

Indiana Principal Leadership Institute

Cohort 12
Action Research
Showcase

April 9, 2025





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

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 - 11:30 am	Action Research Celebration	

Table 1
Brian Hagan, Facilitator

* Embracing the Rebel: Finding Joy and Productivity in Work

Jeremy Shireman, Parkwood Elementary School

In this research, I explored the possibility of fully embracing my Rebel phase while maintaining productivity. Prioritizing enjoyment in my work was a key focus, as I sought to determine whether integrating fun into the process could enhance both motivation and overall success.

*Sprinkles of Success

Bethany Guilfoy, Whiteland Elementary

"Sprinkles of Success" is an action research project focused on documenting and celebrating the positive contributions made within a school setting. The project recognizes the importance of feeling that one's work is intentional and impactful, particularly for individuals who thrive on creating meaningful connections to their work.

Table 2
Mike Pinto, Facilitator

*Better When I'm Thinking?

Laura Ricca Brazil, Test Intermediate

As a Thinker base, I love to engage as a learner with teachers and colleagues. But my own love for learning doesn't always get prioritized in the tedium of running a middle school. Will my own satisfaction and relationships with staff be better when I prioritize my own learning, not just the learning of my students and staff?

*Using my PCM strengths to make conflict more about problem-solving and growth

Lori Katz, Mt. Vernon Middle School

As I prepare for my professional day, my Thinker Base strengths can feel in direct conflict with my Imaginer Phase needs. While my thinker base should revel in prioritizing tasks so that I can meet goals and obligations for the day, my Imaginer Phase drives a need to have unstructured, uninterrupted time to myself. I have to find a way to balance planning my day in an organized way while still allowing myself unstructured time to prepare mentally. This is difficult for me when I know I am facing a day laced with conflict. I need to play to my strengths across these PCM aspects, so that I can create a more balanced, effective approach to managing adult conflict. This alignment will not only improve conflict outcomes but also strengthen professional relationships and trust.

Notes

Table 3
Ryan Langferman, Facilitator

*Structure for having direct, difficult, and purposeful conversations

Nicole Stone, South Decatur Elementary

My AR project relates to having a structure to following: when having direct, difficult, and purposeful conversations with staff, students, or parents. Using a template to navigate difficult conversations with staff provides a structured approach that ensures clarity, empathy, and effective communication. By following a well-defined template, managers can remain objective, stay focused on key points, and avoid emotional escalation. This method fosters a supportive environment, promotes constructive feedback, and increases the likelihood of positive outcomes, such as improved staff performance or stronger workplace relationships.

*Transforming Leadership: The Power of Daily Connection and Intentional Engagement in School Leadership

Marisa Arms,, Wyandotte Elementary School

Through my action research project, I've discovered that intentionally scheduling time for harmonizing activities and being present in classrooms each day keeps me energized and engaged. This shift in mindset has reshaped my perspective and priorities as a school leader. By building connections with both students and staff through daily interactions, I feel more fulfilled in my role as principal.

Table 4
Leigh Barnes, Facilitator

*Work-Life Balance and Setting Boundaries

Megan Butto, North Elementary

As a new administrator, I recognized the need to set intentional boundaries to maintain a healthy work-life balance. I often felt compelled to spend all my time at school, making it difficult to be fully present for my family. To address this, I established clear boundaries for my time and tracked my progress daily. By being mindful of my habits and prioritizing balance, I was able to remain effective at work while being more present at home. This research highlights the importance of boundary-setting as a strategy for sustaining both professional success and personal well-being.

*"Balancing the Scales: Letting Go of Perfection to Find Peace"

Sharon Igras, John Wood Elementary

I've spent so much of my life trying to please everyone, believing that by carrying the weight of others' needs, I would find peace. But in my quest to harmonize the world around me, I've neglected my own well-being, leading me to the edge of burnout. Will embracing shared responsibility and letting go of perfection help me preserve my peace?

Notes

Table 5
Elizabeth Krutz, Facilitator

*You Are Worth It! A Journey In Self-Care and Being a Stronger Leader

Amanda Pyle, Eastern Hancock Elementary School

In this action research, I explore the emotional challenges of being highly attuned to others' feelings because of having a base harmonizing floor. I look at how absorbing others' emotions can drain my mental and physical energy, making it difficult to focus on my own needs. Throughout this AR project, I reflect on the increasing importance of self-care as work demands and aging take a toll on my body. This experience has led me to realize the need for strategies to maintain balance and well-being, so I can keep making a positive impact while also caring for myself and being a better building leader.

*Be GREAT, Not Perfect

Melissa Gilbert, Burris Elementary

Perfectionism can often hinder personal growth and well-being, leading to unrealistic expectations, over analysis, and self-doubt. As a base thinker, this study focuses on overcoming perfectionism to embrace progress and greatness. As an action research approach, documenting daily achievements—no matter how small—serves as a strategy to shift focus from perceived shortcomings to tangible successes. By capturing positive aspects of daily work, this study aims to foster a healthier mindset, promote self-confidence, and encourage sustainable personal and professional development.

Table 6
Adam McDaniel, Facilitator

*Understanding Leadership Responses to Frustration

Andy Brown, Madison-Grant United School Corporation

This action research project explores how my leadership behaviors and responses to frustration aligned with my Thinker Base and Harmonizer Phase as identified through the Process Communication Model (PCM). The study examines patterns in my reactions to stressful situations, such as staff follow-through challenges, communication barriers, and delayed decision-making. By tracking responses using a structured reflection framework, I identified areas where over-explaining, repeating requests, and perfectionist tendencies affected leadership effectiveness.

Through intentional self-monitoring, I experimented with simplifying communication, setting structured accountability measures, and creating intentional breaks to manage stress responses. Initial findings suggest that small adjustments in communication style and proactive accountability structures lead to improved clarity, reduced stress, and better staff follow-through.

*Mastering Your PCM Brain – Intentionally Structuring Your Day for Optimal Productivity, Leadership, and Meaningful Connections

Weston Lambert, North Wood High School

What if you could intentionally design your day to maximize productivity, minimize stress, and strengthen personal connections, all by understanding your PCM Brain? In this Mini AR project, I examined how recognizing which PCM Brain (floor/phase) I am in, which one I prefer, and which one I must satisfy first enables greater control over daily experiences, interactions, and overall outcomes.

Notes

Table 7
John Birmingham, Facilitator

**"The Boundary Is In The Pause*

Amy Harrington, Johnston Elementary

We all encounter interruptions throughout the day, often driven by other people’s priorities and action items. By taking a moment to pause before responding, I give myself the time to process the request and make a decision based on my own priorities—both as a school leader and as a principal. Do you know someone who, like me, feels the urge to fix everything for everyone?

**Prioritizing Tasks and Maximizing Effectiveness*

Brock Richardson, Mintonye Elementary School

Through my action research project, I reflected on how my time was spent by tracking tasks on my Google Calendar. My goal was to feel accomplished by completing prioritized tasks. I've discovered that prioritizing tasks and maximizing my calendar allowed me to feel accomplished as a PCM base and phase "Thinker", and has allowed me to increase my effectiveness in organization. I am able to use my time more efficiently, and identify tasks that can be delegated to others.

Notes

**Table 1
Amanda Pyle, Facilitator**

*Will Analyzing My Time Present Opportunities for More Impactful Work?

Matthew Van Vlymen, Block Middle School

My time was tracked and categorized from October through January. During this time, I found opportunities to introduce systems and delegate tasks creating time for more impactful work and an increase in overall job satisfaction.

*How can I be intentional about my distress behavior to find a pattern and redirect to a source of rebel motivation?

Caleb Cherry, Washington Intermediate School

As a school leader, I recognize the importance of understanding and managing distress behaviors to enhance my effectiveness and resilience. In this action research project, I aim to identify patterns in my distress responses and intentionally redirect these behaviors to a source of rebel motivation—an inner drive for positive change. By analyzing my behavioral triggers and implementing mindful interventions, I seek to foster a proactive approach to stress, enabling myself and my team to thrive in challenging situations. This project will explore strategies for recognizing distress in real-time and using it as a catalyst for personal and professional growth, aiming for a balanced leadership approach that prioritizes both well-being and motivation.

**Table 2
Adam McDaniel, Facilitator**

*Managing Work/Life Balance to Complete Daily Tasks and Fuel Harmonizer Needs

Joshua Emily, Utica Elementary School

After reviewing the "harmonizer" information from PCM and evaluating the stress preventing me from enjoying life to the fullest, I decided in order to feel fulfilled I needed to make a change. I decided to focus on successfully completing my daily tasks, spend quality time with my own children, increase exercise, make positive phone calls to parents, and write staff members positive notes. By tracking my progress in these tasks and monitoring my perceived happiness I will look to discover if there is a correlation that can help me recapture my joy.

*Building Agility in Communication Channels

Vince Edwards, Fortville Elementary School

Effective communication is a cornerstone of great leadership, and it can be particularly challenging in diverse educational settings. This action research project explores how I might be able to further develop my agility in utilizing all six communication styles within the Process Communication Model (PCM). By intentionally incorporating elements of each communication type into weekly staff update emails, I hope to strengthen engagement, clarity, and connection with all staff members as well. Data will be tracked from each week along with a brief, self-reflective journal note related to how easy or difficult this exercise felt to me, and informal staff feedback will also be sought to assess the impact of this intentional approach.

Notes

Table 3
Leigh Barnes, Facilitator

*Building relationships with communication while meeting everyone's needs.

Tami Jacobs, Wea Ridge Elementary

Using the PCM Leadership Profile, I learned that my base and phase are both at the Persister floor. My project focuses on how to communicate with my staff in a way that fulfills my needs while gaining respect, rather than fear. My project centered around building relationships with my staff members in order to better communicate and fulfill their base need, as well as my own.

*Identifying My Own Implicit Biases

Adam Welcher, Hose Elementary

My wondering was to see if I intentionally discussed my personality and work/life performance/expectations with those around me if I can better identify any implicit biases I may have.

Table 4
John Birmingham, Facilitator

*What ties me to my desk and keeps me from the classrooms (informal/formal observations) and building?

Mike Myers, Greensburg Community High School

My project examines how I allocate time as a principal, focusing on factors that keep me in my office rather than being present in hallways, classrooms, and communal spaces. Using a weekly work log, I tracked tasks such as emails, meetings, discipline issues, and staff interactions to identify trends, inefficiencies, and common themes. Analyzing this data will help determine whether my time is spent on essential, high-impact activities and inform strategies to enhance leadership presence, ensuring a balanced approach that improves both school operations and culture.

*Protective Time, Productive Leadership: The Power of Non-Negotiable Work Time

Chauntee Smith, McKenzie Center for Innovation & Technology

In the demanding role of a CTE high school principal, the balance between leadership responsibilities and strategic thinking is often disrupted by constant interruptions and urgent matters. This inquiry explores the impact of implementing structured, non-negotiable work time on productivity, decision-making, and overall well-being. Rooted in the concept of phase thinking and base harmonization, this study investigates how carving out dedicated, uninterrupted time each week enhances focus, fosters clarity, and supports sustainable leadership practices.

Notes

Table 5
Brian Hagan Facilitator

*Harmonizer and Thinker: Will Utilizing a WIN Board keep me validated?

Kimberly Hayes, Virgil I. Bailey Elementary School

Through the Process Communication Model, I have learned that my base is Harmonizer and my phase floor is Thinker. I thrive on recognition and praise to keep me going. The purpose of this project is to implement a WIN board with my daily routine and determine if that meets my need for validation. Will this daily routine provide me the confidence to know I am a successful leader and energy to continue building my leadership capacity?

Table 6
John Pearl, Facilitator

*Groundhog Day: Rediscovering Purpose Through Mindful Practice

Brian Orkis, North Judson-San Pierre High School

This action research delves into the transformative effects of intentional reflection in educational leadership, focusing on how structured contemplative practices can be a catalyst to a renewed sense of purpose in the principalship. Through deliberate self-examination, the administrative role evolved beyond routine and mundane management, uncovering a deeper meaning and connection to the work. Regular reflective practice not only highlighted previously overlooked positive experiences but also helped to revive essential mentorship relationships that had waned over time. This intentional reflection process was crucial in rediscovering the core "Why" of educational leadership, illustrating how mindful introspection can be a powerful tool for professional rejuvenation and personal growth in school administration, ultimately contributing to more effective, fulfilling and purpose-driven educational leadership experience.

*The Power of Reflection: Strengthening Relationships Through Intentional Time and Connection

Duke Lines, Whiteland Community High School

This action research project, The Power of Reflection: Strengthening Relationships Through Intentional Time and Connection, explores the impact of dedicated reflection on relationship-building as a leader. Grounded in the Thinker base and Harmonizer phase of the Process Communication Model (PCM), this study investigates whether carving out intentional time for reflection fosters stronger connections with colleagues, staff, and students.

Notes

Table 1
Mike Pinto, Facilitator

*Time Well Spent: Optimizing Tasks, Prioritization, and Delegation

Kent Rentschler, Edgewood Junior High School

This project is about recognition of productive work by tracking and organizing my completed tasks to better understand how I spend my time and improve efficiency. By identifying patterns and prioritizing effectively, I can focus on high-value work while delegating tasks to my team based on their strengths. This will help me work more efficiently, and energize my thinker phase and base.

*Checking Off What I Need in Order to Be Super-Principal, Super-Dad, Super-Husband...aka Super-Man!

Sam Ells, Union Township Middle School

As a principal, each day brings new challenges, unexpected tasks, and moments of reflection on time management. To improve productivity, I track my daily to-do list, analyze task completion patterns, and evaluate interruptions. By collecting this data, I aim to refine my time management strategies to be fully present for students, staff, and my family. This project is a commitment to intentional leadership and sustainable balance, focusing on maximizing productivity while minimizing stress. My goal is to develop strategies that enhance focus, accomplish meaningful goals, and model effective time management for staff. Ultimately, success is not about doing everything, it's about doing what truly matters, well.

Table 2
Elizabeth Krutz , Facilitator

*Personalizing PD to impact the development and implementation of best teaching practices

Aimee Howard, Riley Elementary

Providing effective feedback to my staff as I complete classroom visits is important, but I often feel that I do not have the time to give that feedback as often as I would like. I have created a feedback form and a schedule to see if that makes me feel more satisfied as an instructional leader in my building.

*Learning to Love Again

Amanda Krga, Crestview Elementary

At the end of my first year of principalship, I recognized that I felt disconnected and lacked a sense of pride in the staff and school I had been named Principal. Given my Harmonizer base, my relationships with staff and having a sense of belonging hold a lot of significance. My AR project, titled Learning to Love Again, reflects the journey of my second year of principalship as I intentionally reflect on each day, its positives, and the interactions I have with my staff members.

Notes

Table 3
Ryan Langferman, Facilitator

*Maintaining Personal Boundaries: Using Meditation and Prayer to Ease Stress and Anxiety

Mitchell Ridenour, Fremont Middle School

In analyzing my PCM profile, I recognized that a major psychological need for my phase of Harmonizer was that I should be able to answer the following question every day successfully, "Have I maintained my personal boundaries?" This allowed me to recognize and wonder if I scheduled time throughout the day to meditate and pray, would it help in this aspect, and leave my battery recharged at the end of the night. The data analysis consisted of rating how I felt, using a scale, before and after the practice, and writing an analysis of how my energy level felt at the end of each day, what the meditation consisted of, and what other factors could have contributed to the way I felt. Also, I created subcategories that separated the data into days of the week, biggest, or smallest, net change, and whether the meditation purposefully targeted my deficiencies at that time. In conclusion, the choice of meditation played a huge part in helping me to maintain personal boundaries and helped serve as a catalyst for positive interactions with my family at home that evening.

*Check Yourself Before You Wreck Yourself

Bucky Kramer, North Putnam Middle School

The understanding of driving personality traits is essential in the development of personal leadership strategies. Within the structure of the PCM Leadership Profile, it was evident that specific personality traits guide my personal decisions and leadership style. Reflection into this data demonstrates that in both the phase and base stage of my personality structure places me directly into the rebel category. It was my wondering in this process if I was aware when my blind spots in personal leadership directly affected my responses and actions. In this action research, data that was collected in the form of a personal diary was used to collect thoughts and examples of what factors lead to displays of blind spots in my personale reactions. It was found that in my daily interactions with students, staff, parents, and community stakeholders, my first and second degree stress behaviors are indeed activated by very specific stimuli: my personal perception of: laziness, disorganization, and claims of misunderstanding. In identifying these factors, it was clear that by quickly identifying situations that may lead to these conclusions, my stressors can be channeled in a positive fashion so that they do not remain blind spots, but rather growing moments for my personal leadership journey.

Table 4
Amanda Pyle, Facilitator

*End-of-Day Reflection for Job Satisfaction: An Action Research Study of a New High School Principal

Steve Sherohman, Brown County High School

This project explored what truly influences daily job satisfaction and overall well-being in the demanding role of school leadership. The inquiry was driven by three key questions: What moments or interactions during the day lead to a genuine sense of accomplishment? What factors contribute to stress or dissatisfaction? And how does taking time to reflect at the end of the day shape one's overall sense of fulfillment? To answer these questions, the principal engaged in daily reflective journaling and completed brief surveys prompted by questions such as: What went well today? What challenges did I encounter? How well did today's activities align with my goals as a principal? Through this process, clear patterns emerged. Positive, goal-oriented interactions and meaningful progress toward long-term objectives consistently enhanced satisfaction, while time constraints, misaligned tasks, and unforeseen disruptions often led to frustration. Importantly, the simple act of daily reflection proved to be a powerful tool—helping to clarify priorities, manage stress, and reinforce a sense of purpose. The insights gained from this project point to practical strategies that can help school leaders cultivate greater fulfillment and resilience in their daily work.

*Feeling Accomplished at the End of the Day

John Tindall, Southwestern High School

In my project, I analyzed how being purposeful with my organizational and planning tasks in the morning each day leads to a sense of accomplishment at the end of the day. I also look at factors that occur during the day that derail my routine and how they affect my sense of accomplishment at the end of the day.

Table 5
John Pearl, Facilitator

*The Principal's Secretary, Growing Collaboration through Shared Vision.

James Stamper, Homer Iddings Elementary

The Principal's Secretary is the face of the school, and many argue, is the one who truly runs the building. I wonder if I am more intentional in slowing down and in scheduling time with my administrative assistant, will we develop a healthy, more organized and productive partnership?

*Remembering Kids

Beth Hoeing, Southwestern Elementary School

This study explores the inconsistent feelings of job satisfaction I feel on a weekly, monthly, and yearly basis, with the purpose being to identify what leads to feelings of satisfaction and what leads to feelings of dissatisfaction. In order to collect data to use in my analysis, I created a Google Form to complete daily to track my level of job satisfaction and to compare my levels with the events of each of my days. My findings show high job satisfaction on days that include unstructured time building relationships with students, and low job satisfaction is shown on days with little student interaction. This study has highlighted to me the importance of investing in student relationships and its impact on my job satisfaction.

Table 6
Adam McDaniel, Facilitator

*Professional Boundaries

McKenzie Leckrone, Central Elementary

This action research project focuses on the necessity of setting professional boundaries, specifically in the areas of communication and time spent working outside of regular work hours. The study aims to explore whether establishing clear time boundaries will help alleviate feelings of being rushed, burnt out, and overwhelmed. By examining the impact of these boundaries on work-life balance and overall well-being, the project seeks to provide valuable insights into the potential benefits of maintaining healthier professional limits.

*Tackling Crucial Conversations When your PCM Base and Phases Conflict

Kelly Boersma, Frank Hammond Elementary School

This action research project explores the integration of Crucial Conversations strategies with PCM (Process Communication Model) awareness to navigate conflicts between colleagues. It examines how I balanced a PCM understanding when addressing communication breakdowns and decision-making challenges. Findings provided practical insights to facilitating more effective discussions through understanding personal PCM bases and phases in the midst of crucial conversations.

Notes

Arms, Marisa, S1,T3	4	Krga, Amanda, S3,T2	10
Boersma, Kelly, S3,T6	12	Lambert, Weston, S1,T6.....	5
Brazil, Laura, S1,T2	3	Leckrone, McKenzie, S3,T6	12
Brown, Andy, S1, T6.....	5	Lines, Duke , S2,T6.....	9
Butto, Megan, S1,T4.....	4	Myers, Michael S2,T4	8
Cherry, Caleb, S2,T1.....	7	Orkis, Brian, , S2,T6.....	9
Edwards, Vince, S2,T2.....	7	Pyle, Amanda, S1, T5.....	5
Ells, Sam, S3,T1	10	Rentschler, Kent, S3,T1.....	10
Emily, Joshua, S2,T2.....	7	Richardson, Brock , S1,T7	6
Gilbert, Melissa, S1, T5	5	Ridenour, Mitchell , S3,T3	11
Guilfoy, Bethany, S1,T1	3	Sherohman, Steven, S3,T4.....	11
Harrington, Amy, S1,T7.....	6	Shireman, Jeremy, S1,T1	3
Hayes, Kimberly , S2,T5	9	Smith, Chauntee , S2,T4	8
Hoeing, Beth, S3,T5	12	Stamper, James, S3,T5	12
Howard, Aimee, S3,T2.....	10	Stone, Nicole, S1,T3	4
Igras, Sharon, S1,T4	4	Tindall, John , S3,T4	11
Jacobs, Tamara, S2,T3.....	8	Van Vlymen, Matthew, S2,T1	7
Katz, Lori, S1,T7	3	Welcher, Adam, S2,T3.....	8
Kramer, Raymond, S3,T3	11		

The sharing of your action research project counts as a “professional presentation.” When citing in your resume, use the following formatting:

Andrews, K., Gruenert, S. (2023). Implementing instructional rounds. Presented at the annual Indiana Principal Leadership Institute Showcase of Schools, 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!!

“Great Principals, Great Schools!”

