



Coffee Talks to Empower Teacher Leaders

New Palestine Elementary
Southern Hancock Schools

Katy Eastes

keastes@newpal.k12.in.us



Background Leading to this Inquiry

- New Palestine Elementary is a Preschool-Grade 4 building
- There are strong leadership structures (team leader, curriculum leaders, cadres)
- Strong professional development plans are in place but they are often directed by administration
- Teachers have expressed over the years that there is not a structure for sharing ideas among themselves in the building. There is also a need to have a structure to share topics that are of interest to some staff but not needed for all.



Purpose of This Inquiry

Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to develop a structure in which teachers would feel empowered to share new learning or expertise with the rest of the staff. The structure would also provide a time for administrators to share very specialized topics.



My Wondering

With this purpose, I wondered in what ways can I as the principal inspire professional growth of teachers within my building through the use of local experts?



My Actions

My Original Plan:

- Once a month from December through May, we will hold a Coffee Talk at which local experts will share knowledge on a highly engaging topic with their colleagues. Staff will visit our new coffee cart and gather together for an informal meeting time of learning and discussion.
- I will present at the Coffee Talks until interest is established and other colleagues begin to volunteer.
- Topics will be generated from new learning gained at professional development opportunities that small groups or individuals attend.
- Topics will also be inspired by staff request.



My Actions

What actually happened:

- On November 7th, I put out an email to staff presenting the idea of Coffee Talks. I told them I would be doing a talk in December and January. I shared the topics that would be presented. I left February open so that any staff could sign up to present.
- On December 3rd, I did a Coffee Talk entitled, “More Than You Ever Wanted to Know About Our School-wide Letter Grade.”
- I never actually got to present my second topic because so many staff signed up to present!

Data Collection

- Number of Staff Who Signed Up to do a Coffee Talk
- Number of Staff Who Attended Each Coffee Talk
- Feedback from Coffee Talks on Flip Grid
- Staff Survey on Coffee Talks





My Data

List of Coffee Talks:

Dec 3rd- More Than You Ever Wanted to Know About our School-wide Letter Grade

Jan 22nd- How to Teach so Kids are Sad When Math is Over

Feb 5th- Tools and Games to Make Your Classroom Fun

Feb 12th- Words to Use to Help Students Get in the Zone

Feb 27th- Flexible Seating

April 2nd- Life Tools that Put the Teacher First



My Data

- 10 staff members signed up to do a Coffee Talk
 - One staff member even presented twice!
- Presenters included several teachers, a speech and language pathologist, an occupational therapist, and our district strategic learning coordinator
- On average 10 staff attended each Coffee Talk

Feedback from one teacher:

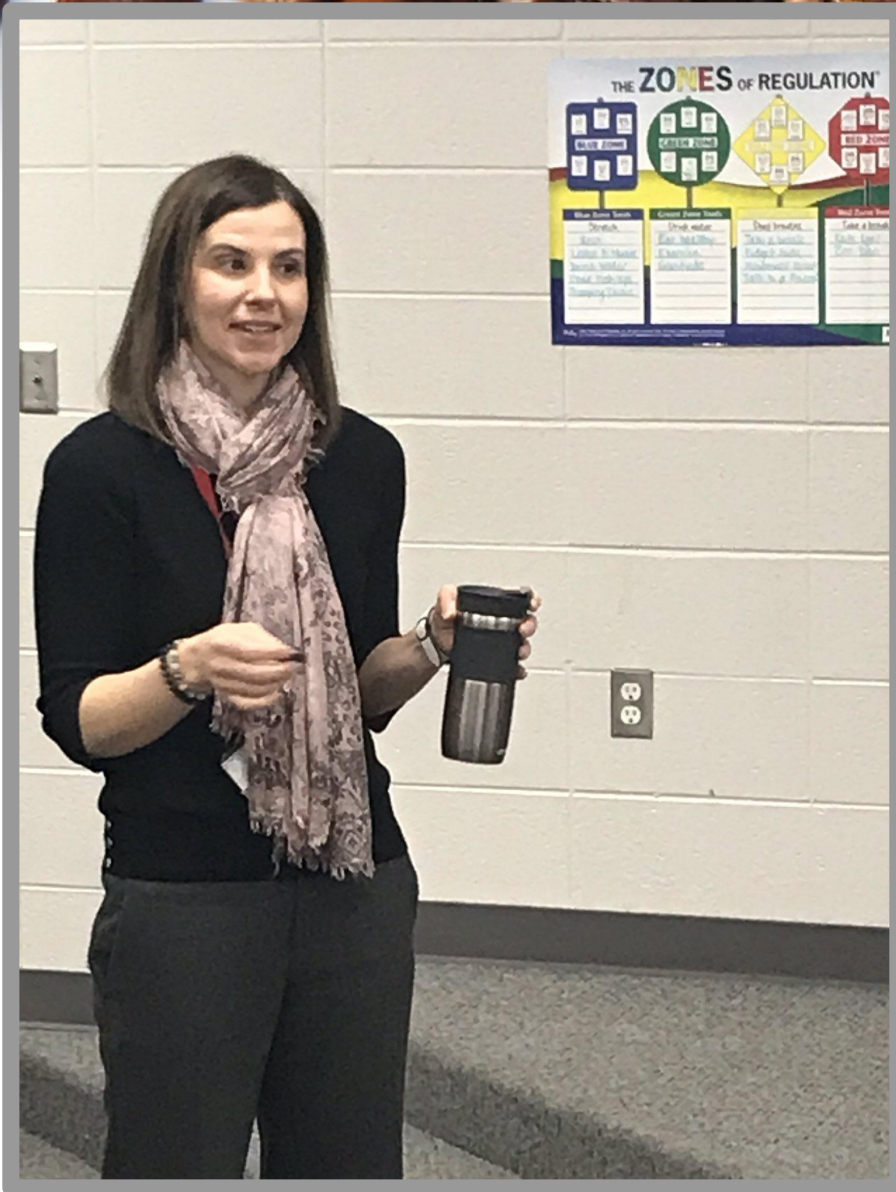
<https://flipgrid.com/s/52c2e4070474>



My Discoveries

- Coffee Talks empower teacher leaders and all staff by providing a structure to share their new knowledge and expertise. Ten staff members signed up to present on a wide variety of topics over a four month period. This proves that staff were looking for a structure that would give them an opportunity to share.
- Coffee Talks improve the building culture as seen in the staff survey results and in the flipgrid responses. Coffee Talks allow teachers to ask for assistance in a certain area and get support from a colleague who has knowledge to share.

Where Am I Heading Next



- I am overwhelmed by the number of staff who participated in Coffee Talks, particularly the number who signed up to present.
- NPE will continue Coffee Talks in the 2019-2020 school year.
- I will continue to solicit topics of need from teachers and continue to encourage staff to give Coffee Talks.



Coffee Talks to Empower Teacher Leaders

Principal Name: Katy Eastes

School Name: New Palestine Elementary, Southern Hancock Schools

Principal's Email Contact: keastes@newpal.k12.in.us

Coffee Talks to Empower Teacher-Leaders

Katy Eastes, New Palestine Elementary

keastes@newpal.k12.in.us

Background Leading to My Inquiry (Slide 2)

Outline what led you to this particular inquiry. Include the following:

- New Palestine Elementary is a Preschool-Grade 4 building
- There are strong leadership structures (team leader, curriculum leaders, cadres)
- Strong professional development plans in place
 - often directed by administration
- Teachers have expressed over the years that there is not a structure for sharing ideas among themselves in the building. I also found a need to have a structure for me to share topics that are of interest to some staff but not needed for all.

The Purpose of My Inquiry (Slide 3)

Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to develop a structure in which teachers would feel empowered to share new learning or expertise with the rest of the staff. The structure would also provide a time for me to share very specialized topics.

My Wondering (Slide 4)

With this purpose, I wondered In what ways can I as the principal inspire professional growth of teachers within my building through the use of local experts?

My Actions (Slide 5 and 6)

My Original Plan:

- Once a month from December through May, we will hold a Coffee Talk at which local experts will share knowledge on a highly engaging topic with their colleagues. Staff will visit our new coffee cart and gather together for an informal meeting time of learning and discussion.
- I will present at the Coffee Talks until interest is established and other colleagues begin to volunteer.

- Topics will be generated from new learning gained at professional development opportunities that small groups or individuals attend.
- Topics will also be inspired by staff request.

What actually happened:

- On November 7th, I put out an email to staff presenting the idea of Coffee Talks. I told them I would be doing a talk in December and January. I shared the topics that would be presented. I left February open so that any staff could sign up to present.
- On December 3rd, I did a Coffee Talk entitled, "More Than You Ever Wanted to Know About Our School-wide Letter Grade."
- I never actually got to present my January topic because so many staff signed up to present!

Data Collection (Slide 7)

Number of Staff Who Signed Up to do a Coffee Talk
 Number of Staff Who Attended Each Coffee Talk
 Feedback from Coffee Talks on Flip Grid
 Staff Survey on Coffee Talks

My Data (Slides 8)

List of Coffee Talks

Dec 3rd, Katy Eastes, More Than You Ever Wanted to Know About our School-wide Letter Grade
 Jan 22nd, Mariann Meyer, Cheryl Rose, Teri Oliver, How to Teach so Kids are Sad When Math is Over
 Feb 5th, Margo Tiede-White and Courtney Story, Tools and Games to Make Your Classroom Fun
 Feb 12th, Lynette Hulet and Lindsey Stamper, Words to Use to Help Students Get in the Zone
 Feb 27th, Olivia Johnson, Rebecca Crull, Lindsey Stamper, Flexible Seating
 April 2nd, Chris Young, Life Tools that Put the Teacher First

My Data (Slides 9)

Number of Staff Who Signed Up to Do a Coffee Talk
 10 staff members!

One staff member even presented twice!

Presenters included several teachers, a speech and language pathologist, an occupational therapist, and our district strategic learning coordinator

Number of Staff Who Attended Each Coffee Talk

On average 10 staff attended each Coffee Talk

Feedback from one teacher: <https://flipgrid.com/s/52c2e4070474>

My Discoveries (Slide ?)

- Coffee Talks empower teacher leaders and all staff.
- Coffee Talks improve the Building Culture.

Coffee Talks empower teacher leaders and all staff by giving them a structure to share their new knowledge and expertise. Ten staff members signed up to present on a wide variety of topics over a four month period. This proves that staff were looking for a structure that would give them an opportunity to share.

Coffee Talks improved our building culture at NPE as seen in the staff survey results and in the flipgrid responses. Coffee Talks allow teachers to ask for assistance in a certain area and get support from a colleague who is willing to share. This was seen in the request by two staff members for a presentation on flexible seating. I put out a request to see who could present, and three staff members volunteered, and collaboratively created a Coffee Talk on this topic. Now the learning is continuing as the teachers who asked for the support are spending time in the presenters' classrooms seeing flexible seating in action.

Where I Am Heading Next (Slide ?)

I really thought that I would be presenting each month when I started the Coffee Talks structure. I didn't really think staff would want to do the talks. I am overwhelmed by the response of teachers wanting to present and the richness of their topics. This tells me that teachers and other staff were longing for a reason to share. We will continue doing Coffee Talks at NPE next year. I will continue to ask staff for topics they need. I will continue to encourage teacher leadership in this area.

Administrators often feel that we need to be the planners of all professional development. In this action research, I realized that sometimes we just need to provide the structure and let the teachers fly.

Citing Your Presentation and Publication

Congratulations on completing the Year 1 Action Inquiry process! You can list your project as both a professional presentation and a professional publication on your resume. Here are examples of the correct ways to cite:

Presentation

Eastes, K. (2019). Coffee Talks to Empower Teacher Leaders. Presented at the annual Indiana Principal Leadership Institute Action Research Showcase, Indianapolis, IN.

Publication

Eastes, K. (2019). Coffee Talks to Empower Teacher Leaders. Retrieved from <http://indianapli.org>