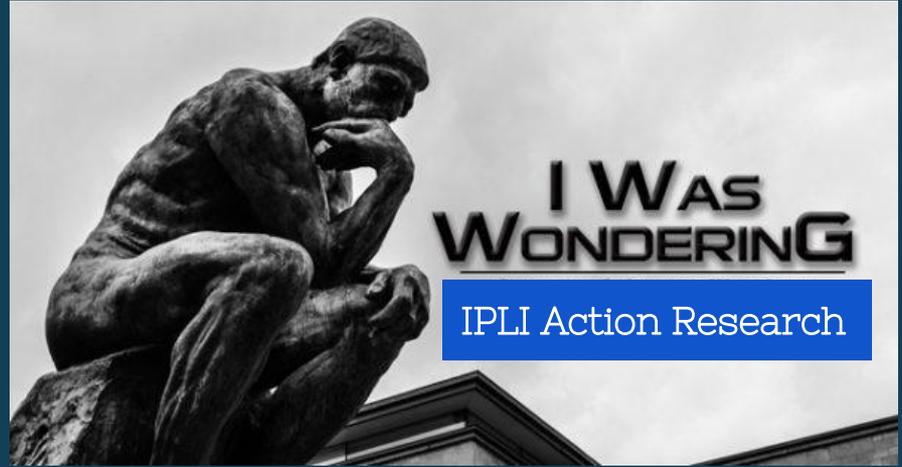




ATTICA
CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL CORPORATION



A Journey from

Wondering to Wandering

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Background

The issue/problem that led me to my inquiry was....

Although a high priority, classroom visits & informal observations do not find a way into my daily schedule or routine as often as I would like.



I also feel some teachers have a sense of anxiety about visits to the classroom; I would like to combat this and provide a sense of normalcy.

Therefore, the purpose of my inquiry is to....

Create & meet a goal on my frequency of classroom visits and observe any impacts on . . .

Level of awareness of instructional practices

Levels of anxiety teachers feel about visits.

Relationships with teachers

Pros/cons of different types of feedback.





With this purpose, I wondered:

How can an increased presence in classrooms build my capacity to make better educational decisions and what type of feedback optimizes these results?

My Actions



I read books and articles related to classroom observations and instructional coaching.

“The Coach Approach to School Leadership - Leading Teachers to Higher Levels of Effectiveness.”

I created a goal to get into classrooms at least twice a week and provide some type of feedback.

I then executed plan and carved out time in my calendar to observe.

I experimented with different feedback.

I collected data by

I sent out a survey to staff to collect their thoughts and feelings about classroom observation and feedback prior to implementing a heavier presence in classrooms.

I then sent another survey after implementation to compare the data.



My data. . .

How much do teachers **VALUE** observations?



Pre-AR project:

Majority of teachers (67%) indicated that observations had only little impact on their effectiveness as teacher.

Post-AR project:

Majority of teachers (62%) indicated that observations have had positive impact on their growth as a teacher.

My data. . .

Levels of Anxiety associated with observations as rated by teachers:



Pre-Action Research project:

Majority of teachers indicated level of anxiety is associated with observations as **6 out of 10**

Post Action Research project:

Majority of teachers indicated level of anxiety is associated with observations as **3 out of 10**

My data. . .

What specific factors do teachers value in observation / feedback?



(47%) Teachers now welcome observations any time of day or day of week.

(42%) Teacher prefer to have observations focus on areas identified as room for growth.

(65%) Teachers feel most important component in feedback is encouraging reflection questions.



What I have learned through my wondering . . .

1

TEACHERS WELCOME CLASSROOM VISITS

Teachers now want administration in their classrooms frequently as increased visits leads to decreased anxiety.

2

TEACHERS WANT INTERACTIVE OBSERVATIONS

Many teachers noted a desire to have the observer participate in class discussions and activities.

3

FEEDBACK COMPONENTS

Teachers feel the most important component of feedback is that it provides reflection opportunities and focuses on areas that need growth.

4

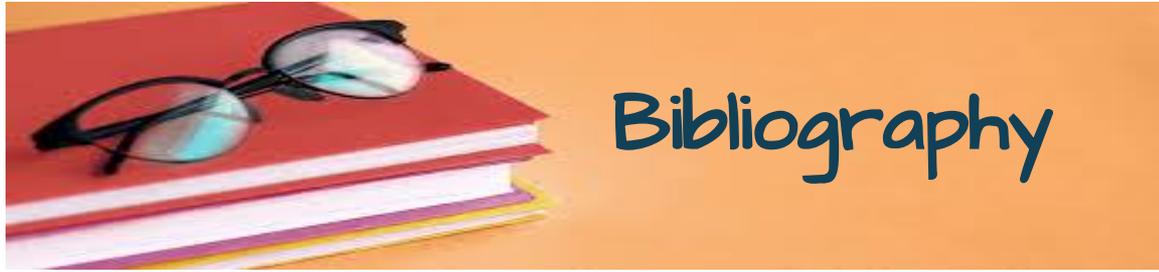
PROMOTE THE POSITIVE

I increase my ability to promote and publicly acknowledge the positive things going on in the classrooms & better build relationships with students and teachers.

Where I am headed next. . .

How can my increased classroom presence drive better informed and more intentional and focused professional development?





Bibliography

1 |

Knight, Jim. Unmistakable Impact a Partnership Approach for Dramatically Improving Instruction. Corwin Press, 2011.

2 |

Johnson, Jessica. The Coach Approach to School Leadership: Leading Teachers to Higher Levels of Effectiveness. ASCD, 2017.

3 |

Eileen Horng, and Susanna Loeb. “New Thinking about Instructional Leadership.” Vol. 92, no. 3, 2010, pp. 66–69.

4 |



[Title of Action Inquiry Project]

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Background Leading to My Inquiry (Slide 2)

- Although a high priority, classroom visits & informal observations do not find a way into my daily schedule or routine as often as I would like.
- I felt a large sense of apprehension and anxiety from the teachers when I did make the time to walk around into classrooms.
- When I do make the time, I am reminded of how important it is to be in classrooms and making connections with the teaching and learning happening. I need to find a way to emphasize this as my biggest priority.

The Purpose of My Inquiry (Slide 3)

Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to . . .

Create & meet a goal on the frequency of my classroom visits and observe any impacts on . . .

Level of awareness of instructional practices. How will an increased classroom presence lead to a more heightened awareness of our teachers' individual strengths - can I tap into these as a lead learner and utilize these teachers to share out at PD. Also, will I be able to better identify the components of instructional practices that have room for growth and development?

Level of anxiety teachers feel about visits. I sense that there is a general level of discomfort / anxiousness when I am present in a classroom. Will an increased presence create somewhat of a sense of normalcy for students and staff and reduce the level of anxiety associated with visits?

Relationships with students/ teachers. I would like to see if I have more opportunities to relate to and make connections with both staff and students with an increased presence in classrooms. Will having a better understanding of their classroom activities allow me to have more meaningful conversations about these at lunch or before school?

Pros/cons of different types of feedback. I believe the most difficult task in a heightened presence and classroom observations is leaving meaningful feedback in a way it is received well and not to make a teacher feel defensive. Which format of feedback best accomplishes this?

My Wondering (Slide 4)

With this purpose, I wondered . . . **How can an increased presence in classrooms build my capacity to make better educational decisions and allow me to connect better with teachers and students? Additionally, what type of feedback optimizes these results?**

My Actions (Slide 5)

Inspired by a workshop on instructional coaching with Jessica Johnson at the January IPLI seminar, I read a few books and articles related to classroom observations and effective instructional coaching.

- *The Coach Approach to School Leadership - Leading Teachers to Higher Levels of Effectiveness. Johnson, Jessica*
- *Unmistakable Impact a Partnership Approach for Dramatically Improving Instruction. Knight, Jim.*
- New Thinking about Instructional Leadership, Eileen Horng, and Susanna Loeb.

I first logged how many times I was actually getting into classrooms despite my best efforts. In the first 3 weeks of school year, I had only observed 11 classrooms. How could this be? This is my biggest priority!

I sent out an anonymous survey to teachers to get their honest opinions on classroom observations; how it makes them feel, and how they react to having a visitor. Questions included . . .

- Please rate the level of impact that classroom observations & feedback has had on your effectiveness as a teacher.
- My level of anxiety associated with being observed is . . .
- What could be done differently in the classroom observation process to ease the amount of anxiety / nervousness associated with them.
- How valuable is the feedback component to the classroom observation process?
- During classroom observations, I wish the observer would . . .
- What do you feel is the MOST IMPORTANT factor in effective observation feedback?
- If you had to choose an area of focus for the classroom observation, what do you think is best?
- Describe your opinion on the frequency of classroom observations - select all that are true.
- Please check all that apply: When I see an observer head into my classroom with a computer, I . . .

I then created a goal to get into classrooms at least once a week and provide some type of feedback. I then executed this plan and went to my google calendar to carve out time on a daily basis to be out in the building and in the classrooms. I was not able to schedule time every single day, but aimed to get in at least 6 class periods a week.

I hit the ground running and visited classrooms briefly (10 minutes) during at least 6 class periods a week. I experimented with different types of feedback. Some were formatted with check mark indicators - I just checked things I saw. Some formats were more of a conversation and just dialogue about the things I observed.

I then sent out a follow up survey to teachers. Asking many of the same questions from the first survey to compare how their responses changed after more frequent observations.

Data Collection (Slide 6)

I sent out a survey to staff to collect their thoughts and feelings about classroom observation and observation feedback prior to implementing a heavier presence in classrooms.

I then sent another survey after implementation to compare the data.

My Data (Slides 7-9)

Do teachers VALUE observations? In the initial survey, 67% of teachers indicated that classroom observation had little impact on their effectiveness as a teacher. After several months of an increased presence in classrooms, this had changed. My post survey indicated that majority of teachers 62% indicated that observations have been meaningful and had positive impact on their growth as a teacher.

Teacher Anxiety during observation?

Pre-Action Research project:

Majority of teachers indicated level of anxiety associated with observations as 6 out of 10 with 10 being the highest level of anxiety.

Post Action Research project:

Majority of teachers indicated level of anxiety associated with observations as 3 out of 10 with 10 being the highest level of anxiety.

OTHER FINDINGS:

(47%) Teachers now welcome observations any time of day or day of week.

(42%) Teachers prefer to have observations focus on areas identified as room for growth.

(65%) Teachers feel most important component in feedback is encouraging reflection

questions.

My Discoveries (Slide 10)

TEACHERS WELCOME CLASSROOM VISITS

Teachers feel supported by having administration in their classrooms frequently and increased visits leads to decreased anxiety.

TEACHERS WANT INTERACTIVE OBSERVATIONS

Many teachers noted a desire to have the observer participate in class discussions and activities. Join the conversation – talk to the students.

FEEDBACK COMPONENTS

Teachers feel the most important component of feedback is that it provides reflection opportunities and focuses on areas that need growth. Teachers overall also preferred to have dialogue formatted observation feedback as opposed to checklists of what is observed and not observed.

BETTER ABLE PROMOTE THE POSITIVE

I increase my capacity to promote and publicly acknowledge via social media, the positive things going on in the classrooms & better build relationships with students and teachers. I can showcase and tap into these teachers' strengths when delivering PD to the teachers.

Where I Am Heading Next (Slide 11)

This project has been very enlightening and multi-faceted. When I first started, I was only focused on getting into classrooms more. What I didn't realize was how dynamic this would become and how interconnected this idea is with so many other components. The side effects of also gaining a better understanding of PD needs, being able to better connect with students and staff, having a better capacity to boast the awesome things happening at the school were all welcome discoveries along the way.

Bibliography (Slide 12)

Knight, Jim. *Unmistakable Impact a Partnership Approach for Dramatically Improving Instruction*. Corwin Press, 2011.

Johnson, Jessica. *The Coach Approach to School Leadership: Leading Teachers to Higher Levels of Effectiveness*. ASCD, 2017.

Eileen Horng, and Susanna Loeb. "New Thinking about Instructional Leadership." Vol. 92, no. 3, 2010, pp. 66–69.