

You Had Me at Data!

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Background That Led to Your Team's Inquiry:

Morocco Elementary is part of North Newton School Corporation. North Newton School Corporation is located in Newton County. The corporation consists of four schools: Morocco Elementary, Lake Village Elementary, Lincoln Elementary and North Newton Jr.-Senior High School. There are currently 1387 students in the North Newton School District. The school corporation is a small blue-collar school district and is rural in nature. The main industry is agriculture. The student population is split between a transient population and long-term residence. The schools serve as the cultural and entertainment epicenter of the community and the heart of each of the small communities of Morocco, Lake Village, and DeMotte. Currently 50.9% of the students in the North Newton School Corporation receive free and reduced textbooks and lunch. The school corporation ethnicity consists of 90.7% white and 9.3% of other races with 6.9% Hispanic. The enrollment is growing for the first time after twenty years of steady decline.

Morocco Elementary has an enrollment of 173 students. It is the smallest school in the district. The ethnicity is primarily white/Caucasian and 7% of the student body is Hispanic. Morocco has 15 teachers. Currently 60.2% of our students qualify for free/reduced lunch and textbooks. 80% of the teaching staff has six or more years of experience. At the end of the 2017 school year teachers took a Marzano survey the levels of school effectiveness. The results of the survey focused on a safe and collaborative culture, effective teaching in every classroom, and a guaranteed and viable curriculum. After reviewing the survey data, the teacher leadership team chose to focus on 2.1 "Written document articulating the school-wide model of instruction is in place." At that time, we did not have an instructional model in place. This was the beginning of our wondering. Therefore, the purpose of our action research was to ensure effective teaching in every classroom.

Statement of Your Team's Wondering:

With this purpose, we wondered, will creating and posting an Instructional Model in addition to conducting Instructional Rounds improve instruction at Morocco Elementary?

Based upon data from 2.1 it stated that a "Written document articulating the school-wide model of instruction is in place." We did not have an instructional framework in place. Therefore, the team began to plan and set out to create an instructional model based upon the question, "What do we expect instructionally in your classrooms?"

- What should we see and hear almost daily?
- What might we see and hear but not daily?
- What should we never see or hear?

Teacher Leaders presented professional development to the staff on the Instructional Framework. The framework was created during a staff meeting. This document will be reviewed every year and revised as we need to for the next 3-4 years until it becomes a part of the school culture.

The second part of our wondering was based upon data from 2.6" Observe other teachers through Instructional Rounds and video examples." The leadership team wondered if implementing instructional rounds would improve instruction at Morocco Elementary.

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into our wonderings, the Leadership Team provided professional development on Instructional Rounds. Data gained from an exit ticket, teachers expressed thoughts regarding Instructional Rounds:

I used to think:

- It was about evaluation.
- It was intimidating.
- People would list positive/negatives about my teaching.

Now I think:

- I'm going to learn something new!
- Aligns with our Instructional Framework!
- Learn new tools for my classroom.
- I will look at preparation, instruction, and management.
- Overall focus on instruction!
- Instructional Rounds will give me great ideas for future instruction.

We took the Instructional Framework and created a checklist. Teachers used the checklist when they went in and observed teachers during Instructional Rounds.

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

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

Learning Statement One: We have "experts" in different areas just down the hall or right next door. Instructional Rounds have made a positive impact upon instruction.

Learning Statement Two: Instructional Rounds provide an opportunity to learn from your colleagues! It is nice to be able to reflect on the different methods someone else uses and how I can incorporate those instructional strategies into my instruction.

Learning Statement Three: Instructional Rounds allowed me to see what other teachers are doing well in our school. I found a lot of useful strategies and ways to better my own teaching.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

The teachers at Morocco Elementary were eager to create an Instructional Framework. They used this framework as the focus of Instructional Rounds. At first the staff met the idea of Instructional Rounds with hesitation. However, teachers quickly determined the powerful impact observing other teachers can have upon their own practice. An important piece of making Instructional Rounds successful was making sure that teachers saw Instructional Rounds as non-evaluative. The principal removed herself from the observations, therefore building trust and an environment that was judgement free. Parameters were put in place from the

beginning to ensure that teachers focus on the positive things they observed in the classroom. Every effort was made to ensure a safe space to learn and grow.

Moving forward our team will continue to conduct Instructional Rounds in order to continue to improve instruction. The qualitative data supports the effectiveness of an Instructional Framework and Instructional Rounds as a means to improve classroom instruction. We learned that the journey is everything.

References:

Marzano, R. J., (2014). High reliability schools: The next step in school reform. Bloomington: Marzano Research Laboratory.