

# In the Trenches: Developing a Deeper Understanding of Teacher Effectiveness

By: Brett Findley, CSA Lincoln Elementary

Contact: [findleyb@bcsc.k12.in.us](mailto:findleyb@bcsc.k12.in.us)

## **Background That Led to Your Inquiry:**

It is difficult to get a comprehensive view of teacher effectiveness by only utilizing the evaluation process. By dedicating consistent time to work alongside my teachers on a weekly basis, I will reinforce a team mentality with staff, gain a better understanding of the curriculum, and improve my understanding of each teacher's strength and weaknesses so that I may help them improve professionally.

## **Statement of Your Wondering:**

How will dedicating 45-60 minutes on a weekly basis in each classroom provide me with a more complete view of teacher effectiveness?

## **Methods/Procedures:**

To gain insights into my wonderings, I scheduled dedicated weekly time in each classroom. During my research I visited 68 classrooms and worked with small groups for 57 of those visits. I worked in a 1:1 or 1:2 setting for 10 visits and supported whole group instruction for just one of those visits. I surveyed my staff via an anonymous survey and included those results in my presentation (emailed these to Lori Davis). Data was collected from December 2017 through February 2018. As a former high school teacher, understanding how to teach the fundamentals was a foreign concept to me. I was able to utilize this experience to ask questions, gain insight into best instructional practices utilized at the elementary level, and develop positive relationships with both my students and teachers.

## **Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:**

As a result of analyzing my data the four important things I learned include:

- I know my students.

John Hattie's research provides clear data on how important relationships are in the learning process. Dedicating time in each room has allowed me the 1:1 interaction needed to truly understand my student's strengths and weaknesses. I know every student's name and a little bit about each of them so when I have discussions with teachers about students I bring an informed perspective.

- I better understand elementary education.

Understanding what are effective instructional practices at a first grade level are very different than a fourth grade level. By living this experience I again am better able to provide support to my teachers and students.

- I can better support my teachers in their professional growth.

This goes along with the above statement. Having logged several hours in each room, I can help my teachers understand their strengths and weaknesses and provide additional support for them to grow professionally.

-Teachers feel supported and appreciated in a “team first” environment.

This is seen clearly by the data I have provided. I'm not using the time to evaluate them, rather they are guiding me in this process. It has been a great experience.

### **Providing Concluding Thoughts:**

1. I have been spending consistent time each week in classrooms for the past two years and this provided an opportunity to really track my progress and get my teacher's perspective on if they felt it was beneficial. The survey results show that they see this time as valuable. I have learned an incredible amount by spending this time with them.

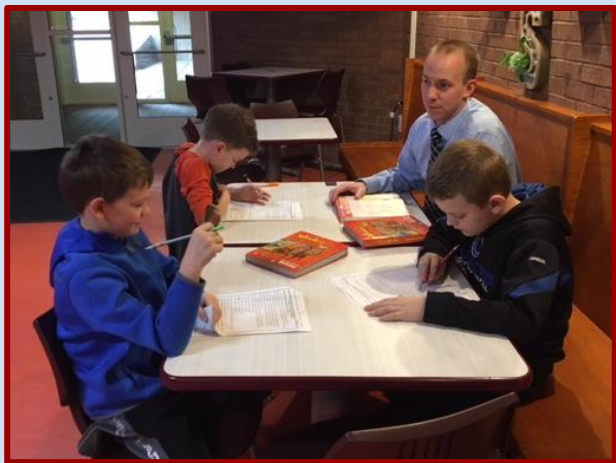
2. Devoting time for my less experienced teachers to choose slots first is something I have learned. If I worked at a much larger school I would most definitely have to split the responsibilities with an AP or shorten time in the classroom.

### **References:**

N/A

# In the Trenches

## Developing a Deeper Understanding of Teacher Effectiveness



Brett Findley

IPLI Action Research Project

CSA Lincoln Elementary  
Columbus, Indiana



# Compelling Challenge

How will dedicating 45-60 minutes on a weekly basis in each classroom provide me with a more complete view of teacher effectiveness?

CSA Lincoln Elementary is a K-6 Project-Based Learning magnet school. CSA Lincoln is one of eleven public elementary schools in the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation.

## Action Research-Need to Knows

Classrooms	14 classrooms (25 students per class)
Timeline	2 years in May 2018

## CSA Lincoln Elementary

Enrollment	345
Attendance Rate	96.8%
Free/Reduced Lunch	35.1%
High Ability	15.4%
Special Education	11.9%
ELL	2.3%

There are two types of people  
who work in a school.

Teachers and those  
who help teachers.

# Building a Foundation

## Reorganize and Delegate

```
graph TD; A[Reorganize and Delegate] --> B[Administrative Assistant]; A --> C[Prioritize My Duties]; A --> D[Peer Counselor];
```

### Administrative Assistant

- Controls my schedule. Prioritize meetings outside of class time.
- Treasurer (budgets, shopping, purchasing).
- Announcements, field trip forms, HR documents, etc.
- First contact for bus and office radio.
- Sends text message updates.
- Freedom to be innovative with her position.

### Prioritize My Duties

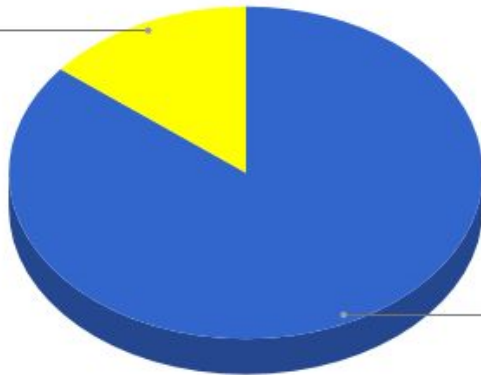
- Monday Notes are shared with all staff with my schedule and outline for the week.
- Work from my phone between classrooms to return emails.
- Observation data is a collection from my time in the classroom.
- Handle student behavior redirection check-ins during my time in the hallway.
- Teacher led PD during staff meeting

### Peer Counselor

- Attendance
- Circle of Friends groups to support positive peer relations.
- Assist in Behavior Redirection
- 504 Conferences
- PBIS Committee Chair

Do you believe that I now have a better understanding of your teaching abilities?

No change  
14.3%



Yes  
85.7%



### AR Data Collection (Dec.-Feb.)

Classroom Visits	68
Small Group Stations	57
Intervention (1:1, 1:2)	10
Whole Group Support	1

### Survey Parameters

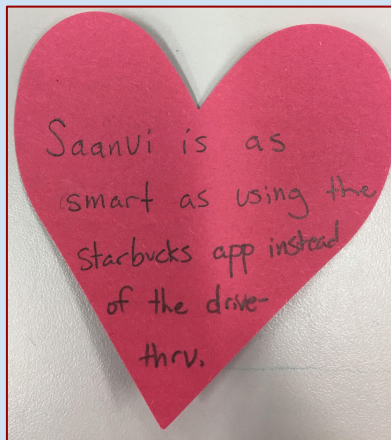
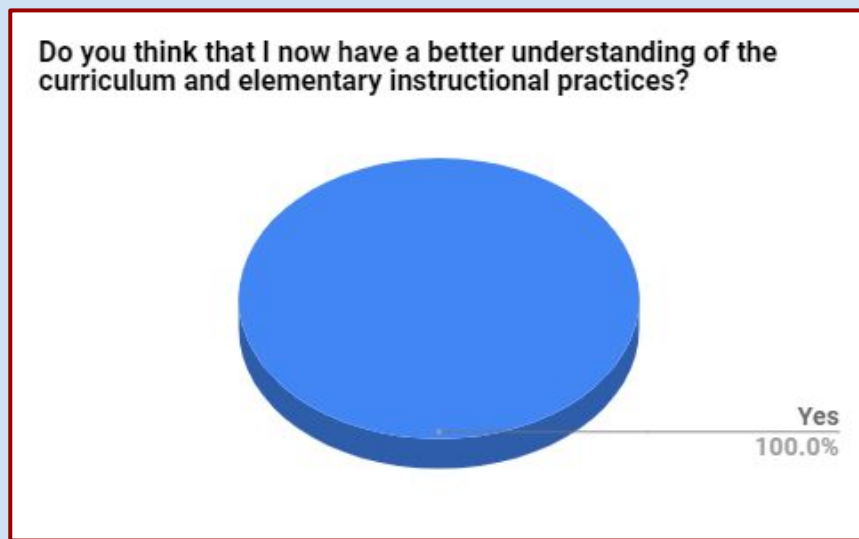
Anonymous (14/14 participants responded)

Choices: Yes, No, No Change



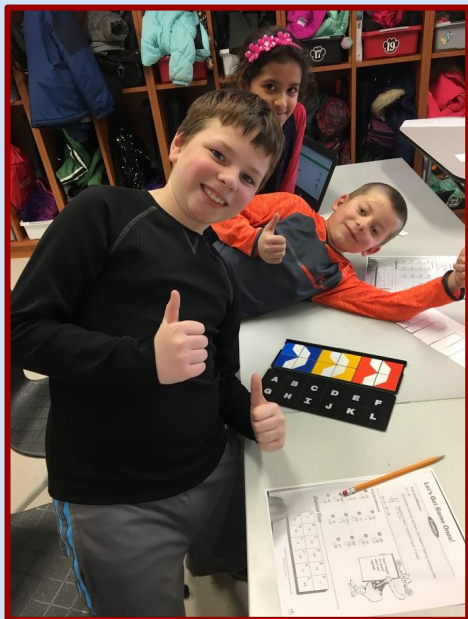


**Second Grade**  
**Valentine's Day**  
**Similes**



**Kindergarten**  
**Math Stations**

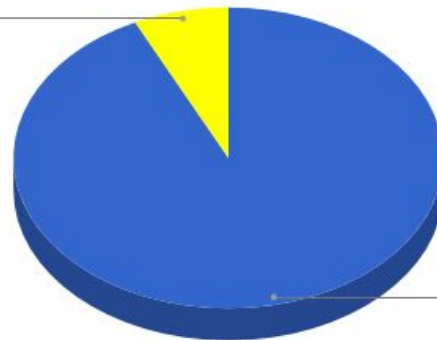




Do you think this experience has positively impacted my abilities as a leader?

No change

7.1%



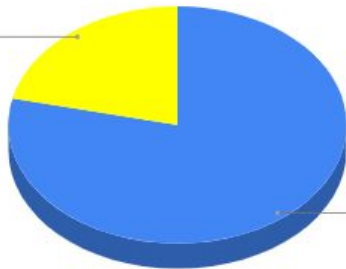
Yes  
92.9%

After learning about how VersaTiles were utilized in Third Grade, I introduced them to Second Grade students.

It was well received by our students as a way to extend their learning!

Do you think me being in your room on a consistent basis has positively impacted your students?

No change  
21.4%

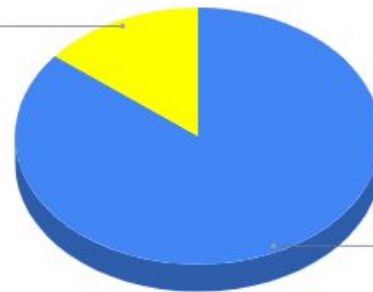


Yes  
78.6%



Has this experience positively impacted principal/student relations?

No change  
14.3%



Yes  
85.7%



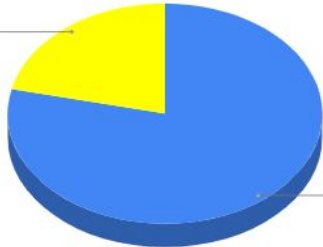
## Action Research Results

- I know my students.
- I better understand elementary education.
- I can better support my teachers in their professional growth.
- Teachers feel supported and appreciated in a “team first” environment.



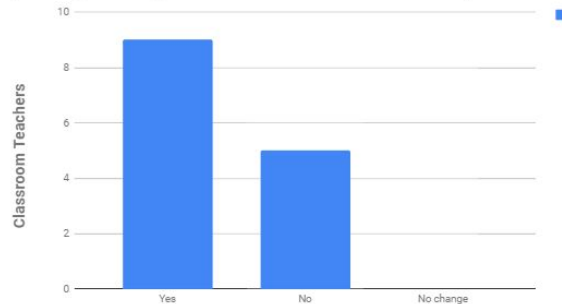
Has this positively impacted principal/staff relations?

No change  
21.4%



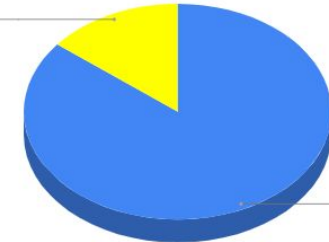
Yes  
78.6%

Are you less likely to send students to the office for behavior concerns (Knowing it would pull me from someone else's classroom)?



How has this impacted your perspective on the teacher observation process?

No Change  
14.3%



Less Stressful  
85.7%