area of need. In the first iteration of Rounds in March, only one of the four discussion groups had enough time propose some areas of Next Level of Work. When Rounds were done again in May, we allowed more

time in the schedule for the entire debrief and groups were able to complete this step and suggested a range of possibilities for Next Level of Work (some of which became integrated into Lesson Study). Despite this adjustment, the teacher feedback demonstrates that there was a lack of clarity about follow-up from the Rounds.

In looking at teachers' written feedback about the follow through on Next Level of Work, there was a missed opportunity to effectively share the results of the Instructional Rounds school-wide.

Table 5: Questions and Suggestions for Next Steps of Instructional Rounds

<p>What questions do you have?</p> <p><i>How can we apply what we learned more quickly to our school?</i></p> <p><i>Will we use information gained in observation and debrief?</i></p> <p><i>How do we make next steps happen?</i></p> <p><i>What are the next steps?</i></p> <p><i>What do we do with the information gained?</i></p> <p><i>I wonder what impact this will have overall and how it will impact my classroom?</i></p> <p><i>Where will this lead? What will we do with this information?</i></p> <p><i>What do we do next? What are next steps from here? How do we evaluate results?</i></p> <p><i>How to formalize next steps?</i></p> <p><i>I would like to know the end result. Where do we go from here?</i></p> <p>What suggestions for improvement?</p> <p><i>Have posters in staff room that facilitates what we are working on</i></p> <p><i>Synthesize and present findings to staff</i></p> <p><i>Integrate and apply next level of work suggestions</i></p> <p><i>Debrief as a staff</i></p>
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The points here speak to the importance teachers place on investing time into an initiative. If they invest a lot of their time and energy into an initiative, they want to know that there their investment was worth it.

The following points of feedback relate to questions about the overall acceptance and integration of rounds into the school. Teachers pose questions about whether this should be integrated, and if so, how it will be integrated. One teacher asks how the work with rounds will relate to other PLC work. They are all areas related to overall messaging about rounds.

Table 6: Comments related to follow-up

<p>After 2nd Rounds</p> <p>What questions do you have?</p> <p><i>How will this become routine? Should this become routine?</i></p> <p><i>How to integrate with other initiatives?</i></p> <p><i>How does this relate to other PLC work?</i></p> <p><i>How can the whole school participate in this?</i></p>
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How do we get buy in so that what we do is helpful for everyone?

What suggestions for improvement?

Scheduling early and clearly

Returning back to the overall finding in this section, these points of feedback provided by teachers formed the foundation of the next iteration of the instructional improvement cycle (which took place in the fall of 2015). Teachers had provided feedback such as: wanting to focus classroom visits within a specific grade level, wanting to have a longer observation time in a classroom, wanting to involve the observed teacher in the debrief session and wanting a long period for a debrief discussion. All of these priorities were addressed as the model shifted more to a Lesson Study approach. The two additional points of feedback (needing to have clarity and follow through on next steps) at the time appeared tied to specific use of the Instructional Rounds protocol and did not become specifically integrated into the next cycle, but they remained important nonetheless.

Summary

This chapter organizes data from the Instructional Rounds intervention into three findings: 1) Tension between optimism and worry, 2) the tension between the a “problem of practice” and the intent to conduct “non-judgmental” observations, and 3) the surfacing of limitations that provide the basis for further adaptation that has the potential to get more closely and deeply into instruction (grade level use of Lesson Study).

With respect to the initial goals of the intervention: sparking conversations of instructional practice with greater depth and de-privatizing instructional practice, it appears the Instructional Rounds were somewhat successful in de-privatizing instructional practice in regards to Lortie’s conditions of individualism, presentism and conservatism. The practice of Rounds brought teachers together to jointly observe their colleagues’ classrooms through the lens of a problem of practice. This joint work focused on a long-term instructional goal is an experience with the potential to reduce norms of privacy if the practice could become routine. A challenge posed by the Instructional Rounds protocol is how its practices can become integrated in teachers’ daily routine. Implementing Instructional Rounds requires teachers to be released from their classrooms to have the time to observe classrooms and discuss their observations. Institutionalizing such practices would require creating the time with each other to talk and reflect.

Additionally, it is worth noting the role of emotions in teachers’ response to Instructional Rounds. Most teachers expressed that they “enjoyed” the process of be able to visit and observe a series of their colleagues classrooms and discussing the observations afterwards. Because of the parameters of the protocol where names of individual classrooms were not mentioned, teachers expressed that they were less worried after participating. In addition, some teachers opted out of having their classroom observed and participated only as observers. In their positive response to the Rounds and in their expressed desire to continue with them, teachers demonstrate the power of positive affective feedback to support a social learning cycle- where participants are in a process of learning together and growing as a team. In the literature on collaboration and school improvement, there is attention given to the emotional and affective dimension of this work. Collaborative groups report personal satisfaction that comes with a sense of shared values, from a sense of support and from the pleasure of each other’s company (Crow & Pounder, 2000; Yisrael, 2008). One study documented how a teacher’s emotional sharing of a challenging

classroom experience increased the level of trust within a group and led to a more profound level of conversation about instructional practice (Horn & Little, 2010). However, there is the potential for conflict and disappointment if collaboration does not go well (Main, 2007; Westheimer, 2008).

These findings reflect developments that laid the groundwork for a further adaptation in the direction of a different but related routine – Lesson Study – that will be the focus of the next chapter. I will next describe the findings from the next stage of this school improvement process at Kelly where teachers engaged in a grade level cycle of inquiry using a process resembling lesson study.

CHAPTER FOUR

CYCLE 2 – FROM INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS TO GRADE-LEVEL LESSON STUDY

Introduction

After completing two iterations of “traditional” Instructional Rounds in the spring of 2015, teachers at Kelly chose to implement a variation of Rounds in the fall of 2015. Most significantly, the teachers wanted to focus attention on lessons and classrooms closest to their own grade level for longer periods of time. In this chapter, I introduce two principal findings. First, teacher participation declined in this next cycle despite efforts to adapt the new “Cycle of Inquiry” routines to respond to feedback and stated preferences. Second, teachers who did participate in the adapted routine demonstrate the potential value of the more in-depth planning and observation entailed in Lesson Study.

The practice of Lesson Study, adapted from a well-established practice in Japanese schools, provided a useful precedent for this work. “Lesson Study” describes a range of instructional improvement strategies that involve observation of classroom lessons by a team of teachers that collects data in order to analyze the lesson (Lewis, 2002a, Lewis & Tsuchida, 1997, 1998; Wang-Iverson & Yoshida, 2005). One teacher from the team agrees to teach the lesson while the others observe and make detailed records of the learning and teaching as it unfolds (Lewis, et. al 2006). The observed lessons are used to highlight the broader vision of education shared by the group of teachers and are kept over time to serve as “research lessons.”

Studies of Lesson Study in the U.S. have found evidence that lesson study can improve instruction (Lewis, Perry, & Hurd, 2009; Lewis, Perry, Hurd, & O'Connell, 2006; Meyer & Wilkerson, 2011; Moss & Tepylo, 2011; Waterman, 2011). Most studies rely on small samples and use qualitative methods; however, one recent study (Lewis & Perry, 2012) was conducted in multiple sites, used quantitative measures of teachers’ and students’ knowledge, and used a randomized controlled design to enable causal inferences (Lewis & Perry, 2012). This study found that teacher use of Lesson Study produced increases in teacher knowledge, teacher efficacy beliefs and in student knowledge.

Lewis et al. (2006) created a framework to represent the various benefits to teacher practice (growth in teacher knowledge, teachers’ commitment and community and learning resources (see Table 1). The “Growth Pathways” framework shown below is an evolution from what was the initial more narrow conception of lesson study’s benefit; an improvement of instruction through the refinement of lesson plans.

Table 1: Growth Pathways in Lesson Study

Teachers’ knowledge	Teachers’ commitment and community	Learning resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of subject matter • Knowledge of instruction • Capacity to observe students • Connection of daily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation to improve • Connection to colleagues who can provide help • Sense of accountability to valued practice community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson plans that reveal and promote student thinking • Tools that support collegial learning during lesson study

practice to long term goals		
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The shift to Lesson Study at Kelly stood, in principle, to benefit from the continuing partnership with a local university. The university partners provided training in analyzing and creating lessons with a focus on “student academic engagement.” With support from this partner, Kelly teachers implemented Lesson Study using a model referred to as a “Cycle of Inquiry” (Appendix A). In this format, teachers followed a cycle of planning lessons, teaching and observing, reflecting and making improvement leading to a subsequent cycle.

The structure of the revised Instructional Rounds format (tailored to the school site) suffered many changes and alterations. The agreed upon structure (Instructional Rounds at grade levels) became a Lesson Study format (one demonstration lesson per grade level). The teachers ultimately decided to stop the process when they felt other school climate concerns (specifically related to student discipline) were becoming too overwhelming.

Table 2 compares the initial plan of the cycle of inquiry to its actual implementation.

Table 2: Implementation Of The Cycle Of Inquiry

	Initial Plan	Actual Implementation
Step 1- Whole Staff Introduction of the Process – (Early October)	Teachers receive an orientation to Cycle of Inquiry with its multiple goals. Teachers receive orientation to Instructional Read Aloud and lesson design framework (with focus on lesson openings). Teachers receive observation tool related to effective opening of a lesson. Teachers watch model lessons on video. Teachers begin to plan initial lesson.	This step was accomplished in a meeting; however there was not enough time in the meeting to cover all of the material. Teachers watched a video modeling a non-fiction Interactive Read Aloud. It is worth noting that this session was held during a “Vertical Collaboration” session which is a whole group meeting held during grade level collaboration time. The school site decision-making team agreed to have these meetings once per month to pursue teacher initiated professional learning. After this meeting, some teachers expressed that that the work of the Cycle of Inquiry did not feel teacher directed.
Step 2- Pre-Instructional Rounds by grade level	Teachers conduct “Instructional Rounds” within their grade level (or within similar grade levels) to see a trial version /diagnostic of an Instructional Read Aloud lesson. In a debrief session, teachers would identify areas for improvement (next level of work). During the school wide planning for this cycle, teachers on the school leadership team determined that having all members of a grade level observed teaching one lesson would be too onerous. One classroom lesson observation would preferably last 40-60 minutes to gain a full picture of the lesson.	No grade level engaged in this step and three of seven grade levels completed a modified version of this step. Substitutes were available to release teachers, but some teachers expressed they didn't want to be out of their classroom. Although planning time was available to allow teachers to plan this lesson, some expressed preference to plan the lesson during a day-long district planning day. The three grade levels that completed this step observed one lesson. They expressed it was too difficult logistically to use a

		“Instructional Rounds” format at one grade level (multiple observations of one grade in a single day). Therefore, teachers preferred using a lesson study approach, where one colleague volunteers to teach a lesson that is planned collaboratively at a grade level while the other grade level colleagues observe.
Step 3 – Grade Level Planning	During a district day long planning day, teachers plan a more detailed Interactive Read-Aloud lesson. Teachers use a “bridge” tool to facilitate making connections between teacher and student understanding of key concepts of lesson.	All grade levels participated in this day of planning designed to create a Non-Fiction Interactive Read-Aloud lesson with a focus on the quality of the opening.
Step 4- Delivery of 2nd Lesson (with accompanying Instructional Rounds) –	Teachers at a grade level deliver lesson as planned. Grade level colleagues are released to observe lesson. In post-observation debrief discussion, teachers discuss strengths of lesson and opportunities for improvement (next level of work).	One grade level completed this particular step.
Step 5 – Whole Staff Share Out	Teachers from individual grade levels share out the results of their inquiry with rest of school staff.	This final step did not occur. Several weeks after the District planning day, teachers met over their concerns school climate and student behavior. They determined that they would not be able to continue the cycle of inquiry while the concerns about school climate lingered. I met with the staff to review their concerns and we determined to focus on our school climate for the remainder of the calendar year (late November and December).

The table above highlights the many changes that occurred to the Cycle of Inquiry model of Instructional Rounds at Kelly in the fall of 2015. Despite the changes made in response to feedback from teachers, the teachers ultimately decided to stop participation at mid-point during the cycle.

External Supports for the Lesson Study strategy: District resources and the university partnership.

Kelly’s participation in a university partnership was a key element of the context of the Cycle of Inquiry. Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, the school joined in this partnership with three other schools and a local university with the goal of creating lessons to foster “student academic engagement.” As a result participation in the partnership, the District provided a set of resources. The District funded 75% of a salary for an Instructional Coach as well as provided funding for teachers to be released from their classroom for lesson observation and lesson planning. The university partners provided learning tools to the school in the form of lesson

planning documents and orientation and training as to the concept of “student academic engagement.” The university partner developed a learning sequence of “Cycles of Inquiry” related to phases of a lesson (opening, introducing new context, independent practice, closure)(see Appendices C&D). For the first cycle, the university partner provided a classroom observation tool to guide analysis of “effective lesson openings” (Appendix B) and also provided sample videos that modeled effective lesson openings. In exchange, the district expected Kelly teachers to utilize protocols and tools developed by the university partners and to allow the university partners to record Kelly learning using video and audio recordings as well as surveys and interviews.

Goals of Cycle of Inquiry / Lesson Study

The goals of the Cycle of Inquiry/Lesson Study at Kelly were similar to those presented in the above Lesson Study framework (Lewis et al., 2006). The university partnership and the focus of the Cycle of Inquiry were approved by the school Site Based Decision Making Team in June of 2015. In August and September of 2015 at the start of the school year, the school ILT (including Instructional Coach and Principal) finalized specific steps with the Cycle of Inquiry and this was presented to staff at staff meetings and reinforced at grade level collaboration meetings.

The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) at Kelly developed three goals for the cycle of inquiry. The first goal of the Cycle of Inquiry was to, “support colleagues in professional growth through collective planning and lesson observation (lesson study).” This goal aligned with the second “Growth Pathway” for Lesson Study listed above, “Teachers commitment and community.” The second goal was, “use the lesson design structure of district’s Common Core Instructional Framework (CCIF) to create lessons that promote student academic engagement” (see Appendix E). For this first cycle, the goal was to focus on the opening of lesson. This second goal most directly connects with the “Learning Resources” element of the “Growth Pathway” as teachers aimed to develop effective lessons using the District’s lesson framework. This goal also relates to the “Teachers’ Knowledge” element of the “Growth Pathway” as teachers hoped to improve their knowledge of instruction by creating lessons to promote student academic engagement. Because of its university partnership, Kelly teachers had been analyzing lessons with regards to “student academic engagement” (described earlier). The university also assisted the district in developing a Common Core Instructional Framework (CCIF) that included a lesson design element with four components (Lesson Opening, Introduction of New Knowledge, Practice with Feedback and Lesson Closure). The framework described specific criteria for effectiveness of each component (Appendix D). The theory was that use of this framework would lead teachers to create lessons that promoted student academic engagement. For this Cycle of Inquiry, Kelly teachers focused on the first component of the CCIF lesson design (the lesson opening). The teachers planned lessons using a set of criteria for effective openings (see Appendix B “lesson observation guide”).

The final goal for Kelly teachers in this Cycle of Inquiry was, “to learn the structures of Readers’ Workshop” and specifically the ‘Instructional Read-Aloud’ lesson format. This goal aligned with “Teachers’ Knowledge” element of the Lesson Study Growth Pathway. Teachers expressed a desire to learn the structures of “Readers’ Workshop” which would increase their subject matter knowledge.

The initial plan for Lesson Study at Kelly was ambitious (see Table 2). Teachers were to receive an initial orientation to an Interactive Read Aloud and plan a lesson during weekly grade level collaboration time. Next, they were to engage in “grade level Instructional Rounds” where all teachers within a grade level observed each other teaching the initial lesson. They would be released all day for observation and debrief. Next, teachers would plan a revised lesson based on a revision of the first lesson during a whole-school teacher-planning day. Next, teachers would take another release day to observe each other teaching the revised lesson and would have a debrief discussion. They would then present the results of the Cycle of Inquiry at a whole staff meeting.

The following are the results from the overall school Lesson Study experience as well as specific experiences from three grade levels at Kelly (Kindergarten, 1st Grade, and 6th Grade). Each grade level went through one lesson observation. Three teachers participated in the Lesson Study at each grade level. The school Instructional Coach, Marjorie, participated in the lesson observation and acted as facilitator in the debrief discussions. Acting as school principal and researcher, I participated in the lesson observations and debrief discussions.

Findings Summary

In considering the data on the lesson study intervention in relation to the lesson study framework referenced above, two main findings emerge.

First, participation markedly declined in Cycle of Inquiry activity despite the effort to respond to teacher concerns and preferences. Only three of seven grade level groups engaged in the Lesson Study activity, although all grade levels had committed to participate at the outset. Teacher participation declined despite the adaptations that were made to “Instructional Rounds” introducing a form of Lesson Study. As with the experience with Instructional Rounds, the tension between optimism and concern continued to surface, and is evident in the discussions of the Instructional Leadership Team (which included both reports of teacher concerns and complaints and suggestions for moving forward).

A second finding is that despite the tension that emerged, teachers who participated in the Lesson Study engaged in rich conversations related to the structures of Readers’ Workshop. When the conversation focused on the subject matter of the lesson (Interactive Read-Aloud), it was notable how teachers demonstrated greater curiosity and reflection about the lesson and posed a greater number of probing questions. This level of conversational depth was not evident when teachers discussed the effectiveness of the lesson opening (another lesson observational focus). In these conversations, teachers shared their observations in relation to a lesson observation guide (Appendix B). In these cases, teacher observations superficially noted the presence of particular strategies in a checklist format. Overall in the observation debrief discussions, they demonstrated a proficiency in subject matter knowledge, but the discussion around knowledge of instruction (lesson openings) and as well as capacity to observe instruction (both a part of the first “Growth Pathway” of the theory of action for lesson study described above) was more superficial.

Finding #1 - A Pattern of Eroding Participation

Although there was optimism at the outset of the Cycle of Inquiry with all grade levels engaging in the cycle, there were frequent changes as the cycle progressed and essential steps of the cycle were not completed. The Instructional Leadership Team made frequent modifications

to the Cycle of Inquiry model to address teacher input and feedback, but only three grade levels initiated Lesson Study and only one grade level completed the whole cycle. Adaptations made to the protocol with the intention of addressing the needs of the participants were not successful in maintaining buy-in with the process.

Accounting for the Decline in Participation

Several factors can account for the decline of participation amongst teachers in the Cycle of Inquiry. These factors became more apparent in analysis of meetings of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) in November of 2015 and January of 2016 when representatives shared their concerns and the concerns of their colleagues.

First, there was a lack of clarity of the goals of the Cycle of Inquiry. There were too many competing foci and structures. Also, teachers expressed a concern with the school-wide curricular focus. Finally, teachers found that the benefits of Lesson Study were not sufficient to warrant being out of their classrooms. They felt it was a burden placed on them having to plan for (and recovering from) a substitute.

In addition, in principle, the university partnership was a source of guidance and support for collaborative lesson planning by providing a planning template and observation protocol, but in practice the time for orienting teachers was too limited, and the relationship was not characterized by adequate trust.

Reflecting back, it appears that the initial model was overly ambitious by expecting grade levels to complete two “Instructional Rounds” lesson observations during the Cycle of Inquiry. At the end of the Instructional Rounds in the spring of 2015, the ILT had discussed having Instructional Rounds within two grade levels (i.e.- all of the 1st grade observe all of the 2nd grade), but grade levels preferred to work just within themselves. It is possible that too much flexibility weakened teacher commitment and ultimately led to teachers giving up the process.

Two meetings of the ILT (in November 2015 and January 2016) are insightful as indicators of the questions and concerns held by teachers. The issues they raised formed the basis for the next iteration of the Cycle of Inquiry. In November 2015, during its monthly meeting, the ILT discussed the progress of the cycle of inquiry. This meeting occurred just prior to the teachers’ meeting when they decided to end participation in the cycle. Factors introduced in the November meeting were repeated and elaborated in the January meeting, but the January meeting also became the occasion for introducing additional considerations related to the university partnership.

Themes from November Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) Meeting

Three main themes emerged in the November ILT meeting that might help account for a decline in participation: a reported lack of clarity about the goals of the Cycle of Inquiry; a perception that the chosen focus on Interactive Read-Alouds was too narrow; and teachers’ reluctance to be out of their classrooms, especially given mounting concerns over student disciplinary problems.

There was a lack of clarity of the goals of the Cycle of Inquiry. There were too many competing foci and structures.

At the start of the meeting, I asked the team where the grade levels were in their steps of the Cycle. From written meeting notes (not audiotaped), it is apparent I am pushing grade level

members regarding their progress in the Cycle of Inquiry. I am also making the effort to clarify the foci of the Cycle of Inquiry as I have sensed ongoing confusion about the process.

Where are we on the status of the Inquiry? A lot of work happens in grade levels, so we need to be clear in the ILT of where we are at and what we are focused on. We need to continue to work at it in grade level teams. In some ways, the Cycle of Inquiry is an abstract professional development. We are being used as a lab site that the District can use for future use and mold it to what works for us. The next cycle will be focused on introducing new concepts and on guided practice with feedback. It is not meant to be a constraint meaning everything is done in a particular way. It gives a structure or menu of resources that they can go to (Principal, November ILT Meeting notes).

In this case, I am pushing the members of the ILT to consider the work that is happening at their grade levels. I am also acknowledging that the work and focus is abstract and can be difficult to grasp (and this is likely in response to questions I have received). I am also using a persuasive tone in reminding teachers that we are a “lab” for these ideas that will be implemented on a grander scale later. I am also previewing the focus of the next cycle of inquiry that will be focused on the next segment of the district lesson design template (Introducing New Concepts and Practice with Feedback). I note that I am doing a lot of persuading.

In response, an ILT member Mark responded that he and others were still lacking clarity: *“For the Cycle of Inquiry, many of us understand what the parts are, but we need a little more clear guidance.”* Heidi, a Kindergarten representative, added that she missed a focus on student results in this version of the cycle. Teachers at Kelly had previously used a cycle of inquiry model based on an assessment of a specific standard. The cycle would begin with a pre-assessment and end with a post assessment to measure progress. The Cycle of Inquiry model used in this case at Kelly included the opportunities to look at student results, but was not shaped around a pre-assessment and post-assessment. To Heidi, the Cycle of Inquiry in this case seemed to focus more on teacher practice, rather than on student learning: *“Can we add an area for results to where you can reflect on did the students achieve the goals – if so, then what’s the next step; if not, then how will you reteach?”* Marjorie, the Instructional Coach responded that the university partnership had created a document to promote individual teacher reflection: *“The partnership has a self-reflection guide they are releasing to the coaches on Wednesday that could serve this purpose.”* However, the reflection document focused teacher practice, not on student results, which was the focus Heidi was seeking.

Teachers expressed a concern with the school-wide curricular focus

Teachers then began to share their opinions about the focus of the cycle of inquiry, indicating that the choice of Interactive Read-Alouds as a focus had been too constraining. It is possible that some of those who had been more supportive of the collective focus earlier now remained silent and conceded a differentiated approach. They indicated they would have preferred to be able to choose their own focus. These comments foreshadow further comments in a January meeting. Brandon, the 5th grade ILT representative indicates this opinion regarding focus being the lesson opening of a Non-Fiction Interactive Read-Aloud lesson.

Having a Non-Fiction Read-Aloud Opening is not that engaging with the text. The students need the text in front of them as a whole class read. We need to talk about what are the best strategies to work with within Reader’s Workshop when trying to talk about the opening and our focus for the Cycle of Inquiry. (Brandon)

Barbara, an advocate for CLRP in the school, also shares her opinion that the Cycle of Inquiry has moved too far away from the earlier focus on CLRP in the school. She makes a case for better reviving the CLRP practices with “Instructional Rounds”.

We need to continue to include the CLRP in the Instructional Rounds and move forward with PD in Staff Meetings / other times. That will link with student engagement with the university partnership.

A few teachers speak about wanting more flexibility in the choice of focus for the Cycle of Inquiry. This foreshadows more of the comments to come in January.

Why do we need to have the same focus for all grade levels? We should have freedom to explore choice of focus at grade level (Irene)

We should make it broader focusing on a subject / standard instead of observing the exact same lesson. You get more ideas and variation instead of being confined. There's a lot to come out of the conversations afterwards (Brenda).

Teachers expressed a concern over the logistics of being released from their classroom to conduct observations during the school day.

Brandon also remarks that an obstacle to some teachers participating in the lesson observations is that they were uncomfortable getting a substitute teacher for the day, saying “*Not every teacher feels comfortable getting a sub, so we need to think of alternatives.*” Barbara agreed, reporting that she had heard teachers express that they did not like having to leave their own classroom in order to observe another teacher during the cycle of inquiry: “*There's a lot of concern about being pulled out of the room and getting a sub. How do you recap and discuss afterwards? How do we minimize the damage of the subs and maximize the debriefs?*”

Teachers' reluctance to leave their classrooms in the hands of a substitute can be traced in part to issues unrelated to the Cycle of Inquiry. A week after meeting, the teachers held a union meeting (with most teachers attending) to discuss mounting concerns about school climate. They felt there were too many discipline problems in the school and that they were having trouble focusing on and participating in the tasks of the Cycle of Inquiry. At this point, I met with a teacher leadership team and over several meetings we jointly developed a plan to address their concerns. We determined that after a few months we would again take up the topic of the Cycle of Inquiry and the university partnership.

Ultimately, the school continued with another cycle (not in the scope this study), but removed the lesson observations all together. In particular, many teachers cited the challenge of being away from their own classroom for a day or portion of the day to observe another classroom and engage in a debrief conversation. In these cases teachers indicated it was an effort to create substitute plans and it would sometimes “take a whole day to clean up the mess” caused when students had been with a substitute teacher. For the third cycle, they indicated they wanted to take smaller steps and conduct a lesson self-reflection without an outside observer. Teachers within the grade level taught the lesson, recorded their own observations and collected student work and then met to discuss. Perhaps they had been pushed too hard to open the classroom door.

Themes from January Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) Meeting

In January 2016, the ILT met to review the status of the school's involvement with the Cycle of Inquiry and participation in the university partnership. Based on notes from the

meeting, the teachers shared the following questions and concerns. Surfacing and discussing these concerns paved the way for participation in a successful cycle of inquiry by all grade levels in the spring of 2016. The themes that emerged from teacher discussion during this meeting echoed those from the November meeting two months prior.

There remained a lack of clarity of the goals of the Cycle of Inquiry.

ILT members continued to express confusion regarding the multiple goals of the cycle of inquiry (Instructional Rounds, Lesson Study, Readers Workshop, Effective Openings of Lessons). Teacher confusion and response evokes a critique of educational reforms that adding a structure to an organization increases its complexity exponentially (Elmore, 2004). As I had done in the November meeting, I am compelled at the start of the meeting to reiterate the focus of the Cycle of Inquiry: *“We blended the original Cycle of Inquiry around Readers’ Workshop to help spark interest and see how it goes hand in hand with student academic engagement.”* This comment highlights the difficulty I encountered in presenting the focus of the Cycle of Inquiry in a clear manner, although I had been called upon to do so on multiple occasions.

Later in the meeting, a teacher raises the question (with a note of irritation), *“Why do we keep going over the same things (purpose of the partnership, clarity)?”* The teacher’s comment indicates that even though some still expressed confusion about the focus, others had tired of ongoing attempts at clarification. Other comments related to lack of clarity were:

What makes this process a ‘cycle’ of inquiry?

How to make it effective with planning ahead/next steps?

I have confusion about Read Alouds and Cycle of Inquiry

What does the staff think the benefit of the work is?

Where does the staff want the direction to be?

What are the issues as to why people aren’t signing up for Cycle of Inquiry observations?

How do we use this process so it is not an extra thing to do?

Overall, teachers’ repeated requests for clarity signal a lack of buy-in from the staff and indicate that teachers may be skeptical about the benefits of participating in the Cycle of Inquiry.

Teachers continued to express concerns regarding the curricular focus

As they had in November, teachers also expressed that they felt confined by the Cycle of Inquiry focus on a single collective topic (in this case it was an Interactive Read-Aloud Lesson with a focus on the opening of the lesson). Several teachers also proposed recommendations to reintegrate Culturally Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy (CLRP) into the focus of the Cycle of Inquiry. When the ILT had chosen a Readers’ Workshop lesson to be the focus of the Lesson Study/Cycle of Inquiry, we discussed that this would meet an equity goal of providing all students with a dynamic, differentiated reading program. This may have contributed to CLRP being left out of the focus for this iteration. Some teachers here are advocating returning to it.

We should place an emphasis on covering all subjects through cross curriculum projects (Brenda).

We should allow people to create lessons in any curricular area with a lens of CLRP (Irene).

The District is asking people to create lessons on February 5th, so we should do it through the lens of what Kelly is great at, like CLRP (Mark).

Barbara would like to see us focus on CLRP to continue to support our staff in the practices of CLR. Call / response isn’t CLRP in and of itself. A focus on the other 3 quadrants is also needed (vocab should be next). Then people will feel comfortable to put the CLR practices into their lesson plans and practice.

Maybe start with, "How do you academically engage your kids? What are you doing? What new strategy are you willing to try?" Bring you CLR book. Brainstorm as a grade level and pick a few strategies.

How can we increase CLRP to get better student engagement to benefit our students and ourselves? (Mark)

There was confusion about and suspicion of the university-district-school partnership

Although the university-district partnership arrangement was intended to provide support for the Cycle of Inquiry, ILT members raised questions and concerns that suggested uncertainty about its benefits and an absence of trust. There were several comments related to overall goals of the partnership as well as questions about the resources it supplied.

What are we doing with the partnership?

"Is the partnership effective at the other schools that they are at?"

What resources do we have as a result of the money that the partnership brings in?

How much will we lose if we don't continue it (funding, position wise...)?

How can we use the resources that are offered for: sub coverage for team collaboration, Marjorie modeling lessons, and cycle of inquiry?

There were also several comments about communication with the partnership and its progress.

How are the partners reporting back to the staff?

We need more clarity and better communication.

Finally, there were questions about how the work of the partnership can fit into other existing programs at the school.

Teachers also indicated a level of discomfort with the observational role taken up by the university partners. Graduate students attended school faculty meetings, Instructional Leadership Meetings, and teacher collaboration meetings and asked to take notes and audio record the meetings. School staff initially agreed, but as evidenced from the comments below, some members became uncomfortable with the outside presence. In discussions after the Cycle of Inquiry ended in November of 2015, the ILT discussed and clarified the role of the university partnership along with the role of the Instructional Coach and the funding that came with the partnership. In a response to the discomfort expressed regarding the graduate students' activity, the ILT also recommended that future meetings would not be recorded (and the university partner agreed).

"Thank you for ending the process of taking notes and observations by the university."

"We need research development by teachers who are teaching."

I interpret that the second comment listed here was in reference to the involvement of a graduate student researcher who had indicated she had not ever taught in the classroom. Some teachers commented that they would have felt more comfortable interacting with her if she had classroom experience.

Overall, several themes overlapped in the two ILT meetings in November and January. First, the goals of the Cycle of Inquiry were not clear to teachers. Too many foci and structures within the Cycle of Inquiry contributed to this confusion (i.e.- focus on lesson opening of a Non-Fiction Interactive Read-Aloud Lesson). Second, teachers expressed concern about the choice of focus for the Cycle of Inquiry and advocated for flexibility at grade level to choose a subject matter focus. Finally, a theme that stood out at the November meeting was the sentiment that preparing for a substitute and being out of class to observe another class was too challenging.

This is notable as in the subsequent cycle, grade levels chose not to include a peer lesson observation element. Finally, a major theme that emerged in the January meeting was concern about the university partnership. At this meeting, ILT members put forth a range of questions and concerns for consideration in order for the school to continue in the partnership. The ILT was able to find a resolution on these concerns and the school moved forward in its participation in the university partnership. As was noted earlier, these recommendations were integrated into the model for the subsequent Cycle of Inquiry that all grades completed in the spring of 2016.

Finding #2: Those who did participate demonstrate the potential value of the more in-depth planning and observation entailed in Lesson Study.

Although the school wide participation in the lesson study declined during the Cycle of Inquiry, three of seven grade levels participated in a modified way and analysis of their lesson debrief conversations reveal the potential benefit of Lesson Study. The potential benefits were especially apparent when teachers were discussing their experience with the Interactive Read-Alouds. When the conversation focused on the subject matter focus of the lesson (Interactive Read-Aloud), it was notable how teachers demonstrated greater curiosity and reflection about the lesson and posed more probing questions. In debrief conversations related to the lesson opening, teachers specifically and descriptively referred to teacher instructional moves and student responses to these moves. Teachers connected these teacher moves to specific strategies for effective lesson openings (see Appendix B); however this same level of conversational depth was not evident during the conversations about the lesson openings. In these cases, teachers' observations superficially noted the presence of particular strategies in a checklist form as opposed to having a real discussion of how students might be drawn into a lesson in ways that promote academic engagement. Revisiting the "Growth Pathways of Lesson Study" framework (Table 1), analysis of teachers' conversation reveals this example of lesson study had the greatest impact in the area of promoting subject matter knowledge.

The examples below highlight different elements from the post-observation debrief from each of the grade levels that participated. As the lesson opening was the first element to be discussed, it is shown first in the analysis. The parts of the conversation related to Readers' Workshop are shown after.

The following are examples from teacher conversations that highlight the elements discussed above. The following markers are used to highlight the features of the conversation related to lesson openings. References to specific teacher actions are underlined, specific student responses are highlighted in gray and references to specific strategies of effective lesson openings are shown in bold. With respect to conversations about Readers' Workshop, reflective comments are written in bold and reflective questions are underlined.

Kindergarten

The three members of the Kindergarten team met in the afternoon before the lesson to preview the lesson. The teacher delivering the lesson (Heidi) presents a preview to the observers. The next morning, Heidi delivers a model lesson and the observers (two grade level colleagues, Instructional Coach and Principal) take notes using an observation protocol. The participants then return to the conference room and debrief the lesson using Debriefing Protocol (exhibit C).

Lesson Opening

The following exchange is between two Kindergarten teachers and myself and describes features of the lesson opening in relation to the strategies listed in the observation protocol.

*Maria: When you gave the hook, the students were excited. For **'prior knowledge'**, you asked them about eating peas. For **'participation'**, you had them turn and talk. For the last part, 'leading questions', I didn't get to that.*

John: You passed out jellybeans for students to taste which connected to theme in the story. This promoted student academic engagement.

*Sarah: There were a lot of **attention getters & hooks**- a lot of experience with call and response. When reading, we use voices especially for younger kids. They were academically engaged when they acted out scenes from the book.*

The participants are effective at noting all of the strategies present in the opening; however Sarah in particular reveals she is going through the categories of the observation protocol in checklist type fashion (i.e. "for 'leading questions', I didn't get to that").

Readers' Workshop

In the section of the conversation related to the instructional focus (teaching an Interactive Read-Aloud), the teacher Heidi demonstrates greater reflection and inquiry about her practice. At one point she reflects if her choice to stop and ask students to act out a scene/moment from the story was a good one.

In an Interactive Read-Aloud lesson, a teacher pre-determines points in the story to stop reading and ask students questions or to give them prompts. In the case of this lesson, Heidi often stopped to ask students a question (which often they discussed with a partner) or asked students to act that moment in the story. The purpose of acting out specific moments from the story is to focus students' attention on small moments in the story that will help them in using senses to writing specific sentences.

This is an excerpt from a conversation between Heidi and another Kindergarten teacher.

Heidi: Next time I wouldn't have the students act out vocabulary on the first reading. I would have them do it on the second reading. They can get a bit distracted by acting out words."

Sarah: Well, if they got distracted, you closed the book and showed the title again to refocus them."

Heidi: The kids had fun with lesson. Next time I would have visuals, more practice with acting-out. We did charades yesterday, but maybe they were shy? Today they seemed uncertain what to do."

Heidi uses the term "next time" twice referring to future improvements to the lesson. The conversation continues with participants debating the best strategies for having students act out moments from the story.

John: You passed out jellybeans for students to taste that connected to theme in the story. This promoted student academic engagement.

Sarah: "Maybe you could try a different taste and see how they respond; tastes like bitter, sweet, and plain. Maybe you could try with broccoli?"

Heidi: "I would worry. I don't want them to act out a bad face as broccoli is a healthy food."

Sarah: you could have them say 'that's not my favorite.'"

Heidi: I do want them to be dramatic."

Here participants were digging into the principles of an Interactive Read-Aloud Lesson. Heidi is thinking about improvements to the lesson and her colleagues are making suggestions. This did not happen as frequently during the discussions about the effectiveness of the lesson opening.

The post-lesson discussion is marked by specific analysis of the effectiveness of the Interactive Read-Aloud lesson, paying attention to the moments the teacher stopped the reading and engaged students through questions or simulations. The teachers also spent a substantial part of the discussion looking at the effectiveness of the lesson opening compared to the criteria of the lesson observation guide. The lesson also employed a “mentor text” that would be used by the other teachers of the grade level, meaning that this lesson would also be taught by the other members of the grade level. Therefore, the lesson discussion also resembled a lesson study leading to a refinement of the lesson for future benefit.

First Grade

The three members of the 1st Grade team met before the lesson to preview the lesson. The teacher delivering the lesson (Gail) presents a preview to the observers. Then, Gail delivers a model lesson and the observers (two grade level colleagues, Instructional Coach and Principal) take notes using an observation protocol. The participants then return to the conference room and debrief the lesson using Debriefing Protocol (exhibit C). As with the Kindergarten discussion, the discussion around the effectiveness of the Interactive Read-Aloud contained the most salient moments of teacher reflection and inquiry. The discussion of the Read-Aloud generates discussion of instructional issues and dilemmas that is not evident when the teachers are discussing the lesson opening.

Lesson Opening

The initial discussion in the lesson debrief was related to the lesson opening. This exchange is between two first grade teachers and myself. In this section teachers are connecting teacher moves to strategies for Lesson Opening (Getting Attention, Using Hook, Activating Prior Knowledge) and citing some student responses to those moves. They are also making connections between the criteria for effective lesson openings.

*Stacey: I'll start with the section about **getting students attention**. The teacher said 'Chicka-chicka' and the students responded "boom-boom" and **she used this to get their attention**. This was a **call and response** and students shouted out and echoed her.*

*John: She showed a photo and used a question 'what is the difference between a monkey and an ape?' as a **hook**.*

*Stacey: She developed a **hook to access prior knowledge** by asking them about Africa and pets.*

*Gina: Yes, she referred to **prior knowledge** when she asked them about their pets.*

John: Yes, there can be overlap between the lesson hook and activating prior knowledge (seeing connection between strategies).

Gina: I could see from the stuff on wall that they had covered this topic in a prior lesson.

*John: She used **questions to get their attention** (i.e. 'could we have a tiger as pet?' or 'Is this book fiction or non-fiction?')*

*Marjorie (facilitator): She grabbed **students' attention** when the students were laughing.*

Gina: That part was good.

In this next exchange, I notice a student asking an unprompted question as sign of engagement and teacher praise of this moment. The teacher highlighted this as an exciting moment for her.

*John: A student asked unprompted questions (i.e. 'Is Jane a girl or boy?') This question was **connected to a previous story**.*

Gail: That made my day!

John: You said, 'ring-ring smartie' to praise him.

Gail: I thought, 'you remembered!'

This exchange was between two first grade teachers, the Instructional Coach and myself and highlights references to teacher moves and connections to criteria for effective lesson openings.

*Gina: There were **leading questions** written on board. Key text features were identified (looking for a title, glossary, table of contents).*

Stacey: There were leading questions. She then asked them to turn and talk, not just think in their heads.

Gina: She allowed plenty of think time.

Marjorie: Do you have any conclusions about lesson openings and student academic engagement?

*John: I noticed the power of **leading questions**. I also noticed the effectiveness of charts and the value of charts and the value of having words to the side.*

Gina: She engaged all learners. She pointed to her ear to prompt and she used Spanish.

Readers' Workshop

When the conversation turned to the outstanding questions about the lesson, Gail shared with the group her wonderings about how to stimulate more conversation. She pointed out difference between a Read-Aloud and another strategy (Shared Reading). She also poses a question about the differences between a Fiction and Non-Fiction Read-Aloud that solicited multiple responses from her colleagues. In general, she asked provocative questions and shared dilemmas where she felt stuck in her practice.

Marjorie: What wonders do you have?

Gail: How to bring in more student conversation that is focused on text features? What made it hard for them? How to create more opportunities for students to talk? What questions could I ask?

Gail here poses probing questions that demonstrate her reflection on the lesson.

John: I like how you highlighted the life story of Jane Goodall and emphasized her humanness.

*Gail: **I noticed the difference between a 'Read Aloud' and 'Shared Reading'. With a 'Read Aloud', you walk around with the book. With 'Shared Reading', you use the Elmo (document camera) and everyone reads together.** I also wonder about the differences between a fiction read aloud and a non-fiction read aloud?*

Gina: The difference is in text features. In non-fiction we emphasize titles and captions.

Gail: The difference is in the structure. A fiction text has a beginning, middle and end.

Stacey: Non-fiction texts involve more vocabulary.

Gail: What if a fiction story had no people? I have trouble explaining to children as they tell me, 'No that could really happen.'

Marjorie: In a non-fiction text, I emphasize author's purpose. Is this something you've thought about? That was in my notes- we talked about learning something (to entertain, to inform)

In this case, Gail repeatedly poses reflective questions that engage the other group members in rich discussion. Gail's question about the differences between a Fiction Read-Aloud and Non-Fiction Read-Aloud has evoked responses from her colleagues, Gina and Stacey) and the Instructional Coach, Marjorie. She has also made a distinction between two strategies of Readers' Workshop. Overall, the discussion of Read-Aloud generates a depth of discussion that is not evident when the teachers are discussing the lesson opening

6th Grade

The 6th grade team met to preview the lesson that Mark was going to deliver. He passed out a copy of lesson and reviewed the objective and sequence of activities. It is an Interactive Read-Aloud lesson using a non-fiction text and he explains his strategies for the lesson opening. He then shared that planning this lesson to such detail was unusual for him and helped him.

Lesson Opening

As with other grade levels, the debrief discussion began with a discussion of the lesson opening. The following exchange was between two 6th grade teachers, the Instructional Coach and myself. The conversation highlights participants' attention to teacher moves and student response to these moves. Participants are also connecting teacher moves to strategies for effective lesson openings.

*John: I noticed the teacher said, 'We're going to preview the book by looking at text features.' This relates to the principle of **making the learning objective clear**.*

*Kenneth: The teacher asked, 'what are examples of text features?' Here he was **activating prior knowledge**.*

Krista: I noticed that students looked at the picture when teacher showed a picture.

John: The teacher asked students to share prior knowledge about certain text features (titles, table contents, indices, sidebars).

Kenneth: I liked when the teacher pointed out the window to the sea to make a comparison for the students.

Krista: The teacher asked the students, 'what do you think?'

John: The teacher asked students, 'why do we preview?'

Marjorie: The teacher asked, 'how do text features and prior knowledge help us?' and 'where do we find bold words?' The students responded, 'history and science books.'

Krista: The students focused on the lesson at hand, repeating the purpose and objective.

John: I noticed the opening about text features and opening about ocean. The teacher showed a map to spark interest.

Marjorie: What pieces in the lesson opening engaged students?

*Kenneth.: The teacher posed questions and linked to what students know, tapping into **prior knowledge**. He used a smart board and **posted the objective**.*

This exchange was between two 6th grade teachers, the Instructional Coach and myself. In their conversation about the lesson opening, the 6th grade teachers are focusing more on the student moves and are listing fewer of the strategies for effective openings than the other grade levels.

Marjorie: **The teacher posted the objective and asked what text features to respond to.** Students were raising their hands and responding. Three of the students turned their body when the teacher said, 'we're going to use text features to make a prediction.'

Kenneth.: He showed a sidebar and he mentioned ice-cream and everyone looked.

Krista: When Marlene spoke, everyone's eyes were on Marlene.

John: The teacher posed three questions, 'What do text features tell us?' 'Why did the author use them?' and 'How do you plan to use them?'

Krista: I observed **continual questioning**. I noticed students not playing with pencils. The teacher was interactive. The students were looking, listening and tracking.

Kenneth.: I noticed the teacher informally assessing.

In summary, these excerpts demonstrate where the lesson observers name specific teacher actions and at times connect these to student responses while also connecting the teacher moves to specific strategies for effective lesson openings.

Readers' Workshop

The conversation related to the Interactive Read-Aloud produced several moments of reflection and inquiry. In the first excerpt, the group debated whether to attribute difficulty in student learning to lesson design or to low skills. Mark wondered how to promote more student discussion and discourse and allowing them to express agreement and disagreement in a productive manner. When Krista wondered if such skill is teachable in school, Mark proposed a possible strategy (involving movement). In several cases, Mark wondered how he could improve his lesson as he asks reflective questions.

The following are excerpts from lesson debrief conversations that describe the above phenomenon. As earlier, teacher questions are underlined and teacher reflective statements are in bold.

Marjorie: How could the teacher have engaged more?

Mark: I prepared them for the read aloud. **When I was doing the think-aloud, I noticed not many people used quotes. I would improve on that and emphasize quotes.**

Marjorie: Are there any wonders?

Krista: How to get more students to talk and become more motivated to work as a group? I wonder how to stimulate curiosity? I wonder about vocabulary? As adults, we can disagree. The students at table 3 thought it was fun and games. One boy stated what he thought and I told another, 'it's ok to disagree.'

Mark: My two most contrary people ended up at same group. **That is something I need to work on.** The kids need to be taught to respectfully disagree. They could say, 'I see what you're saying.' That is a skill that needs to be taught.

Krista: Even as adults, at meetings, that is challenging. **As a teacher I wonder.** I don't put that as a responsibility of a teacher. I put it on skills. Class discussion is a skill. I wish I knew more how we could get students to verbalize.

Mark: We could do movement strategies and use protocols to promote discussion, like 'Taking Sides'.

Krista: I still wonder how to stimulate curiosity?

Mark: What I hope I got across was that you can use text features to help.

Here Krista indicated that promoting inter-student discussion may be a skill outside the realm of teacher influence. Mark responded to this comment with a suggestion of how the team could plan strategies that could encourage student participation and conversation. It is interesting to note that Mark is seeking to find answers within himself to address the dilemma where Krista suggested this might be outside the realm of teacher control. Mark also pointed back the overall goal of the lesson that was reflected in his lesson objective (using text features to make predictions). Overall, the debate contrasts two teachers' expectations for student performance.

In the conversation, there was some reflection by Mark and some suggestions for improvement were made by Marjorie, the facilitator.

Mark: What I hope I got across was that you can use text features to help you when you are reading something you might know very little about. Students can think, 'I'm going to experience this from pictures and captions and do a picture walk.'

Krista: I noticed that you made connection to prior reading.

Mark: I wonder about how to support low readers? Should they write down their prediction? I noticed they were struggling with this.

Kenneth: But you are offering them support by letting them work with other students.

Mark: I thought about adding from the Unit 2 guide that you gave me.

John: As a next step they could be reading different books at their level instead of using text books.

Mark: I'm anxious to look at the new textbook.

Marjorie: Some suggestions I would make are to have students write the text feature descriptors. They could also try out skills with history book. Also, ask students to pay attention to author's purpose. Are you going to go back and revisit the section on Greek history in the textbook?

Mark: We'll go back and check our predictions. Tomorrow we'll read story and what we saw at home. That's where I'm headed.

Marjorie: I would be curious to hear what they would say about how what they did --yesterday helped us.

In this section, the 6th grade teachers have arrived at specific recommendations for Mark (and for themselves) for future iterations of this lesson. Mark continues to impact the conversation by asking self-reflective questions about the lesson and suggesting modifications he might make in the future.

Summary

In summary, there were several themes in the findings for the second iteration of the Instructional Rounds/Lesson Study at Kelly. First, concerns and confusion about the goals of the Cycle and the university partnership led to a decline in participation. Midway through the cycle, teachers determined to end participation indicating they were too overburdened to complete the cycle. Discussion of these concerns led to a revision of the Cycle of Inquiry format implemented in a subsequent period. Second, although the school wide participation in the lesson study declined during the Cycle of Inquiry, three of seven grade levels participated in a modified way and analysis of their lesson debrief conversations reveal the potential benefit of Lesson Study. When the conversation focused on the subject matter focus of the lesson (Interactive Read-Alouds), it was notable how teachers demonstrated greater curiosity and reflection about the lesson and posed more probing questions. In debrief conversations related to lesson openings,

teachers specifically and descriptively referred to teacher instructional moves and student responses to these moves. Teachers connected these teacher moves to specific strategies for effective lesson openings (see Appendix B); however this same level of conversational depth was not evident during the conversations about the lesson openings. In these cases, teachers' observations superficially noted the presence of particular strategies in a checklist form as opposed to having a real discussion of how students might be drawn into a lesson in ways that promote academic engagement. Revisiting the "Growth Pathways of Lesson Study" framework (Table 1), analysis of teachers' conversation reveals this example of lesson study had the greatest impact in the area of promoting subject matter knowledge.

Finally, revisiting the larger goal for this intervention- de-privatization of instructional practice - it is evident that participation in the Lesson Study promoted collective conversation about a promising instructional practice designed to bring students to a higher level. The component of this cycle address the characteristics of privatized practice explained by Lortie (1975)- individualism, presentism and conservatism. The promise of this practice was constrained by organizational factors where teachers withdrew support as they felt other needs in the school precluded participation in this learning initiative. In addition, Kruse et al. (1995) emphasize structural and social conditions that must be place to support development of school professional learning communities- including a sense of teacher empowerment and trust and respect. Based on teacher response to the second cycle, teachers did not feel empowered in their participation as they perceived features of the Lesson Study protocol to be imposed from above. In addition, the resistance to participation in peer observations suggests that teachers did not trust and feel safe in this process where they might be subject to unfair critique. Overall, these negative responses to the protocol and process inhibited the social learning cycle- the process whereby participants are committed to work together as a team.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Teachers in the K-12 education system in the United States tend to work in isolation and there is a tradition of privacy that limits opportunities to learn. There is a tradition of autonomy and independence in teaching that inhibits the creation of a shared technical culture (Lortie, 1975; Little, 1990). Teachers generally do not discuss matters of teaching and learning and they rarely attempt to involve themselves in each other's classrooms (Little, 1982; Lortie, 1975; Smylie, 1994). Research has shown that teacher communities in American secondary and elementary schools generally are weak (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). To counter the negative effects of a norm of privacy and isolation, schools have introduced initiatives to promote teacher collegiality and collaboration. There is a body of research that demonstrates the significance of teachers' collegial relationships as a factor in school improvement (Little, 1982; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001, Little & Horn, 2010).

In the literature, there are many examples of research detailing the types of practices that need to be fostered. However, more research has been done on exemplars of strong professional community than on efforts to produce professional community where it doesn't already exist. This study was an attempt to measure the impact of several iterations of an effort to promote professional community and de-privatize instructional practice within one school.

This study analyzes the evolution of a school inspired professional development initiative over several cycles at Kelly Elementary School (where I serve as Principal). Curious to develop an intervention to guide their own practice, teachers at Kelly initially chose the protocol of Instructional Rounds to structure peer observation of classrooms and to collect data about a stated problem of practice. Instructional Rounds was first used as a protocol to guide the school visits of district leaders and has begun to be used by individual schools as inquiry to get feedback on instructional practice. When teachers are involved as full professional participants (not just those being observed), Instructional Rounds can create opportunities for ownership, growth in perspective, learning and overall development. Instructional Rounds can create collective efficacy that can shift member's individual responsibility, the expectations they have for students and their work, and their development of a mutual and collective form of accountability (Teitel, 2013). In this regard, this described potential of Instructional Rounds to institutionalize patterns of collaboration is similar to other literature on teacher collaboration. For example, Kruse et. al (1994) describe the characteristics of professional community as: shared values, reflective dialogue, de-privatization of practice, focus on student learning and collaboration.

Kelly Elementary School teachers embarked on using Instructional Rounds in the spring of 2015 to gain insight into their practices of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy (CLRP). Specifically we wanted to understand how our CLRP practice promoted student academic engagement. In studying this intervention, I theorized that participation in Instructional Rounds would increase the depth of teacher conversation as demonstrated in the conversations that followed classroom observations. The school Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) laid the groundwork for Instructional Rounds and teacher representatives were able to advocate for the approach among their peers.

Three primary findings emerged from the first implementation of Instructional Rounds in spring 2015. First, teachers' response to Instructional Rounds was marked by a tension between optimism and worry. There were many instances where teachers responded to Instructional Rounds in the manner proposed by Teitel (2013) which could lead to collective efficacy and accountability; however, responses also indicated making observations of their colleagues' classrooms provoked anxiety. A second form of tension emerged between teachers' investigation into the problem of practice and efforts to remain non-judgmental in observations. Finally, widespread participation by teachers in the Instructional Rounds allowed participants to identify limitations that lead to a subsequent iteration of the intervention.

Based on participant feedback from the spring of 2015, a new version of Instructional Rounds was launched at Kelly Elementary School in the fall of 2015 (referred to at the school level as a "Cycle of Inquiry"). The main difference in the structure was that the Rounds (classroom visits) would occur at the grade level and participants for each "Round" would be from the same grade level. The school determined that the focus of the Cycle of Inquiry would be on an Interactive Read-Aloud lesson within the structure of Readers' Workshop. In addition, through guidance from its university partner, there would be an additional focus on the opening of a lesson. After this cycle began, additional changes and modifications took place making the protocol very similar to Lesson Study.

Two main findings emerged from the analysis of the data from this second iteration. First, teacher participation declined in this next cycle despite efforts to adapt the new "Cycle of Inquiry" routines to feedback and stated preferences. Teachers found that the benefits of Lesson Study were not sufficient to warrant being out of their classrooms. They felt it was a burden placed on them having to plan for (and recover from) a substitute teacher. In addition, in principle, a university partnership was a source of guidance and support for collaborative lesson planning by providing a planning template and observation protocol, but in practice the time for orienting teachers was too limited, and the relationship was not characterized by adequate trust. Despite assurances and transparency about the research goals of the partnership, teachers began to question the presence of university researchers in meetings and during lesson debrief conversations. The combination of these factors caused participation to decline.

A second finding was that despite the tension that emerged, teachers who participated in the Lesson Study engaged in rich conversations related to the structures of Readers' Workshop. When the conversation focused on the subject matter of the lesson (Interactive Read-Aloud), it was notable how teachers demonstrated greater curiosity and reflection about the lesson and posed a greater number of probing questions. This level of conversational depth was not evident when teachers used the items in an observation protocol to discuss the effectiveness of the lesson opening (another lesson observational focus).

Second Implementation of Lesson Study (Spring 2016) – Outside Scope of this Study

It is worth noting that Kelly teachers implemented a third cycle of this school improvement routine in the spring of 2016. The results of this cycle are not included in the data collection of this study, but some details are worth mentioning here. Much of the feedback presented by teachers at the end of the Lesson Study Cycle of Inquiry was incorporated into this third iteration. In this iteration, there was much greater commitment throughout the process and all grades completed a lesson study cycle and presented their findings at the end of the cycle (in contrast to the 2nd iteration). It was notable that almost all of the grade levels removed the lesson

observation component from the steps of their cycle. From the outset they determined a focal subject and standard, planned a lesson, taught the lesson individually, and then shared the results of the lesson. Finally, they determined follow up steps and created a poster documenting their learning experience and presented this at a staff meeting. The table below presents contrasts the elements of the 2nd and 3rd iteration of the Cycle of Inquiry.

Table 1: Comparison of Features of 2nd and 3rd Iteration of School Improvement Routine - Lesson Study/Cycle of Inquiry

	2nd Iteration	3rd Iteration
Leadership/Facilitation	Directed/Facilitated primarily by Principal	Directed/Facilitated primarily by Instructional Coach
Focus of Lesson/Unit	One focus for all grade levels. Focus on lesson opening with specific criteria.	Chosen by each grade level. Focus on entire lesson without specific criteria.
Lesson Observation	Initially each participant would be viewed twice (beginning and end of cycle). Structure was modified so that one lesson was observed	No lessons observed. Each teacher taught planned lesson individually and reported back results of lesson (some student work, teacher notes).
Whole Group Debrief- Cycle of Inquiry Closure	Did not occur- teachers withdrew participation	All grade levels participated. Each grade level created poster documenting their learning
University partner involvement	More active- researchers were participants in lesson observations and recorded debrief discussions	Researchers not present during conversations about lessons. One researcher attended initial planning sessions and final debrief.

Table 1 highlights several factors. First, the teachers may have responded more favorably to leadership from an Instructional Coach as evidenced by the fact that all grade levels completed the cycle. I was out on paternity leave for a month at the start of the cycle and the Coach was primarily in charge for scheduling the cycle and checking in on group progress. Second, the decision by ILT teacher leaders to remove the lesson observation element of the cycle indicates a retreat towards privacy from the leaders who promoted transparency earlier. Teachers shared individual results of planned lessons and lessons were analyzed through teacher experience and some evidence of student work. The end of the cycle was marked by a celebration designed to represent the results of the inquiry and grade levels represented their learning through skits and songs. Finally, the presence of the university partner was diminished; teacher meetings and lesson debrief conversations were no longer audio-recorded and teachers did not create lessons with a focus on a specific phase of the lesson (i.e.-opening, introduction of new content, independent practice and closure). This had been the focus of the university partnership previously. Teachers preferred to plan a lesson and consider all aspects of the lesson as a whole.

The Cycle of Inquiry/Lesson Study format continues in the current school year (2016-17).

Conditions

In order for this intervention to work, several conditions needed to be in place. I needed the cooperation of a school community for my design to be successful. I implemented this Instructional Rounds intervention with teachers at Kelly Elementary School where I served as Principal. These teachers needed to see the investment of time in the Instructional Rounds process as valuable and worthwhile. I needed the cooperation of teachers to participate in the process and I needed their agreement to have their conversations recorded and to complete surveys. I also needed the support of the school district to provide financial resources to allow the participants to be released from their classrooms during the Instructional Rounds and Lesson Study.

I believed this intervention was feasible as teachers at Kelly Elementary School indicated they would participate in this study. In addition, the school district central office leadership was committed to supporting these interventions. Kelly Elementary also was involved in a professional development partnership with a local university that provided additional resources to support the study. As described below, there was a range of resources available at the school site to support these initiatives that both supported and constrained the outcomes.

Reflections and Implications

Reflecting on the study, there are several patterns evident across the iterations of these interventions. First, the results of this study demonstrate the durability of a culture of individual autonomy and privacy even in a situation in which teachers seem disposed to activities designed to make teaching more public. Teacher leaders at the school joined with the school principal to initiate Instructional Rounds, an organizational routine designed for instructional improvement, but they also later participated in a retreat and return to privacy. Throughout the stages of the study and in the subsequent iteration, there was a successive move toward privacy. Beginning with Instructional Rounds and continuing with Lesson Study, teachers expressed a stream of "concerns" to their peers on the ILT or to the teacher union representative. The structure of the organizational routine moved from a school-wide approach of Instructional Rounds to a more bounded grade level Lesson Study arrangement to a form of individual "sharing" (in the 3rd iteration) that avoided peer and external exposure to classroom instruction. The third iteration of the instructional routine generated greater enthusiasm and buy-in, but did not produce evidence of inquiry and teacher learning.

Also, throughout the process, the chosen organization routines (Instructional Rounds and Lesson Study) were modified in ways that compromised their key ostensive features and structure. These modifications were made in an effort to accommodate local context and implement established and tested routines with "flexibility". This was especially true for Lesson Study, since classroom observation is central to that routine.

Finally, an inventory and assessment of the resources available to support these ventures reveal that the resources provided some support but overall were inadequate to create the intended results of making teaching more public and collective at the school. In some cases these resources supported positive outcomes; yet there is evidence that these resources were limited and insufficient to yield the desired outcome of the two initiatives.

First, the school Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) was one important resource positioned to provide leadership for the interventions. Comprised of teacher representatives from each grade level and the Principal, the ILT works to provide collaborative instructional leadership for the school. In this way, the ILT represents a form of “Collaborative Governance” (Ansell, 2012) – a collective decision making process that is formal, consensus-oriented and deliberative. Collaborative Governance involves collaborative problem-solving whose features are distributed action (stakeholders are autonomous), joint-ness (stakeholders work together), self-production (stakeholders directly engaged), consensus-orientation, deliberation, and consequential decision making (Ansell, 2012). In Collaborative Governance a team engages both in a cycle of problem-solving (how to work together to solve problems) and a cycle of social learning (what makes people committed to collaborative practice) (Ansell, 2012). According to these criteria, the ILT was a collaborative governance body engaged in collaborative problem solving.

Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, ILT members engaged in training that included guidance on transforming teacher climate from one of individualism and privacy to one of collaboration and shared practice. In this way, the ILT wished to initiate a social learning cycle where teachers would discuss and share their instructional practice more deeply and frequently. During that same year, members of the ILT suggested using the protocol of Instructional Rounds to gain insight into instructional patterns across classrooms. In this case, the ILT also looked to Instructional Rounds in a problem solving cycle.

Although the ILT was a powerful voice in initiating Instructional Rounds, it also played a role in some of the challenges that were encountered. Teachers expressed concern over the lack of follow through and definition of “Next Level Work”; however, the ILT determined that their grade levels did not have the capacity to implement such follow up activities. ILT members cited they and their colleagues felt too overloaded with other pressures and obligations such as preparing for and implementing new Common Core aligned, computer based summative assessments.

Although on the surface the ILT continued its leadership role in decision-making during the next cycle (Lesson Study), in fact its leadership role diminished. ILT members later participated in withdrawing support for the revised protocol midway through the cycle. During the Lesson Study cycle, ILT members (who had earlier expressed support for the goal of making teaching more public and collaborative) withdrew support for the for classroom observations during the cycle, lessening the prospect for peer accountability. As Principal and lead Researcher, I wonder why reservations regarding this cycle were not voiced by members and discussed during our ILT meetings. Reflecting back, there were some competing priorities during our meetings that reduced the time we had to discuss the cycle. As a result, I was forced to make decisions independently the “jointness” of the team’s work was reduced. In addition, team members may have agreed with suggestions and modifications I put forth, but there was likely not the buy-in or ownership as in the first cycle. As a result, the ILT operated less like a collaborative leadership entity during the second cycle.

In planning for a third iteration of a Cycle of Inquiry (January 2016 ILT meeting), one ILT member recommended (and others agreed) that lesson observation not be a part of the cycle of inquiry. They preferred that release time be used to either plan focal lessons or debrief lessons that have been co-taught. “We have to take baby steps as not all teachers are comfortable being

observed,” one representative commented when I suggested that observing each other’s lesson could be a powerful learning experience.

Based on this experience, it is evident the school ILT initially was an advocate for making teaching more public and collaborative, but their advocacy diminished in the face of reluctance from the rest of the teachers. The ILT was instrumental in both the opening and the closing of the classroom door at Kelly. Teacher avoidance to collectively examine specific evidence of classroom practice parallels the conclusions of other research on collective teacher examination of student work. In an analysis of three case studies analyzing teachers’ examination of student work, Little et al. (2003) found that protocols were an insufficient resource by themselves to promote specific conversation about student learning. Teachers, when given the opportunity to discuss specific evidence from student performance, tended to avoid such opportunity and preferred instead to talk more generally about classroom practice.

Another potential resource for these interventions was teachers’ prior experience with forms of the organizational routines of Instructional Rounds and Cycle of Inquiry. This prior experience supported the implementation to a degree, but also served as a limitation and hindrance. Teachers’ prior knowledge (or association) with Instructional Rounds came from the visits of state and district representatives during a period when the school was under “Program Improvement” sanctions. Teachers recalled these visits as surveillance of their practice and they were remembered negatively. Because of this precedent, many teachers viewed the Instructional Rounds protocol with suspicion and which created resistance to participate. When teachers actually experienced the Instructional Rounds protocol first hand, they indicate it felt non-evaluative and was a contrast to their prior experience. In addition to precedents with Instructional Rounds, teachers at Kelly also had prior experience with protocols of “cycle of inquiry”. The prior protocols for cycle of inquiry were more focused on student pre- and post-assessment and had less focus on collective lesson planning and lesson observation. Teachers therefore expressed some confusion learning and adapting to a new protocol.

Another source of potential support for these organizational routines was a partnership with a local university. The university had supported Kelly’s district in creating a “Common Core Instructional Framework (CCIF)” and Kelly was chosen a pilot school for an initiative to promote “student academic engagement” within classroom instruction. The university partner played a role in both interventions, but played a more critical role in the second cycle (Lesson Study). In the Instructional Rounds, the partner influenced the school’s choice of problem of practice; however the observation conversations revealed that teacher understanding of student academic engagement was not sufficient. In the Lesson Study intervention, the university partners developed a learning sequence for participants to receive guided practice planning different phases of a lesson (“Cycles of Inquiry” -Appendix A). For the lesson study cycle (focus on lesson opening), the university partner developed an observation protocol with a range of criteria for an effective lesson opening; however there was not adequate time to train and orient teachers to this instructional framework. While the partner provided these supports during the cycle, some began to view the partnership with suspicion. When teachers ended their support for the Lesson Study cycle, they indicated their discomfort with the audiotaping of conversations. They also indicated that they would be more comfortable with “research done by teachers” as opposed to research being done by graduate students who didn’t have experience in the classroom (January 2016- ILT Meeting Notes). In summary, the university partnership was

poised to be a strong source of support for the intervention, yet the potential of this resource was not achieved.

Another resource for the school in these initiatives was prior professional development teachers had received in the area of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy (CLRP) and Readers' Workshop. Many teachers at Kelly had received professional development in CLRP as presented by Dr. Sharroky Hollie over the course of four years. Teachers on the school's Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) first discussed using Instructional Rounds as means of assessing the effectiveness of CLRP in classrooms. In addition, teachers at Kelly had also received some training in the area of Readers' Workshop that was some source of support during the Lesson Study.

Teacher knowledge of CLRP was a key component of the Instructional Rounds initiative. With leadership from the ILT, the "problem of practice" and main focus for the Rounds focused on a link between teacher practice of CLRP and student academic engagement. In the Instructional Rounds, teachers were able to use knowledge of CLRP to recognize the use of certain strategies in observed lessons; yet, they struggled to recognize whether these strategies furthered the academic goals of the lesson. In most cases, teachers simply observed the presence of certain strategies as evidence of an effective lesson. Most of the recommendations made for "Next Level of Work" involved finding means for teachers to learn more CLRP strategies. During one classroom observation debrief, one teacher wondered if a lesson needed CLRP strategies in order to be effective. This question highlights that the focus of many teachers during observations was compliance with a preferred strategy rather than observing for authentic student engagement. Although teacher knowledge of CLRP was a resource in some instances, teachers looked for evidence of this pedagogy in a superficial manner (through strategies) indicating teacher knowledge was not sufficient for in-depth analysis. Also, although integration of CLRP was a school goal articulated in its school site plan and its professional learning goals, there were indications of varying levels of commitment to the practice.

Finally, another resource available was the observation protocols used both during Instructional Rounds and Lesson Study. In the case of Instructional Rounds, the observational protocol was embedded in a larger protocol created from the model in the original Instructional Rounds literature (City et al., 2009). Teachers were provided an orientation to recording classroom observations in a specific, non-judgmental manner in relation to a problem of practice. Participants in the Rounds were provided with a basic chart to guide observational note taking (teacher moves written on one side and student moves on the other). After the observations were completed, the Instructional Rounds protocol guided a structured debrief session where teacher observations were shared, analyzed collectively and then used to form recommendations for "Next Level of Work" (this last component did not occur as planned). In their feedback on the process, teachers indicated they appreciated the protocol. It is worth noting that the case here documents the teachers first attempts at using the Instructional Rounds protocol. The fact that collaborative groups were not able to come up with actionable "Next Level of Work" in some part indicates that they were beginning to become familiar with the protocol.

In the Lesson Study intervention, the observation protocol (focused on effective lesson openings) was developed by the school's university partner (Appendix B). Teachers were presented this protocol at the beginning of the Cycle of Inquiry, yet this occurred during a short orientation session when they were also presented with other information regarding a subject matter focus of the lesson (Non-Fiction Interactive Read-Aloud). Without sufficient orientation

to its origin and rationale, the protocol was unlikely to be supportive to teachers in their learning. The grade levels that participated in the Lesson Study did not use the observation protocol during their planning and conversation about the lesson openings in the lesson debriefs tended to be superficial. Teachers discussed the effectiveness of the opening in checklist type format, running down the criteria shown on the observational protocol. In contrast, conversations regarding Interactive Read-Alouds tended to include greater teacher reflection and discussion of instructional dilemmas (the protocol for observation for this lesson was more open-ended). The superficiality of the discussions about lesson openings suggests that teachers did not have sufficient orientation to the use of this protocol.

Overall, an assessment of these organizational supports for the interventions reveal that in almost all cases, the supports were not adequate to achieve a positive outcome for the introduction of the routine. There were instances where the support was adequate, but in most cases more support was needed.

Reexamining Theory of Action within Context of Literature - Possible Explanations for Findings

The initial Theory of Action for this study centered on the introduction of new organizational routines that would create structured opportunities for teacher interaction focused on aspects of classroom practice. The theory of learning was if teachers have the chance to visit and observe their colleagues' classrooms, they will understand their own and their colleagues' instructional challenges more clearly. They will want to work more closely together. If teachers have the chance to discuss their observations in a collective, non-judgmental format guided by a shared understanding of effective teaching, they will feel more inclined to work together.

The results of the study can be examined in the context of the existing literature of routines. Both Instructional Rounds and Lesson Study are attempts to introduce an organizational routine to make teaching more public and collective in a school. Routines have ostensive (the intended aspect) and performative aspects (the routine in performance) (Feldman and Pentland, 2003). New routines can serve as a mechanism to build instructional coherence, internal accountability, and professional community (Spillane & Sherer, 2011). Some studies have shown that how teachers make sense of the routine, and integrate it into their practice, can create shifts in teaching and learning (Spillane & Sherer, 2011). Spillane and Sherer (2011) state, "By understanding the interplay between the ostensive and performative aspects, we can better understand agency and how it might be used to transform practice" (p.618).

Teachers at Kelly began their use of the Instructional Rounds protocol in its ostensive aspect and they had strong and multi-faceted responses to the protocol. Their responses to the protocol and suggested modifications indicate how the routine changed in its performative aspect. It is clear that the Kelly teachers (particularly the members of the ILT) exercised their agency in advocating for a change in the Instructional Rounds protocol. In the case of Kelly, teachers' enactment of the performative aspects of the Instructional Rounds steered the format of the protocol towards a routine more resembling Lesson Study. The second iteration of an improvement routine was described as a "Cycle of Inquiry", a general term encompassing a range of inquiry activities. Like the first iteration, there were adaptations that occurred throughout the study, but in the second iteration, teacher participation declined and ultimately the cycle was not completed. In the case of the second iteration, teacher agency led to the abandonment of the routine. When the cycle was taken up again, the teachers requested a further

“modified” version of the routine, without classroom observations. As classroom observations is an essential component of Lesson Study, this alteration signified a move to a new type of routine altogether. This pattern of change and flexibility of routines calls into question the degree to which the ostensive aspects of established and tested routines can be altered before they lose essential features and structures.

The results of the Instructional Rounds and Lesson Study can also be analyzed in relationship to the literature on Distributed Leadership. A distributed perspective on leadership argues that school leadership practice is distributed in the interactions of school leaders, followers and their situation (Spillane, 2004). Spillane (2004) explains that *“distributed leadership is first and foremost about leadership practice rather than leaders, leadership roles or leadership functions..practice is the interactive web of leaders, followers and their situation”* (p1-2.)

The initial intervention of Instructional Rounds achieved traction through the leadership of the school Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) as the initiative was seen as arising from the “bottom up”. The initial response to Rounds was marked with optimism and enthusiasm, yet teachers did not witness follow through and did not feel a sense of efficacy from the process.

In the second iteration (Lesson Study), although the ILT participated in the initial planning, the intervention began to be perceived more as an initiative of the principal and university partner and was no longer identified as coming from the “bottom up”. Overall, the shifting support for these organizational routines demonstrates the difficulty in achieving cultural change in a school especially when such change involves deeply embedded organizational norms. This also demonstrates that teacher “buy-in” is not a static or stable pre-condition for an intervention. Rather, it is a dynamic aspect of the context, constantly subject to revision, re-calibration and negotiation.

Looking again at studies documenting examples of teacher collaboration, there are some clues as why this cycle of Instructional Rounds and Lesson Study were not effective in reducing norms of privacy in the school. As discussed above, the first cycle of Instructional Rounds had a greater level of “buy-in” from the teachers as a whole. In this sense the intervention contained a core criteria for effective professional community (i.e.- “Shared Values” and “Openness to Improvement” – Kruse et al., 1995). The second cycle (Lesson Study) appeared to be a natural progression from the Instructional Rounds, yet additional components were added into the process that confused participants and led them to see the initiative as imposed from the outside. In this way the first iteration of Instructional Rounds was centripetal- a process with one instructional focus and the Lesson Study was centrifugal- a process with multiple foci (which detracted from the effort). Returning to Lortie’s framework (1975) of the endemic uncertainties of teaching, the changing, centrifugal nature of the Lesson Study protocol caused teachers to view the initiative as another example of whimsical super-imposed initiatives that are to be avoided. On a positive note, teachers at Kelly returned to the Cycle of Inquiry protocol later in the year; yet they conducted their inquiry in a scaled back manner and did not include peer classroom observation as part of their collective study.

Implications for Leadership

Depending on its nature, the introduction of a new organizational routine in a school setting is a challenging process that requires effective leadership to ensure its success. Organizational change theory distinguishes structural change (i.e.- change of timing of recess

schedule) from cultural change – a change that requires shift in underlying assumptions and beliefs (Schein, 2010). Schein (2010) defines culture as, “*a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.*”

Introduction of a routine such as Instructional Rounds -with the underlying goal of making teaching more public and collective- was an attempt to change the culture of Kelly Elementary School. Research on individual and group change suggests that shifts in individual and cultural mindset are unlikely to occur without a supportive environment that includes positive pressure for change (Huberman & Miles, 1994; Schmuck & Runkel, 1985). There are indications that the interventions in this study achieved some of their intended results, yet there are indications that the interventions were not successful in changing the teacher culture of the school.

Three distinct leadership entities were prominent during the planning, implementation and outcome these interventions; these were the principal, the Instructional Leadership Team and the university partner. The interplay of these three entities at different phases of the study demonstrates dynamics of distributed leadership.

Bringing Rounds to Kelly

The initiation of Instructional Rounds at Kelly was a collaboration between the three leadership entities mentioned above. As the principal, I had become aware of Instructional Rounds as a potential school improvement initiative through recommendations of other educational practitioners. I became interested in implementing Instructional Rounds as a means of addressing the pervasive norm of privacy and isolation that I observed in the professional culture of teachers in the schools where I served as principal. As I pursued my educational doctoral degree, I envisioned the implementation of Instructional Rounds could be the focus of my research. The ILT also played a crucial role in bringing Instructional Rounds to Kelly. One representative persistently suggested we use Rounds to measure the progress of Culturally, Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy (CLRP) across classrooms at the school and the other members supported of this. Our university partner also supported using Instructional Rounds to complement its goal of helping teachers “to successfully transition to the Common Core by developing on-going professional learning around instructional improvement to foster student academic engagement.” Through participation in the partnership, the school district provided Kelly with the part-time service of an Instructional Coach and received funding for the release of teachers for lesson observation, lesson planning, and other professional learning.

The collaboration between these leadership entities continued in the implementation of Rounds; however there was evidence that some teachers perceived Rounds as a top down initiative. During the orientation on preparing for Instructional Rounds, the teacher union representative indicated some teachers were uncomfortable participating which caused me to make participation voluntary. This approach appeared to have been successful as 24 of 25 teachers participated, though some only chose to participate as observers.

Implementation and Follow-Up of Rounds

When Rounds began, the overall response was positive and teachers expressed optimism about the promise of the practice for building community and creating transparency. This response points to the conditions of supportive environment and “positive pressure” needed for individual and group change (Huberman & Miles, 1994; Schmuck & Runkel, 1985). Participants

expressed appreciation for the opportunity to visit classrooms of different grade levels and discuss instructional patterns throughout the school. Participants also expressed that the parameters of the protocol created a feeling of safety about being observed (as the names of individual teachers were not discussed in the debrief). This process calls to mind the second phase of managed change highlighted by organizational change theorists (Lewin, 1951; Schein, 2010). Teachers were engaged in team learning (Senge, 1990) that was socially based and action oriented (Fullan, 2007); and learning was accomplished through observation of a role model (Schein, 2010).

While teachers expressed initial enthusiasm in participating in the Rounds, they expressed concern about the lack of follow through on the concepts and ideas that were generated from the Rounds' visits. This follow up is expressed as "Next Level of Work" in the Instructional Rounds protocol. Teitel (2013) theorizes that Rounds can build collective efficacy of a school staff through the implementation of short improvement cycles where participants can immediately see the results of their efforts. In the case of Kelly, for various reasons we did not successfully identify and implement "Next Level of Work."

One reason for the difficulty in determining Next Level of Work was the wide range of patterns in the classroom data presented by participants. The chosen problem of practice for the Rounds was, "How does Culturally, Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy impact student academic engagement?" Based on the observation debrief conversations, most teachers were observing for the presence of CLRP strategies and were not observing how these promoted student academic engagement. A common recommendation of Next Level of Work was thus providing more training in CLRP practices to the staff. The results of Instructional Rounds show that teachers would have benefitted in greater preparation in both CLRP as a pedagogy (not just a set of practices) and student academic engagement. In the six months prior to Rounds, teachers had engaged in activities designed to familiarize themselves with observing student academic engagement in classrooms, but they did not demonstrate familiarity with this concept during the Instructional Rounds observations. Limitations in teacher understanding in these two areas emphasize the importance of having sufficient background knowledge with a specific inquiry in Instructional Rounds.

Additionally, teacher feedback about the lack of clarity and implementation of next steps speak to the importance of producing results from the introduction of an instructional routine. When teachers invest time and energy into an initiative, they want to know that their investment was worth it. After the first Instructional Rounds in March, the ILT met in April to review the results. As discussed in the findings section, the debriefing session in three of the four initial small Instructional Rounds was cut short so that there was not an opportunity to collectively determine "Next Level of Work." I suggested that the ILT synthesize the Rounds' conversations and set "Next Level of Work" goals to be taken up during the month of April and May before a second planned Instructional Rounds. In this way, we could make a comparison of the first set of rounds and the next (and any changes could be observed). However, the teachers on the ILT determined that grade levels did not have the time to take up "Next Level of Work" actions. The teachers expressed there was "too much going on" particularly in the area of assessment where teachers were administering new on-line Common Core assessments.

Reflecting back on my leadership role, I feel I, or members of the ILT, should have communicated this decision not to pursue Next Level of Work clearly to the rest of the staff so they would be aware that no next steps would be taken. As co-facilitator, I also should have

emphasized that not completing “Next Level of Work” would be to neglect a key component of the Instructional Rounds routine. At the time I sympathized with the teachers’ feeling of overload, yet not implementing next steps caused them later to question the purpose of the whole endeavor. Struggles in the follow up of the Instructional Rounds call to mind the “Internalization” phase of organizational change (Schein, 2010). In order for a change to be lasting and internalized, it must be reinforced by results so that organizational members can see its benefits that can trigger the positive effects of efficacy. Successful internalization of change can trigger horizontal accountability and normative press (Fullan, 2007). One productive outcome of the Instructional Rounds was that teachers did provide feedback on their experience and regarding the protocol that led to a subsequent iteration.

Planning for 2nd Iteration – Grade Level Instructional Rounds / Lesson Study

The planning for this 2nd iteration (taking place in the fall of 2015) was supported by teacher feedback on Instructional Rounds that informed the approach of this cycle. The switch to a grade level focus also corresponded to a revised focus of the university partnership (see Appendix A- “Cycle of Inquiry Model”). Through approval from its “Site Based Decision Making Team (SBDM)”, Kelly chose to continue its partnership with the university in the next school year. As in the previous year, Kelly received a set of resources from its district through its participation in the partnership; in this case a full-time Instructional Coach (Kelly covered 25% of her salary from site funds) and financial support to allow release of teachers for professional development (lesson observation, planning and training). From the beginning of the year, using the model created by the university partner, the intervention became known as “Cycle of Inquiry.”

As with the Instructional Rounds, the school ILT took up the planning and preparation for the Cycle of Inquiry. Because the ILT had identified learning and implementing the “Readers’ Workshop” approach to literacy as a professional learning goal, the ILT determined that a Readers’ Workshop lesson should be a collective focus of the cycle. In addition, the university partner developed a learning sequence whereby teachers would use a “cycle of inquiry” to focus on planning the various stages of a lesson (opening, introducing new content, independent practice, closure- see Appendix C). In this first Cycle of Inquiry, there would be a focus on planning an effective lesson opening. At this point, the ILT hoped to implement “grade level Instructional Rounds” during the cycle of inquiry (with my prompting). This component called for teachers at a grade level to plan a lesson and each observe each other teaching the lesson. This was to occur at the beginning and end of the cycle. The ILT met in June (the previous school year) and in August and September to plan this cycle, though much of the planning before the start of the cycle was interrupted as the ILT meetings became consumed with organizing a new leveled book library.

Implementation and Follow-Up on Cycle

From the start of the Cycle of Inquiry, there was a decline of participation, indicating that key elements were missing from the implementation of successful change process. After a staff orientation to the cycle in late September, teachers reported that the orientation felt principal directed. Only three of seven grade levels completed the next step of the cycle (planning and teaching an initial lesson). Those that did complete this determined that the “grade level Instructional Rounds” model where teachers observed each other teaching the same lesson was too ambitious; they only observed one lesson. All grade levels participated in the next step,

lesson planning, but only one grade level completed the following step (teaching a second lesson). The teachers met in a union meeting in November and determined that school climate concerns (specifically student discipline concerns) were too great for them to continue their participation in the work of the cycle. The union representative indicated that the teachers felt I, the Principal, was “too occupied” by the work of the cycle to fully attend to the student discipline issues that were occurring in the school. This news came as a shock, as I was invested in the outcome of the cycle both as a Principal and as a researcher. I did recognize that I needed to heed the concerns that were being put forth and attend to teachers’ basic needs of safety and security.

Looking back on this teacher decision, it is clear that the resources to support this cycle were diminished which played a factor in teachers withdrawing their support for the initiative. Although there appeared to be group buy-in at the outset of the cycle, support and enthusiasm waned during the process.

One problem during the cycle appeared to be the ever-changing structure of the process (which morphed from grade level Instructional Rounds to grade level Lesson Study). Teachers proposed adaptations of the structure of the Instructional Rounds, but this revised structure suffered many changes and alterations from the outset. In the effort to accommodate local context and implement established/tested routines with “flexibility,” those routines were modified in ways that compromised their key ostensive features and structure. The agreed upon structure (Rounds at grade levels) became a lesson study format (one demonstration lesson per grade level). In the end, only three of seven grade levels initiated Lesson Study and only one grade level completed two lesson cycles. The teachers ultimately decided to stop the process when they felt other school climate concerns became too overwhelming.

It is likely that the vision of the cycle was too ambitious and overly complex. In addition to the classroom observation goals of the original “design” (two sets of grade level Instructional Rounds), there were to be multiple foci for each lesson. Teachers were asked to plan a Non-Fiction Interactive Read-Aloud while attending to the principles of an effective lesson opening while also looking for markers of student academic engagement. This complexity was likely confusing and overwhelming. Whereas the first cycle was a centripetal process, focused on one question, the second cycle was centrifugal with multiple foci. One explanation for this shift is that as designer, I attempted to include interests of too many stakeholders in the design. The teachers had advocated for a focus on Readers Workshop, I wished to maintain the structure of Instructional Rounds (for research purposes) and the District and university partner wanted us to focus on lesson openings. In addition, as with the first cycle of Rounds, teacher commentary in this cycle revealed a limited understanding of both foci of Reader’s Workshop and Lesson Openings – they likely would have benefitted from a deeper understanding of both.

My dual role as Principal, Designer and Researcher also became more problematic during this cycle. In my conversation with the teachers’ union representative, it seems some teachers believed the Cycle of Inquiry to be about my research or potential research of the university partner, as opposed to something that they collectively developed. I believed that we were all on the same page and I assumed the role of keeping the project on track (through scheduling and reminding), but some teachers felt I was driven by ulterior motives to keep the project moving forward. Looking at the principles for organizational change, this cycle appeared to lack the collective buy-in and motivation required for the initiation of change (Fullan, 2007). Perhaps by being distracted by competing priorities (such as setting up a leveled book library), the ILT became less of a leadership voice in the cycle and the teachers perceived the initiative coming

from the principal and the university partner. Rather than taking up the issues with the cycle in an ILT meeting, the teachers chose instead to address the concerns in a union meeting.

Overall, the role of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) differed greatly in the introduction and implementation of the organizational routines of Instructional Rounds and Lesson Study. In the successful completion of two series of Instructional Rounds in the spring of 2015, ILT leadership and decision-making was evident as were specific calls for the de-privatization of teaching at Kelly. In the second iteration (Lesson Study), the role of ILT in the planning was diminished and the Lesson Study initiative became more associated with the agenda of the principal and the university partner. Teachers did not see the benefits of the initiative warranting their effort.

After the decline in participation in the fall of 2015, the ILT regrouped and created new parameters for a revised Cycle of Inquiry. The influence of the principal and the university partner was reduced (see Table 1) as were elements of the protocol that involved peer observation of classrooms.

Action Research

Because this study has an action research orientation, it is important to address the two primary concerns upon which such studies need transparency and clarification: my dual role as designer and researcher. As the designer, my primary concern was to remain true to the articulated design process. As the researcher, my principal concern was that I remained open to the data I received, particularly when the data did not comport with anticipated or expected findings.

Initial reflection upon my role in the design process clarified that I acted within the boundaries articulated at the onset of this design study. From the beginning of this process, I maintained an inquiry stance and optimism about the possibility of moving teachers to a less private, more collaborative stance in their instructional practice. This sincere curiosity outweighed any personal bias I may have had preferring a particular outcome of the study; I was primarily interested in seeing how the data would unfold and what it would reveal. I documented my process in the hopes that if the design was not successful, future studies would be conducted that could build upon my work, correct any missteps or false interpretations, and successfully design such a tool. Throughout each stage of the design process, I revisited the design plan, and executed activities in accordance with the plan. I also re-examined data collection and data interpretation using the self-reflection tools of action research. At each stage of planning in the process, I involved my “co-designers”, teachers on the school’s Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and received feedback from them on planning.

Overall, I believe that the findings and interpretations were comprehensive and free from personal bias and rigorous by the criteria of action research.

It is worth noting that there were challenges for me in the completion of this action research study on my own organization. While there was general agreement from teachers to participate in this study at the outset, there were several instances where the tension between my dual roles as principal and researcher emerged. At one point in the second phase of this study, the study participants (the teachers) determined to end participation in the Cycle of Inquiry. The teachers cited a number of factors one of which was their perception that I was too preoccupied by the workings of the Cycle to attend to overall administration of the school. My role as

Principal of Kelly Elementary provided me with intimate, insider knowledge of the workings of the school; yet also created complications when paired with an additional role of researcher.

Study Limitations

Reflecting on this study, there are several limitations worth noting. First, this study was originally designed as a “design development study,” meant to capture both quantitative and qualitative data on the impact of an intervention. In the case of the first intervention, Instructional Rounds, participants undertook two iterations of Rounds (as was part of the design), but did not sufficiently define “next level of work” to occur between iterations and therefore no action was taken based on the patterns generated and identified after the first Rounds. Therefore a key element of Rounds was not completed making measuring impact difficult.

The second intervention cycle (Lesson Study) faced a similar problem as participants did not complete the final phases of the cycle. This also made collecting qualitative impact data measuring the effect of the intervention difficult.

Therefore, process data is used in both iterations to measure the impact of the intervention. The process data tells a story of what occurred, but is lacking quantitative measurement of the impact.

Another limitation is that this study is focused on the case of one school in California. Because the information is only from one school, it is difficult to extrapolate the results to a greater audience.

Implications for Practice

This study has implications for other schools and school leaders wishing looking for guidance on the introduction of school improvement oriented routines in general as well as the introduction of the specific routines of Instructional Rounds and Lesson Study.

The goal of the introduction of the organizational routines was to make teaching more public and collective. Due to prevailing norms of privacy and culture of isolation, such a cultural change in a school setting does not occur easily. The initial intervention of Instructional Rounds achieved traction through the leadership of the school Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) as the initiative was seen as arising from the “bottom up”. The initial response to Rounds was marked with optimism and enthusiasm, yet teachers did not witness follow through and did not feel a sense of efficacy from the process. School leaders will want to refer to a common organizational change model -unfreezing, establishing new learning and internalization - (Lewin, 1951; Schein, 2010) as a guide to considering such organizational change.

In the second iteration (Lesson Study), although the ILT participated in the initial planning, the intervention began to be perceived more as an initiative of the principal and university partner and was no longer was identified as coming from the “bottom up”. The lesson for school leaders here is to continuously monitor teacher buy-in to a new organizational routine. It is important to have this support at the outset and if support declines during implementation, it is important to reconvene and ensure that support is maintained. Overall, the shifting support for these organizational routines demonstrates the difficulty in achieving cultural change in a school especially when such change involves deeply embedded organizational norms.

Regarding the routine of Instructional Rounds, the study documents one school’s attempt to adapt the Instructional Rounds protocol to the school site level and its subsequent modification

to resemble Lesson Study. School leaders will benefit from the learning in this study as they work with their school teams to make decisions about school improvement routines that best suit their school and context.

The adaptations of these routines to the site context mirror recommendations by researchers of Instructional Rounds and Lesson Study (Teitel, 2013; Lewis et al., 2006) to allow flexible adaptation of the routine to the local context. Researchers have addressed the difficulty of summatively assessing the effectiveness of Lesson Study in improving teacher development and have recommended a “local proof route” be used to assess Lesson Study (Lewis et al., 2006). A local proof route for Lesson Study assessment focuses on how the intervention performs in a specific context. Use of a local proof route indicates that instructional knowledge accumulates through progressive advances in research lessons taught in various local contexts (Lewis et al., 2006).

Teitel (2013) has produced one of the few analyses of Instructional Rounds at the school site level and he documents the implementation of Instructional Rounds at over eight school sites. He also echoes the sentiment of Lewis et al. (2006) that Rounds must be integrated and adapted to the needs of an individual site. In his conclusion he writes,

“The refinement and development of a nested rounds practice cannot be done in a one-sized-fits-all fashion, but must be customized to the context and needs of a particular setting... Manage the entire process with just the right amount of authority and structure- enough to foster innovation and set up clear expectations, but not so much that participants get stuck in the compliance mode, rather than develop ownership of the process and the outcomes.” (p.212-213)

Teitel here speaks to the tension between authority and structure one side and innovation and flexibility on the other. The structure of this instructional improvement initiative has been flexible throughout and in a later iteration (outside the scope of this study) the cycle of inquiry received full participation and buy-in; yet with greater perseverance of privacy of practice.

The question for leaders and school leadership teams then becomes, how much to push before resistance and non-compliance sets in? Returning to the perspective of distributed leadership, it appears that when a teacher leadership team (such as the Kelly ILT) can push for practices to make teaching more public and collective, there is a greater chance of success.

Finally, the practices of both Instructional Rounds and Lesson Study are improvement routines that occur outside of the daily practice of teaching. They require organizational support such as funding for substitutes (to release teachers from their classrooms) and the support of a facilitator to lead the discussion. Through these collaborative practices, teachers gain more insight into their own instructional practice and grow in their profession. A question moving forward is how to support this type of reflective work for teachers that is integrated into daily practice.

Implications for Research

This study was an action research inquiry into the introduction of two school improvement organizational routines designed to make teaching more public and collective in a single school site. The study was conducted by myself, the school site principal, and benefitted from my intimate knowledge of the context and participants in this study. This study can add to the knowledge of real school settings and problems faced by educational practitioners. By using qualitative methodology, this study expands the research on the challenges of promoting teacher professional community in a more traditional school culture. This study demonstrates how

qualitative research can detail the many factors that can impact the introduction of a new organizational routine designed to de-privatize teaching in a school setting. More studies investigating the promotion and creation of teacher professional community are needed.

There are also some specific areas of future research that could be undertaken based on the implications of this study. Based on the results of the two organizational routines analyzed here, the question of "flexibility" in the implementation of tested routines deserves some additional research. Research in the area of Instructional Rounds (Teitel, 2013) and Lesson Study (Lewis et al., 2006) emphasizes that practitioners need to allow flexibility to ensure these routines are successfully integrated into the local context; however, a question should be asked which adaptations preserve the intent of the routine and which ones compromise or undermine them?

Also, the results of this study underscore the importance of organizational cultural change being driven by a group of teacher leaders or through a phenomenon of distributed leadership where there is a collective impetus for change. Future studies should provide more information on the dynamics of how distributed leadership can create organizational change.

Further Iterations

As this study documented iterations of an instructional improvement initiatives involving peer classroom observation, future studies will want to explore how both Instructional Rounds and Lesson Study are best adapted to individual contexts. In addition, future studies could measure how either of these initiatives promote the characteristics of professional community such as talking frequently and in detail about classroom teaching and learning; sharing ideas and materials; observing one another; and learning with and from one another.

Conclusions

This study documents an intentional effort to introduce new instructional improvement organizational routines with the goal of making teaching more public and collaborative. Due to prevailing norms of privacy and culture of isolation in the teaching profession, such a cultural change in a school setting does not occur easily.

Despite the growing descriptions of effective teacher community —and lessons about the conditions needed for them to survive — more research has been done on exemplars of strong professional community than on efforts to produce professional community where it doesn't already exist. Building professional community is important to school improvement as it promotes cooperative, job-embedded learning where teachers engage in serious discussions about teaching that could lead to shift in instructional practice (Spillane & Louis, 2002). Change in fundamental practice could cause teachers to question, unlearn, and discard much of their current understandings of teaching, learning, and subject matter which can be a complex and troubling process (Cohen & Barnes, 1993). Research on individual and group change suggests that these shifts are unlikely to occur without a supportive environment that includes positive pressure for change (Huberman & Miles, 1994; Schmuck & Runkel, 1985).

The initial intervention of Instructional Rounds achieved traction through the leadership of the school Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) as the initiative was seen arising from the "bottom up" from the teachers themselves. The initial response to Rounds was marked with optimism and enthusiasm, yet teachers did not witness follow through and did not feel a sense of efficacy from the process.

In the second iteration (Lesson Study), although the ILT participated in the initial planning, the intervention began to be perceived more as an initiative of the principal and university partner and was no longer identified as coming from the “bottom up”. The lesson for school leaders here is to continuously monitor teacher buy-in to a new organizational routine. It is important to have this support at the outset and if support declines during implementation, it is important to reconvene and ensure that support is maintained. As stated earlier, this point demonstrates that teacher buy-in to an initiative is subject to change during implementation. Support can shift which could require recalibration and re-negotiation with participants.

In addition to the ILT, there was a set of additional resources available at the school to support these interventions. These were a university partnership, professional development in areas of relevant subject matter, and other tools and resources (such as observational protocols). In some cases these resources were adequate and were presented with sufficient training and orientation to make a positive impact on the introduction of the routine; however, in most cases these resources were not sufficient. School leaders and practitioners wishing to implement such routines will want to ensure they understand the inventory of resources available to them and assess whether these resources are sufficient to successfully implement a new organizational routine- especially one that addresses cultural change.

Overall, the shifting support for these organizational routines at Kelly demonstrates the difficulty in achieving cultural change in a school especially when such change involves deeply embedded organizational norms.

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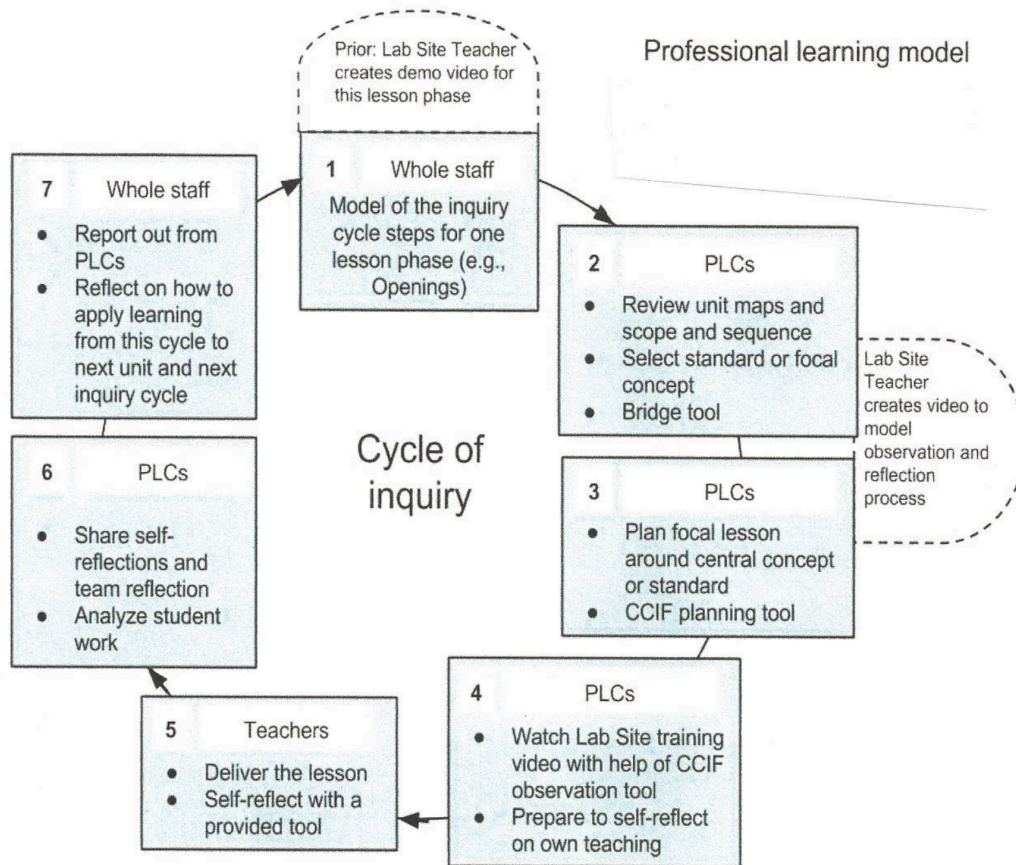
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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Cycle of Inquiry Model



Appendix B

LESSON OBSERVATION GUIDE – LESSON OPENINGS

During the lesson observation, write down low-inference observations: what you see and what you hear. Please *refrain from judgment*. Use the first page to record observations of the *lesson opening* and the second page to record observations from the remainder of the lesson.

OPENING - Activate prior knowledge and student interest.		
What we tend to say or do... get students' attention, motivate students by generating curiosity or anticipation for new content (the hook), build a bridge between prior knowledge and new content, and share the lesson objective.		
Indicators		Observations
Attention	Teacher calls students to attention and communicates lesson objectives, topics and/or expectations in language understandable for students.	
	Students pay attention to teacher.	
The Hook	Teacher stimulates curiosity and creates a "hook" for new content.	
	Students exhibit interest in new content.	
Prior Knowledge	Teacher recalls prior knowledge and/or experience.	
	Students connect to prior knowledge and/or experience.	
Participation	Teacher taps into varied cultural, linguistic, and personal experiences.	
	Students participate broadly.	
Leading Questions	Teacher poses questions about new content.	
	Students generate relevant questions, hypotheses, or hunches related to new content.	

Student Cues - What do students do or say that indicate to you that they are attentive, participating, or academically engaged with content?	Teacher Moves - What does the teacher do or say to prompt student attention, participation, and academic engagement?

APPENDIX C
COMMON CORE INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK (CCIF) LESSON DESIGN TEMPLATE

Version 2.0

Unit:	Grade:
Common Core Standard:	
Lesson Objective (defines what students should know and be able to do after instruction):	Misconceptions (Potential student misconceptions about the new learning):
Formative Assessment (describes how students will demonstrate what they learned about the lesson objective):	

LESSON COMPONENTS	LESSON ELEMENTS
<p>While not all lessons have the same structure, many follow this sequence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening Introducing new concepts or skills Practicing with feedback Closing 	<p>The following lesson elements should be incorporated as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning Objective (DOK levels) Engagement Strategies Integrated ELD Culturally Relevant Practices Checking for Understanding

OPENING	Teacher Actions	Student Actions
Activate Prior Knowledge and Student Interest		
INTRODUCING NEW CONCEPTS OR SKILLS		
<u>Option 1:</u> Teacher Modeling <u>Option 2:</u> Teacher-Student Dialogue <u>Option 3:</u> Student Exploration		
Guided Practice Depending on how		

new concepts and skills were introduced.		
PRACTICE WITH FEEDBACK		
Practice Options: Independent or Collaborative & Feedback		
CLOSING		
Closing		

APPENDIX D

District COMMON CORE INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK (CCIF) LESSON DESIGN STRUCTURE

Version 2.0

Unit:	Grade:
Common Core Standard:	
Lesson Objective (defines what students should know and be able to do after instruction):	Misconceptions (Potential student misconceptions about the new learning):
Formative Assessment (describes how students will demonstrate what they learned about the lesson objective):	

LESSON STRUCTURE

While not all lessons have the same structure, many follow this sequence:

- Opening
- Introducing new concepts or skills
- Practicing with feedback
- Closing

OPENING		
Activate Prior Knowledge and Student Interest	What we tend to say or do ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get students' attention Motivate students by generating curiosity or anticipation for new content (the hook) Build a bridge between prior knowledge and new content Share the lesson objective 	
INTRODUCING NEW CONCEPTS OR SKILLS		
<p>New concepts or skills can be introduced in a way that is more teacher-centered (i.e. modeling) or student-centered (i.e. exploration). Here are three different options for introducing new concepts or skills that range from more teacher-centered to student centered. The key decision is to consider which mode best supports the new concept or skill to be taught. Note that the first two often lead to guided practice, while the third often leads to feedback and closure (see below).</p>		
Option 1: Teacher Modeling	Option 2: Teacher-Student Dialogue	Option 3: Student Exploration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate what it is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share new concept(s) or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide materials and/or tasks that enable students to

<p>the student will be able to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Be clear on what may be difficult for the student about the new concept(s) or skill(s), including new vocabulary● Choose examples to use that are accessible to students	<p>skill(s) in a way that is accessible to students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ask questions that involve students as active thinkers● Guide the conversation to strengthen understanding of the new concept(s) or skill(s)	<p>work independently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Provide materials and/or tasks that require students to engage in higher order thinking: hypothesizing, testing assumptions, making sense of dissonances, formulating hunches, preliminary explanations.● Offer materials and scaffolds that enable the majority of students to discover the new concept or strategy with independence/ in collaboration with each other.● Offer guidance where needed.
<p>Guided Practice</p> <p>Depending on how new concepts and skills were introduced.</p>	<p>What we tend to say or do ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Enable learners to formulate new understandings in their own words.● Recognize and dispel misconceptions with corrective reformulations.● Try out new explanations.● Offer materials or tasks that help students recognize the new concepts or skills.● Engage students in materials or tasks that enable them to reproduce new concepts or skills with your step-by-step guidance.	
<p>PRACTICE WITH FEEDBACK</p> <p>After being exposed to new content and having had the opportunity to clarify their understandings, students need their understandings reinforced, secured, or expanded through practice or application. The purpose of the component is to enable students to work on new concepts or skills with relative independence. Teachers’ guidance varies with levels of understanding students exhibit when they engage in tasks. Feedback makes learning gains visible to students and identifies performance that has met expectations. Feedback provides students with opportunities to recognize and correct misconceptions and learn from errors.</p>		
<p>Practice Options</p> <p>Independent or Collaborative</p>	<p>What we tend to say or do ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Gradually release; students shift from interacting with the teacher to interacting with material and each other.● Offer materials and scaffolds that enable the majority of students to reinforce or apply the focal new concept(s) or strategies of the lesson with increasing independence.● Target support and intervention based on assessed needs.● Give students the opportunity to practice and demonstrate independent mastery of the objective, collaboratively and individually.● Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate learning in writing or orally	
<p>Feedback</p>	<p>What we tend to say or do ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Make learning gains visible to students and identify performance that has met expectations.● Elicit results from student practice and give feedback to students that helps them correct mistakes or misconceptions.● Make students aware of their own thinking.	
<p>CLOSING</p> <p>This lesson component occurs when students have been engaged in extended processing of new content via modeling, dialogue, exploration, construction, practice, application, and/or feedback, at the end of which they need synthesis and re-integration of the new content into the bigger picture.</p>		
<p>Closing</p>	<p>What we tend to say or do ...</p>	

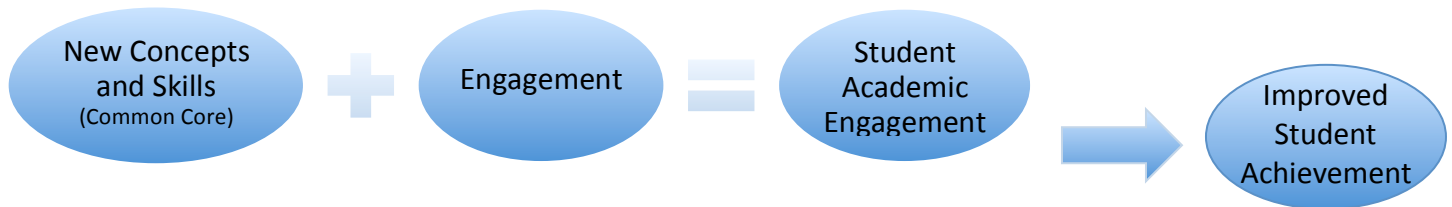
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review and summarize key ideas● Students share new understandings● Revisit lesson objectives● Reference where this learning fits in with the overall unit goals● Students self-reflect on learning
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APPENDIX E

District Common Core Instructional Framework (CCIF) Lesson Design

Lesson Delivery

Common Core lessons incorporate key elements to foster student academic engagement during the lesson. These elements need to be considered when planning a lesson; however, they do not work in isolation. The point of a lesson is to develop new concepts and skills through challenging content in a way that academically engages students, not to implement isolated strategies. Students are academically engaged when they are learning new ideas in ways that interest, motivate, and challenge them.



Learning Objectives			
Learning Objectives: Must be written in terms of a situation and a behavior objective. Defines what the student will be able to do after instruction. When stating the learning objective, teachers are making a commitment to teach it so the students will learn to do it successfully independently.			
Learning Objective Verbs based on Depth of Knowledge (DOK):			
Recall/Reproduction	Skill/Concept	Strategic Thinking	Extended Thinking
arrange, calculate, define, draw, identify, list, label, illustrate, match, measure, memorize, quote, recognize, repeat, recall, recite, state, tabulate, use, tell who- what-when- where-why	apply, categorize, determine cause and effect, classify, collect and display, compare, distinguish, estimate, graph, identify patterns, infer, interpret, make observations, modify, organize, predict, relate, sketch, show, solve, summarize, use context clues	apprise, assess, cite evidence, critique, develop a logical argument, differentiate, draw conclusions, explain phenomena in terms of concepts, formulate, hypothesize, investigate, revise, use concepts to solve non-routine problems	analyze, apply concepts, compose, connect, create, critique, defend, design, evaluate, judge, propose, prove, support, synthesize
Engagement Strategies			
In every lesson every student needs opportunities to participate. Below are just a few common strategies that have been discussed in HUSD to help engage students. The key is to intentionally plan when to use which strategy to support the learning objective.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Focused student talkThink-Pair-ShareChoosing non-volunteerNumbered Heads TogetherSentence Frames		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Collaborative conversationsKagan StrategiesLines of CommunicationMultiple representationsEquity sticks	
Integrated ELD			

HUSD classes typically have English Learners who have different needs. Lessons need to be planned with English Language Development support integrated into the lesson. Below are a few ways to integrate ELD support into the lesson.

- Incorporate vocabulary development – introduce and explicitly teach new terms and vocabulary that might be unfamiliar to English Language
- Plan language objectives – plan the lesson with a language objective for your EL students (i.e. if the Learning Objective is to compare and contrast then the Language Objective may be to use comparative adjectives such as “better” or “heavier”)
- Use sentence frames to promote collaborative conversations about content
- Determine where there are opportunities to highlight and discuss particular language resources (e.g., cognates, powerful or precise vocabulary, different ways of combining ideas in sentences, ways of starting paragraphs to emphasize key ideas)
- Observe students to determine how they are using the language you are targeting
- Use the California ELA/ELD Framework as a resource when planning lessons

Culturally Relevant Practices

Culturally Relevant Practices includes establishing positive relationships with students, providing language support for English Learners, explicitly teaching the necessary academic language to be successful, and using culturally relevant materials. Below are strategies to consider when planning a lesson to help make it culturally relevant.

- Activate prior knowledge.
- Create a positive learning environment: attentive skills, teaching skills, and teacher/student interaction.
- Utilize diverse materials.
- Know, understand, and work with families that come from different race and ethnicities.
- Expose children to role models from their own culture as well as those from other cultures.
- Utilize student's cultures to help them learn the subjects and skills taught in school.
- Helping learners construct meaning by organizing, elaborating, and representing knowledge in their own way.

Check for Understanding

Throughout every lesson it is important to check for understanding. Teachers may elicit student understanding using a variety of strategies, such as the ones listed below.

- Provide wait time.
- Call on 2-3 students.
- White Boards
- Popsicle sticks
- Exit slips