

Instructional Rounds: The Utilization of Colleagues in Self-Improvement
Cohort 7, Year 2

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Background Leading to Our Inquiry (Slide 2)

- The reason behind this action inquiry report is support my staff. From surveying my staff, one of the areas in which they feel they would gain the biggest benefit and could be utilized in their day-to-day instruction would be genuine professional development. Professional development that was tailored to their area of need/interest. Often time professional development opportunities that have come up in the past consisted of a very large group of teachers gathered around listening to a person who was brought into the district to speak for a few hours before leaving and heading to the next town/school corporation. Teachers constantly were saying that the presenters didn't touch on their specific needs nor did they truly know the challenges and intricacies that they face with their current population, curriculum, technology, etc.
- Teaching during a pandemic comes with many NEW challenges and obstacles that even veteran teachers aren't accustomed to navigating, so I wanted to provide for my teachers with professional development opportunities that would address some of these challenges and obstacles they have encountered this school year.

The Purpose of Our Inquiry (Slide 3)

- Therefore, the purpose of our action inquiry report was to provide an opportunity for teachers to get genuine professional development. Job-embedded professional development that is directly related to their instructional growth goals (Marzano, 2018, p. 96). Professional development that is on topics of need and interests, and from people that they know and that understand the challenges and intricacies they deal with on a day-to-day basis. My goal as a principal and with the support of my teacher leader is to provide these opportunities for my teachers so they can hone their craft and strive for continuous improvement.

Our Wondering (Slide 4)

- With this purpose, I wondered how I can best support my teachers wishes and needs to grow and learn professionally in an environment that was a close to their own as possible. Teachers have an incredibly busy schedule and often time are unable to get the pleasure of observing their fellow teachers and learning first-hand from them strategies, skills, or tips that they too could implement into their classroom instruction.

Being this is my 5th year as the principal of Myers I have the duty and privilege of getting to observe and help guide my teachers. During these observations I have found strengths in all of my teachers, and I am confident that I will be able to steer teachers in the direction of fellow colleagues that they might not know of within our building that would positively impact their professional instruction. So, this professional development would need to be in an environment that was a similar to their own and in a time frame that was not overwhelming in order to best meet the teachers' needs.

Our Actions (Slide 5)

- My first step in devising a plan to get teachers into each other's classrooms to observe and learn from their colleagues, was to get buy in from the staff. I presented the idea of instructional rounds to my Site Base Team. This team is comprised of one teacher from each grade level (K-5) as well as one Related Arts Teacher and my school advisor. During this presentation, I shared with the team a video of what instructional rounds look like, and how we as a school could go about implementing them into our classrooms.
- Next, the Site Base Team as a whole went into a classroom of a fellow Site Base Team member for 15 to 20 minutes, conducted the instructional round, and went through the process together. I felt it was crucial to walk the team through an instructional round together to alleviate the angst of having others come in to your classroom, to prevent the feeling of being judged or evaluated, as well as to show the benefit and ease of conducting an instructional round.
- Once we completed the instructional round as a Site Base Team, we presented instructional round process to the entire staff. Having the support and testimony of the Site Base Team played huge dividend in making the task seem valuable and worthwhile.
- Teachers in the building then were free to go about and conduct instructional rounds on their own. In order to provide the necessary time for teachers to complete these rounds, I aligned coverage in classrooms for teachers to go overserve their colleagues.

Data Collection (Slide 6)

- In order to collect data for my Action Inquiry Project from my staff I created a unified Instructional Round Form for staff to use when conducting instructional rounds. Since the premise behind Instructional rounds is to get into classrooms and observe first-hand the teachers teaching, I introduced the form at a staff meeting to make sure all teachers were aware of the form and the process. This school year without question has been an interesting one with the switching back and forth with between the in person and virtual learning we have found the need to learn together how to increase and maintain engagement in the virtual setting. In December of 2020 teachers went into each other's virtual classrooms and not only observed their colleagues teaching virtually but also got

onto the Google Meets to monitor and observe student interactions. During/After the instructional round teachers completed the form and then held a post conference with those observed. During the debriefing discussion, it is important that teachers link their comments to the purpose of the round. (Marzano, 2016, p. 89) As a means of tracking data and feedback from the instructional rounds, teachers provided me a copy of their form and completed a survey following the experience. The survey was completed via Google Forms.

- The following Questions were asked.
 - How beneficial did the instructional round process impact your own instruction?
 - How easy did you find the process of performing an instructional round?
 - How beneficial was it getting to observe a colleague as compared to a stranger during the instructional round?
 - What takeaways did you gain from the instructional round? (Mark all that apply)
 - How likely are you to conduct an instructional round to gain ideas in the future?
 - Please provide additional comments to the process and the benefits of conducting an instructional round.

Our Data (Slide 7-13)

- Survey data from the following questions asked in the survey are as follows.
 - How beneficial did the instructional round process impact your own instruction?
 - 12 out of 12 responses (100%) stated that they found the instructional round process to have a huge impact on their own instruction.
 - How easy did you find the process of performing an instructional round?
 - 12 out of 12 responses (100%) stated that they found the instructional round process to be very easy to complete.
 - How beneficial was it getting to observe a colleague as compared to a stranger during the instructional round?
 - 10 out of 12 responses (83%) stated that they found it very beneficial to observe a colleague as compared to a stranger during the instructional round.
 - 2 out of the 12 responses (17%) stated that they were indifferent when it came to observing a colleague as compared to a stranger during the instructional round.
 - What takeaways did you gain from the instructional round? (Mark all that apply)
 - 8 out of 12 responses (75%) stated that engagement was a takeaway gained from the instructional round.
 - 6 out of 12 responses (50%) stated that relationship building was a takeaway gained from the instructional round.
 - 5 out of 12 responses (42%) stated that classroom management was a takeaway gained from the instructional round.
 - 2 out of 12 responses (17%) stated that Math curriculum was a takeaway gained from the instructional round.

- 1 out of 12 responses (9%) stated that English/Language Arts curriculum was a takeaway gained from the instructional round.
 - 1 out of 12 responses (8%) stated that affirmation was a takeaway gained from the instructional round.
- How likely are you to conduct an instructional round to gain ideas in the future?
 - 11 out of 12 responses (92%) stated that they would absolutely conduct an instructional round again.
 - 1 out of 12 responses (8%) stated that they were unsure if they would conduct an instructional round again.
- Please provide additional comments to the process and the benefits of conducting an instructional round.
 - "I liked the variety of activities"- Mrs. Bayer
 - "I liked the use of attention grabbers; I am going to do this in my lessons."-Mrs. Mann
 - "I think we both try to relate content to their interest." –Mrs. Tersptra
 - "Sharing the screen prior to the lesson, allows the students to see what the topic will be."-Mrs. Cassoday
 - "Kids did spirit finger high-fives for other classmates who answered questions correct, really cute." - Mrs. Porter
 - "I loved the check-ins with the 'thumbs-up' if the students are following along and understanding."- Ms. Sharpe
 - "Students orally stated 'I-CAN Statements', this was really smart." –Mrs. Mann
 - "Students earned dojo points, even while virtual, this is a great way to keep them engaged." –Ms. Tampier

Our Discoveries (14)

- Teachers are more receptive and gain a lot more from professional development that is job-embedded, and centered around topics of interest and is relatable to the climate and environment in which they teach.
 - Initial angst and barriers are mitigated when we are provided an opportunity to learn from others that have walked in our shoes, and understand the challenges and adversities that we are accustomed. Taking away the barrier of not knowing our climate and environment takes time and not having to work at overcoming this obstacle allows for trust and learning to take place right away.
- Teachers are busy and when professional development can take place in a short amount of time and still be worthwhile the likelihood that they are interested and excited about additional opportunities to participate in professional development in the future increases drastically.
 - 15 to 20 minutes is the length of an instructional round, during this time a teacher is able to get in and out without the added burden of creating sub plans and lining up additional work for students in their absences that full and even

half day professional development often requires. Instructional rounds can be completed during a planning period or even during a special, which makes them more appealing to staff.

- Many staff members noted that their fellow colleagues naturally instruct in a way that would not have been possible to put into words unless witnessed first-hand.
 - During PLCs teachers discuss with one another what strategies they use in their classroom to help students learn topics that they are struggling getting their own students to understand. Instructional rounds allow for teachers an opportunity to witness for themselves the teacher in action. They are able to pick up on minute details and intricacies that the teacher teaching doesn't even know he or she is doing and therefore would not be able to describe during one of these PLCs.

Where We are Headed Next (Slide 15)

- We feel that we have just started scratching the surface of instructional rounds in our building and district. Moving forward, we would like to see increased opportunities for Myers' teachers to observe and be observed by fellow Myers' teachers. Vertical articulation is a concept we have discussed but never truly witnessed first-hand. Instructional rounds we feel can play a crucial role in helping our teachers better understand where are students are at when they are coming to us from the previous grade level, and where we need then to be in order to make them successful in the next grade level.
- The creation of an instructional video library. Like we already knew, and was confirmed during this action research project, we have very talented teachers. We feel it would be great to take video recording of some of these teachers teaching specific skills, or elements of teaching and achieve for use as professional development for the masses.
- We would like to see the instructional round process expand throughout the district. We know that we have great talent not only in our teachers here at Myers but throughout the district. It would be great to be given the opportunity to observe others throughout the district and grow a higher level of instructional pedagogy through the use of our Portage Township Schools teachers.

Bibliography (Slide 16)

- Marzano, R., Heflebower, T., Hoegh, J., Warrick, P., Grift, G. (2016). *Collaborative Teams That Transform Schools: The Next Steps in PLCs*. Marzano Press.
- Marzano, R., Warrick, P., Rains, C., Dufour, R. (2018). *Leading A High Reliability School*. Solution Tree Press.

INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS:

THE UTILIZATION OF COLLEAGUES IN SELF-IMPROVEMENT

MYERS ELEMENTARY

JON EVERS: PRINCIPAL

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NICOLE CLARK: TEACHER LEADER



Background Leading to Our Inquiry

- How can I support my staff?
 - Teaching during a pandemic:
 - The challenges and hurdles associated with the switching back and forth from virtual instruction to modified in person instruction.
 - Professional Development
 - Presenters in the past are not fully verse in the culture and challenges associated with implementing and attempting new initiatives. Schools have often approached professional development with a one-size-fits all strategy (Marzano, 2018, p. 96).
 - We have highly qualified teaching professionals in our school why not draw on their expertise.
 - Current opportunities are not addressing all the needs of the staff.

Purpose of Our Inquiry

- The purpose of this Action Inquiry Report was to provide my teachers with an opportunity for professional development in the most conducive learning environment. Professional development that was tailored to their specific needs as an educator and in a format that was stress-free and enjoyable. Job-embedded professional development that is directly related to their instructional growth goals (Marzano, 2018, p. 96), is one of the leading indicators in a High Reliability School.

Our Wondering

- As a group we wondered, how can we provide professional development opportunities that are not only meaningful and interesting, but of actual need to the staff.
 - Professional development that is tailored to the specific needs.
 - Professional development that is not time consuming, due to the already busy schedule of a classroom teacher.
- We also wondered how within this process we could highlight and acknowledge the professionals that teach within our building, and praise their hard work and high level of pedagogy which often goes over looked.

Our Actions

- We decided to offer job-embedded professional development in the form of instructional rounds.
- Teachers identified areas of personal interest and need and observed fellow Myers' teachers for 15 to 20 minutes, and followed the Instructional Round Form that was created.
- Teachers then followed up with the teacher they observed and provided feedback and accolades to their fellow colleague from the job-embedded professional development, and provided me a copy of their form.
- Teachers then completed a survey, and provided testimonials from the instructional round experience.

Data Collection

- Teacher completed the following form during/ at the conclusion of the instructional round. →
- Teachers then completed a survey via Google Forms on the instructional round process.
- Testimonial from Teachers on the process and success of instructional rounds.

Instructional Rounds

Teacher Performing the Instructional Round:

Date of Instructional Round: _____ Time of Instructional Round: _____

Focus of Instructional Round :

Positive Observation Notes:

Post Observation Reflections

What commonalities did you observe during the Instructional Round pertaining to your focus? _____

What did you see that was especially interesting to you? (A New Idea, Validation, and AHA Moment)? _____

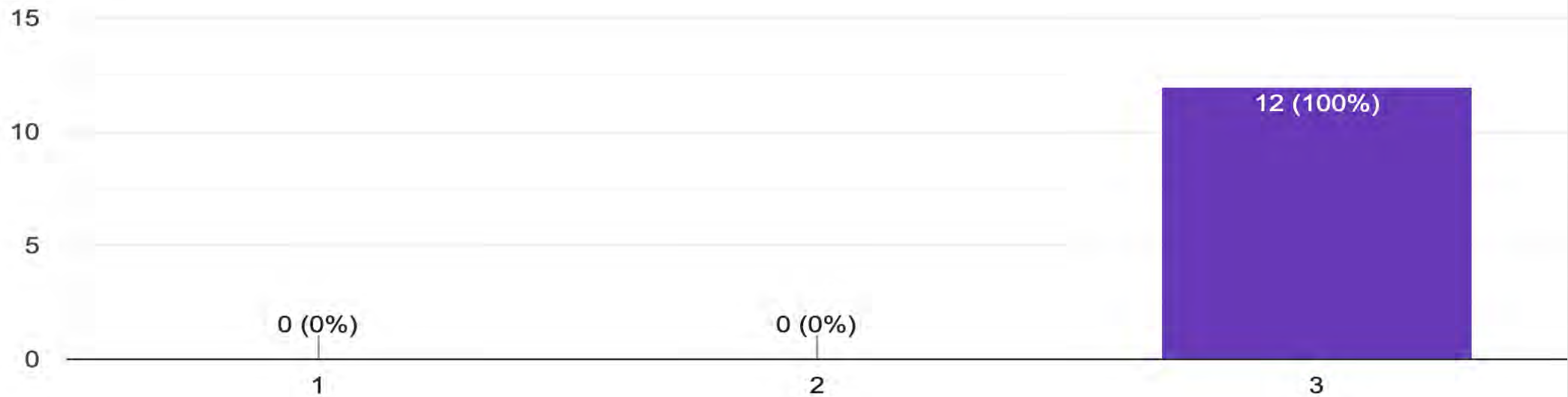
Questions, wonderings, or surprises that were a result of the Instructional Round?

Identify an idea from the Instructional Round you can apply in your classroom?

Our Data

How beneficial did the instructional round process impact your own instruction?

12 responses

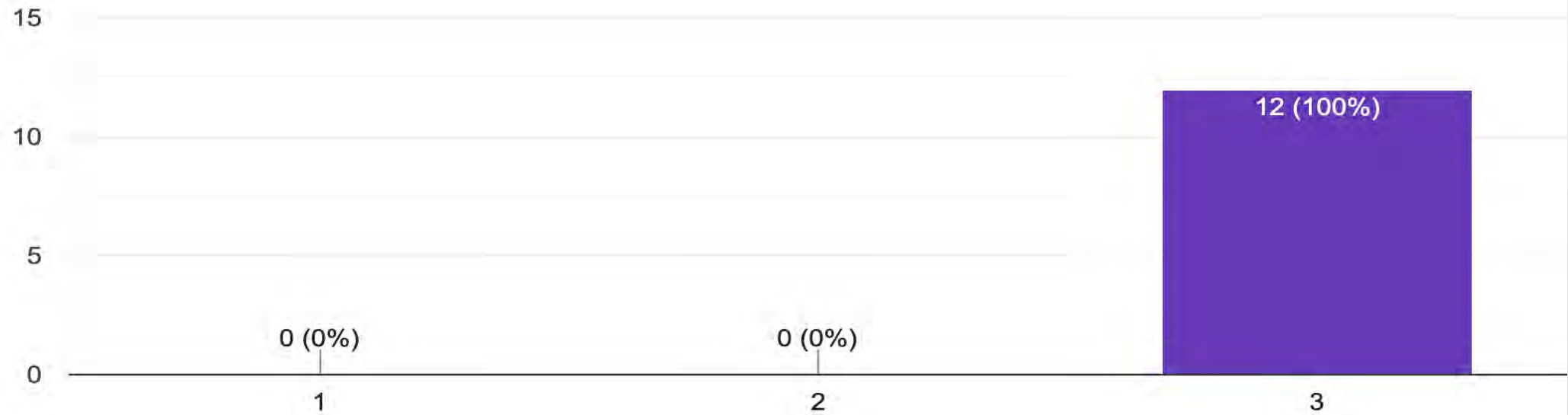


1 = Not at All. ----->. 3 = Huge Impact

Our Data

How easy did you find the process of performing an instructional round?

12 responses

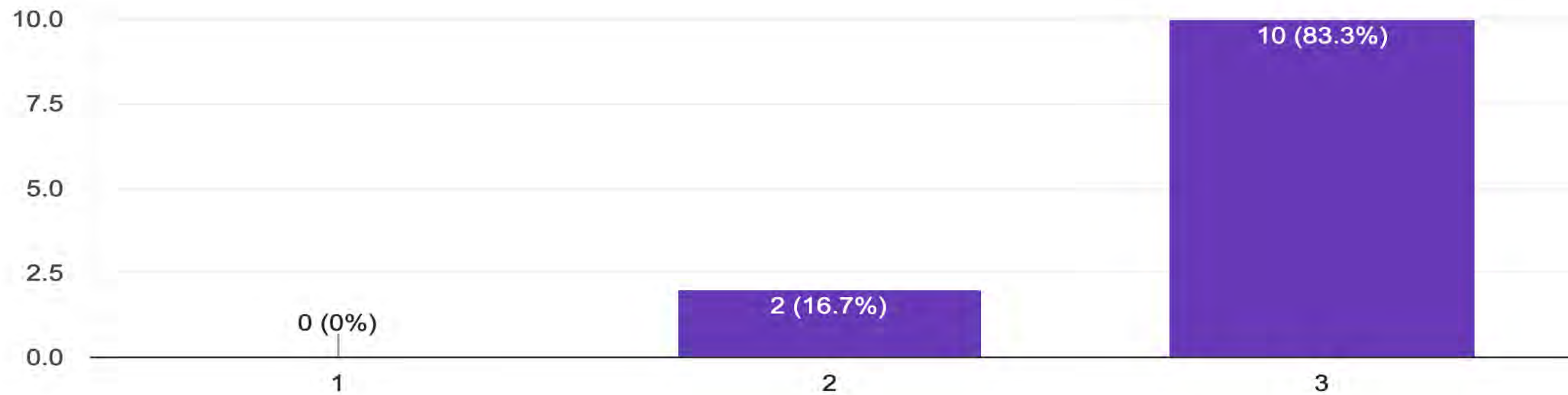


1 = Difficult. ----->. 3 = Easy

Our Data

How beneficial was it getting to observe a colleague as compared to a stranger during the instructional round?

12 responses

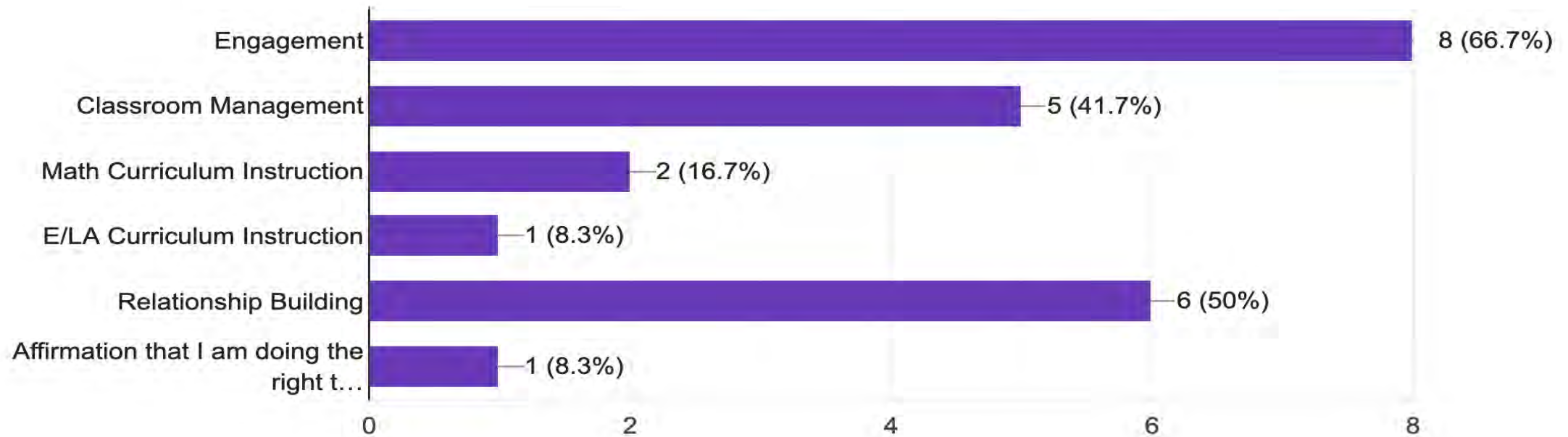


1 = Indifferent ----->. 3 = Very Beneficial

Our Data

What takeaways did you gain from the instructional round? (Mark all that apply)

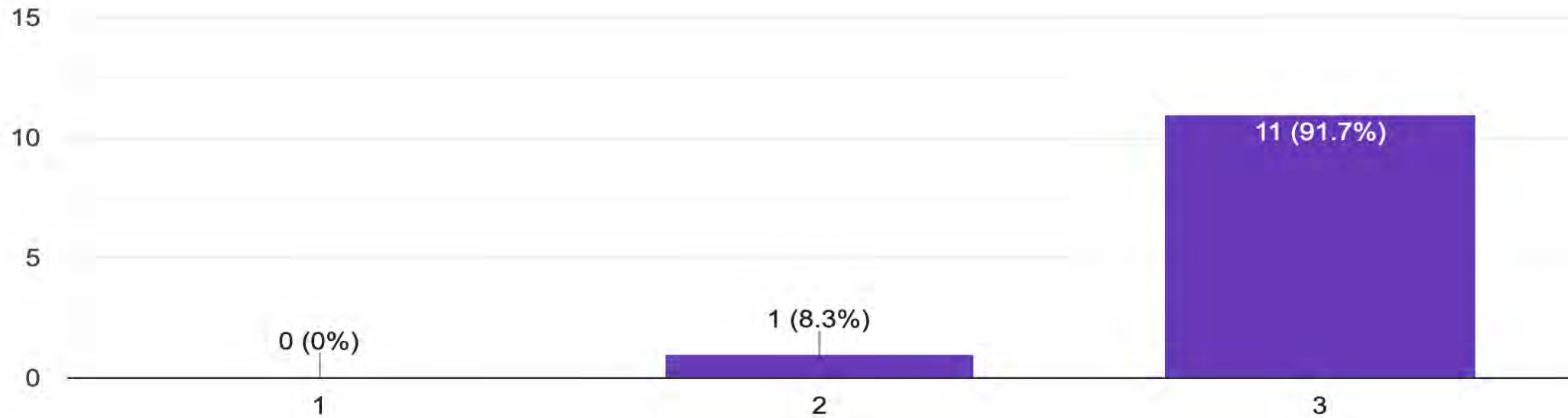
12 responses



Our Data

How likely are you to conduct an instructional round to gain ideas in the future?

12 responses



1 = Never Again ----->. 3 = Absolutely

Our Data Continued...



Our Data

- "I liked the variety of activities"- Mrs. Bayer
- "I liked the use of attention grabbers, I am going to do this in my lessons."-Mrs. Mann
- "I think we both try to relate content to their interest." –Mrs. Tersptra
- "Sharing the screen prior to the lesson, allows the students to see what the topic will be."-Mrs. Cassoday
- "Kids did spirit finger high-fives for other classmates who answered questions correct, really cute." - Mrs. Porter
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Our Discoveries

- Teachers are more receptive and gain a lot more from professional development that is job-embedded, and centered around topics of interest and is relatable to the climate and environment in which they teach.
- Teachers are busy and when professional development can take place in a short amount of time and still be worthwhile the likelihood that they are interested and excited about additional opportunities to participate in professional development in the future increases drastically.
- Many staff members noted that their fellow colleagues naturally instruct in a way that would not have been possible to put into words unless witnessed first-hand.

Where We Are Headed Next

- Continued opportunities for staff to get into each others classrooms to observe and learn from one another.
 - Vertical Articulation
- The creation of an instructional video library.
- Providing opportunities to expand the instructional round process throughout the district.
 - Allowing for other teachers within the Portage Township Schools Corporation to come observe Myers teachers as well as allowing for our teachers to go and visit and observe teachers at other schools within the corporation.

Bibliography

- Marzano, R., Heflebower, T., Hoegh, J., Warrick, P., Grift, G. (2016). *Collaborative Teams that Transform Schools: The Next Steps in PLCs*. Marzano Press.
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