



## **Making the Rounds: How Can Learning from Each Other Improve Instruction?**

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### **Background Leading to Our Inquiry (Slide 2)**

We wanted to explore instructional rounds for two main reasons:

- Limited time for professional development made us want to explore imbedding it within the school day by providing time to observe fellow professionals and reflect on our instructional practice with our colleagues.
- We adopted a new literacy program, which was a shift from our previous practice. We wanted to give teachers a window to see how others were implementing it in action.

### **The Purpose of Our Inquiry (Slide 3)**

The purpose of our action inquiry was to determine if instructional rounds had a positive impact on classroom practices and helped teachers obtain new strategies that would increase engagement and achievement.

### **Our Wondering (Slide 4)**

With this purpose, we wondered if instructional rounds would have a positive impact on teacher practices and instruction. We also wanted to see if teachers would obtain new strategies to use in their classrooms by watching their colleagues in action.

### **Our Actions (Slides 5-6)**

We began this process by introducing the concept of instructional rounds at a staff meeting. We made sure teachers understood that the purpose of instructional rounds was to learn new strategies to improve instruction and have the opportunity to reflect on personal practice. We helped teachers understand the purpose was not evaluative for those being observed, but for those watching to grow professionally. We also collaboratively developed norms for instructional rounds and shared guiding questions to use during debrief conferences.

We then took the following steps:

- Asked for teacher volunteers to be observed.

- Developed a schedule that allowed for two, 15 minute, observations followed by a 20 minute debrief.
- Provided coverage for classrooms as needed utilizing aides and support personnel.
- Asked teachers being observed if they desired feedback.
- Assigned a member of the leadership team to each debrief to lead the discussion and take notes for feedback and documentation of our action research project.
- After the first round, the leadership team reflected on the process, the comments from debrief sessions, and input from teachers that had participated. We then modified our observation session to 20 minutes as teachers commented they wanted to spend more time in the classrooms. We also invited additional teachers to volunteer, and several did.
- Shared feedback with those being observed.
- Volunteer teachers emailed or talked with teachers to address any questions that their colleagues had from the observation sessions.
- Created a survey to gather qualitative and quantitative data regarding our initial wonderings and to obtain feedback for how we can improve the process in the future.
- Met with the leadership team to discuss the survey results and determine next steps.

### **Data Collection (Slide 7)**

#### Qualitative Data

- Norms, guidelines, and guiding questions developed at a staff meeting.
- Schedules
- Notes from debrief sessions
- Emails with feedback and answers to questions between volunteer teachers and observers
- Survey comments

#### Quantitative Data

- Survey

### **Our Data (Slides 8-11)**

- Most of the data we collected was qualitative data. Some of the examples include the norms, guiding questions, and procedures we developed at a staff meeting.
- We have examples of the schedules developed and feedback provided to teacher volunteers. With our feedback, we emailed our volunteer teachers and tried to provide validations, strategies others saw that they would like to implement, and ask questions that the volunteer teachers could answer for those that observed.
- Volunteer teachers often emailed detailed answers to questions like the example provided. Teachers also had follow up conversations and often ended up sharing resources with each other stemming from the questions asked.
- The survey indicated that 84% of teachers stated it had a positive impact on their classroom instruction. Seventy-four percent stated they obtained additional

instructional or management strategies. Seventy-two percent said they would like to participate in instructional rounds next year.

### **Our Discoveries (Slide 12-16)**

- Learning Statement One: Teachers really valued having the conversations in teams to reflect on their practice. It has made a positive impact on their instruction.
- Learning Statement Two: Teachers were able to glean meaningful management strategies regardless of the subject they observed.
- Learning Statement Three: Teachers would like instructional rounds to be more self-directed.

Learning Statement One: Teachers really valued having the conversations in teams to reflect on their practice. It has made a positive impact on their instruction.

- Teachers' comments in the survey indicated that they valued the time spent completing instructional rounds. An example statement is, "...creates a sense of community among colleagues."
- Seventy-two percent of teachers reported they would like to participate in instructional rounds again next year.
- The fact that two teachers asked to do additional observations on their own shows they valued the process.
- Unexpectedly, volunteer teachers began responding to teacher questions and comments by emailing them responses and following up after the instructional round debrief sessions, demonstrating their commitment to professional growth and valuing the instructional rounds process.
- Often debrief sessions ran over the allotted 20 minutes as teachers reflected on their practice, which indicates they valued that professional learning time.
- Eighty-four percent of teachers indicated that instructional rounds had a positive impact on classroom instruction.
- A positive impact on classroom instruction was indicated through responses and comments during debrief sessions including:
  - "I realize I need to break my questions down into smaller chunks."
  - "I learned a new approach to reading and have tried it a couple of time and the kids have enjoyed it."
  - "It was helpful to see how other teachers were implementing word study and phonics lessons."
  - "I would like to list and review the learning goals before my lessons."

Learning Statement Two: Teachers were able to glean meaningful management strategies regardless of the subject they observed.

- Seventy-four percent of teachers indicated that they observed instructional or management activities they want to implement.
- Comments from the surveys show teachers were able to gain management strategies to use in their classrooms.
  - “It gave me ideas for classroom management.”
  - “Gave me some ideas for behavior management and strategies to use for learning.”
  - “It helped me see other strategies that teachers were using to implement the Scholastic Literacy program, as well as behavior and class management techniques.”
  - “I would like to incorporate having students select a group procedure to focus on for today and then have them evaluate their performance. I also want to have students tell what sounds or skills they need more practice with.”
- During a debrief a teachers statements indicate reflection on and modification of current strategies:
  - “I need help figuring out how to handle kids that constantly raise their hands because they want to share even when I haven’t asked a question yet or finished the instruction.” After which teachers in the session, helped the teacher by offering suggestions for various ways they have managed similar situations in their classrooms.
  - “I think I have too many group procedures.”

Learning Statement Three: Teachers would like instructional rounds to be more self-directed.

- Comments from the survey show teachers would like more choice in future instructional rounds. Examples include:
  - “I would love to see more classes, if possible.”
  - “Stay in classrooms for longer and/or have teachers schedule it themselves with people they specifically want to see.”
  - “I think it would be neat if you could request a certain subject matter or even a particular lesson to watch. If there is something that you struggle with and would like to see how other teachers navigate a certain subject or even a particular skill.”
  - “Again ask for volunteers to provide specific instructional demonstrations in specific areas of instruction. This will help answer questions on how to instruct or provide options for instruction in specific areas that will strengthen over all teaching.”
  - “If teachers could choose which classrooms they would like to observe, that could be nice!”

- During debriefing sessions, teachers requested being able to spend more time in classrooms, so we accommodated that request as best we could.
- After her initial instructional round, one teacher set up three different observations in a particular area of focus for her personal professional growth.
- Another teacher initiated an observation of a particular student in another environment because she wanted to help that student be more successful in her class.

### **Where We Are Headed Next (Slide 17)**

Our action research journey led us to the following conclusions:

- Throughout this process, we have learned that teachers generally value their professional growth and appreciate the opportunity to learn from one another.
- We believe the instructional rounds process helped our teachers feel validated and realize that their colleagues have the same successes and challenges.
- Teachers would like to continue learning from each other through implementation of instructional rounds.
- Teachers would like to direct their own learning by seeking to observe specific teachers and subject areas where they would like to explore growth.

Some changes we will need to consider:

- Teachers would like observations to last longer than 20 minutes. We may extend observations to a full class period or subject block.
- We will need to provide opportunities for classroom coverage and consider how teachers could benefit from a debrief, if everyone observes different lessons at different times. Perhaps we could establish a weekly debrief session for those that observe.

Future implications:

- As a leadership team, we need to continue to provide opportunities for personal growth and invite feedback for improvement on professional learning opportunities.
- We would like to move towards teachers establishing goals and reflecting on their growth towards accomplishing those goals. Instructional rounds will be an effective tool in helping teachers achieve their personal growth goals.
- Engaging in the action research has helped our leadership team become more effective. Since this process began, we have invited more feedback from teachers and been more transparent about the goals we are trying to accomplish as a school. This has led to teachers being more invested in their growth and realizing that our leadership team is responsive to their needs and the needs of our students and school.
- Our next project will be to identify critical math standards to align our instruction, assessment, and remediation. Our goal is to create a guaranteed and viable math curriculum.

## **Bibliography (Slide 18)**

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# Making the Rounds: How Can Learning from Each Other Improve Instruction?

Mollie B. Hoover Elementary



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Team Members: Suzanne Furgye and Rhonda Bacon

# Background Leading to this Inquiry

- ▶ Teachers at Hoover Elementary have limited time for professional development. We wanted to provide time embedded throughout the day as an opportunity to learn from each other and grow our professional practice.
- ▶ Our school adopted a new literacy program that provided a shift from previous practices. We wanted teachers to have the opportunity to see the program in action in other classrooms. We believed teachers would benefit from seeing how the program was implemented in different ways through a variety of instructional techniques.

# Purpose of This Inquiry

- ▶ The Hoover Elementary School Leadership Team used action research to determine the usefulness of instructional rounds, find out if instructional rounds had a positive impact on classroom practices, and determine if teachers obtained new strategies to use with students to increase engagement and achievement.

# Our Wonderings

- ▶ Will instructional rounds have a positive impact on teacher practices and instruction?
- ▶ Will teachers obtain new strategies to use in their classroom through instructional rounds?

# Our Actions

- ▶ We began by establishing the purpose and norms for instructional rounds at a staff meeting.
- ▶ We asked teachers to volunteer if they were willing to be observed.
- ▶ We distributed 3 schedules of instructional rounds which allowed for observing 2 different classrooms for 15 minutes followed by a 20 minute debrief.
- ▶ We utilized prep periods and instructional aides to cover classrooms for observations and debrief sessions.

# Our Actions

- ▶ One member of the leadership team took notes during debrief as many of our teachers that were observed desired feedback.
- ▶ We shared notes and questions with the teachers that were observed. Volunteer teachers often responded to questions that observers had through email.
- ▶ Upon completion of rounds, our leadership team reviewed notes from debrief sessions to discuss what we learned.
- ▶ We gave our teachers a survey to respond to our initial wonderings and determine interest, modifications, and next steps for instructional rounds in the future.

# Data Collection

- ▶ Documented norms and guiding questions
- ▶ Schedules
- ▶ Documented comments and questions from debrief sessions
- ▶ Emailed feedback to teachers that were observed
- ▶ Emailed volunteer responses to teacher questions posed during debrief sessions
- ▶ Administered a survey to gather qualitative and quantitative data regarding our wonderings and the instructional rounds process

- Norms - Dos + Don'ts
  - Observation Notes - OK or not?
  - Avoid interacting with students so we don't distract from the learning environment.
  - Teacher observed will not be at post-reflection meeting
  - Feedback from meeting is up to teacher that is being observed.
  - Begin the week before Thanksgiving Break?

Learning from one another

## Staff Meeting Data

- Teachers observe other teachers in our school to become inspired to try new techniques, learn different teaching or management strategies, and collaborate with other teachers.
- Groups of 3-5 teachers observe 2 different classroom teachers for 10-15 minutes. Then meet for 20 minutes to debrief and reflect on effective teaching practices they observed.
- Instructional Rounds are a reflective process to improve as teachers and as a school. It is not a means of evaluating or critiquing other teachers/teaching practices. It is a way to gain new ideas and learn best practices from each other.

Learning from one another

- Guiding Questions for Post-Observation Reflection
1. What do I see and hear that validates my own teaching?
  2. Considering what I've seen today, what, of my own teaching, do I question?
  3. What did I see and hear that I would like to know more about?
  4. What strategies did I see and hear that I will try in my own practice immediately?

Learning from one another

## Upcoming Instructional Rounds Schedule

Thursday 1-23-20

Fever, Lowe, Reese, Stanley to observe

**taught 12:00-12:20**

Coverage Rogers – PE, Thomas – Art, Nicholas – Library, Virgen - Music

**Baker 12:25-12:45**

**Debrief 12:50-1:10**

Tuesday 2-4-20

Vaught, Whicker, York, Tyler to observe

**Bacon – 1:30-1:50**

**Jones – 1:55-2:15**

**Debrief 2:20-2:40**

Coverage 1:30-1:40 Tyler – Nicholas, York – Sheets, Vaught – Linn, Whicker – Rogers;  
essential arts teachers will dismiss so have kids bring backpacks to special

10:55

# Schedules and Feedback

Fri, Jan 31, 12:25 PM



**Furgye, Suzanne** <sfurgye@cville.k12.in.us>  
to Deb ▾

Rectangular Snip

Thank you for allowing your fellow staff members to come in to observe last week. Here are a couple of thoughts and questions that came out of the discussion.

Some **instructional** strategies that they saw that they would like to implement:

- When you noticed only a few kids raise their hands, you pulled the kids back to a small group and had them sit knee to knee. It really helped to get the kids engaged and encourage everyone to respond. They would like to pull the kids closer and help manage the discussion.
- Good reminder to wait and use praise until everyone was quiet before instruction.
- Using the touchscreen with your projector reminded them that how much more smoothly instruction goes when you can interact with the screen rather than talking from your computer or desk. Several want to utilize that feature more.
- Realized that asking several follow up questions helped in order to gather more information and understand student thinking when an incorrect response was given.
- Realization that they may need to break down their questions into smaller chunks to help lead to student understanding.

One question that came out of the conversation:

- Do your students have regular assigned seats? Assigned seats for sitting up at the front of the room? It seemed that transitions were simple and students knew where to be. How did you accomplish that?

# Debrief Follow Up

Okay, here are the best answers I have to share based on your debriefing.

The "No Excuse Board" are words from the old blue Rebecca Sitton's book. Those are given out on Monday and the words are tested on Friday along with their 10 spelling words. I use the high frequency syllable words for spelling - low spellers do first column, and so forth. The typical spelling week goes sort of like this:

M - introduce high frequency syllables and read whole list; do an individual sort of all words based on syllable. (I make one copy for them to cup up and leave one in the journal).

T - colorful spelling in notebook. Write only their 10 words using colorful spelling (vowels one color and consonants another) and HFW from Sitton's list. Introduce the pattern/root of the speed drill words and read through the first two rows. The kids then do a whisper read by themselves for their first read.

W - They spell their 10 spelling words by breaking them down into syllables in their notebook. Then get with their spelling partner and check syllables. They also do a speed read of the other words with their partner at that time. Partners are chosen by me and stay for several weeks.

TH - Complete their final speed read with someone near them. Partner spelling test to practice reading and writing spelling words.

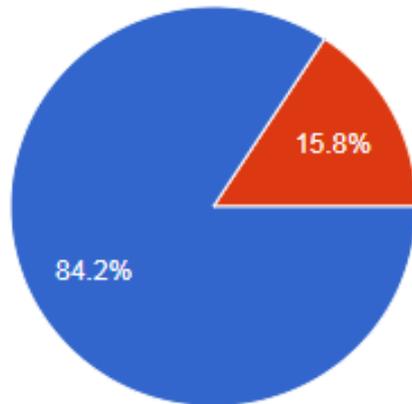
FR - Traditional word test

I tried using the dictionary page in the book, but it was usually a fail. Not large enough to write definitions, couldn't find the words, etc. I sometimes do that, but not consistently. I usually only dedicate 10-15 minutes each day to spelling. I feel like it is throwing a lot of words at them, but most of them enjoy the speed drills. Spelling grades are decent....maybe 3-4 perfect scores each week and 2-3 failing scores. Most kids have gotten increasingly better and many enjoy the more challenging words.

Did your participation in instructional rounds have a positive impact on classroom instruction?

19 responses

## Post-Round Survey Results

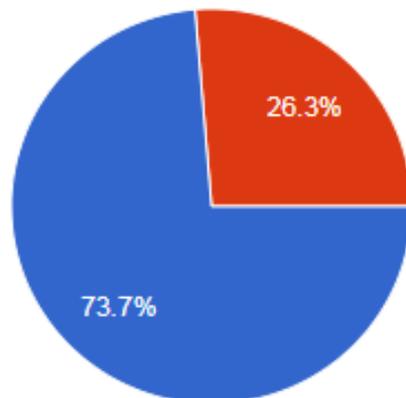


● Yes  
● No

**72% of teachers report they would like to participate in instructional rounds next year**

Did instructional rounds help you to obtain any instructional or management strategies you would like to implement?

19 responses



● Yes  
● No

# Our Discoveries

- ▶ Learning Statement One: Teachers really valued having the conversations in teams to reflect on their practice. It has made a positive impact on their instruction.
- ▶ Learning Statement Two: Teachers were able to glean meaningful management strategies regardless of the subject they observed.
- ▶ Learning Statement Three: Teachers would like instructional rounds to be more self-directed.

# Our Discoveries

- ▶ Learning Statement One: Teachers really valued having the conversations in teams to reflect on their practice. It has made a positive impact on their instruction.

Teachers began emailing responses to debrief questions to each other and following up with their colleagues outside of the debrief on their own.

What, if any, impact did your participation in instructional rounds have on you as an educator?

16 responses

It gave me ideas for classroom management.

It gave me ideas of activities to do in my class and just a general idea of how other classrooms are ran.

It was helpful seeing how other teachers were implementing word study and the phonics lessons.

It was good to see both practices that do and don't occur in my room confirming some of what I already do, and giving me ideas about how I may be able to try different things in the future.

creates sense of community among colleagues

Reaffirmed current practices and gave ideas for new ones to try/implement.

awareness

Getting insights into other rooms was helpful. Even simple things such as furniture arrangement and seeing posters about content taught in 4th grade gave me a better idea of what students have already been exposed to. I learned a new approach to reading and have tried it a couple of times and the kids have

# Our Data - Teacher Comments During Debrief

- ▶ “I realized I need to break my questions down into smaller chunks.”
- ▶ “I liked how the teacher kept asking several follow up questions to gather more information or understand the student’s thinking even when it was an incorrect response.”
- ▶ “I need help figuring out how to handle kids that constantly raise their hands because they want to share, even when I haven’t asked a question yet or finished the instruction.”
- ▶ “I have such a greater appreciation for how hard some of my colleagues are working.”

# Our Discoveries

- ▶ Learning Statement Two: Teachers were able to glean meaningful management strategies regardless of the subject they observed.

What, if any, impact did your participation in instructional rounds have on you as an educator?

16 responses

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# Our Discoveries

- ▶ Learning Statement Three: Teachers would like instructional rounds to be more self directed.

Comment Data from the survey includes:

- ▶ I would love to see more classes, if possible.
- ▶ Stay in classrooms for longer and/or have teachers schedule it themselves with people they specifically want to see.
- ▶ I think it would be neat if you could request a certain subject matter or even a particular lesson to watch. If there is something that you struggle with and would like to see how other teachers navigate a certain subject or even a particular skill.
- ▶ Again ask for volunteers to provide specific instructional demonstrations in specific areas of instruction. This will help answer questions on how to instruct or provide options for instruction in specific areas that will strengthen over all teaching.
- ▶ If teachers could choose which classrooms they would like to observe, that could be nice!

# Where We Are Heading Next

- ▶ Teachers would like to continue learning from each other through implementation of instructional rounds.
- ▶ Teachers would like to direct their own learning by seeking to observe specific teachers and subject areas where they would like to explore growth and meet professional goals.
- ▶ Teachers would like observations to last longer than 20 minutes. We may extend to a full class period or subject block.
- ▶ We will need to provide opportunities for classroom coverage and consider how teachers could benefit from a debrief if teachers observe different lessons at different times. Perhaps we could establish a weekly debrief session for those that observe.
- ▶ Continue inviting feedback and being more transparent about the goals of our leadership team.
- ▶ Begin the process of creating a guaranteed and viable math curriculum.

# Bibliography

Dana, N. F., & Yendol-Hoppey, D. (2016). *The PLC book*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

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