

Indiana Principal Leadership Institute

Cohort 6
Action Research
Showcase

April 17, 2019



Action Research Showcase

Imagine that you notice a large pond that is stagnant and that you are enticed to create some type of movement or change in the water. As you near the edge, you notice the pond is surrounded by numerous stones. You reach down, pick up a stone, and toss it as far out into the center of the pond as your strength allows. While lying beside the pond, the stone had no impact on the water, but once tossed in, it disturbs not only the stillness of the water where it lands, but also emanates ripples from its landing place that eventually reach the perimeter of the pond.

An unshared inquiry is like the stone lying beside the pond. Unless that inquiry is tossed into the professional conversation that contributes to the knowledge base for teaching and administration, it has little chance of creating change. However, once tossed in, it disturbs the status quo of educational practices, creating a ripple effect that begins with the principal himself and his immediate vicinity (the teachers and students in the building) and emanates out to a district and a state, eventually reaching and contributing to a transformation at the perimeter of practice — in the education profession itself!

Dr. Nancy Dana

(Leading with Passion and Knowledge, 2009, pp. 135-136)

Schedule

<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Table Selected</u>
9:15 am - 9:45 am	Session 1	
9:50 am - 10:20 am	Session 2	
10:20 am - 10:35 am	Break	
10:35 am - 11:05 am	Session 3	
11:10 am - 11:40 am	Session 4	
11:45 am - Noon	Action Research Celebration	



A Special Thank You to...

Dr. Nancy Dana

*Thank you for leading us through
our inquiry journey!!*

Table 1
Tina Noe, Facilitator

****Closing the Gap on Principal Absenteeism in the Classroom***

Holly Arnold, Elberfeld Elementary
harnold@warrick.k12.in.us

This action research project was focused on organizing and implementing a set schedule for weekly 30-minute classroom visits. It is too easy for principals to focus on the logistics of the school instead of what's happening in the classroom. Find out how one principal enhanced her leadership practice, curriculum knowledge, and relationships with teachers and students by increasing her presence in the classroom.

****Making Time to Visit Classrooms***

Stephen Snodgrass, New Haven Intermediate
ssnodgrass@eacs.k12.in.us

“Nothing within a school has more impact upon students in terms of skills development, self-confidence, or classroom behavior than the personal and professional growth of the teachers. When teachers examine, question, reflect on their ideas and develop new practices that lead toward their ideals, their students are alive. When teachers stop growing, so do their students.” (from *The Principal as Staff Developer*, R. Barth, 1981)

This working definition of professional growth was sent to the NHI staff in the fall of 2018 along with a survey to establish how I could best facilitate their growth. The staff informed that I needed to spend more time in their classroom in a non-evaluating role. I then completed a plan to spend 5 minutes in each classroom on a weekly basis.

Table 2
Melissa Pancake, Facilitator

****Difficult Conversations: A Process to Open and Honest Relationships***

Jennifer Coyle, Meredith Nicholson Elementary
jecoyle@cville.k12.in.us

I transitioned from teacher to principal in the building I have been in for my entire career. As I hired new teachers, I found the more difficult conversations came naturally. Those conversations were more difficult with those that I had been working alongside for so long. My project focused on making those conversations more effective and less stressful.

****My Intentions Are NOT Always Your Perception!***

James Hough, Triton Central Elementary
Jhough@nwshelbyschools.org

After looking at my school survey, I began to wonder, why does my staff see me as inconsistent? In my mind I talk to all of my staff and from my point of view, I give them the information they need to know. That is when I had the realization that my perceptions and my staff's perceptions were not lining up! Communication is key!

Notes

**Table 3
John Pearl, Facilitator**

****Time for a Change***

Tracy Ahlbrand, Tracy Ahlbrand
tahlbrand@madison.k12.in.us

As an administrator of a small elementary, I find that at the end of the work day my car is still in the parking lot. I often find myself working weekends and occasionally evenings. While I love my work, I used this project to improve my time management at school. This presentation will share the steps I took to better organize my daily schedule and set aside more time to push into classrooms during the day.

****Getting Organized...Where Do I Start???***

Erin Proskey, Culver Elementary School
eproskey@culver.k12.in.us

How will becoming organized in my professional life increase my leadership abilities? Just when I think I am getting organized, all I am doing is writing things down in ten different journals. When I need to find an answer to my question, I can't ever find where I wrote it down. Sticky notes are also an issue...I could wallpaper my office with them. Sticking to my calendar, storing my meeting notes, parent communication, all of the ideas or inquiries floating around in me head, staying on task, meeting all of my deadlines and making it into classrooms daily.... how do I organize it all??? I feel that once I find that magic organizational tool where I can "Stick and Store," I will be able to be a more effective leader in my professional role as an administrator.

**Table 4
Angela Harris, Facilitator**

****ACEs Are High, but School Doesn't Have to Be Wild: The Impact of Trauma-Informed Administrators in the Public School Setting***

Sarah Gustin, Delphi Community Middle School
gustins@delphi.k12.in.us

Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) affect so many of our students. Not only are classroom teachers and other school personnel tasked with meeting the unique needs of these students, but they are also responsible for informing the school community (families, school board members, patrons, etc.) about the impact of trauma on our youth and how the response to trauma manifests itself, and the neuroscience behind it. As a school administrator, it is my duty to ensure that I am an expert in this field, so that I am able to provide knowledge, support, and structure to my students as well as my staff and my school community at large.

****Am I in Control of My Calendar, or Is It in Control of Me?***

Craig Smith, Center Grove Middle School Central
smithc@centergrove.k12.in.us

Do I as a leader have the ability to better manage my day to have a greater connection/impact upon my students, my staff, and myself? In this session, I will showcase the evolution that took place as I attempted to take the reins of control back by better managing what matters most.

Notes

Table 5
Amy Bertram, Facilitator

****Building Instructional Leadership***

Jody French, Perry Central Jr./Sr. High School
jfrench@pccs.k12.in.us

What does good instructional leadership look like? This is something I struggled to understand. After reading Mike Schmoker's book, *Focus* (2nd ed.), I realized that it is really supposed to be simple! I will share my journey of improving my skills and instruction in the classroom.

****Using Technology to Provide Effective Instructional Feedback to Teachers***

Ashley Hammond, Fountain Central Jr./Sr. High School
hammonda@sefschools.org

After viewing the data I received from the IPLI leadership surveys completed, I've learned that teachers feel as though they do not receive timely, effective feedback from evaluation observations and walk-throughs. Our corporation has not had a performance evaluation tool in use with teacher evaluations to create a collaborative, transparent process. Therefore, the purpose of my action research was to increase my ability to positively impact instruction through timely, actionable feedback using Standard for Success.

Table 6
Ryan Langferman, Facilitator

****Leading by Example: "Working out" the Work!***

Franklyn Bush, Lawrence Central High School
franklynbush@msdlt.k12.in.us

My action research is a project designed around self care, mental health, and monitoring "me time" to keep a healthy balance away from the 24 hour grind of being a Principal, aka The Work! I would like to share my experiences as a 2nd Year Principal, husband and father of 3 young children.

****Searching for the Perfect Balance: Professionally and Personally***

Veronica Tobon, Valparaiso High School
vtobon@valpo.k12.in.us

Being a servant leader makes putting oneself first difficult. In order to be a great servant leader, taking care of oneself is important. Focusing on the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of life by balancing, processing, accepting, acting, and growing will help reach that goal.

Notes

Table 1

Shawn Wright-Browner, Facilitator

**Wawasee Team Building*

Kim Nguyen, Wawasee High School
knguyen@wawasee.k12.in.us

My goal of my team building activity is to touch base with every employee in my school (about 115 staff) and talk to them about something not related to school. I want to learn a little bit about their life and show them that I care for them as a person. I have a spreadsheet that I am collecting my data and notes on them with. My wondering is, how can I increase my understanding of my staff, form better relationships with them, and hopefully create a stronger team within my building.

**Listening to the Whispers so I Do Not Have to Hear the Screams*

Rob Willman, Floyd Central High School
rwillman@nafcs.k12.in.us

As an administrator, it is sometimes hard to intentionally cultivate relationships with students - especially those students who might "fly under the radar" or who might be part of an unintentionally marginalized group. For my research, I am being more intentional about meeting with student groups. I will meet with student leadership, such as the student council or the class leaders. To become more in touch with those students who struggle with high school, I am meeting individually with at-risk seniors at least 4 times during the year. In addition, I am in the process of meeting with certain minority groups to give them more of a voice in a largely homogenous population: racial, LGBTQ+ and religious.

Table 2

Lynn Simmers, Facilitator

**Collaborative Communication*

Dean Fecher, Success Academy
dfecher@successacademysb.com

I will observe all teachers (37) once every two weeks and provide immediate feedback in an effort to improve my communication among staff. Data will be collected using the App "Teach One."

**Focusing on Growth: Improving as an Instructional Leader*

Andrew McDaniel, Southwood Jr./Sr. High School
mcdaniela@msdwc.k12.in.us

For my project, I wanted to develop a definition for the term "Instructional Leader" and conduct an action chart to see how much time I devote to instructional leadership activities on a given day. With the definition and action chart, I plan to complete a self-analysis of my strengths and weaknesses and develop a personal improvement plan to address weaknesses and build upon strengths.

Notes

Table 3
Mike Pinto, Facilitator

****Building Teacher Leadership Capacity Starts with Me!***

Marci Galinowski, Mollie B. Hoover Elementary
mgalinowski@cville.k12.in.us

After reviewing my IPLI Survey Data, it was clear that my building was lacking in teacher leadership opportunities, but the desire by teachers to do more was there. At about the same time, I was presented with the opportunity to create paid leadership positions within my building. However, before I could begin to create this new team and teacher leadership opportunities, I needed to arm myself with additional knowledge and skills to support these newly appointed leaders, plan for ways to implement this team, and plan for leading these new teacher-leaders through the goal setting process.

****Empowering Others Around You***

Wendy Ivey, Greenville Elementary
wivey@nafcs.k12.in.us

No one creates success alone! For my project, I focused on empowering others to take on some of the tasks of the principal, so that I would have time to do the essentials – be an effective leader and create an environment where everyone can become great. In order to do this, I had to ask myself, “What am I willing to give up? What do I need to give up? What do I need to keep? What impact does each task have on student learning or positive culture?”

Table 4
Jane Rogers, Facilitator

****Racing for Time***

Jan Kehrt, Harris Elementary
jkehrt@gcsc.k12.in.us

Why are there days I feel like a hamster on a wheel racing for more time? Principals are pulled in many different directions and have many responsibilities and demands on their time. While I can't slow down time, I can show you how I became more intentional in building relationships and being present in classrooms.

****What Have I Done? One Principal's Focus on Learning***

Rhonda Myers, Prairie View Elementary School
rmyers@npusc.k12.in.us

There is so much noise in a principal's day. How do I sort through the many demands and focus on student learning? I have completed a monthly reflection journal detailing responses to: What did I do today to ensure learning for all students? Data will be analyzed, categorized and shared with peers.

Notes

Table 5
Jack Birmingham, Facilitator

**Maximizing My Role as Instructional Leader*

Phil Boone, Southwood Elementary School
boonepr@msdwc.k12.in.us

As a school administrator, I see instructional leadership as being the single, most important aspect of my position. As such, the greatest amount of my time should be spent on tasks related to instructional leadership. My inquiry will focus on categorizing tasks that I complete into three areas: management, organizational, instructional leadership. After collecting and analyzing data, I will determine if/how more of my time can be shifted to focus on instructional leadership.

**Diving In: Focusing On and Modeling Effective Early Literacy Instructional and Intervention Strategies*

Brad Stoneking, Batesville Primary School
bstoneking@batesville.k12.in.us

Do I impact the instruction of teachers and the learning of students through my position as an educational leader? During this process, I will share how I became a better instructional leader, and how my fears of transitioning from a high school principal to a primary school principal pushed me to be better. I will share the steps of how I created time to be in classrooms assisting teachers, learning from their instructional approaches, and in turn, modeling effective instructional and intervention strategies for teachers and staff.

Table 6
John Pearl, Facilitator

**How Can Improving My Communication Skills Improve Our School Culture?*

Justin Stok, Charter School of the Dunes
jstok@csdunes.org

My inquiry is all about improving my communication skills with staff, students, and parents. I have done research, talked to my team, and asked my supervisors for feedback. It is important to me to be a better communicator, especially listening, to create an environment where everyone is working toward our goals.

**Every Class, Every Student, Every Day*

Jennifer Teare, Brooklyn STEM Academy
jennifer.teare@msdmartinsville.org

A large portion of my day entailed responding to emails, phone calls, paperwork, and discipline while IN MY OFFICE. Due to this, there were days I did not get into the classrooms. I want to be more accessible for teachers and students on a daily basis. This is one needed step to becoming a more instructional leader.

Notes

**Table 1
Mike Pinto, Facilitator**

**How Do I Grow as a Leader in Knowledge of the Co-teach/Collaboration Model Within the Classroom?*

Chris Gearlds, Decatur Blue Academy
cgearlds@decaturproud.org

As I reflect on this wondering, What does “Right” Look Like and Sound Like when it comes to Collaboration in the Teaching World? Throughout this project I will be researching and looking for “Positive Deviances” to share with my staff to increase our collaboration as a School Team, as well as with the administrators in my district. I'm looking forward to seeing my growth in awareness and providing resources to my team to strengthen our collaboration and co-teaching.

**Systems to Reduce Stress and Promote Success*

Chad Whitehead, Huntingburg Elementary
whiteheadc@swdubois.k12.in.us

The lack of quality systems in some areas at Huntingburg Elementary have increased stress levels among the staff, including myself. It is the goal of this action research to pilot and implement systems that will directly affect the academic success for students K-5 through intentional planning:
Systems: Scheduling & Instruction During the 90-Minute Block.

**Table 2
Tina Noe, Facilitator**

**Peace vs Productivity*

Erica Glenn, Carrie Gosch Early Learning Center
eglenn@ecps.org

I am learning about life balance. My task is to spend at least an hour per day on personal interests and analyze the rate of productivity at work. I am currently using a reflection log and a productivity chart to collect data.

**Finding the Balance! How Does Purposefully Finding Time to Take Care of Yourself First Impact the Ability to Lead and Support Others?*

Elizabeth Markward, Crestdale Elementary School
elizabethm@rcs.k12.in.us

Being a school administrator requires support physically, mentally and emotionally for your students, teachers and staff. After you have given them all the support they need each day, what is left for your family and yourself? My action research looks into how purposefully scheduling time to take care of yourself affects the ability to lead and support others.

Notes

**Table 3
Melissa Pancake, Facilitator**

**There Has to Be a Way To Get It All in!!!*

Michael Chen, Woodlan Elementary
mchen@eacs.k12.in.us

My teachers really want feedback that will help them improve their instruction. I need to organize my personal and professional schedule so that I can not only spend more time in the classrooms, but also be able to have the time to really reflect and provide the feedback that they want and deserve.

**Making Time to Get in Classrooms*

Kelly Wright, Pettit Park Elementary
kwright@kokomo.k12.in.us

Time is always a challenge. Getting into classrooms needs to be a top priority, yet it often gets pushed to the side. For this project I wondered how I could restructure my time to allow for more consistent time in classrooms.

**Table 4
Amy Bertram, Facilitator**

**Will Being Intentional About Spending Time out of My Office Make a Difference?*

Kirsten Clark, Clinton Prairie Jr./Sr. High School
kclark@cpssc.k12.in.us

(Presented by John Pearl)

I have implemented "No Office Days," wherein I spend the entire school day in classrooms. I want to make everyone (staff and students) more comfortable with my presence in the classroom.

**A Journey from Wondering to Intentional Wandering*

Kara Skinner, Attica Jr./Sr. High School
kskinner@attica.k12.in.us

Although a top priority, classroom visits somehow get buried beneath so many other administrative and day-to-day tasks. I wondered what kind of impact a stronger presence in the classrooms could have on my capacity to make more informed and strategic instructional decisions, as well as what type of feedback optimizes those results.

Notes

Table 5
Angela Harris, Facilitator

****Do We Really Need More Meetings?***

Tom Hughes, Maple Crest STEM Middle School
thughes@kokomo.k12.in.us

Our contract includes a 30-minute meeting time every day. I have often wondered how to use this time in the most effective manner without overwhelming my teachers. For my project, I solicited feedback from teachers, presented the staff with multiple schedules for our morning meetings, and allowed them to select how the days would be laid out in the week. Teachers voted on which days were most helpful and least helpful and asked to provide recommendations on how to improve on the days that were less productive.

****Going Off Book***

Adam McDaniel, New Castle Middle School
amcdaniel@ncweb.me

As a leader, it is my responsibility and privilege to build capacity in others. My action research project is focused on providing staff members with opportunities and resources to grow. This will, in turn, allow me to delegate more responsibilities to others and allow me to focus on areas of greatest need.

Table 6
Shawn Wright-Browner, Facilitator

****Finding Balance/Avoiding Burnout/Keeping the Tank Full...***

Tom Black, East Central High School
tblack@sunmandearborn.k12.in.us

My wondering focused on the challenges of task management in a large building with multiple needs/goals. Having worked in a large setting the past 5 years and knowing the difficulty in managing building/staff/curriculum/community while prioritizing teaching and learning, I was well aware of how many managerial tasks would inevitably take huge amounts of time and center-stage, and the focus on teaching and learning would fall behind in level of priority. My hope was that balancing work/life and/or personal/professional priorities would ultimately lead to fewer periods of burnout and longer periods of innovation/growth in the area of teaching and learning...could I be a better leader by keeping my own tank full?

****No Excuses... Making Time to Get Better!***

Nancy Campbell, Prosser Career Education Center
nrcampbell@nafcs.k12.in.us

During my first year in my current school, I was confronted with various "opportunities" – new school, new school corporation, moving my family two hours south, and being a principal in a building undergoing millions of dollars of renovation and new construction. This list seemed to grow. What was not on the list was balancing my professional and personal times, which unfortunately lead to a stagnant to non-existent time for me to exercise and spend time with my family. My research involved creating time for journaling, exercise, and family time. I wondered how this time would impact my "day job." Would I feel better? Would I communicate more and contribute in a positive way to my building?

Notes

**Table 3
John Pearl, Facilitator**

****Better Connecting with Students***

Richard Brown, Otterbein Elementary School
rbrown@benton.k12.in.us

“These days, teachers have all kinds of programs, systems, standards, learning goals, and assessments to digest, integrate, implement, and embrace. One thing that has not changed: no new program, curriculum, set of guidelines, or list of acronyms stands a chance unless there is a strong bond between the students and their teachers” (Sturtevant). This is what I’ve done to better connect with students.

*****Peak Performance through Growth Mindset***

Jerome Lahlou, Forest Glen Elementary
jeromelahlou@msdl.org

In this session, the evolution for growth mindset and its implications to peak performance will be discussed. I will share how acquiring and modeling leadership skills helped me become a leader with a growth mindset, which will promote a growth mindset culture in my school.

**Table 4
Lynn Simmers, Facilitator**

****Making Positivity a Priority***

Michelle Ginkins, New Albany High School
mginkins@nafcs.k12.in.us

In a position that is heavily focused on identifying and responding to areas in need of improvement, the balance of also focusing on the positives in one’s building can be overlooked. Communicating and providing feedback on the positives, big or small, is healthy for the Principal and the climate of the building. I am being intentional in scheduling my time, classroom visits, and daily reflection to seek and highlight positives.

****To Become a More Inspirational Leader***

Doug Gresham, Castle High School
DGresham@warrick.k12.in.us

I would like to become a more inspirational leader. In his video, Simon Sinek says, “There are ways to get people to do the things we want. It all boils down to two things. You can either manipulate people or you can inspire them.” Bain Research identified 33 characteristics that make for an inspiring leader. Research shows that I only need one to two well-developed traits to be an inspirational leader.

Notes

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Chen, Michael, S3,T3	10		
Clark, Kirsten (<i>John Pearl</i>), S3,T4.....	10		
Coyle, Jennifer, S1,T2.....	3		
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Snodgrass, Steve, S1, T1	3		
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The sharing of your action research project counts as a “professional presentation.” When citing on your resume, use the following formatting:

Marrs-Morford, L. (2018). Providing effective feedback. Presented at the annual Indiana Principal Leadership Institute Action Research Showcase, Indianapolis, IN.



Sustaining the development of school leaders is crucial to the quality of life and to the best interests of all who inhabit the schoolhouse – and to their development as a community of learners. Principals, no less than teachers, need replenishment and invigoration and an expanded repertoire of ideas and practices with which to respond to staggering demands... The principal need no longer be the ‘headmaster’ or ‘instructional leader,’ pretending to know all. The more crucial role of the principal is as head learner, engaging in the most important enterprise of the schoolhouse – experiencing, displaying, modeling, and celebrating what it is hoped and expected that teachers and pupils will do.

Roland Barth
(Improving Schools from Within, 1991, p. 46; 73)

Happy Inquiring!!