

Professional Development=Professional Growth?

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Background That Led to Your Team's Inquiry:

Every year I worked to provide professional development to our staff that I hope is meaningful and will lead to improved instruction in the classrooms. I have started every year with a plan, but by the end of the first semester what was done was vastly different. Not only was the professional development topics different, I had no true data to prove if it was effective.

Classroom management was an area of concern identified on our HRS Level 1 survey and our current focus with PBIS. Monitoring for learning was a district focus through our work with Marzano on increasing rigor in our schools. Therefore, the purpose of our action research was to provide targeted instruction for teachers in two different areas; classroom management and monitoring students' learning.

Statement of Your Team's Wondering:

With this purpose, we wondered if providing weekly targeted professional development around 2 specific topics would lead to teachers' professional growth?

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insight into our wondering, we started off by identifying two areas of concern through the HRS 1 survey, classroom observations, and discipline data. The two areas that were identified were classroom management and monitoring for learning. We also compared our areas of focus to the district focus: Marzano's Essentials for Achieving Rigor, and schoolwide focus of Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS).

My team then developed a plan for providing professional development and collecting data. We decided to divide the teachers into two groups by grade levels, 1st-3rd grade teachers and 4th-6th grade teachers. The Resource and Related Arts teachers were divided between these two groups based on the grade levels they work with the most. Each week there were two professional development topics that were provided to the teachers; classroom management and instructional strategies on monitoring their students' learning. The classroom management professional development was presented by the PBIS team. This team is made up of classroom teachers, Resource teacher, Behavior Mentor, and a related arts teacher.

We started this PD structure in October. The success of these PDs was monitored through our discipline data (calls to the office for assistance, bus behavior referrals, and discipline referrals) and classroom walk-throughs. The walk-throughs were to monitor if teachers were using strategies being taught and the effectiveness of the strategies. This allowed us to adjust how and what we were presenting to the teachers.

Stating Your Team's Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing our data, three important things were learned:

- Providing targeted instruction on classroom management strategies improved the school climate and culture and allowed teachers to increase the amount of time they were able to teach.
- The PBIS team was effective because it was colleagues presenting to colleagues. This allowed them to have credibility and discussions about everyday situations. Teachers are holding teachers accountable.
- Having a focus for professional development allowed teachers to improve their classroom instruction on the identified areas.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

My team has made substantial progress with our professional development this year. We have some data to show that providing targeted professional development can lead to professional growth. I believe that one of the reasons we saw growth with classroom management is because the PDs were led by the PBIS team. Colleagues holding colleagues accountable is powerful.

Dividing staff into groups based on grade levels was a good first step. My team will continue to find ways to provide targeted professional development by topics or grouping the teachers. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of our professional development that we provide to our staff. I will also continue to involve teachers in planning and leading professional development.

It is vital that teachers are provided with professional development opportunities so they can continue to grow in their profession. As the principal I believe that I have to provide these opportunities within the building. I also have to build the capacity among the staff so that they will seek out growth opportunities on their own. I believe that this is one of the most important roles of a school principal.

References:

N/A