



Learning From Each Other Through Instructional Rounds

Principal Name: Tracy Ahlbrand

School Name: Lydia Middleton Elementary

Team Members' Names: Sarah Lytle and Melissa Perry

Principal's Email Contact: tahlbrand@madison.k12.in.us

Background Leading to Our Inquiry

Teachers in our school and throughout our district were teaching reading using a variety of strategies with various outcomes. To improve reading instruction, a book study on Jan Richardson's *The Next Step in Guided Reading* was implemented district-wide. When the book study was completed at the end of October, all teachers were given materials to implement the strategies that they learned. At the same time, intensive professional development was provided in the area of math with a focus on developing a new math curriculum and implementing our current math program with fidelity. Although all teachers participated in the book study and professional development in math, for many there was a need to see the strategies in action.

The Purpose of Our Inquiry

Therefore, the purpose of our action research was to create opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers modeling the strategies in action, discuss how those strategies could be implemented at their own grade level, and provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect and evaluate their own teaching.

Our Inquiry

With this purpose, we wondered: How can we create opportunities for teachers to observe and discuss effective teaching?

Our Actions

To answer this question we took the following steps:

- Drafted a survey to staff to generate interest;
- Developed a schedule for teachers to observe their peers;
- Developed a set of guidelines for observation and reflection; and
- Set a date for all participants to meet and discuss their experiences.

Data Collection

Teachers signed up to observe their colleagues teaching a math lesson or a reading lesson. During the observations, teachers looked for examples of best practices in both math and reading paying close attention to specific strategies learned through professional development.

Our Data

Participants looked at specific instructional strategies in both math and reading. Teachers then met to discuss their observations and reflect on their own instruction. A post survey was distributed to all participants to record the number of times specific strategies were observed and how many times they were later implemented by the teacher making the observation.

Our Discoveries

Based on our data, teachers noted that this was a very positive experience. After observing in one classroom, over fifty percent of the participants expressed a desire to continue with this process. Many of the teachers noted they were excited to have an opportunity to see another teacher at their own grade level teach a lesson that they were already teaching.

Where We Are Headed Next?

Next year we plan to continue this process implementing the following format:

- Observations will be mandatory;
- We will require a minimum of two observations, but encourage four per year;
- All teachers will meet and reflect on their experience;
- Some teachers have expressed a desire to extend this process to other schools.

Bibliography

- Aguilar, E. (2012). "Teachers Observing Teachers: Instructional Rounds." Edutopia. <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/instructional-rounds-ells-observations-elena-aguilar>
- City, E. (2011). "Learning From Instructional Rounds." Educational Leadership. <https://www.birdvilleschools.net/cms/lib/TX01000797/Centricity/Domain/3660/Learning%20From%20Instructional%20Rounds.pdf>
- 'How to' Guide: Instructional Rounds. American Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/how-to-guide---instructional-rounds.pdf?sfvrsn=72acec3c_2
- Gunn, J. (2020). "Instructional Rounds: Not Just for Administrators." Share. <https://blog.sharetolearn.com/classroom-resources/instructional-rounds-not-just-for-administrators/>
- Marzano, R. (2011). "The Art & Science of Teaching/Making the Most of Instructional Rounds." <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb11/vol68/num05/Making-the-Most-of-Instructional-Rounds.aspx>



Learning From Each Other Through Instructional Rounds

Lydia Middleton Elementary

Tracy Ahlbrand

tahlbrand@madison.k12.in.us

Team: Sarah Lytle and Melissa Perry



Background Leading to This Inquiry

In an effort to improve instruction in the area of both reading and math, our school district took the following steps:

- All elementary schools participated in a book study on Jan Richardson's *The Next Step Forward in Guided Reading*
- Teachers were provided with the materials needed to implement the strategies they learned
- A new math curriculum map was created for students by teachers at each grade level

Purpose of this Inquiry

While teachers received intensive professional development in both reading and mathematics, the opportunity to observe the strategies in action was lacking. This action research project was developed to do the following:

- Create opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers modeling the strategies learned;
- Discuss how those strategies could be implemented at their grade level;
- And provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their own instruction.

Inquiry: How Can We Create Opportunities for Teachers to Observe and Discuss Effective Teaching?

Questions to guide this project:

1. How can we encourage teacher buy in?
2. How can we structure this project in a manner that does not feel evaluative?
3. How can we create opportunities for teachers to share their reflections?

Actions

To answer our question we did the following

- Surveyed all teachers to see if they would be willing to participate;
- Developed a schedule for teachers to observe their peers;
- Developed a set of guidelines for observation and reflection;
- Set a date for all participants to meet and discuss the process.

Data

Lydia Middleton has fifteen core teachers. Of those fifteen core teachers, eleven teachers agreed to participate. (73%)

After the first round of observation, there was an increase in teacher participation by 15%.

Teachers were given the opportunity to observe either math, reading, or both.

Data: Reading

Strategy	Times Observed	Times Implemented
Instructional focus shared at beginning of the lesson	Seven	Seven
Academic Vocabulary integrated during the lesson	Eight	Seven
Self-monitoring of reading strategies prompted by the teacher	Four	Four
Citation of textual evidence required during the lesson	Two	One
Checked for understanding	Three	Three
Word work component implemented	Five	Five

Data: Math

Strategy	Times Observed	Times Implemented
Used transitional time to practice computation	Five	Three
Used higher level questioning	Four	Four
Provided time for engaging & meaningful practice	Seven	Six
Used Everyday Math & games with fidelity	Four	Three
Provided varied representations of mathematical thinking	Five	Five

Discoveries

Based on teacher reflections, this was a very positive experience.

"It would be hard to teach all of the content and expectations and to be able to fit it all in."

"I observed so many great transitions - students were moving quickly and quietly to their next activities."

"The use of academic vocabulary was present in so many classrooms!"

"It is obvious this teacher is following the curriculum with fidelity."

Next Steps

For the upcoming year we plan to continue this process implementing the following format:

- Observations will be mandatory;
- Teachers will be given the option to observe or be observed during the first semester;
- During second semester all teachers must participate in a second observation;
- All teachers will be required to meet and reflect on their experience;
- In the future, we would like to extend this process to other schools.

Resources

- Aguilar, E. (2012). "Teachers Observing Teachers: Instructional Rounds." Edutopia.
<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/instructional-rounds-ells-observations-elena-aguilar>
- City, E. (2011). "Learning From Instructional Rounds." Educational Leadership.
<https://www.birdvilleschools.net/cms/lib/TX01000797/Centricity/Domain/3660/Learning%20From%20Instructional%20Rounds.pdf>
- 'How to' Guide: Instructional Rounds. American Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.
https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/how-to-guide---instructional-rounds.pdf?sfvrsn=72acec3c_2
- Gunn, J. (2020). "Instructional Rounds: Not Just for Administrators." Share.
<https://blog.sharetolearn.com/classroom-resources/instructional-rounds-not-just-for-administrators/>
- Marzano, R. (2011). "The Art & Science of Teaching/Making the Most of Instructional Rounds."
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb11/vol68/num05/Making-the-Most-of-Instructional-Rounds.aspx>