



Building Capacity through Instructional Rounds

Northeast Elementary

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Background Leading to this Inquiry

- 12 new teachers in the last three years
- Most of the new teachers are new to teaching
- Prior to the teacher turnover our school transformed from a D to an A school

Purpose of this Inquiry

Over the last several years, we have had a high turnover of staff members which caused a break down in systemic knowledge and practices among teachers.

Our Wondering

We wondered if we could increase the systemic knowledge around instructional practices of our school, as well as create a cohesive, educational environment, with the implementation of an articulated instructional snapshot and instructional rounds.

Our Actions

- Created an instructional snapshot as a staff
- Researched instructional rounds and trained leadership team
- Selected a variety of classrooms to be observed
- Created instructional round teams made of both seasoned teachers and new teachers from varying grade levels
- Administered surveys to observers before and after the instructional rounds as a point of data collection and reflection

Data Collection

- Staff survey of what should and should not be seen or heard in the classroom (used to create Instructional Snapshot)
- Instructional Rounds observers identified through self reflection the areas in which they wanted to grow using the Instructional Snapshot
- Observers kept track of how often they noticed practices from the Instructional Snapshot during rounds
- Observers answered questions about their own practices in relation to what they saw in observations after each round
- Observers answered questions in a post-rounds survey that reflected on their learnings and how the process could be improved

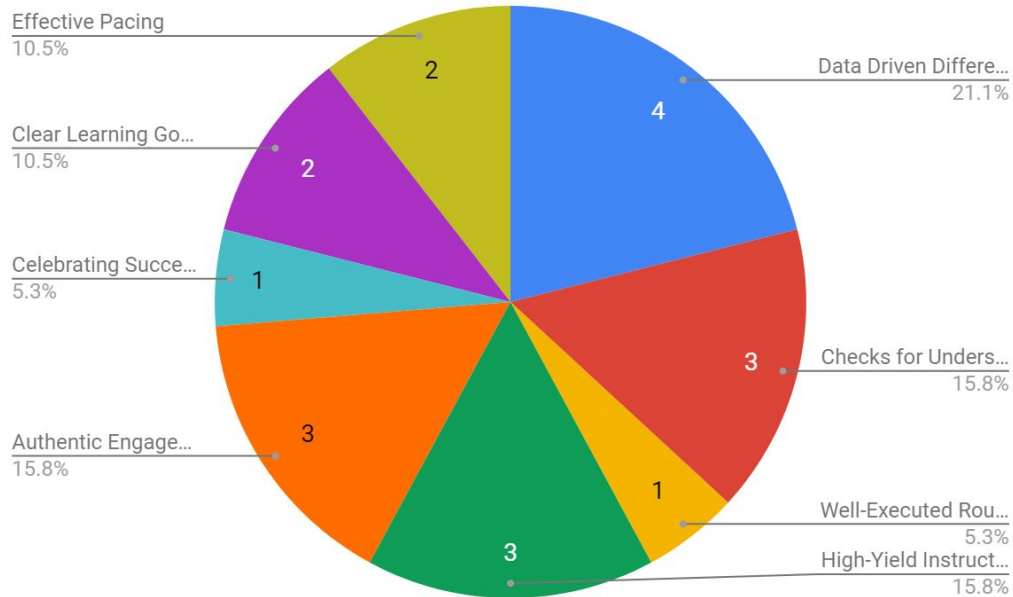
Our Data

Northeast Elementary

K-5 CROSS-CURRICULAR INSTRUCTIONAL SNAPSHOT

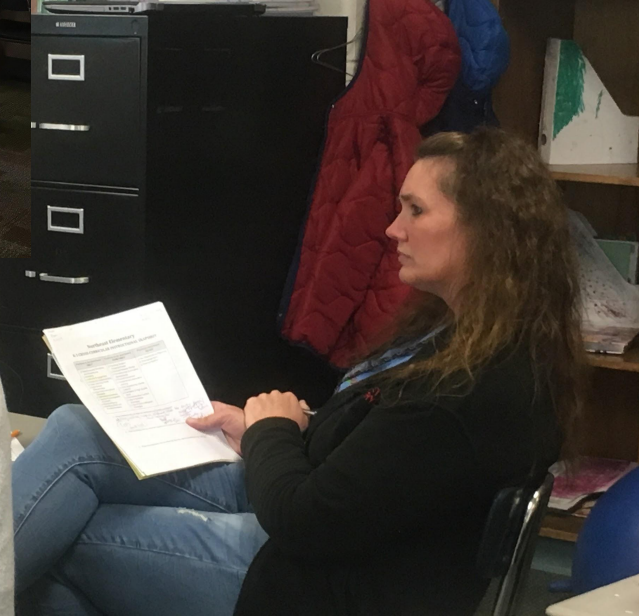
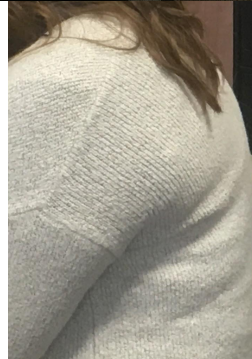
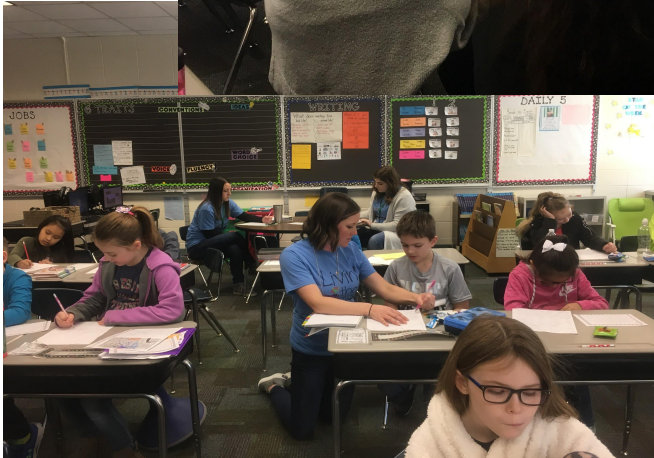
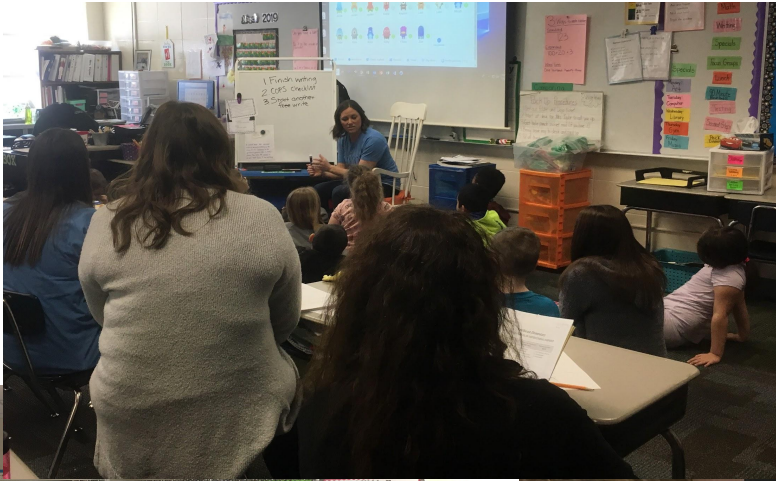
Practices to be seen/heard DAILY	Practices to be seen/heard SOMETIMES	Practices seen/heard NEVER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Well-Executed Routines and Procedures<input type="checkbox"/> Modeling<input type="checkbox"/> Authentic Engagement<input type="checkbox"/> Checks for Understanding<input type="checkbox"/> Clear Learning Goals<input type="checkbox"/> Data Driven Differentiation<input type="checkbox"/> High-Yield Instructional Strategies<input type="checkbox"/> Celebrating Successes<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Knowledgeable of Content<input type="checkbox"/> Effective Pacing<input type="checkbox"/> Reinforce Effort and Provide Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Tracking Student Progress/Goals<input type="checkbox"/> Gradual Release Model<input type="checkbox"/> Formative and Summative Assessments<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Movement<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative/Collaborative Learning<input type="checkbox"/> DOK Questioning (Levels 3 and 4)<input type="checkbox"/> Exemplars of High Quality Work<input type="checkbox"/> Previewing New Content<input type="checkbox"/> Use of Smekens Strategies<input type="checkbox"/> Use of Orton-Gillingham Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> No Objectives or Planning<input type="checkbox"/> Disengagement<input type="checkbox"/> Disorganization

Our Data

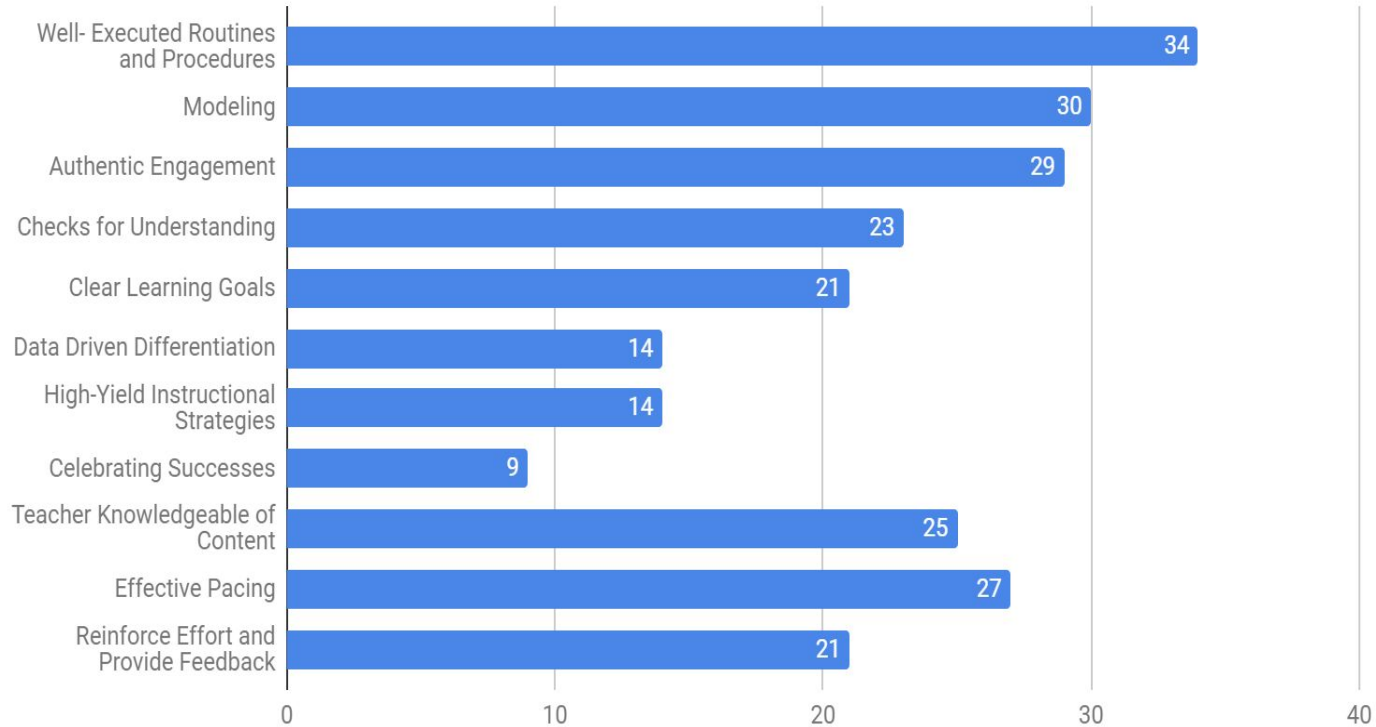


Practices identified by teachers participating in instructional rounds as an area of personal weakness or growth opportunity

Our Data



Our Data



Practices from Instructional Snapshot seen during Instructional Rounds

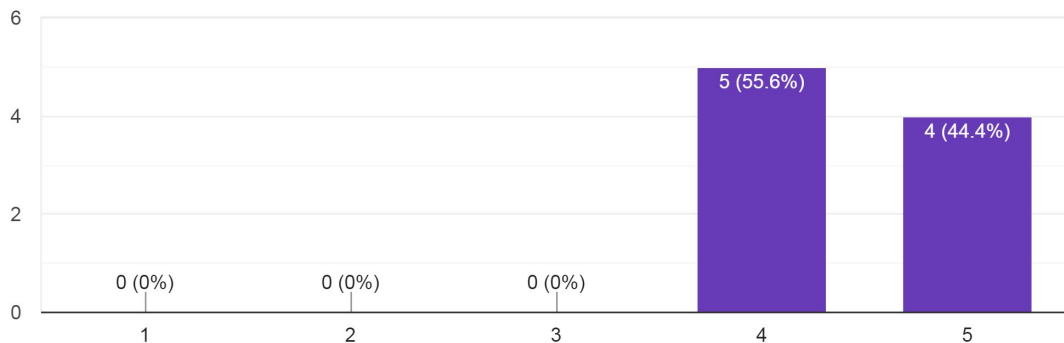


Our Data

Data from post survey

How would you rate your overall experience with instructional rounds?

9 responses



All participants said they would recommend participating in Instructional Rounds to a colleague.

6 out of 9 participants ranked themselves at 80% or higher in increased effectiveness of their self-identified areas for improvement.

Our Discoveries

Learning Statement One:

- We value common language in our school.
 - We believe that when common language is used among staff we are able to work with more efficiency.
 - When teachers have a common expectation and understanding around vocabulary, instructional strategies, and lesson delivery, all stakeholders benefit.

Our Discoveries

Learning Statement Two:


- Instructional rounds supported teachers with a variety of needs.
 - Not all teachers wanted/needed support in the same areas. Instructional Rounds allowed us to service all of those needs at the same time.
 - We were able to identify areas of strengths and areas of growth as we looked vertically within the grades as well.

Our Discoveries

Learning Statement Three:

- We were able to identify areas in our instructional model that need improvement school wide.
 - By tallying the instructional strategies teachers saw in the classroom while observing, we noticed some instructional strategies were lacking tallies. Providing professional development in those areas will help increase our staff knowledge, and in turn, we will see an increase in highly effective instructional strategies.

Where We Are Heading Next



Reflection on our Research

- Allowed us to systematize some of our processes.
- Permitted reflect on our organizational structures and systems that have critical impacts on students learning.
- Learned we need to continue to work on building relationships among teachers in order to continue to build our capacity.
- Creating clear systems will continue to help us grow in our instructional practice and also grow together as educators.

Where We Are Heading Next

Direction
for the
Future

- Implementing a consistent instructional rounding system in which all staff participates.
- Could the implementation of regular self reflection using technology such as the Swivl have a positive impact on implementing highly effective instructional strategies using the instructional snapshot?

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City, E. A. (2011) Learning from Instructional Rounds. *Educational Leadership*, October 2011, 36-41.

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Warrick, P. (2019). High Reliability Schools Level III: Effective teaching in every classroom. Presented at the Indiana Principal Leadership Institute



Thanks!

Any questions?

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Building Capacity Through Instructional Rounds

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Background Leading to Our Inquiry (Slide 2)

The background that led us to our inquiry was the loss of a systemic knowledge base. As a veteran staff retired and enrollment increased, we found ourselves with twelve new teachers in the last three years. Almost all of the new staff were new to the profession as well. Prior to the teacher turnover our school had transformed from a school letter grade of a D to an A. The journey from the D to the A was one that brought us closer as a staff and bonded us in a way that new staff did not understand.

The Purpose of Our Inquiry (Slide 3)

Therefore, the purpose of our action inquiry was to see if we could increase the systemic knowledge around instructional practices within our school, as well as create a cohesive, educational environment, with the implementation of an articulated instructional snapshot and instructional rounds.

Our Wondering (Slide 4)

We wondered will the implementation of instructional rounds would improve instruction and cohesion within our school.

Our Actions (Slide 5)

Through our learning via the High Reliability Schools surveys we discovered we had often verbalized our non-negotiables, but never put them into a systematic format. We found this was our missing piece. However, we knew the next step would be the actual implementation, which would be done through instructional rounding.

We began our work by creating an instructional snapshot. This was done as an entire staff during a Professional Learning Community. We began by discussing research on highly effective instructional strategies. We used Marzano's and Hattie's work to give teachers common background knowledge. Using google sheets as an interactive document, staff worked together in mixed grade level teams do brainstorm a list of best practices, as well as, things that should never be seen in the classroom. As a leadership committee we then cleaned up the brainstorming document by grouping specific strategies together, eliminating duplicates etc. This process created a comprehensive list of the strategies the teachers listed. The next step was to have staff rank those strategies they felt were the highest impact on student learning or most effective strategies. We then averaged teacher input creating a scale score for each strategy. As a leadership committee we then divided them into three columns, should be seen and heard daily, should be see and heard sometimes and those that should never be seen or heard. This document would then be used as the foundation for our instructional rounds. We felt it was critical to have teachers viewing instruction through a common lense. For example, when we have a consistent or common understanding of engagement we are more likely to see consistent implementation. Each teacher was then asked to review the instructional snapshot and list two things that they felt they were

very strong at, we then posted these shout-outs outside of their classroom. This allowed us not only to have teachers reflect on their own practice, but lift up their strengths.

Our next step was to create the structure for instructional rounding. Peer observations were not new to about half of the staff. We had created a culture of sharing practices and highlighting one another's strengths, however with several new staff many had not had this experience in the past. The foundation and vision for instructional rounds was discussed often during our Professional Learning Communities.

The first step of creating a structure of instructional rounds was to select the classroom that would be observed. We wanted to have a variety during this process. We selected six classrooms to be observed. They included a small group reading, whole group reading, small group math, writing and Physical Education. Each teacher and subject was carefully selected for specific reasons. For example, Physical Education was selected for excellent classroom management, pacing of lesson, and checks for understanding.

Selection of rounding groups was the next step in this process. Our selection was based on our goal of creating a cohesiveness within the staff. We selected teachers from both primary and intermediate grade levels. Each team consisted of a more veteran staff that had participated in our prior peer observations and had experience with the process, we also selected new staff members for each group as well. Through the process we actually had three teachers that were observed, but also participated in a rounding group. This allowed those teachers to experience both perspectives. We had a total of three teachers per group, with a total of three groups, with Our Literacy Coach and the two teachers on the Leadership Team leading the groups. We determined that each group would participate in three rounding cycles giving them an opportunity to see all six classrooms. We paired the observation classrooms into groups of two. In order to cover those observing we found an hour to an hour and a half a manageable amount of time.

Before the actual rounding began we did some training as a leadership team. The Literacy Coach, two Teacher Leaders and myself read articles about coaching and determined guiding questions they would use during their rounding. We discussed questions that might come up and practiced the process a few times using video observations. We also discussed how they would track data throughout the process. We determined that it would be helpful not only to glean data on what strategies they were seeing in the classroom, but what strategies that were not being seen in the classrooms. This data collection would then give us insight on how to move forward with specific areas of focus.

Each instructional rounding leader met with their group prior to rounding. They asked them to take a survey on what they felt their strengths were and what areas they needed to grow. Prior to each rounding, the leader would then give them an instructional snapshot with the areas they wanted to grow highlighted. The goal was to give them a targeted focus within their roundings. The leadership committee created a schedule over a six week period, selecting a rounding time every other week. This allowed each group to participate, and possibly implement or focus on a strategy within their own classroom between rounds. The actual rounding was about twenty minutes per classroom and then approximately twenty minutes to process at the end.

At the end of the three rounding experiences each teacher was asked to complete the same survey they took at the beginning of the process.

Data Collection (Slide 6)

Data collection was done in a variety of ways. One way we collected data was through the analysis of the brainstorming of instructional strategies. This allowed us to reflect on what strategies the staff perceived as highly effective. Another piece of data we felt was insightful was the staff survey results of what should never be seen or heard in the classroom. This gave an indication of what they valued in the classroom.

A second data point that was insightful was the self reflection on what instructional strategies from the Instructional Snapshot column should be seen and heard daily that staff felt was a strength for them.

The instructional rounding teams each took a survey on what areas they wanted to grow in based on the instructional snapshot. We saw a consistent instructional strategy rise to the top of this survey...data driven differentiation.

Rounding participants also completed a post survey based on their experiences. This allowed us to make some conclusions on the effectiveness of the process. After each rounding experience participants had reflection questions that they discussed as a group. This qualitative data allowed us to determine the effectiveness of the process. Through discussions within their rounding groups, the rounding leaders were able to make conclusions of growth based on their conversation.

Our Data (Slides 7-11)

Our first data piece is the culmination of surveys and discussions surrounding what we as staff viewed as important teaching practices. Teachers ranked each item out of ten possible points. The items with the highest scores became the practices that we wanted to see daily. We used this instructional snapshot throughout the instructional rounds as practices to look for while observing.

Our next piece of data comes from a survey completed by those teachers who would be observing during the instructional rounds. We asked the teachers to identify areas from the instructional model in which they felt they were the weakest. We used this data to help drive what we looked for during observations and the discussions we held as a group after each instructional round.

Our third piece of data shows teachers at work in instructional rounds. We were able to observe many different teaching types during this process. We visited grades 1, 2, 3, and 5 and saw lessons in math, reading, writing, and PE, both in small group and whole group format.

Our fourth piece of data comes from what teachers observed during the instructional rounds. Each teacher was given a copy of the instructional model and was asked to keep track of how often they saw practices from the model being used. This data was very informative because it not only showed us which practices were being used often, but also which ones might require more development because they weren't seen as often.

Our fifth and final piece of data comes from an ending survey completed by our instructional rounds participants. We found that every participant rated their experience at a 4 out of 5 or higher and all participants said they would recommend participating in instructional rounds to a colleague. We also

found that 6 out of the 9 participants saw a significant improvement (80% or more) in their instructional practices because of their time spent doing the instructional rounds.

Our Discoveries (Slides 12-14)

Our learnings through this process was very eye opening and affirming. We identified three key learning statements.

- **Learning Statement One:** Value common language.
- **Learning Statement Two:** This model of professional development supported a variety of teacher needs.
- **Learning Statement Three:** Based on data gathered through the rounding process, we were able to identify areas in which we need to improve.

Valuing common language has been important to us as we went on our journey from a D to an A, and we were reminded again of the value of common language among staff. We found when staff had a common understanding we were able to work with more efficiency in our practice. When teachers have common expectations and understanding around vocabulary, instructional strategies and lesson delivery, all stakeholders benefit. This common language began in the formation of the instructional snapshot, however we were then able to expand on it throughout the rounding process. During the debriefing sessions teachers shared statements such as: “She modeled and modeled some more. I really need to do that more even in 4th grade. I feel like in the older grades we forget we still need to do that.” “Students were so engaged during stations. I want to know what steps she took to get her students to that level.”

Our second learning statement focused on the benefits of supporting a variety of teacher needs through the rounding process. We were able to identify areas of strength and areas of growth within our building. This was accomplished by the varying grade levels placed together on the rounding teams and the variety of classrooms observed during the process. We were intentional to select observation classrooms that highlighted whole group instruction, small group instruction, writing, math and a classroom with strong procedures. An example of data from teacher statements: “Students knew exactly what they should be doing from the powerpoint. I loved her use of the timer on the PowerPoint. How do you do that?” “Watching physical education class was so interesting. The procedures he had in place were amazing!”

Our last learning statement was focused on our ability to identify areas in our instructional model that need improvement school wide. By tallying the instructional strategies teachers saw in the classroom while observing, we noticed some instructional strategies were lacking tallies. By providing professional development in those areas, we will be able to increase staff knowledge and in turn, we will see an increase in highly effective instructional strategies. We were also able to tie our SMART goal for the year into the instructional snapshot. Teachers selected which strategies they felt would best support them in reaching their SMART goal. At the end of the year teachers also identified which strategies they would like additional professional development in. We then framed a portion of our staff retreat to provide additional professional development in the top four categories listed.

Where We Are Headed Next (Slide 15-16)

This was an excellent process. The information we gleaned from the High Reliability Schools Surveys allowed us to systematize some of our processes. It allowed us to reflect on our organizational

structures and systems that have critical impacts on students learning. We learned our school had talked and verbalized many of these important foundations, but needed to move to the next step. Through this process we learned we need to continue to work of building relationships among teachers in order to continue to build our capacity.

When we reflect on the implications of what we have learned, we realize creating clear systems will continue to help us grow in our instructional practice and also grow together as educators.

As we look at the future, one change we will make is implementing a consistent instructional rounding system in which all staff participates. This process allowed us to create a system that we can implement school wide next year. We realize the creation of our instructional snapshot was the beginning step and we are looking forward to growing our knowledge on specific practices and updating the instructional snapshot as we grow. A wondering that also arose through this process is...could the implementation of regular self reflection using technology such as the Swivl have a positive impact on implementing highly effective instructional strategies using the instructional snapshot.

Bibliography (Slide 17)

City, E. A. (2011) Learning from Instructional Rounds. *Educational Leadership*, October 2011, 36-41.

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