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The Impact of Instructional Rounds Professional Development on Teacher Self-Efficacy

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The Impact of Instructional Rounds Professional Development on Teacher Self-Efficacy

By
Melessa B. Widener

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2014

Approval Page

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To make our way, we must have firm resolve, persistence, tenacity. We must gear ourselves to work hard all the way. We can never let up. –Ralph Bunche

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Bill, we made it through yet another adventure from start to finish!
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Daddy, I hope you are proud of me and smiling down from Heaven.

Abstract

The Impact of Instructional Rounds Professional Development on Teacher Self-Efficacy.
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The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy. The scope of this study was a qualitative case study including interviews with teachers who had participated in instructional rounds professional development in a rural district in the foothills of North Carolina. The methodology included interviews with two teacher leaders from all elementary schools implementing Responsiveness to Instruction (RtI) and teachers at the Early College who participated in instructional rounds professional learning through the New Schools Project. The findings include teachers' quotes from the transcriptions of the interviews as supporting the research found in the literature on high-quality professional development, teacher self-efficacy, and instructional rounds. The conclusion reached was that teacher self-efficacy was positively impacted through participation in instructional rounds professional development. Limitations of this study included the researcher acted as the interviewer; the researcher was personally involved in the professional learning, and the interview participants' inabilities to articulate component by component regarding instructional rounds as opposed to discussing the instructional rounds professional development as an entire process. This study contributes information which could be useful for district and school administrators when planning for high-quality professional learning for continuous school improvement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Education in the 21st century calls for adjustments in teaching and learning in an effort to improve student achievement and prepare students to be college and career ready (Johnson, 2009). “American schools are under tremendous pressure to produce better results than they have ever produced before” (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2010, p. 2). In an era consumed with high-stakes accountability, teachers are under great scrutiny and pressure to positively impact student achievement. Continuous improvement provides pathways to reflect and achieve such goals. According to the research, a major component of continuous improvement is to promote collaboration among teachers in an effort to refine practice and design instruction based on student data and student outcomes (Hirsh, 2013; Hirsh & Killion, 2007; Learning Forward, 2011).

Traditionally, teachers have made decisions daily regarding their students’ instruction. Also, teachers tended to work in isolation while making those instructional decisions (Doyle, 2012). According to City et al. (2010),

It is clear that closed classroom doors will not help us educate students to high levels. It is also clear that what happens in classrooms matters for student learning and we can do more together than we can do individually to improve learning and teaching . . . the image of the teacher behind the closed classroom door is giving way to an image of an open door, but many educators are not sure what to look for when they open the door or what to do with what they see. (p. 3)

Teachers need tools to assist them in meeting the demands of the rigorous accountability which is in place. Research shows that current models of professional development call for collaborative practices where teachers are actively engaged in their own learning (Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, & Goe, 2011; Gibbs, 2011; Hirsh & Killion,

2007; Learning Forward, 2011; Loveless, 2013; Tournaki, Lyublinskaya, & Carolan, 2011).

A collaborative practice, such as the practice of medical doctors making rounds and working together to problem solve, has made its way into the arena of education (Roegman & Riehl, 2012). The educational model, based on the medical model of *rounds*, is known as instructional rounds in education and was developed for administrators to observe and discuss best practices in the classroom; however, the model has been modified, enabling teachers to conduct instructional rounds following a protocol which assists in pinpointing areas across grade levels or other groups or departments where instructional improvement can be made for student success (City et al., 2010). The precept behind “the rounds process is an explicit practice designed to bring discussions of instruction directly into the process of school improvement” by means of common language, common discipline, common focus, common purpose, and common problems (City et al., 2010, p. 3). With adequate professional development in instructional rounds and proper implementation, instructional rounds can positively impact collaboration and team decisions concerning instructional design based on data-driven decisions.

Research on school leadership (Somech, 2005; Wu & Short, 1996) has suggested that a participative leadership approach positively affects school effectiveness.

Somech (2005) found teacher empowerment led to school effectiveness in schools where collaboration was promoted and individuals were allowed to voice opinions and share in decision making. (Mongillo, Lawrence, & Hong, 2012, p. 553)

Site-based administrators share in the responsibility of fostering collaborative environments and become learners as well as teachers and students; thus, “growth in the abilities of a leader is the catalyst for growth of the stakeholders” (Mongillo et al., 2012,

p. 551).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy. A core group of teachers who have received professional development in conducting instructional rounds and using the debriefing protocol participated. The study is qualitative in nature based on information gathered from interviews.

Setting of the study. The setting of this study is a small rural district in the mountain region of western North Carolina. There are 26 schools in the system with a population of approximately 12,300 students: five high schools; four K-8 schools; four middle schools; 12 elementary (K-5) schools, one of which is a K-5 alternative school. Another alternative school serves Grades 6-12. Two of the five high schools include a Middle College High School and an Early College High School: nontraditional high schools located on a community college campus. Students who graduate from these institutions do so with a certification or an Associate Degree from the community college. Over 62% of the students in the system receive free and reduced lunch, although a higher percentage qualify for services yet do not apply. Twenty-one of the schools are served as school wide Title I schools which include all the elementary schools. The researcher serves as the Title I Director for the system and, therefore, has access to and permission to use all data necessary to conduct this study. Written permission was obtained from the superintendent of the district for the access and use of data within the system.

Most of the 12 elementary Title I school-wide schools have been involved in implementing Responsiveness to Instruction (RtI) at various levels or phases. Ten of the

schools identified two teacher leaders, one representing Grades K-2 and one representing Grades 3-5. Teacher leaders were trained in conducting instructional rounds within their schools in an effort to support their implementation of RtI through building collaborative adult groups similar to DuFour's model of professional learning communities (PLC) (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). The purpose of the groups was to discuss data and improve instructional design in an effort to sustain RtI or any new initiative that may come along within the district.

In addition to the elementary teacher leaders receiving instructional rounds professional learning, the Early College participated in instructional rounds professional development as a requirement of the New Schools Project. Familiarity with the history and purpose of the New Schools Project provides understanding for such practices in professional learning. North Carolina implemented the New Schools Project in an effort to provide innovative, rigorous instruction for 100 new and redesigned secondary schools throughout the state in keeping with the college- and career-ready expectations of the 21st century (Department of Public Instruction, 2013; Habit, 2013). The New Schools Project, a public-private partnership with business, industry, government, school districts, and higher education, inspires and accelerates instructional change (Department of Public Instruction, 2013; Habit, 2013). Teachers in the Early College receive professional development based on specific design principles for innovation in which "all adults collaborate to support, deepen and extend student learning" (Habit, 2013, para. 3).

Similar to the elementary teacher leaders, the purpose of the teachers in the New Schools Project incorporating instructional rounds into their practice was to build capacity in the participating school to form collaborative adult groups with a focus on a shared understanding of quality teaching and learning (Marzano, 2011). Teachers

involved in the instructional rounds professional development through the New Schools Project have had an opportunity to implement, practice, and share the use of the rounds protocols within their school.

Significance of the Study

Title I dollars have been used to fund the development of the instructional rounds professional development project in each participating school; with the use of federal funding comes great accountability. The results of gathering, compiling, and analyzing trained teachers' perspectives concerning the instructional rounds professional development and its impact on their own self-efficacy provided data needed to conduct an analysis of the appropriateness of the expenditures. Decisions then can be made concerning expanding the project and replicating the model in the K-8 and middle grades in the future.

Along with federal Title I funding for instructional rounds professional development, the New Schools Project provided the funding source for the Early College. The data gathered from the impact of the instructional rounds professional development in the Early College can be used to determine possible next levels of implementation in the traditional high schools within the district.

Currently, there is a major emphasis on the scrutiny and pressure teachers face in this era of increasing accountability and high expectations of improved student achievement. Finding a tool to assist educators in fostering the type of dialogue necessary to arrive at shared understandings of quality teaching and learning is a by-product of this study.

Definition of Terms

Action plan. "An action plan is an opportunity to develop relevant and focused

professional development for your teachers,” written in a response to analyzing data and in an effort to improve instructional practices (Boudett, City, & Murnane, 2005, p. 135).

Collaboration. For the purposes of this literature, collaboration is the joining of two or more individuals to work together and problem solve for the purposes of the betterment of instructional planning and delivery for all students.

Continuous improvement. Carrying forward with a conscious plan to improve instruction and student outcomes in a learning organization based on a comprehensive needs assessment.

Data analysis. Carefully searching and disaggregating data to identify trends and patterns related to student outcomes. “Data analysis supports a culture of improvement by building the habit of inquiry in which you consistently ask questions and find answers not in your preconceived judgments of children, but of observable data” (Boudett et al., 2005, p. 95).

Data-driven decisions. Educational planning and instruction based on the outcomes determined by carefully searching all types of data.

Instructional core. A focus on the relationships between and interactions of the student, the teacher, and the content (Chauncey, 2009; City et al., 2010; Curtis & City, 2010).

Instructional rounds. The practice of a network of educators developing a problem of practice, observing instruction, debriefing, and determining the next level of work centered on the instructional core in a learning organization (Chauncey, 2009; City et al., 2010; Curtis & City, 2010; Marzano, 2011).

Problem of practice. “A problem of practice is an expression of learning problem and the teaching relating to that problem and is an integration of analysis of both

assessment and instructional data (Boudett et al., 2005, p. 98).

Professional development. Training received by educators to keep abreast of changes and new initiatives in education which can also be referred to as in-service, staff development, training, workshops, and preservice instruction.

Professional learning. Formerly known as professional development, new standards developed by Learning Forward (the former National Council of Staff Development) which refer to professional learning indicating that all educators are learners.

Protocol. A particular process or order in which things occur.

Reflective practice. The opportunity to think about what has or has not worked and self-questioning to see what could be done differently to improve instruction and student achievement.

Responsiveness to Instruction (RtI). North Carolina's model of a multi-tiered system of support for students developed to ensure all students receive the most appropriate instruction based on their needs with a focus on how students respond to the instruction they receive.

Teacher efficacy. Teacher beliefs, attitudes, and dispositions about their own abilities to impact instruction and affect student achievement.

Research Question

The following research question provided data by which to measure the impact of the instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy:

What is the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy?

Summary

A new era in education calls for change in many areas of instruction, professional development, teacher practice, and student academic improvement. Traditional methods of teachers working in isolation or in silos cannot meet the rigors of the current curriculum or the high expectations currently associated with instructional improvement that accountability models require (Doyle, 2012). Educators need tools and assistance to find ways to continuously improve while at the same time increasing their own self-efficacy. Professional development can aide in providing such tools for teachers, especially the professional development of instructional rounds in education.

This study measured the impact of the instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy in elementary schools and in an Early College in a small rural district in the foothills region of North Carolina. The study was qualitative in nature providing a case study of this topic.

The following chapter searches the literature regarding high-quality professional development, teacher self-efficacy, and instructional rounds.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This qualitative case study gathered teachers' perceptions of how instructional rounds professional development impacts teacher self-efficacy.

In a small rural district in the foothills of North Carolina, teachers were selected as representatives for the grade spans of K-2 and 3-5 to be teacher leaders in the development of RtI for their particular school. These teacher leaders received yearlong professional development. One component of the training was instructional rounds. Prior to the elementary teacher leader training, a core team of teachers at the Early College participated in instructional rounds professional development in partial fulfillment of the requirements through the New Schools Project. This core team of teachers trained the remaining teachers, as well as new hires, in their setting. All teachers at the Early College routinely practice a modified version of rounds.

The instructional rounds professional development consisted of learning for the teachers in developing a problem of practice, conducting and participating in instructional rounds, using the debriefing protocol to identify patterns and trends for their group, and determining the next level of work. After learning the procedures and protocols required in instructional rounds, each set of teacher leaders visited classrooms in their schools. These classrooms served as learning labs for job-embedded practice in an effort to facilitate improvement and, ultimately, impact student achievement. This four-part process of the instructional rounds professional development is detailed in Chapter 2.

Overview

Careful study of the existing literature reveals several themes relating to the use of instructional rounds in education. The premise behind the incorporation of instructional

rounds is to build teacher capacity to collect and analyze data, both formative and summative, not only on student outcomes but also on teacher practices in a time where more is expected from teachers, especially high student success. The underlying themes associated with the implementation of instructional rounds incorporate the following: high-quality professional development, teacher self-efficacy, and instructional rounds.

Components of High-Quality Professional Development

Professional development is a key component of education. According to a research article in *The Teacher Educator*, “professional development has been cited as a key mechanism for improving schools” (Tournaki et al., 2011, p. 229). With the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, put in place in 2001, a focus on school reform has been reemphasizing the required professional development of educators to be of high quality and meeting specific criteria in efforts to improve student achievement. In order to be well prepared to impact student achievement, teachers must learn to become engaged in continuous professional growth despite the fact that “comprehensive professional development for educators has generally been a neglected or shallow component of school reform efforts for the past twenty years” (Speck & Knipe, 2005, p. 2). Research indicates teachers need a minimum of 40 to 100 hours of professional development each year in order to impact growth in student achievement (Loveless, 2013).

Wei et al. (2009) found that professional development is more likely to be viewed by teachers as effective if it is sustained over time and offers substantial contact hours, allowing more opportunities to engage in active learning, enable meaningful collaboration and focus on content, all of which enhance the

acquisition of knowledge and skills. (Gibbs, 2011, p. 8)

According to the literature regarding high-quality professional development, the standards and models of effective professional development have evolved and changed over time. Ultimately, the common goal of professional development regardless of the model is to produce more effective teachers (Tournaki et al., 2011) which in turn results in improved student achievement. According to the National Council of Staff Development (NCSD), a newer form of staff development in this decade should be results-driven, standards-based, and job-embedded and should as “Stephen Covey said, ‘begin with the end in mind.’ (1989, p. 95)” (Hirsh & Killion, 2007, p. 5). This section of the literature review discusses the need for teacher professional development, components of high-quality professional development for educators including professional development standards, current models of high-quality professional development, and the change process including generational challenges incurred with change.

In the past, professional development consisted of attending a *one-shot* workshop session (Tournaki et al., 2011), with the expectations of gleaning new skills to be incorporated into the classroom. It was usually based on whatever area interested the participant. Although most teachers select professional development which meets their individual needs, research indicates professional development should be determined based on student data and data gathered from teacher evaluations (Grossman & Hirsch, 2009). A study on teachers’ perceptions of the impact of professional development on instructional practices in a dissertation by Renamarie Gibbs at the California State University cited research which indicates that most professional development in the United States today is ineffective (Gibbs, 2011). Gibbs (2011) also quoted Darling-

Hammond et al.: “The intensity and duration of professional development offered to U.S. teachers is not at the level that research suggests is necessary to have noticeable impacts on instruction and student learning” (Gibbs, 2011, p. 11). The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality published a research and policy brief which articulated that the area which is most important and often most lacking in implementation in education is teacher learning and teacher development (Archibald et al., 2011). The report also indicated teachers feel that most professional development is disconnected from actual practice and is often considered a waste of time. As well, they are generally dissatisfied with mandated professional development they are required to attend (Archibald et al., 2011). Also, teachers maintain the professional development they experience often does not contain the follow-up and administrative leadership necessary to implement properly once back in the classroom (Grossman & Hirsch, 2009). However, Tournaki et al. (2011) cited “the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality (2002) which published research that supports the critical role of professional development in advancing student learning in high poverty schools” (p. 300). In an era of high accountability and in light of the research which indicates positive effects on student achievement can only be accomplished by “building the capacity of teachers to improve their instructional practice and the capacity of school systems to advance teacher learning” (Gibbs, 2011, p. 15), all teachers should be involved in high-quality professional development throughout their educational careers.

There are several resources available in the literature which provide the characteristics or components of high-quality professional development and identify the standards of such. Once again, professional development must be developed according to research-based standards, must be provided over time, must be intensive and classroom

focused, and must be sustainable to meet the high-quality criteria according to the NCLB document (Lind, 2007). Gibbs also cited NCLB which stated, “High quality professional development programs should be developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators of schools” (Lind, 2007, p. 2).

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality’s research and policy brief indicated, “to be considered high-quality, professional development must be delivered in a way that yields direct impact on teacher practice” (Archibald et al., 2011, p. 3). The same policy brief lists characteristics of high-quality professional development based on a review of the literature. Those which relate to instructional rounds professional development include

alignment with school goals, state and district standards and assessments, and other professional learning activities . . . inclusion of opportunities for active learning . . . provision of opportunities for collaboration among teachers, inclusion of embedded follow-up and continuous feedback. (Archibald et al., 2011, p. 3)

Similarly, the NGA Center for Best Practices issue brief entitled *State Policies to Improve Teacher Professional Development* stated, “Effective professional development should be intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice, focused on student learning, and tied to school improvement goals” (Grossman & Hirsch, 2009, p. 6).

Gibbs’s (2011) study revealed common components of best practices in professional development which have emerged through the literature. The essential components discussed in the study which align with instructional rounds professional development include “active learning opportunities; collective participation; coherence; and duration (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Desimone et al.,

2002 Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 2000; Hayes & Robnolt, 2007; Kennedy, 1988; Loucks-Horsley, Stiles, Mundry, Love, & Hewson, 2010; Richardson, 2003; Wei, et al., 2009; Yoon et al., 2007)” (Gibbs, 2011, p. 22). In essence, according to the best practices revealed in this study, teachers should receive professional development which engages them actively as learners, provides opportunities to work together with peers, is purposefully centered on improving student achievement, and has follow-up built in for sustainability.

According to an article in *Educational Leadership*, Tom Loveless cites the National Academy of Education (Wilson, 2009) noting features of effective professional development which include “ample time (more than 40 hours per program) with a year or more of follow-up, clear linkages to teachers’ existing knowledge and skills, training that actively engages teachers, and training teams of teachers from the same school” (Loveless, 2013, p. 6). Again, various research identifies similar components or practices of high-quality professional development which are overlapping.

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC), now Learning Forward, published standards for high-quality professional development. The guiding standards are organized into three categories: context, process, and content (Roy, 2010). All of the context, process, and content standards were designed for “staff development that improves the learning of all students” (Hirsh, 2013, p. 1) which affirms the belief that schools and districts should invest in effective professional development to ensure improvement in students’ academic improvement (Roy, 2010). The standards “redefine professional development and emphasize the importance of results-oriented, collaborative, job-embedded professional development” (Roy, 2010, p. 3).

The context standards include planning that “organizes adults into learning

communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district; requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement; requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration” (Hirsh, 2013, p. 1).

“Content standards address the ‘what’ in professional learning. What knowledge and skills will educators acquire and how will they and their students benefit?” (Hirsh & Killion, 2007, p. 7).

“Process standards address the ‘how’ questions of professional learning. How do we design professional learning so that competency in new practices is accelerated for educators?” (Hirsh & Killion, 2007, p. 7). The process standards developed by the NSDC include

- Uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.

- Uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.

- Prepares educators to apply research to decision making.

- Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.

- Applies knowledge about human learning and change.

- Provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate. (Hirsh, 2013, p. 1)

Finally, the “content standards address the organization’s responsibility to build a climate and culture that is receptive to and supportive of new practices that develop its leaders, and provide the necessary resources to sustain improvements” (Hirsh & Killion, 2007, p. 6).

In 2010, the Center for Applied Linguistics published a paper regarding a

framework for quality professional development for practitioners working with adult English language learners. The paper also included a graphic (Figure 1) displaying the context, process, and content standards necessary for quality professional development which is “systematic, coherent, and sustainable” (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2010, p. 3). The figure shows the reciprocal nature of the content component where received knowledge and constructed knowledge inform one another; whereas, the process portion is more of a cyclical nature of planning, implementing, and evaluating which leads to more planning and so forth (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2010). The final component of context deals with the system in place; personnel and process for professional development; shared decision making; team to analyze the need for and type of professional development; and support, fiscal commitment, incentives, and appropriate working conditions to foster quality professional development (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2010).

The standards set forth by NSDC are rigorous and suggest a move toward more collaborative forms of professional development determined by student and teacher effectiveness data where there is support from others rather than the traditional workshop method previously mentioned. It is also important to note that all three types of standards should be incorporated simultaneously to expect optimal results from professional development or professional learning (Hirsh & Killion, 2007).

Lind’s (2007) research suggested high-quality professional development programs are those that “provide adequate time for practices that involve inquiry, reflection, and mentoring; are subject centered; and are rigorous, leading to long-term change” (p. 3).

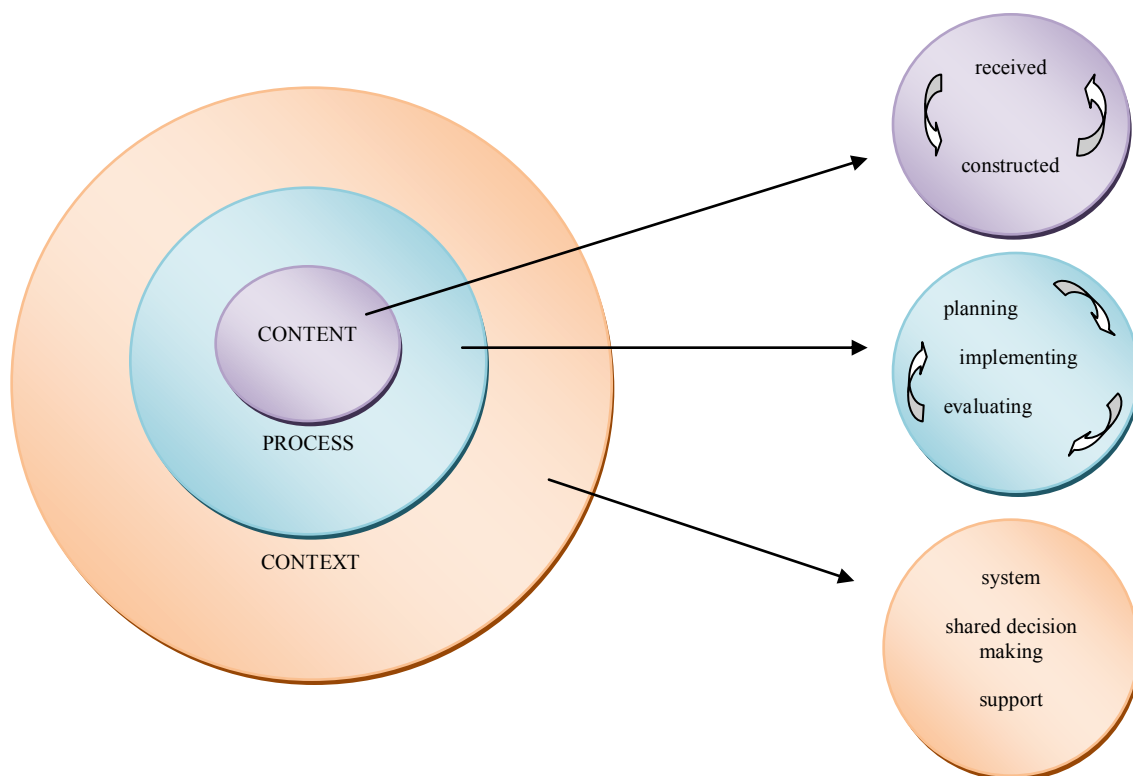


Figure 1. Components of the CAELA Network Quality Professional Development Framework (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2010).

Lind's (2007) study of the supports for and barriers to high-quality professional development in arts education reflect the work of Little (1993) and his design principles for professional development.

Professional development offers meaningful intellectual, social, and emotional engagement with ideas, with materials, and with colleagues; professional development takes explicit account of the contexts of teaching and the experience of the teachers; professional development offers support for informed dissent; professional development places classroom practice in the larger contexts of school practice and the educational careers of children; and the governance of professional development ensures bureaucratic restraint and a balance between the interests of individuals and the interests of institutions (Lind, 2007, p. 3).

According to Tournari et al. (2011), quality professional development exhibits the following characteristics: “activities are ongoing and sustained over time and provide teachers with opportunities to actively interact and engage with each other around curriculum and instruction” (p. 300). The research and policy brief for the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality indicates teachers are more likely to make changes in their instructional practices when they have participated in professional development where they were actively participating and engaged (Archibald et al., 2011).

The issue brief published by NGA Center for Best Practices, *State Policies to Improve Teacher Professional Development*, identified common elements in research of professional development which impacts teacher practice and affects student improvement (Grossman & Hirsch, 2009). Those elements included

Professional development that lasts for a minimum of 14 hours shows a positive and significant impact on student achievement; high-quality professional development is ongoing and affords teachers time to practice what they have learned and receive feedback on how well they are implementing what they have learned; high-quality professional development that is connected to school and district goals for student learning is more likely to improve student achievement; and professional development decisions should be driven by data to determine the needs of teachers and determine the effects of the training on student learning.

(Grossman & Hirsch, 2009, p. 2)

In a report published by the National Center on Educational Outcomes which reviews the literature on *Professional Development to Improve Accommodations Decisions*, Hodgson, Lazarus, and Thurlow (2011) discussed research-based models of professional development. The models they detailed in the report fit into “three major

categories: project-based learning, case-based learning, and Communities of Practice” (Hodgson et al., 2011, p. 6). The first model, project-based learning, has a theoretical framework which stems to Guskey’s (1986) work, then reconceptualized by Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) where participants engage in the problem-solving process (Hodgson et al., 2011). Case-based instruction for educators is based on narrative cases where teachers receive layered support in analyzing the situation presented in the case, offers opportunities to reflect, allows teachers to apply their learning in the classroom, and promotes collaborative evaluation (Hodgson et al., 2011). Although much learning occurs in this model, one challenge is the amount of time involved that tends to take away from instruction (Hodgson et al., 2011). The final model mentioned in this study is Communities of Practice. This model adds to the case-based model, offering more opportunities for educators to form learning communities which boosts collaborative practice and is usually based on adult interactions with like interests and abilities; however, there is the potential for internal conflict if roles and responsibilities are not determined (Hodgson et al., 2011). Communities of Practice are closely aligned to DuFour and Eaker’s (1998) model of PLCs or learning organizations as mentioned in Larry Lezotte’s book on effective schools entitled *Assembly Required* (Huffman & Hipp, 2003; Lezotte & McKee, 2002). “Professional learning communities serve as the most obvious catalyst for teacher professional growth in a collaborative setting” (Archibald et al., 2011, p. 5).

Most research mentioned in the literature advocates collective practices or collaboration with adult learners providing forums for teachers to discuss experiences, practices, successes, and areas to improve (Gibbs, 2011; Hirsh, 2013; Hirsh & Killion, 2007; Hodgson et al., 2011; Lind, 2007; Tournaki et al., 2011). “Within professional

learning communities, teachers do more than share direct evidence of student learning; they also elicit feedback on how to improve their instructional practice while acting within a safe, stable structure of support for trying new approaches to teaching” (Archibald et al., 2011, p. 5). A collaborative process in professional development can be related to transformative theory of learning which refers to the way adult learners “change beliefs and attitudes or transforming meaning structures” (Lind, 2007, p. 4). Often this transformation of meaning structures or changes in beliefs and attitudes assists in promoting a growth mindset where individuals will “take a challenge, learn from failure, or continue their effort” (Dweck, 2006, p. 46). In other related information concerning collaborative processes in professional development from the literature, “Darling-Hammond, et al., (2009, p. 48) found nations that outperform the United States on international assessments invest heavily in professional learning and build time for ongoing, sustained teacher development and collaboration into teachers’ work hours” (Gibbs, 2011, p. 28). According to this research, collaboration and sustained teacher development are necessary; therefore, building administrators need to consider opportunities for such job-embedded practices.

With that premise in mind, the concept known as professional development has been undergoing a transformation to professional learning which requires the teacher to be viewed as a learner (i.e., lifelong learner) (Learning Forward, 2011).

As mentioned previously, NSDC, now known as Learning Forward, published a book, *The Learning Educator: A New Era for Professional Learning*, which referenced a *new* paradigm shift in thinking about professional development that is results-driven, standards based, and job-embedded (Hirsh & Killion, 2007). The same publication outlined guiding principles for professional development upon which the newest

standards for professional learning are based (Learning Forward, 2011). Those guiding principles include

Principles

Principles shape our thoughts, words, and actions.

Diversity

Diversity strengthens an organization and improves its decisions.

Leadership

Leaders are responsible for building the capacity in individuals, teams, and organizations to be leaders and learners.

Planning

Ambitious goals lead to powerful actions and remarkable results.

Focus

Maintaining the focus of professional learning on teaching and student learning produces academic success.

Impact

Evaluation strengthens performance and results.

Expertise

Communities can solve their most complex problems by tapping internal expertise.

Collaboration

Collaboration among educators builds shared responsibility and improves student learning. (Hirsh & Killian, 2007, p. 12)

These principles establish the foundation for professional learning upon which the newest, revised standards of professional learning from Learning Forward have been

developed. The revised standards will be discussed later in the literature review.

Two notable components of the principles which should be mentioned are developing SMART goals in the Planning principle and Professional Development and the Instructional Triangle in the Focus principle (Hirsh & Killion, 2007). The Planning principle deals with setting ambitious goals designed to achieve remarkable results, which may seem unreasonable. The direction on how to achieve them is unclear; however, the literature suggests writing them as SMART goals. “When goals are written in the SMART (Specific and Strategic, Measurable, Attainable, Results-based, and Timebound) format, stakeholders are more likely to understand what success will look like (O’Neill, 2004)” (Hirsh & Killion, 2007, p. 51).

Once again, the focus of professional learning on teacher learning, student learning, and academic success is emphasized in Principle of Focus. The literature displayed a figure which adequately conveys the importance the instructional relationship to professional learning and is seen in Figure 2.

Research by Cohen, Raudenbush, and Ball places the focus of professional learning on the instructional triangle. “The instructional triangle depicts the relationships between teacher, student, and content . . . identifies three relationships that become the focal content for professional learning . . . teachers’ understanding of subject domains for purposes of teaching . . . teachers’ grasp of students’ thinking and learning . . . teachers’ understanding of and responsiveness to the students they teach, with special emphasis on understanding the nature and significance of student diversity (p. 6)” (Hirsh & Killion, 2007, p. 66).

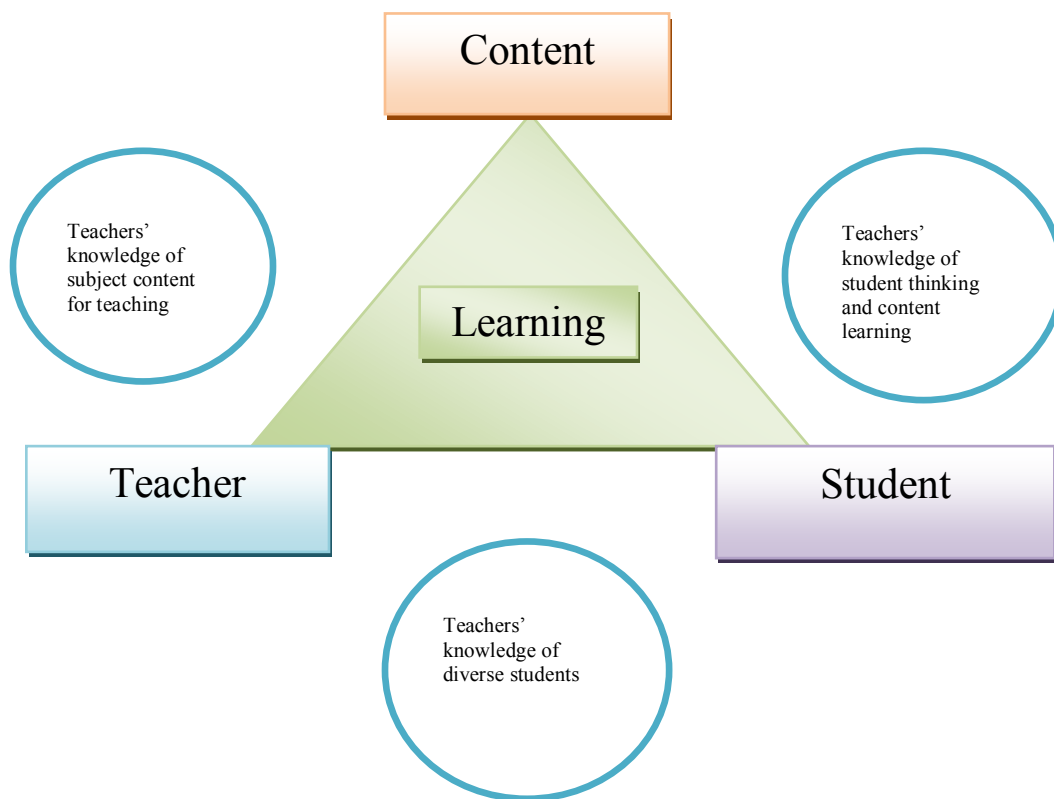


Figure 2. Professional Development and the Instructional Triangle (2006)
(Hirsh & Killion, 2007, p. 66).

In 2011, Learning Forward, formally NSDC, completed the third revision of *Standards for Professional Learning*. Learning Forward determined the name change to Standards for Professional Learning rather than Standards for Professional Development. This signifies teachers' responsibilities for their learning and continuous improvement (Learning Forward). According to the introduction to the standards, all elements in the standards should be implemented to realize the full potential of the professional learning working together in "synergy" (Learning Forward, p. 14).

The revision of the standards in 2011 resulted in some changes, including fewer standards, a holistic view, combined content standards, a revised stem, and three areas of focus (Learning Forward, 2011). The revised stem, which is included in all the new

standards is “Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students” (Learning Forward, 2011, p. 19) which “confirms the link between educator practice and results for all students” (Learning Forward, 2011, p. 19). Again, the standards work in partnership with one another and include

LEARNING COMMUNITIES: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.

LEADERSHIP: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.

RESOURCES: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.

DATA: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.

LEARNING DESIGNS: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.

IMPLEMENTATION: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students supplies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

OUTCOMES: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and

results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards. (Learning Forward, 2011, p. 23)

Figure 3 shows the process of professional learning impacting student results and the changes which take place through that pathway. According to Learning Forward (2011), educators who receive high-quality professional learning that is standards-based will find changes in their knowledge, skills, and dispositions which inform their practice which, in turn, improves student results. Thus, the cyclical nature represented in the figure lends itself to one of continuous improvement. As described in the figure, the cycle works in the opposite direction as well, showing the route an educator would follow if the student results were not desired which provides steps to follow in this case (Learning Forward, 2011).

Any professional learning implies a need for change: “change in how one views instruction, change in how one delivers instruction, and change in how one measures instruction” (Gibbs, 2011, p. 33). Gibbs (2011) went on to say,

Change is difficult because it is often perceived as a loss of control. It provokes primal fears, even turning it into a survival issue: fight or flight. And if that sounds a little dramatic for everyday workplace change, it remains true that the brain runs all new experiences through its self-protection circuit (Salerno & Brock, 2008, p. 11). (p. 33)

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND STUDENT RESULTS

When professional learning is standards based, it has greater potential to change what educators know, are able to do, and believe. When educators' knowledge, skills, and dispositions change, they have a broader repertoire of effective strategies to use to adapt their practices to meet performance expectations and student learning needs.

When educator practice improves, students have a greater likelihood of achieving results.

When student results improve, the cycle repeats for continuous improvement.

This cycle works two ways: If educators are not achieving the results they want, they are needed to make the desired changes. They then consider how to apply the standards so that they can engage in the learning needed to strengthen their practice.

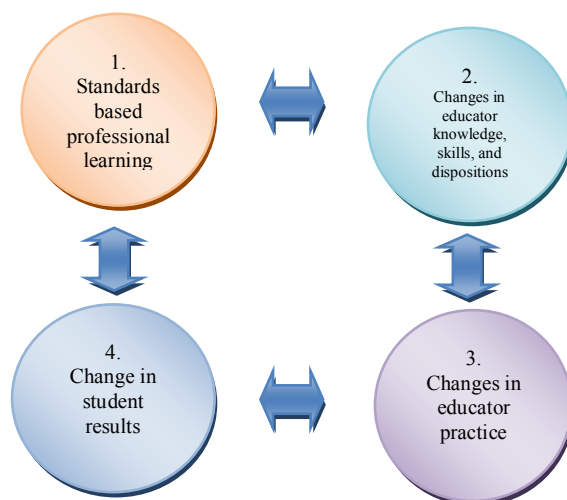


Figure 3. Relationship between Professional Learning and Student Results (Learning Forward, 2011, p. 16).

Since change can be difficult for many, it is important to understand that there is a process regarding change. Michael Fullan (2001) discussed change in his book *Leading in a Culture of Change*, suggesting change is complex and often appears messy during transformation. Gibbs (2011) cited Salerno and Brock (2008), stating that

“change goes through a predictable cycle that can be described in six stages: loss, doubt, discomfort, discovery, understanding, and integration” (pp. 34-35). Kotter’s 8-Step

Change Management Process outlines the following stages for top-down change:

“Creating Urgency; Forming Coalition; Creating the Change Vision; Communicating the Change Vision; Empowering Team Members; Creating Short-Term Wins; Consolidate Improvements; and Anchoring Changes” (McDonough, 2012, p. 2).

Kotter’s model of change management loosely aligns with the *Seven Disciplines*

for Strengthening Instruction on the macro level. The seven disciplines, a product of The Change Leadership Group, Harvard School of Education, are as follows: “Urgency for instructional improvement using real data; Shared vision of good teaching; Meetings about the work; A shared vision of student results; Effective supervision; Professional development; and Diagnostic data with accountable collaboration” (Wagoner & Kegan, 2006, p. 27).

Figure 4 details the progression through Kotter’s eight stages of change moving from “creating a climate for change, to engaging and enabling the organization, to implementing and sustaining the change” (McDonough, 2012, p. 2). As noted in the visual representation of change management, change is a process which occurs over time with careful guidance and support.

Work from The Change Leadership Group at Harvard Graduate School of Education views change in a somewhat different aspect. Wagoner and Kegan (2006) proposed that implementing systemic change is a process which involves levers and phases. The change levers include “data, accountability, and relationships” (Wagoner & Kegan, p. 134) and the phases include “preparing, envisioning, and enacting” (Wagoner & Kegan, pp. 133-134). Figure 5 shows the phases and levers on a progression chart. Wagoner and Kegan informed that the levers of data, accountability, and relationships occur while moving through the phases of preparing, envisioning, and enacting. This results in change with a large community, accountability to one another (such as in peer groups), and enabling deeper levels of trust and respect which will enhance professional learning.

By the enacting phase, a laser-like focus on improving instruction becomes evident in all three change levers. Finally, movement through the three phases

corresponds with rightward movement on the three continua . . . the phases describe the stages of a long-term, cyclical process of continuous improvement. (Wagoner & Kegan, p. 136).



Figure 4. Kotter's 8 Steps of Change Management (McDonough, 2012, p. 2).

Progress Through the Phases and Levers			
Lever	Phase		
	Preparing	Envisioning	Enacting
Data			
Accountability			
Relationships			

Figure 5. Progress through the Phases and Levers (Wagoner & Kegan, 2006, p. 137).

The change models reviewed include reshaping a culture after understanding why change is necessary and indicate a collective nature in order to implement and sustain

change. Understanding change and the processes of change can inform professional learning as the goal for professional learning is to impact student results and outcomes (Wagoner & Kegan, 2006).

While it is important to understand the processes of change, it is equally important to note perceptions of change differ between teaching generations. Research indicates generation gaps impact teachers' perspectives, teaching styles, and attitudes toward adult collaboration (Dronzek, 2008; Johnson & Kardos, 2005; Rinke, 2009). External factors play an important role in the differences between generational actions and performance. For building administrators, it is significant to understand the specific differences in two distinct generations in education, veteran teachers and novice teachers (Johnson & Kardos, 2005; Rinke, 2009), in an effort to build capacity for collaboration and to improve practice.

In an article, "The Academic Generation Gap," Dronzek (2008) discussed the generation gap between senior faculty "(all of whom were full professors)" and junior faculty, assistant professors (para. 3). One specific contributor to the gap in academia is related to "the structural problems of academic employment" (Dronzek, para. 7). The appointment of senior and junior professors is dependent on the demographics of the department as well as the size of the department which often differs due to the size of the institution (Dronzek). In many instances, the turnover rate for senior professors is less than that of the junior professors indicating "junior faculty had careers, while senior faculty had vocations" (Dronzek, para. 17).

Research also indicates a similar concept for teachers in public education. In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a large influx of teachers into the profession during a time when teaching was a logical career choice and a respected profession for women and

minorities (Johnson & Kardos, 2005; Rinke, 2009). Teachers entered into teaching to remain for their working years and, according to the literature reviewed, generally saw teaching as a job. “Teachers entered teaching because they already believed in the current system of schooling. Once in the classroom, the system worked to reinforce those beliefs” (Rinke, 2009, p. 6). In general, this generation embraces “a conservative nature of teaching” (Rinke, 2009, p. 6) which could be described as “an egg-crate-style classroom, with great isolation and little interaction with other teachers” (Rinke, 2009, p. 8).

During the last few years, this cadre of veteran teachers has begun to retire, opening positions for novice teachers (Johnson & Kardos, 2005; Rinke, 2009). The recruitment and hiring of new teachers has led to “a generation gap in teaching, with independent, sometimes complacent, veteran teachers and inexperienced, often distressed, novice teachers struggling to understand each other (Johnson & Kardos, 2005, p. 10)” (Rinke, 2009, p. 6).

Although there are many similarities between the generations in the profession of teaching, there are also distinct differences. The literature reveals new teachers have a higher attrition rate often leaving education within the first 5 years which prevents them from becoming novice teachers (Rinke, 2009). As well, there are multiple professional job opportunities outside of education that attract the current generation making teaching no longer the “logical” choice for women (Rinke, 2009, p. 70). Teachers just entering the profession tend to view teaching “as a calling” (Rinke, 2009, p. 18). New teachers have been involved in educational programs that stress “professional learning in communities” (Rinke, 2009, p. 8) which may result in them being “more open to and interested in working collaboratively with colleagues in professional learning communities” (Rinke,

2009, p. 8). Generally speaking, the current generation enters teaching to change the system rather than maintain the system (Johnson & Kardos, 2005; Rinke, 2009).

Interpersonal relationships can differ between the generations of teachers. A study exploring the generation gaps in urban schools revealed a veteran teacher who distanced herself from forming close relationships with her students while a novice teacher formed close, interpersonal relationships with his students (Rinke, 2009). The novice teacher considered teaching to be his *life*. Although she was committed to the profession, the veteran teacher had interests outside of the teaching arena (Johnson & Kardos, 2005; Rinke, 2009).

In summary, professional development, sometimes referred to as staff development, in-service training, or training, now transitioning to the term professional learning, remains a critical component in education. In decades past, professional development consisted of attendance at a conference, workshop, or meeting where the participant was expected to receive information and then apply it when returning to the classroom. NCLB (2001) outlined the expectations of high-quality professional development in an effort to improve student achievement. Research reveals a myriad of standards to be considered in providing high-quality professional development; however, the most current research moves professional development into a new realm which includes a paradigm shift recognizing teachers as learners (Hirsh, 2013). With this precept in mind, Learning Forward, formerly known as the National Staff Development Council, has revised professional learning standards based on eight principles which promote collaboration, culture changes, and a community of learners (Hirsh, 2013; Hirsh & Killion, 2007; Learning Forward, 2011). The most current principles and standards for professional learning are designed to be standards-based, results-driven, and job-

embedded, where participants are actively engaged, and centered around the internal expertise contained in all schools, while simultaneously revolving around content, process, and context (Archibald et al., 2011; Center for Applied Linguistics, 2010; Hirsh, 2013; Hirsh & Killion, 2007; Learning Forward, 2011). Current professional learning components call for change in education: change in standards, change in delivery, change in learning, change in practice, change in instruction, and change in results for both teachers and students. With change in the forefront of effective education, knowing and understanding the change process is helpful as it is vital to the current model of professional learning. As well, generational challenges should be considered when designing professional learning in an effort to understand and meet teachers' needs while implementing change (Dronzek, 2008; Johnson & Kardos, 2005; Rinke, 2009). Progressing forward with a growth mindset adds ease to the challenges that lie ahead (Dweck, 2006).

Most of the research on professional learning is grounded in social constructivism where "meaning is constructed through individual and social processes" (Lind, 2007, p. 4) which aligns with the underlying theory of teacher self-efficacy (Viel-Ruma, Houchins, Jolivette, & Benson, 2010). Professional learning can significantly affect teacher self-efficacy. The next section of the literature review will discuss teacher self-efficacy.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Abundant research deals with self-efficacy, especially teacher self-efficacy, and its connection to positive student achievement. Research suggests teacher self-efficacy is the teachers' own feelings of attitude, disposition, confidence, and how well they feel prepared to influence students in various facets of educational experiences (Kelm &

McIntosh, 2012). Teacher self-efficacy theory is “rooted in social cognition theory” (Viel-Ruma et al., 2010, p. 226) and conveys the belief that individuals have the ability to control their own actions. It has been defined in several studies as the teachers’ perceptions of how effective they are in their professional practices regarding affecting student outcomes in academic achievement, student motivation, student behaviors, and even their own job satisfaction (Viel-Ruma et al., 2010).

Teacher sense of self-efficacy is an important component of effective teaching (Swackhamer, Koellner, Basile, & Kimbrough, 2009). “Mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional states are listed among the resources of self-efficacy” (Calik, Sezgin, Kavgaci, & Cagatay Kilinc, 2012, p. 2501). In mastery experiences, teacher self-efficacy is judged based on how they have completed similar tasks in the past (Bembenutty, 2006). Bembenutty (2006) went on to explain vicarious experiences include when one observes others’ successes in similar situations. Social persuasion, also called verbal persuasion or verbal feedback (Jamil, 2012), refers to when “others prompt one to initiate action, tasks, or behavior” (Bembenutty, p. 6). Social persuasion is very effective due to peer relationships. The final source, emotional states or physiological states, deal with one’s “stress, anxiety, fear, and fatigue in order to initiate a specific course of action” (Bembenutty, p. 6).

Relatedly, Carol Dweck, Ph.D. (2006), discussed in her book, *Mindset the New Psychology of Success*, two mindsets individuals possess which could affect the notion of self-efficacy. The two mindsets include the fixed mindset and the growth mindset, conflicting self-beliefs, which can impair or accelerate an individual’s attitude, disposition, or belief about the amount of effort to put forth, how failure or success is viewed, and ultimately, the determination or lack of determination with which to proceed

(Dweck). Dweck stated,

Believing that your qualities are carved in stone – the *fixed mindset* – creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over. If you have only a certain amount of intelligence, a certain personality, certain moral character – well, then you’d better prove you have a healthy dose of them. It simply wouldn’t do to look or feel deficient in those most basic characteristics. (p. 6)

Dweck went on to describe the alternate mindset where traits are not just a hand one is dealt but

in this mindset, the hand you’re dealt is just the starting point for development. This *growth mindset* is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts. Although people may differ in every which way – in their initial talents or aptitudes, interests, or temperaments – everyone can change and grow through application and experience (p. 7).

Kelm and McIntosh (2012) conducted a study on the effects of a school wide positive behavior support system on teacher self-efficacy in which she cited Guskey’s (1998) work that indicated researchers from the RAND Corporation included teacher self-efficacy as the teachers’ perceptions of their influence in dealing with students who are difficult to motivate or exhibit severe discipline problems (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The RAND researchers’ work used Rotter (1966) as a theoretical framework. Viel-Ruma et al.’s (2010) research indicated, “Teacher efficacy has been positively correlated to high academic achievement, effective teacher practices, increased family involvement, decreased referral rates into special education, and higher levels of teacher job satisfaction” (p. 226).

Since the literature shows self-efficacy can affect so many variables in education,

this section of the literature review will focus on the theories of teacher self-efficacy, the effects of high and low self-efficacy, studies measuring teacher self-efficacy, studies relating teacher self-efficacy to professional development, and the concept of collective efficacy as it is related to self-efficacy.

Research suggests three particular theories of teacher self-efficacy. The first is the theory, produced by the RAND Corporation, which maintains two factors determine teacher self-efficacy – personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012). The RAND Corporation indicates a teacher’s personal teaching efficacy (PTE) “is a teacher’s evaluation of his or her personal level of ability to affect student performance” (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012, p. 137). This evaluation of one’s ability as a fixed variable relates to the fixed mindset component of the two mindsets which frame thinking and learning (Dweck, 2006). Also, according to the RAND Corporation research, a teacher’s general teaching efficacy (GTE) deals with teachers’ perceptions of how outside influences such as environment, home life, and social groups compete with their ability to influence student outcomes (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012). Therefore, a teacher with a high general teaching efficacy believes that all students learn regardless of external factors contributing to their lives.

A second theory which competes with the RAND theory comes from the work of Bandura (1982), indicating that perceived teacher self-efficacy varies and can change based on the situation (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012). This work demonstrates that factors such as classroom management and instruction can elicit different levels of self-efficacy along with subject content knowledge and classroom make up (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012). This theory aligns somewhat with a growth mindset; however, in this theory, one could still retain a fixed mindset implying potential and abilities are set and cannot be changed

(Dweck, 2006). Much of the literature reviewed for this study centers around Bandura's (1982) theory of different levels of teacher self-efficacy depending on the situation.

Finally, a third theory was developed which integrates the former competing theories in work by Tschannen-Moran and colleagues (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012). Their definition of teacher self-efficacy is "one's perception of performance of some future task, when the current level of functioning is considered in reference to the teaching task and its context" (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012, p. 138). Another way to frame this theory is there is emphasis on one's perception of competence rather than on the actual competence itself (Powell-Moman & Brown-Schild, 2011). Analyzing the teaching task and its context implies self-efficacy is content-specific and may also include student motivation, resources available to the teacher, and content being taught along with the external factors of environment and home life. The other process incorporated in this theory deals with teachers' abilities to reflect on their own teaching abilities and suggests that with time and experience, self-efficacy becomes higher (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012). The precepts in this theory are more similar to a growth mindset due to the self-reflection piece and the idea that self-efficacy can become higher (Dweck, 2006). Over time, change occurs in education and, according to this theory, teachers may need to reevaluate their own self-efficacy which may vary regarding the specific task when implementing a new curriculum or initiative (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012). Kelm and McIntosh (2012) indicated that the work of Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998) "emphasizes the recursive nature of self-efficacy, such that a higher perception of self-efficacy will lead to greater persistence on a task, which will often lead to higher performance, which in turn will contribute to an individual's self-efficacy" (p. 138).

Much of the current research indicates that high perceptions of teacher self-

efficacy positively influence students' outcomes and can be related to higher academic achievement (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012). Kelm and McIntosh (2012) stated,

Interestingly, more recent research (Caprara et al., 2006) has provided evidence of a reciprocal relationship between academic achievement and teacher self-efficacy, in which achievement influences teacher self-efficacy, which in turn predicts academic achievement. Teacher self-efficacy has also been indicated to influence student motivation (Ashton & Webb, 1986). In addition to the influence of teacher self-efficacy on student outcomes, teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to persist in teaching students with difficulties, set more ambitious goals for students, and support the inclusion of student with disabilities in the general education classroom. (p. 138)

The research of Powell-Moman and Brown-Schild (2011), reported in *The Influence of a Two-Year Professional Development Institute on Teacher Self-Efficacy and Use of Inquiry-Based Instruction*, cited Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998), indicating teacher self-efficacy is a motivational construct which means higher self-efficacy results in higher motivation for teachers; whereas, lower self-efficacy results in lower motivation for teachers to carry out routine expectations of teaching. Teachers who have a high sense of instructional self-efficacy tend to spend more time on areas related to student learning, while teachers with lower instructional efficacy spend less time on areas related to student learning, have less content knowledge, avoid working with students who display learning difficulties, and appear more critical of their students (Powell-Moman & Brown-Schild). "There is evidence that teachers with high sense of efficacy beliefs engage in a high level of planning and organization (Allinder, 1994)" (Bembenutty, 2006, p. 5). Studies have shown that teachers who have a high sense of self-efficacy use more reform-

based teaching strategies which are student-centered. Conversely, teachers who exhibit a lower sense of self-efficacy use more direct teaching methods such as lecture (Swackhamer et al., 2009). Also, low self-efficacy can be linked to low organization and task completion (Gotch & French, 2013).

“Efforts to increase teacher efficacy . . . will also increase teacher effectiveness and student performance” (Powell-Moman & Brown-Schild, 2011, p. 48). Teacher self-efficacy is not only an indicator of teacher effectiveness but it also serves as a gauge for school and program effectiveness (Calik et al., 2012). It is also a consideration when attempting to restructure and develop effective schools (Calik et al., 2012). Studies have also indicated that preservice teachers who are enrolled in at least three content courses designed to teach them how to teach have a greater level of self-efficacy (Swackhamer et al., 2009). Also, professional development and induction programs are means through which teacher self-efficacy can improve (Viel-Ruma et al., 2010).

Studies measuring teacher self-efficacy suggest self-regulation can be tied to high levels of self-efficacy (Bembenutty, 2006). Self-regulation includes cognitive, motivational, and behavioral abilities necessary to achieve tasks which would include goal setting, choosing appropriate learning techniques, self-monitoring, and reflecting on practice; however, these components are directly related to feelings of personal and professional success which relates back to the reciprocal causality mentioned earlier (Bembenutty, 2006).

In 2000, Megan Tschannen-Moran and Anita Woolfolk Hoy, Ohio State University, College of Education, penned a journal article reviewing many of the major instruments designed to measure teacher self-efficacy and indicating problems that have arisen with each. The purpose of the article was to reveal a new measure of teacher self-

efficacy called the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES) (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The measure was developed and withstood three separate studies to determine validity, reliability, and refinement, which resulted in the creation of a 24-question long form, a 12-question short form, and divided into three factors: efficacy for instructional strategies, efficacy for classroom management, and efficacy for student engagement (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Current quantitative research regarding measuring teacher self-efficacy typically employs the OSTES as the instrument used as a survey with teachers.

Another measure referred to in current literature is the survey instrument used by Marshall, Horton, Igo, and Switzer (2009) (Powell-Moman & Brown-Schild, 2011). A study at North Carolina State University concerning teacher self-efficacy and a 2-year professional development program through the Kenan Fellows reveals four of the questions on this survey instrument related to self-efficacy and beliefs surrounding inquiry-based instruction (Powell-Moman & Brown-Schild, 2011).

Other studies in related literature connect teacher self-efficacy to professional development or professional development programs. One particular piece, a conference abstract template from the SREE Spring 2012 Conference, details an interactive web-based professional development module from the University of Virginia called My Teaching Partner (MTP) (Jamil, 2012). The module is based on the four sources of self-efficacy related to Bandura's (1993) work of mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion or verbal feedback, and physiological and emotional cues (Jamil, 2012). The module is primarily one of self and collective reflection with feedback from a *coach* in a collaborative practice which contains video exemplars of high-quality teaching (Jamil, 2012). The instrument used in the study to gather pre and postmeasures of self-

efficacy was the *Teacher's Sense of Self Efficacy* also known as the OSTES (Jamil, 2012; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Although all areas of teacher self-efficacy, instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management did not show enhanced efficacy individually, there was an indication of greater post self-efficacy in the area of instructional strategies suggesting the intervention was successful (Jamil, 2012).

As previously referenced, another study conducted at the NC Kenan Fellows, NC State University (Powell-Moman & Brown-Schild, 2011) attempted to measure the influence of a 2-year professional development institute on teacher self-efficacy and the use of inquiry-based instruction (Powell-Moman & Brown-Schild, 2011). The program revolved around the content areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and was offered to in-service novice and experienced teachers alike (Powell-Moman & Brown-Schild, 2011). The results of the study indicated the courses offered through the Kenan Fellows program significantly increased the novice teachers' self-efficacy to the level of experienced teachers and that professional development should be increased in STEM education (Powell-Moman & Brown-Schild, 2011).

A study published in the Australian Journal of Teacher Education was conducted "to consider the potential of professional development to enhance teachers' beliefs about their self-efficacy" (Karimi, 2011, p. 1). The research questions particularly intended to measure self-efficacy regarding engaging students, implementing teaching strategies, and managing classroom behavior (Karimi, 2011). The research indicated that teacher participation in professional development initiatives significantly enhances or can change teachers' beliefs about their teaching practices (Karimi, 2011). The author stated, "educational policy makers should consider launching quality professional development programs aimed specifically at raising teachers' operational knowledge and content

standards which in turn boosts the teachers' efficacy" (Karimi, 2011, p. 59).

According to Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001),

the professional development of teachers would be structured as powerful mastery experiences with an eye toward helping teachers garner evidence of improved learning on the part of their students in order to reap the efficacy pay-off that would result. In these days of hard-nosed accountability, teachers' sense of efficacy is an idea that neither researchers nor practitioners can afford to ignore. (p. 003)

In addition to teacher self-efficacy, there is also the concept of collective efficacy, which refers to the beliefs and efforts of a group rather than the beliefs and efforts of individuals (Viel-Ruma et al., 2010). It "refers to the entire social system's perception of its ability to effect desired change (Bandura, 1997)" (Viel-Ruma et al., 2010, p. 3). This translates into the assumption that if the school as a whole believes it can be successful, then each individual will put forth more effort personally to achieve such success (Viel-Ruma et al., 2010). In other words, the collective efforts of the entire group are based on the premise and belief that together the group can positively impact student achievement (Calik et al., 2012). According to Calik et al. (2012), "the group of teachers who have high level of collective efficacy will be more persistent on overcoming the obstacles they face while educating students" (p. 2499; Demir, 2008; Goddard, 2001; Hoy, Sweetland, & Smith, 2002). Bandura (1997) referred to the term *reciprocal causality* as a two-way relationship which can be applied to the relationship of teacher self-efficacy to collective efficacy. Both can influence each other (Calik et al., 2012).

Some factors deemed effective in developing collective efficacy are "a positive and supportive environment, clear and understandable vision and aims, high expectations,

a significant professional development, and shared leadership” (Calik et al., 2012, p. 2501). These are similar to the indicators of effective schools as well as the components of a PLC (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Huffman & Hipp, 2003; Lezotte & McKee, 2002; Roy, 2010). As previously indicated, “mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional states are listed among the resources of self-efficacy” which also form the basis for collective efficacy (Calik et al., 2012, p. 2501).

Research indicates that teacher self-efficacy is an important indicator in education which can influence student academic success (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012; Swackhamer et al., 2009). High self-efficacy can be coupled with a growth mindset providing the internal motivation for teachers to be continually seeking ways to improve their practice to benefit students in this day of high accountability (Dweck, 2006; Powell-Moman & Brown-Schild, 2011). The research also highlighted collective efficacy as an effective component of highly effective school and district improvement movements (Viel-Ruma et al., 2010).

The concepts of high-quality professional development and teacher self-efficacy provide relevance for the next topic in the literature review, an overview of instructional rounds professional development.

Overview of Instructional Rounds

As mentioned in Chapter 1, traditionally, teachers have made decisions daily regarding their student instruction. Also, teachers tended to work in isolation or in silos while making those instructional decisions (Doyle, 2012). Collaborative practice such as the practice of medical doctors making rounds and working together to problem solve has moved into the arena of education (Roegman & Riehl, 2012). The educational model, based on the medical model of *rounds*, is known as instructional rounds in education and

was developed for administrators to observe and discuss best practices in the classroom; however, the model has been modified, enabling teachers to conduct instructional rounds following a protocol which assists in pinpointing areas across grade levels or other groups or departments where instructional improvement can be made for the students' success (City et al., 2010). Since research from the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality reveals teachers need opportunities for high-quality professional learning activities to improve student outcomes (Isabel, 2010), this section of the literature review will discuss the concepts and procedures of instructional rounds in education.

The practice of instructional rounds in education is relatively new; thus, limited research is available. However, the practice of instructional rounds is growing rapidly throughout the United States and other countries such as Australia (Roegman & Riehl, 2012). This iterative process was originally designed by Richard Elmore in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for district superintendents and administrators to network and visit each other's districts to conduct rounds in an effort to inform their next level of work (Calik et al., 2012; City et al., 2010; Roberts, 2012; Roegman & Riehl, 2012). Several variations of instructional rounds have evolved, including Learning Walks and Classroom Walk-Throughs (Doyle, 2012); however, Richard Elmore and colleagues (City et al., 2010) indicated in their book *Instructional Rounds A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning*, along with other sources, that the original design can be modified for teachers to observe teachers and use the process to improve instruction (Doyle, 2012; Roegman & Riehl, 2012). Peter Cummings, a principal at Farmington's West Woods Upper Elementary School commented,

There is a real difference between rounds and walkthroughs. Rounds is very much meant to be a learning experience for people going through the process.

You are gathering data on what's happening in your school and thinking of the implications of that data (D'Orio, 2013, p. 43).

Marzano (2011), in an article in the publication *Educational Leadership*, stated, Instructional rounds are one of the most valuable tools that a school or district can use to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills and develop a culture of collaboration. The goal of instructional rounds isn't to provide feedback to the teacher being observed, although this is an option if the observed teacher so desires. Rather, the primary purpose is for observing teachers to compare their own instructional practices with those of the teachers they observe. The chief benefit of this approach resides in the discussion that takes place among observing teachers at the end of the observation as well as in subsequent self-reflection (p. 82).

Instructional rounds offers a systematic, meaningful, and focused approach for putting structures in place to support dialogue among teachers regarding instructional practice and improvement (Chauncey, 2009). In his book on effective schools, *Assembly Required*, Larry Lezotte references Senge's 11th Law of no fault/no blame where he expounds that educators are working to the best of their abilities based on the knowledge and skills they possess (Lezotte & McKee, 2002). City et al. (2010) stated, "Most educators are working for better or for worse, at, or very near, the limit of their very knowledge and skills" (p. 8). Teachers have a need to become learners themselves and can use the process of instructional rounds to promote learning and reflection on their own practice (City et al., 2010; Learning Forward, 2011; Lind, 2007).

Rounds, a four-step process, involves identifying a problem of practice that incorporates a theory of action, conducting actual observations, participating in a debriefing process, and developing the next level of work (Chauncey, 2009; City et al.,

2010; D'Orio, 2013; Marzano, 2011; Roegman & Riehl, 2012). This four-step process serves a variety of purposes: building an organizational process, providing a learning process, functioning as a culture building process, and operating as a political process (City et al., 2010). Research revealed specific criteria of high-quality professional development that includes learning communities where teachers redefine their own teaching practices, activate learning of their own professional development, and promotes them to support each other's practices (Danielowich, 2012). The four-step process aligns with these characteristics of high-quality professional development.

It is important to understand that when change comes about in education, teachers and students alike feel disruptiveness and uncertainty. Educators must confront the changes and reprogram the practice which has worked in the past (City et al., 2010). In order to make changes in instructional practice, one must understand the instructional core. The instructional core refers to the relationship between the student, the teacher, and the content, as seen in Figure 6, which serves as the anchor for instructional rounds (Chauncey, 2009). "It is what happens in the classroom every day. It represents teachers (instructional practices) and students in the process of content (curriculum)" (Curtis & City, 2010, p. 9). There is little chance of improving the instructional core without knowing what is actually happening there and without paying attention to it (Curtis & City, 2010). There are seven principles that guide the work with the instructional core which are shown in Figure 7.

To obtain true improvement in education, the focus of the improvement must be on the instructional core (Chauncey, 2009). City et al. (2010) specified that one learns to do the work by actually doing the work:

Instructional rounds is a practice that can be learned by repetition, reflection, and

analysis at progressively higher levels of skill and knowledge. Rounds is a way of focusing on the instructional core of teachers and students in the presence of content. (p. 38)

To begin the process of rounds, the group of teachers, or the network, develops a problem of practice based on data, conversation, or current work justified by some kind of evidence or from a goal in a district or school improvement plan (City et al., 2010). Once the problem of practice has been articulated, the group begins the problem-solving process and develops a theory of action or a hypothesis which will need to be tested (Chauncey, 2009).

Theories of action, from the work of Chris Argyris and Donald Schön in organizational learning, connect causal visions with strategies to improve the instructional core usually written as *if . . . then* statements (City et al., 2010; Curtis & City, 2010). To understand theories in action, one needs to know of single loop and double loop learning in individuals and in organizations (City et al., 2010; Doyle, 2012; Lezotte & McKee, 2002; Morgan, 1986).

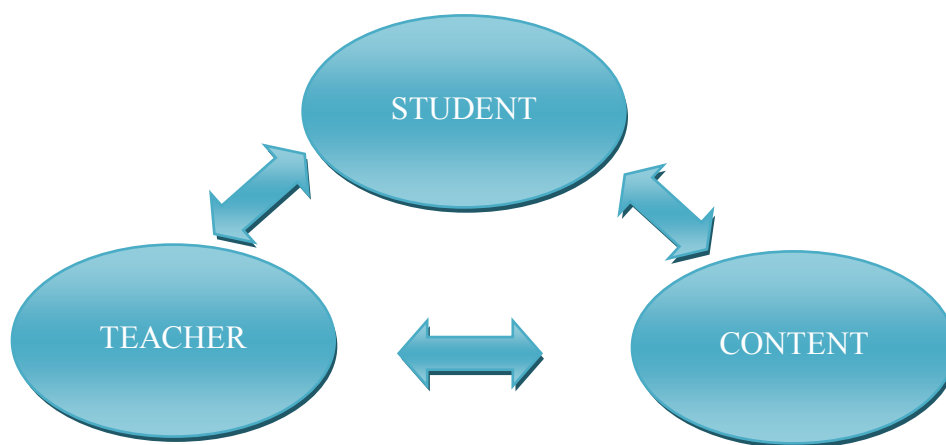


Figure 6. The Instructional Core (City et al., 2010, p. 22; Curtis & City, 2010, p. 7).

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL CORE
<p>Increases in student learning occur only as a consequence of improvements in the level of content, teachers' knowledge and skill, and student engagement.</p> <p>If you change any single element of the instructional core, you have to change the other two.</p> <p>If you can't see it in the core, it's not there.</p> <p>Task predicts performance.</p> <p>The real accountability system is in the tasks that the students are asked to do.</p> <p>We learn to do the work by doing the work, <i>not</i> by telling other people to do the work, <i>not</i> by having done the work at some time in the past, and <i>not</i> by hiring experts who can act as proxies for our knowledge about how to do the work.</p> <p>Description before analysis, analysis before prediction, prediction before evaluation.</p>

Figure 7. Seven Principles of the Instructional Core (City et al., 2010, p. 23).

Single loop learning involves one's actions, the feedback of the consequences of those actions, and a change in behavior as a result of the consequences where double loop learning is the same as single loop with an added component of reflective questioning after the feedback stage or reflecting on the *how* of the learning based on the actions. These processes can be seen in the illustration in Figure 8 (City et al., 2010; Doyle, 2012; Lezotte & McKee, 2002; Morgan, 1986). With the double loop learning process in mind, "rounds can create a culture of creative problem solving when discussions are about the actual instruction in classrooms as opposed to people's projections of their own ideas of what's happening in classrooms" (City et al., 2010, p. 52).

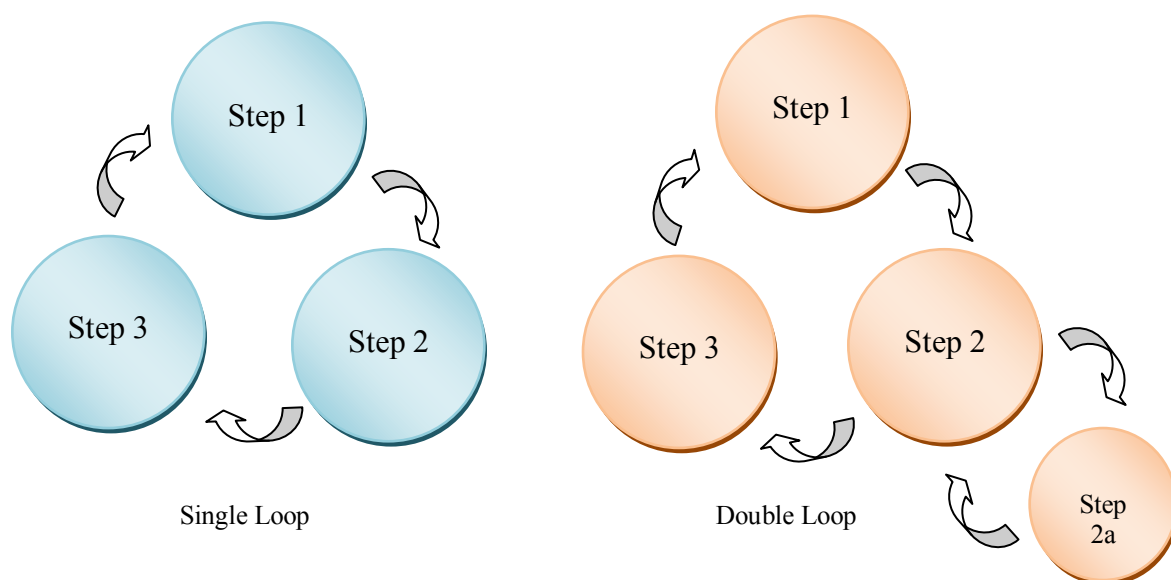


Figure 8. Single Loop and Double Loop Learning (Morgan, 2001, p. 87).

Theories of action assist a learning organization in being specific as to why they are doing particular actions and how those actions will lead to student achievement (Curtis & City, 2010). Good theories of action provide the catalyst for accountability relationships, the basis for single and double loop learning, the opportunity to test presumptions of what one thinks will work against the evidence of what actually works, and an outlet for reflection of practice and the process of learning (City et al., 2010; Curtis & City, 2010). When a team develops a theory of action, it is necessary to “test its reasoning, surface its assumptions, and make its intentions clear” (Curtis & City, 2010, p. 115).

For the purpose of this study a network is a grade-level team. After a network identifies a problem of practice and develops a theory of action, it is time to “do rounds” (City et al., 2010, p. 62). The network, or grade-level team, visits each other’s classrooms for 10 to 20 minutes describing the interactions of the student, the teacher, and the content; and the instructional core, without making judgments (City et al., 2010;

Doyle, 2012; Roegman & Riehl, 2012).

Life revolves around culture which shapes individuals' values and assumptions that are reflected in conversations about data, how data is selected, and what happens next (Love, 2009). The Ladder of Inference, a framework first developed by Chris Argyris (1990) and expanded by Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, and Smith (1994), represents how values, assumptions, and beliefs shape experiences (Love, 2009). "The first rung of the ladder represents all the actual data and experiences that would be captured by a movie camera that didn't lie" (Love, 2009, p. 82). The higher one moves up the ladder of inference, the further away one moves from evidence and moves toward judgment (City et al., 2010), imposing or adding one's own beliefs, values, assumptions, and interpretations on the data which could lead to inappropriate actions (Love, 2009).

It is important to note the descriptive process in instructional rounds is low on the "ladder of inference" (City et al., 2010, p. 82). The power of rounds centers on dialogue; therefore, it is imperative all descriptions are based on the evidence of exactly what was seen and heard (Chauncey, 2009).

During this observation process, it is important for the observers to have a focus which has been provided by the problem of practice and the theory of action. In these observations, teams of four to six people go to the classrooms, enter unobtrusively, and find an inconspicuous place to observe to avoid disrupting instruction or distracting students (Marzano, 2011). On blank paper, the observers simply record the interactions between the students and the teachers and note the tasks being attempted and the content. Observers may quietly ask students questions concerning their learning such as

What are you learning? What are you working on?

What do you do if you don't know the answer or if you are stuck?

How will you know when you are finished?

How will you know if what you have done is of good quality? (City et al., 2010, p. 111)

Again, the focus of the data being collected is on what the students are actually doing rather than what the teacher has asked them to do, as this is a great predictor of student success (Chauncey, 2009; City et al., 2010; Curtis & City, 2010; Marzano, 2011).

Once the observations have been completed, the group of observers, the network, reconvenes to begin the second portion of the rounds process, debriefing (Chauncey, 2009; City et al., 2010; Marzano, 2011; Roegman & Riehl, 2012). “The purpose of the debrief is to consider the collected evidence together and moving to agreeing on what people saw to eventually agreeing on what learning should occur from what they saw” (City et al., 2010, p. 116). Working individually, or with a partner, participants reflect on the data collected and choose five to 10 key pieces to individually record on sticky notes – one piece per sticky note. At this point, the group works together again and categorizes the sticky notes into themes, trends, or patterns, similar to coding in qualitative analysis (Gibbs, 2007), which have emerged based solely on the evidence as they begin to predict the learning that occurred. City et al. (2010) indicated,

The goal of this conversation is not to evaluate the teaching we saw in that single classroom, but to understand the practice of teaching and the process of learning by investigating very specific interactions between the elements of the instructional core. (p. 123)

The final phase of the entire process is the next level of work (Marzano, 2011), which is the stage where the participants in the network form solutions and recommend actions for those seeking to improve, keeping in mind the assumption that educators are

doing the best with the knowledge they have; therefore, they may need to think in new ways (Chauncey, 2009; City et al., 2010; Lezotte & McKee, 2002). Again, teachers are actively engaged in their own learning through nonevaluative, collaborative practice which occurs during their school day. This job-embedded collaboration meets the most current standards and principles of high-quality professional development (Hirsh & Killion, 2007; Learning Forward, 2011). “Conversations like these teach . . . the process necessary to unpack what’s involved in supporting teachers to learn a new skill” (City et al., 2010, p. 126). The process of rounds is one of a cyclical nature continually searching the evidence of what teaching and learning is taking place for those who seek to improve their practice. To document the solutions and recommended actions, the network may choose to develop an action plan which details what will occur until the next review (Curtis & City, 2010). The network continually reconvenes to evaluate the progress of the action planning which has occurred and makes decisions as to whether or not changes are evident.

According to City et al. (2010),

The rounds process is not a silver bullet that will singlehandedly lead to better outcomes at scale for students. It is, however, a powerful accelerant of school and district improvement efforts. Its focus on what goes on in classrooms anchors improvement efforts in the instructional core and provides a key source of data and a powerful feedback loop to tell educators whether their systemic improvement efforts are actually reaching students. The collaborative approach used in rounds networks separates people from their practice and creates norms that make individual and organization learning possible. (p. 171)

Instructional rounds in education is a practice which was inspired by the practice

of rounds in the medical field with the “goal of a shared understanding of teaching and learning” (City et al., 2010, p. 136). Rounds, an iterative process, is considered professional development and encompasses several components of the most current models of high-quality professional development; collaboration, reflection, active learning, and job-embedded practices.

Summary

The search through the literature revealed particular themes related to a qualitative case study of the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy. Those themes included components of high-quality professional development, teacher self-efficacy, and an overview of instructional rounds. It can be concluded from the research that instructional rounds is an iterative practice based on the medical model of rounds and designed with the goal of a “shared understanding of teaching and learning” (City et al., 2010, p. 136) where educators develop a problem of practice with a theory of action, conduct observations, reflect and identify patterns and trends during the debrief, and formulate solutions and recommend actions for improvement in the instructional core (City et al., 2010; Doyle, 2012; Marzano, 2011; Roberts, 2012; Roegman & Riehl, 2012). Instructional rounds exhibit the components of active learning, collaborative practice, and job-embedding where educators and students alike are learners. These are criteria which meet many of the most common components for high-quality professional learning (Frank, 2009; Galea, 2012; Gibbs, 2011; Hirsh, 2013; Hirsh & Killion, 2007; Learning Forward, 2011). Professional learning has evolved through the decades from one-stop workshop attendance to that of learning communities or learning organizations with shared understanding of practices that elicit school improvement. Finally, with tools such as instructional rounds in education serving

as high-quality professional learning, teacher self-efficacy may be impacted which in turn can impact or influence positive student achievement in a time of stringent accountability and need for continuous improvement (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012; Viel-Ruma et al., 2010).

The following chapter outlines the methodology for this qualitative case study which will measure the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Adjustments in teaching and learning are necessary to meet the 21st century expectations of preparing students for college and career readiness (Johnson, 2009). Education in America requires more dramatic measures in showing improvement than ever (City et al., 2010). Effective schools employ continuous improvement models as guiding frameworks for creating settings where student performance is a priority (Lezotte & McKee, 2002). According to research, a major component of continuous improvement is to promote collaboration among teachers in an effort to refine practice and design instruction based on student data and student outcomes (Hirsh, 2013; Hirsh & Killion, 2007; Learning Forward, 2011).

Traditionally, the teacher in a classroom solely made the decisions regarding student instruction behind closed doors in isolation from others in the profession (City et al., 2010; Doyle, 2012). With the current high demands in teaching, along with the extreme accountability in place, teachers have a need for tools to assist them in meeting expectations. Research shows current models of professional development involve collaborative practices which allow teachers to be actively engaged in their own learning (Archibald et al., 2011; Gibbs, 2011; Learning Forward, 2011; Loveless, 2013; Tournaki et al., 2011). Currently, there is a movement in education to transition from working in silos behind closed doors to becoming more collective in practice by visiting classrooms and reflecting on what is occurring during instruction (Doyle, 2012). One model in particular, instructional rounds, promotes many of the characteristics identified in research as high-quality professional development. The characteristics include collaborative, reflective, and data-driven practices where professional learning is job-

embedded and teachers are actively engaged as learners (Chauncey, 2009). Instructional rounds, inspired by the process of medical rounds, offers opportunities for individuals to visit classrooms, observe, describe instruction, participate in conversations centered on the observations (data), and develop solutions and recommendations for improvement (Marzano, 2011; Roegman & Riehl, 2012).

In a small rural district in the foothills of North Carolina, teachers were selected to be teacher leaders in the development of RtI for their school. These teacher leaders received yearlong professional development. One component of the training was instructional rounds. The instructional rounds professional development consisted of learning for the teachers in developing a problem of practice, conducting and participating in instructional rounds, using the debriefing protocol to identify patterns and trends for their group, and determining the next level of work (Chauncey, 2009; City et al., 2010; Marzano, 2011). After learning the procedures and protocols required in instructional rounds, each set of elementary teacher leaders visited classrooms in their schools which served as learning labs for job-embedded practice in an effort to facilitate improvement and, ultimately, impact student achievement.

In addition, the Early College has a core team of teachers who participated in instructional rounds professional development as a requirement of the New Schools Project. Similar to the elementary teacher leaders' training, the purpose of Early College teachers incorporating instructional rounds into their practice was to build capacity in the school to form collaborative adult groups, or PLCs, with a focus on a shared understanding of quality teaching and learning (Marzano, 2011). All teachers involved in the instructional rounds professional development had opportunities to implement, practice, and share the use of the rounds protocols within their school.

A qualitative case study will provide data from participating teacher leaders to measure the impact of the instructional rounds professional development on their own self-efficacy. This chapter outlines the methodology for the study using the following topics: design, participants, procedures, instrument, data collection, and data analysis.

Design

There are three approaches to research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Gibbs (2011) cited Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p. 274), stating that “qualitative research is an approach to social science research that emphasizes collecting descriptive data in a natural setting, uses inductive thinking, and emphasizes understanding the subjects’ point of view” (p. 43). According to Creswell (2009),

Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s own setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. (p. 4)

Murakami (2013) stated that in qualitative research “there is a strong tendency to hold interest in observing facts or relationships that are difficult to comprehend” (p. 84). This type of research is usually conducted in face-to-face interviews, focus groups, or surveys, through open-ended questions designed to encourage the participants to share their views. It relies on human interactions and is conducted by the researcher visiting the participants to conduct the inquiry (Creswell, 2009).

Since the researcher was investigating to understand how instructional rounds professional development affects teacher self-efficacy, it was necessary to conduct this

study in its natural context. This study was qualitative in nature based on the social constructivist worldview theory (Creswell, 2009) where “meaning is constructed through individual and social processes” (Lind, 2007, p. 4). Social constructivists attempt to understand the world where they live and work, developing meaning from their experiences, and asking open-ended questions to determine how situations occur as they do (Creswell, 2009). Gibbs (2007) suggested “constructivism is a version of idealism which stresses that the world we experience arises from multiple, socially constructed realities. These constructions are created because individuals want to make sense of their experiences” (p. 7). Social constructivism aligns with the underlying theories found in professional learning and those in teacher self-efficacy as well (Lind, 2007; Viel-Ruma et al., 2010). This theory occurs in the context of the participants’ practices by asking *how* questions. Yin (2009) referred to how and what questions as appropriate question types for qualitative inquiry. The qualitative study encompassed the open-ended questioning technique where each participant in the instructional rounds professional development was interviewed during face-to-face interactions by the researcher to gather the data needed to measure impacts on teacher self-efficacy.

This study incorporated the qualitative strategy of a case study. A case study is a “strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information (Stake, 1995)” (Creswell, 2009, p. 13). As the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews in the participants’ natural contexts to determine how participating in the instructional rounds professional development impacts their self-efficacy, the qualitative case study approach was appropriate.

Participants

Two teacher representatives were chosen from each of 10 elementary schools involved in some level of RtI implementation to participate in yearlong professional learning centered on increasing knowledge in the school sites and serving as teacher leaders for their respective schools. Specific criteria were shared with the principals to assist in determining the appropriate teachers for the project. For each school, those criteria included one representative from Grades K-2 and one from Grades 3-5. These individuals were respected by others, considered leaders with the ability to share information, and committed to being on time and present at all sessions and to the professional learning. Principals chose the two representatives for their school and submitted the names to the district contact. As a result, 20 elementary teacher leaders were selected to participate in the professional learning that occurred. These 20 elementary teacher leaders were offered the opportunity to participate in the study.

In addition, four individuals, who were original participants in instructional rounds professional learning through the New Schools Project, are still assigned to the Early College. These individuals received professional learning in the process of instructional rounds focusing on the four steps. Teachers at the Early College were offered the opportunity to participate in the study as well.

Procedures

Upon proposal and Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, Appendix A, the researcher drafted and sent a letter to the superintendent of the district to obtain permission to conduct the study within the school system, Appendix B. Once permission was granted, the researcher composed a letter to the participants which included a description of the proposed study, a request for their agreement to participate, an

informed consent form (Creswell, 2009), and an inquiry about their planning times for scheduling purposes. Pseudonyms were used to protect the confidentiality of the participants, thus allowing them to be candid and share honestly. The letter was sent to each participant via email. After the participants submitted their responses, the researcher developed a schedule for interview times and dates. Each participant again received an email with their scheduled interview information as well as an attachment which included the list of questions for each to review prior to the interview, Appendix C. The purpose of sending the list of questions prior to the interview was to help the participants reflect on the professional development they received in an effort to prepare them to complete the interviews in less than 1 hour. The researcher requested in the email that the teacher leaders refrain from discussing the questions and the interviews with anyone before all interviews were completed.

After the interviews were all scheduled, the researcher traveled to each school to conduct the interviews and collect the data. Data collection and data analysis are discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Instrument

As in qualitative research, the researcher served as the instrument conducting the inquiry necessary to conduct the study (Creswell, 2009). Holding true to the qualitative style of inquiry, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with all participants who agreed to participate in the study. A list of interview questions was developed by the researcher and reviewed by a committee of experts for validity and reliability. The dissertation committee affirmed the validity and reliability.

Data Collection

Qualitative case studies incorporate multiple strategies for the data collection

portion of the process of inquiry. Qualitative data are meaningful and include “any form of human communication – written, audio or visual – behavior, symbolism or cultural artifacts” (Gibbs, 2007, p. 2). One option within qualitative data collection types includes one-on-one, face-to-face, in-person interviews with the researcher and the participants (Creswell, 2009; Gibbs, 2011). This type of inquiry is “useful when the participants cannot be directly observed” (Creswell, 2009, p. 179). Advantages of interviews as data collection include the opportunity for interviewees to provide background information, and this type of inquiry “allows the researcher to have control over the line of questioning” (Creswell, 2009, p. 179). Since this qualitative case study measured the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy, the interview was an appropriate type of data collection strategy.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with each participant who agreed to be included in the study.

This less-structured format acknowledges that each individual defines his or her experience in a unique way (Merriam, 1998), and the open-ended approach allows the informants to answer from their own frame of reference rather than from one structured by prearranged questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 3). (Gibbs, 2011, p. 62)

A semi-structured format allowed the interviewer to gather background information such as teaching experience. It also allowed for the interviewer to probe for clarifications or explanations that were needed during the interviews; however, the interviewer had a list of prearranged questions to use throughout all interviews.

An interview protocol was used during the interviews for note taking and consistency in conducting each interview. The protocol began with “a heading (date,

place, interviewer, interviewee) . . . instructions to follow so that standard procedures are used from one interview to another, questions with space to record responses, and a final thank you statement” (Creswell, 2009, p. 183). Using this protocol ensured each interview was conducted with fidelity so that all were as consistent as possible.

Most qualitative data are produced as written text developed from transcriptions of the actual recorded conversations that have occurred (Gibbs, 2007). The data were collected by two means. The primary means was with a technology-based device, Livescribe™, a software program which records and allows field notes by the interviewer; and the secondary means was by audiotape. With the Livescribe™ device, the notes are taken in a specially formatted notebook and the software program fills in the details missed by the note taker through the computer software; however, the program captures the entire conversation. The audiotaped interviews served as a back-up in the event there were issues with the technology. A transcriptionist was contracted to transcribe interviews from the Livescribe™ device, mobile uploads of the interviews, or audiotapes in their entirety.

Data Analysis

The final section of the methodology is the process of data analysis. “The idea of data analysis implies some kind of transformation . . . start with some collection of qualitative data and then process it through analytic procedures into a clear, understandable, insightful, trustworthy, and even original analysis” (Gibbs, 2007, p. 1). According to Creswell (2009), qualitative data analysis is often referred to by some researchers as similar to “peeling back the layers of an onion” as this is the process where the data are analyzed looking deeper and deeper to gain understanding of it and make interpretations (p. 183). Gibbs cited Bogdan and Biklen (2007) who suggested that “data

analysis involves working with the data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns” (Gibbs, 2011, p. 65). Essentially one must make sense of the data and its meaning.

In some types of social research, all data should be collected before analysis begins; however, in qualitative research, “there is no separation of data collection and data analysis” (Gibbs, 2007, p. 3). Analysis begins in the field by taking field notes while collecting data (Gibbs, 2007). As the transcription of the interviews is complete, the process of analysis can continue through coding (Saldana, 2013). The researcher began by reading through all the transcripts completely to get a feel for the responses. This process allowed the researcher to get a “general sense of the information and reflect on the overall meaning of it” (Creswell, 2009, p. 185).

Next, a coding process continued to be applied to the raw data that were collected. The coding process involved searching the data to determine the trends and patterns that emerged by chunking or categorizing reoccurring phrases, words, thoughts, and ideas to make meaning of the information (Creswell, 2009).

Coding is how you define what the data you are analyzing are about . . . Usually several passages are identified and they are then linked with a name for that idea – the code . . . Coding is a way of indexing or categorizing the text in order to establish a framework of thematic ideas about it. (Gibbs, 2007, p. 38)

A common coding process, grounded theory, entails theories arising out of the data and supported by the data (Gibbs, 2007; Gibbs, 2011; Hecht & Others, 1993; Saldana, 2013). Gibbs (2007) and Gibbs (2011) cited the work of Strauss and Corbin (1990) who divided coding into three stages to achieve grounded analysis which include

Open Coding, where the text is read reflectively to identify relevant categories.

Axial Coding, where categories are refined, developed, and related to, interconnected.

Selective Coding, where the “core category”, [*sic*] or central category that ties all other categories in the theory together into a story, is identified and related to other categories. (Gibbs, 2007, p. 50)

The researcher employed the three stages of open, axial, and selective coding to this qualitative study. The coding process entailed color coding by theme. Various colors were used to differentiate between themes that occur in the interview transcriptions. Computer software, CAQDAS (Gibbs, 2007; Hecht & Others, 1993; Saldana, 2013), was available to assist with the organization of the collected data; however, the researcher coded and organized the data manually.

The final phase in the data analysis process is that of interpretation, or as Creswell (2009) stated, “making meaning of the data” (p. 189). Determinations were made by the researcher as to what story the data was telling or what could be learned from the information that was gathered. As themes emerged, the researcher captured their essence in a narrative which included supporting statements from the respondents’ interviews. Chapter 4 is the compilation of the emerging themes that tell the story of the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to measure the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy. In a small, rural district located in the foothills of North Carolina, instructional rounds professional development had been offered to two selected teachers from each of the elementary schools implementing RtI. These teachers participated in yearlong professional learning in preparation to train other educators at their schools. Also, several charter teachers at the Early College participated in instructional rounds professional development through the New Schools Project. Teachers who had participated in either professional development were offered the opportunity to be a part of the study. Twenty-two of a possible 24 teachers agreed to be interviewed concerning the impact of instructional rounds professional development on their self-efficacy.

This chapter presents the results of the data collected during the interview process. The data gathered throughout the interviews served as the qualitative data collected to determine the results of this study in which the research question was “What is the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy?”

The following table displays the demographic data that were collected from the participating teachers. All participants were female. The participants represent a rich mix of grade levels and experience.

Table

Teacher Demographic Information

Interview #	Grade Level	Years of Teaching
Interview Participant 1	5	15
Interview Participant 2	2	20
Interview Participant 3	3	5
Interview Participant 4	2	2
Interview Participant 5	5	5
Interview Participant 6	3	3
Interview Participant 7	1	17
Interview Participant 8	3	17
Interview Participant 9	4	19
Interview Participant 10	1	7
Interview Participant 11	1	8
Interview Participant 12	2	15
Interview Participant 13	3	10
Interview Participant 14	3	9
Interview Participant 15	1	4
Interview Participant 16	5	24
Interview Participant 17	9	14
Interview Participant 18	9	25
Interview Participant 19	10	12
Interview Participant 20	11	12
Interview Participant 21	11	12
Interview Participant 22	12	20

As described in Chapter 3, a coding process was applied to the data that were gathered through interviews and transcribed for analysis. As expected with qualitative research, three types of coding – open, axial, and selective – were applied to the raw data to identify categories of information (Gibbs, 2007; Gibbs, 2011; Hecht & Others, 1993; Saldana, 2013). Originally, 14 categories emerged and were mapped to determine how they might be merged into fewer categories or themes. Through the continuation of the coding process, those 14 categories were merged into four prevailing categories corresponding to the four resources of efficacy from Bandura's (1993) work (Bembenutty, 2006). Those four resources of efficacy were mastery experiences,

vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional states which served as the themes for the data analysis (Calik et al., 2012).

The following sections of this chapter discuss each theme supported with data from the interview transcriptions. The resources of efficacy have been applied to each of the four components of instructional rounds professional development – problem of practice, conducting rounds, debrief, and next level of work. These themes and their applications within the research provided the organization of the results of this qualitative study.

Teacher sense of self-efficacy is an important component of effective teaching (Swackhamer et al., 2009). In mastery experiences, teacher self-efficacy is judged based on how individuals have completed similar tasks in the past (Bembenutty, 2006). Bembenutty (2006) went on to explain vicarious experiences as an individual's observations of others' successes in similar situations. Social persuasion, also called verbal persuasion or verbal feedback (Jamil, 2012), refers to "others prompt one to initiate action, tasks, or behavior" (Bembenutty, 2006, p. 6). The final source, emotional states or physiological states, deals with "stress, anxiety, fear, and fatigue in order to initiate a specific course of action" (Bembenutty, 2006, p. 6).

Mastery Experiences

As previously indicated, teacher self-efficacy was judged based on completion of similar tasks in the past (Bembenutty, 2006). If teachers felt confident in their own abilities to affect students' achievement based on their previous instructional experiences, they would have been experiencing the resource of mastery experiences.

Problem of practice. To begin the process of rounds, the group of teachers, or the network, developed a problem of practice based on data, conversation, or current

work justified by some kind of evidence or from a goal in a district or school improvement plan (City et al., 2010). Collectively, the group identified a trend or pattern in their instructional practices determined by data analysis. That trend or pattern of instruction was developed into a problem of practice as indicated by data. Once the problem of practice had been articulated, the group began the problem-solving process and developed a theory of action or a hypothesis, usually written as an *if/then* statement, which needed to be tested (Chauncey, 2009). An example of a theory of action might have been, “if we involve students in creating higher level questions, then their understanding of critical thinking would increase as measured by their responses.” This section provides data collected from interview participants concerning the component of instructional rounds problem of practice as related to mastery experiences.

As previously mentioned, teacher self-efficacy can be related to mastery experiences as indicated by interview participants. This was apparent as articulated by Interview Participant 2. “I feel that I am a strong teacher and . . . I feel my personality can actually influence other people.” This concept was reiterated by Interview Participant 15.

I felt really good when it came to me because I was like, “Wow, those kids are really engaged!” Whereas, when I was looking at some of the others, a lot of the other kids in the other classes, the kids were just sitting with no response. You wouldn’t think that just minutes were wasted, so it just made me feel good because my kids were active and engaged. It made me feel good about that. I would have never known that if I hadn’t have had the instructional rounds.

Interview Participant 10 shared similar thoughts about her own abilities by saying,

It really empowered me to see how what I’m doing myself, and not being told

what I was doing wrong, just stating what I was doing and bringing my attention to my problems and the way that I am saying things. Am I asking what I want my kids to truly learn? So, my self-efficacy, it really empowered me. . . . It felt like a positive outlook.

“Because we determined our own problem of practice rather than having it dictated to us, I really felt empowered,” claimed Interview Participant 10. Her statement indicated a level of confidence in her own abilities as mastery experiences would suggest.

Study participants were able to relate instructional changes to their participation in the problem of practice portion of the learning opportunity. Interview Participant 7 shared,

I think if we had not done that problem of practice, there wouldn't have been that emphasis put on non-fiction as much. I think everyone knew with Common Core non-fiction was important. When you are actually looking for something, you will be more apt to do it,

which supported mastery experiences as the teachers were able to rely on their own previous experiences and knowledge to determine best instructional practices for students. Additional support that indicated the problem of practice affected instructional change was expressed by Interview Participant 20.

I would say (problem of practice) really, it made you look a lot more at yourself, which you kind of hated to do, but with the observation on the video tape you could actually see a little bit more of what you were doing really well with students and what, maybe, you needed to improve.

Again, continued support for the notion of problem of practice affecting instructional change was revealed.

Once a problem of practice was selected, it made me think more about how I was carrying that out in my classroom. For example, the first problem of practice that we focused on during the instructional rounds was questioning. So, it automatically got me thinking in that same direction of, you know, what kind of questions am I asking my students? Am I asking more students than they are giving me answers? Am I giving them time to give me answers? So, it already got me thinking about that problem in my own classroom and how I was carrying that out. (Interview Participant 3)

Conducting the rounds. After the problem of practice had been determined and a narrowly focused area of concern for the team had been targeted, the actual component of conducting the rounds took place. The network, or grade-level team, visited each classroom for 10 to 20 minutes and described the interactions of the student, the teacher, and the content, the instructional core, without making judgments (City et al., 2010; Doyle, 2012; Roegman & Riehl, 2012).

During this observation process, it was important for the observers to have a focus which had been provided by the problem of practice. In these observations, teams of four to six people went into the classrooms, entered unobtrusively, and found an inconspicuous place to observe to avoid disrupting instruction or distracting students (Marzano, 2011). On blank paper, the observers simply recorded the interactions between the students and the teachers and noted the tasks being attempted as well as the content. Observers quietly asked students questions concerning student learning, such as

What are you learning? What are you working on?

What do you do if you don't know the answer or if you are stuck?

How will you know when you are finished?

How will you know if what you have done is of good quality? (City et al., 2010, p. 111)

The focus of the data being collected was on what the students were actually doing, rather than what the teacher had asked them to do, as this is a great predictor of student success (Chauncey, 2009; City et al., 2010; Curtis & City, 2010; Marzano, 2011).

A search of the data led to evidence from the interviewees' responses correlating conducting rounds to mastery experiences. As a result of participating in this component, study participants indicated instructional changes put in place as a result of conducting rounds. One teacher expressed,

I realized that I was doing the work. . . . The students were doing too much sitting and listening, so after my instructional rounds, after I watched and reflected, I changed the next chapter in the book. I decided, okay, they are going to do most of the work . . . I just changed it up so that the job was off of me and onto the learner. It helped me (to) know my units (were) more learner (centered), where the learner is doing the work. (Interview Participant 12)

By changing instructional practices and procedures as a result of participating in the component of conducting rounds, study participants indicated their level of self-efficacy improved because of mastery experiences.

Debrief. After the observations were completed, the group of observers reconvened to begin the third portion of the rounds process, debrief (Chauncey, 2009; City et al., 2010; Marzano, 2011; Roegman & Riehl, 2012). “The purpose of the debrief is to consider the collected evidence together and moving to agreeing on what people saw to eventually agreeing on what learning should occur from what they saw” (City et al., 2010, p. 116). Working individually, or with a partner, participants reflected on the data

collected and chose five to 10 key pieces of data and, individually, recorded on sticky notes – one piece per sticky note. At this point, the group worked together and categorized the sticky notes into themes, trends, or patterns, similar to coding in qualitative analysis (Gibbs, 2007), which had emerged based solely on the evidence as they began to predict the learning that occurred.

Teachers adjusted their instruction because of participating in the debriefing section of the professional learning. Interview Participant 13 disclosed, “(we) go back and talk about what we saw so that we could adjust our instruction.” Not only did participation in the debrief provoke changes in instruction, but it also validated what teachers already knew to be effective teaching as indicated by an interview participant.

Well, (debrief) validated a lot of what I do works. I am on the right track, and it showed me those holes that are very easily filled that I didn’t ever realize because I’m only one set of eyes and ears where having that extra set helped with that.

(Interview Participant 16)

The data collected revealed a dependence on mastery experiences as the resource for judging self-efficacy as teachers experienced validation and confirmation of practices they used in the past. The component of debrief in instructional rounds professional development provided opportunities for teachers to realize those particular areas.

Next level of work. The final phase of the process was the next level of work (Marzano, 2011), the stage where the participants in the network formed solutions and recommended actions for those seeking to improve. Keeping in mind the assumption that educators were doing the best they could with the knowledge they had, they may have needed to think in new ways (Chauncey, 2009; City et al., 2010; Lezotte & McKee, 2002). Again, teachers were actively engaged in their own learning through

nonevaluative, collaborative practices which occurred during their school day. This job-embedded collaboration met the most current standards and principles of high-quality professional development (Hirsh & Killion, 2007; Learning Forward, 2011).

“Conversations like these teach . . . the process necessary to unpack what’s involved in supporting teachers to learn a new skill” (City et al., 2010, p. 126). The process of rounds was one of a cyclical nature continually searching the evidence of teaching and learning that had taken place for those who seek to improve their practice. To document the solutions and recommended actions, the network chose to develop an action plan which detailed what was to occur until the next review (Curtis & City, 2010). The network was to continually reconvene to evaluate the progress of the action planning which had occurred and to make decisions as to whether or not changes were evident.

Participants in the study had less to say regarding the final component of the instructional rounds professional development, next level of work. Although the remarks were sparse, there were still indications of positive impacts on teacher self-efficacy as can be gleaned from the following remarks:

(next level of work) gave us an opportunity to make change, change that was meaningful to our classrooms and to the groups that we were working with. We were more likely to continue it (change) because it was a change that we instituted instead of being told and it was positive. (Interview Participant 11)

This statement indicated teachers knew, based on previous experiences, the changes that needed to be instituted which, again, supports improved self-efficacy through mastery experiences.

Attitudes, mindsets, effectiveness, and affirmation were characteristics of teacher self-efficacy which surfaced during the interview responses. One interview participant

indicated, “Again, my attitude has just made me look at what I do more, reflect deeper, but also feel good about what I am doing” (Interview Participant 12). Another shared,

I have this instructional rounds mindset now in my own teaching even though nobody is in here watching. I have used that to think about my own teaching . . . and (to) reflect about my own teaching. So, it has really helped that next process to know where to go. Are my kids ready or are they not? (Interview Participant 10)

Vicarious Experiences

Bembenutty (2006) explained vicarious experiences, another resource for self-efficacy, occurred as individuals observed others’ successes in similar situations.

Participants indicated change and improved self-efficacy related to the problem of practice component of instructional rounds because of vicarious experiences, observing others’ successes.

Problem of practice. Interview Participant 12 described the component of the problem of practice as

(problem of practice) actually made my attitude and opinion of my own teaching better. I felt more empowered as I went into other classrooms and worked with other teachers as a teacher leader. It took away some of my shyness which impacted my own classroom. I felt more empowered because other teachers were looking at me and asking my opinion about things. . . . (It) all worked together to make me more confident and more capable to do what I needed to do in a changing classroom.

Another participant went on to add,

this process gave me a lot of empowerment, and I realized that there were things

that we could do to improve what was going on in our classrooms and in our schools. You affect changes in what you can rather than just give up and go back to your room and put your nose to the grindstone. (Interview Participant 9)

Interview Participant 20 stated, “I think that (problem of practice) made me feel more confident.”

As teachers looked at group, grade-level, or school wide data during the problem of practice phase of the instructional rounds, they arrived at the conclusion that change was needed based on previous experiences. Self-awareness arose as teachers implemented change into their preparation and practice. Interview Participant 8 captured her self-awareness as she shared,

(problem of practice) actually made me more aware of what I’m asking students to do, and how I’m asking them to do it. Mostly, that awareness was I was talking too much, and I wasn’t allowing student conversations which I’m learning is so important to their understanding and what they’re doing.

More evidence supporting change in preparation surfaced as another study participant stated,

(participating and developing a problem of practice) helped me realize how prepared you actually need to be. I think teachers get to the point where they think lesson planning really isn’t that important, but it actually is when you think you have all day to teach and you don’t. You need to be as prepared as possible.

(Interview Participant 6)

The network had the opportunity to share experiences during the problem of practice component which enabled teachers to learn from others’ experiences as vicarious experiences indicated.

Conducting rounds. As the participants continued through the professional development, and moved through the conducting rounds component, they realized the process was intended to be judgment free with no inferences added. This allowed them to focus on successful practices related to the vicarious experiences of learning from others' successes. Interview Participant 1 communicated,

we had no time to be judgmental . . . we were really focused on specific tasks of looking for what students were saying and what their teachers were saying. So, it affected me in that I realized we could have an observation without being judgmental or just looking around for ideas basically from another teacher. We were able to just observe and make note of that.

Interview Participant 4, a less experienced teacher, had similar feelings as she shared,

Going around and doing the rounds even though it's not a judgment, I think if it is being looked at you are more aware of it. I didn't feel like it was a judgment, but it made me just focus more on a specific thing which has helped me this year.

Improvement in practice and sparking creativity occurred as a result of instituting instructional rounds through vicarious experiences as revealed by an interview participant:

There is a teacher here that every time I go into his room I learn something new that makes me want to change what I'm doing. It makes me want to say, "Oh! I can use that in my classroom!" I definitely think it makes me reflect on my teaching practices and makes me maybe want to change a little bit about what I'm doing. It gives me new ideas and it makes me want to be more creative.

(Interview Participant 21)

Another interview participant experienced similar revelations through the instruction she

witnessed.

We saw so much good practice, and we shared so many good ideas for bettering our own practice. My goodness, is she really just a second year (teacher)? Only in her second year and look at what she is doing! I'm not doing that. I need to do that. So, it did affect my own instruction in that it broadened my ideas and encouraged me to go look for other strategies, go outside my comfort zone with the ones I might have been very used to. In the end, kids benefit from that . . . so, it was very, very effective in giving new ideas and strategies for teaching.

(Interview Participant 5)

Having participated in the conducting rounds component, an interview participant shared what she learned about her own teaching style and the changes she implemented as a result. Interview Participant 18 signified,

I had to teach myself, because of the rounds, to slow down and to back up and take a breath and not answer my own questions even though I've known that for a really long time. You get caught back up into that. So, slowing down and being very careful about setting up the lesson and how I go through it and trying to think about where the holes will be or what the kids might not understand has helped me to be able to reach more students for them to find better success.

Positive responses contributing to improved self-efficacy continued to be evident, as a study participant stated, "what I saw at my school was phenomenal. It really was" (Interview Participant 5). School wide the benefits were apparent, supported by the comment, "I think that by doing those rounds . . . helped to develop a most effective action plan for our school" (Interview Participant 6). Interview Participant 17 commented,

It raises the bar when you see exceptional teaching in other classrooms. Then you feel compelled to do that yourself, and so when you find out that you're not an island doing, well, on your own, that everybody around you is doing great things you learn so much more from other people.

A relatively inexperienced teacher quickly realized she needed to make adjustments to her time management as she indicated,

I paid more attention to my time. I mean watching other people in their classrooms helped me to pay attention and use my time wisely, whereas, before I may have been saying things or doing things that maybe weren't the best use of time. So, it made me more aware and being more aware of that type of thing does make me feel like getting more accomplished as far as teaching throughout the day. (Interview Participant 4)

In the professional development learning session, intentionally asking high level questions during lessons was the identified problem of practice. Several of the study participants expanded this topic as a result of conducting the practice rounds and analyzing the data gathered from those rounds. Thoughts were shared as the interviews were being conducted specifying how the problem of practice related to questioning affected their own instruction. One interview participant explained,

Well, first of all, because we focused on higher level questioning, I brought into my classroom a whole new visual for how we think. It is up on the board and so we have all the levels of Bloom's (Bloom's Revised Taxonomy). My children are asked almost daily where our thinking right now is. Where are we on ours? How much brain power are we using? Are we just recalling things that we have learned? Are we analyzing thinking about what we have learned? Are we

coming up with new ideas from what we have learned? We are looking at every level and they are doing a really good job with that. They are starting to analyze themselves and where their thinking is. That has impacted me greatly. I feel like I wasn't challenging my students enough. I want them to be thinkers and think about how they are learning and what is the best way to learn and what am I thinking at the time my teacher is asking me the question and where am I? So, that's kind of very impacting for me. (Interview Participant 1)

Another found the process to be an avenue to invoke a curiosity she had not previously experienced as she noted,

After 17 years you get used to your little, closed four walls and this kind of opened up new doors to what others are doing and how much you can learn from others. I think being in a big school you have so many more to share with and see more ideas, and in a smaller school, you don't even think about what you have outside your doors until something like this makes you aware. Given the time to do that makes you aware that other people have some really good ideas and the more heads and brains and teaching styles you see, the more you can adapt to new things. Being an older teacher, seeing new ideas and new people coming out of school with new ways to approach learning and new cultural things, the video era and technology era; teaching kids now to reach different parts. The stimulus now is really important in how you teach. Watching how others are effective helps you to be more effective. (Interview Participant 8)

"By doing instructional rounds, I could take back things to my classroom that I feel were contributing to the success of my students by the end of the year," Interview Participant 6 confirmed, which indicated she had made instructional changes throughout the year while

participating in the instructional rounds professional development. Consequently, an interview participant realized there were strengths in her school she had not noticed before, as she stated,

When you are privileged enough to work in a school . . . (where) there is lots of good teaching taking place, I'm taking it in and learning and tweaking and applying it to my situation. For me being able to see somebody else helped me just as much as, hopefully, it helped the other person. (Interview Participant 16)

Participating in conducting rounds provided opportunities for teachers to make refinements in their own practices. As one interview participant spoke,

I learned through actually doing observations myself what to look for in preparing the lesson; listen how a student may listen. Knowing what to look for made me a better teacher because I could reflect on my own lesson by watching others. Plus, it gave me great ideas from others – just observing what they did and think that's a great idea. I can take it back and tweak it for my own lesson. It made me look for holes in my own lesson plans. (Interview Participant 19)

After participating in the professional development and conducting rounds herself, one teacher shared,

It affected me by doing the rounds to see, okay, "I do need to be more prepared," or "Wow! He or she is really prepared in their lessons." I need to do that more because if I watched them do something, I realize, wow, I really waste a lot of time switching centers or whatever, so I do need to be more prepared. (Interview Participant 6)

An example of reflective practice was shared by Interview Participant 4,

that actually made me feel a little bit more confident . . . it made me be very

reflective for my classroom even when I was doing rounds in other classrooms. I started being more reflective on what I was doing and what I was saying throughout the day.

Another expressed,

(conducting rounds) was a very reflective process for me . . . it just made me constantly go back to how I was carrying out things in my classroom and comparing what I was seeing in the instructional rounds as to what I'm doing in the classroom. (Interview Participant 3)

Debrief. The next component of instructional rounds professional development was debrief. Due to vicarious experiences, positive effects educators felt through the debrief component of instructional rounds included feelings of preparedness and confidence as indicated in the following communication: “(higher-level thinking questions) is one thing that I took away from (debrief) and I felt like I need to be more prepared and more confident in asking those kinds of things and learning more about creating questions” (Interview Participant 6). An additional attestation to confidence building through the debrief component was documented in this statement, “not only are you getting feedback on what you are doing, but you are also getting things that are working well for other teachers, too. So, I think it builds your confidence to debrief” (Interview Participant 13).

Interview Participant 3 indicated, “I was constantly thinking about what am I doing? Am I making sure that my kids understand?” Other interview participants reaffirmed the same sentiment by voicing, “When I heard the teachers kind of thinking out loud and reflecting on what they were seeing in their video, it helped me” (Interview Participant 12).

Next level of work. The final component of instructional rounds professional development, next level of work, was discussed with each interview participant. Multiple responses supported the efficacy resource of vicarious experiences aligned to the next level of work.

Mapping out the next level of work, in the form of some type of action plan, assisted teachers: “It gave me some guidance” (Interview Participant 1). Having moved into a planning phase for what comes next helped complete the process and again provided a focus as conveyed by Interview Participant 6:

Doing the rounds does help you narrow it (next level of work) down to see what is exactly going on in the classroom so that you can make your action plan based around what would be most helpful to students and teachers.

After teachers had convened to determine the next level of work, suggestions were noticeably implemented in a short amount of time as indicated by the following participant:

I noticed that when they got the feedback you would generally see that feedback implemented almost within the next week – different protocols that people would use in class that different people got to observe. You heard the conversation happening, where people were borrowing those protocols to use in their classrooms. So, there was a proliferation of some best practices that happened just from the sharing of best practice. (Interview Participant 17)

The self-reflection process prompted teachers to develop their own questions to examine their own practice in and out of the classroom. Examples of such questions were shared by Interview Participant 16:

Again, we’re on a constant self-reflection because of what we saw. What did I do

right? What did I do wrong? What can I change for tomorrow? What can I add to it to make it even better? The next level of work just takes it to that next level.

Vicarious experiences afforded opportunities for collaboration during the next level of work. Teachers shared their thoughts regarding the next level of work and collaboration. One interview participant shared,

We determined our own next level of work as a team. Therefore, we had to collaborate among ourselves which was productive. . . . This gave us a chance to really, on a school day, see somebody else's classroom and that's hard to do when you just have your little planning time and that's it. (Interview Participant 9)

Each of the four components of instructional rounds professional development – problem of practice, conducting rounds, debrief, and the next level of work – allowed responses during the interviews to substantiate vicarious experiences as a resource for improved self-efficacy for teachers. Changes in practices, instruction, lesson planning, self-reflection, and collaboration all took place because of teachers' opportunities to learn from others' successes.

Social Persuasion

Social persuasion, also referred to as verbal persuasion or verbal feedback, occurred as "others prompt one to initiate action, tasks, or behavior" (Bembenutty, 2006, p. 6). Social persuasion is very effective due to peer relationships and was present in the data collected from the interviews. One interview participant indicated, "It was something that I knew. One of the best ways to learn is from your peers or your colleagues" (Interview Participant 2).

Problem of practice. An interviewee articulated, "That made me feel better knowing that what I was doing was kind of what everyone else was doing, too"

(Interview Participant 7). Interview Participant 8 mentioned that because of the verbal feedback in identifying the trends of the grade level for a problem of practice, “it made me teach (vocabulary) more and better.” Due to the verbal feedback that was given during the development of a problem of practice, teachers began to self-reflect even before the actual rounds took place. One teacher indicated,

Personally, I felt like my self-efficacy rose. I felt more confident in that I could examine my practice, examine my core instruction, and then, be a reflective practitioner and say this is what I see. It gave me a starting point for improvement. I think that teachers by nature are reflective. (Interview Participant 5)

Interview Participant 7 summed up social persuasion as a resource for teacher self-efficacy by her statement “I just think that seeing what other teachers were doing helped me feel better about what I was doing.”

The data primarily revealed a positive effect on teacher self-efficacy related to social persuasion as indicated by several participants’ comments during the interviews.

Conducting rounds. This portion of the professional development offered opportunities for study participants to experience social persuasion as they observed and learned from others’ input. They were quick to indicate the importance of other teachers understanding the observations were just a snapshot of reality and not to be held against them. One interview participant advised, “to let them know that nobody is coming in to critique them. We are in this together, but we can only improve if we can see ourselves in the classrooms” (Interview Participant 12). “It does not feel like you’re telling me what I did wrong. You are just telling me what I did. From that I can gain a reflection,” voiced a veteran teacher (Interview Participant 12).

Teachers appreciated the collaboration instructional rounds promoted aligned to social persuasion. One teacher who appeared to struggle with some of the components of instructional rounds was quick to share her thoughts on collaboration, “the actual communication that is going on . . . I’m trying to figure out what to do by myself, and now, it is more like I feel I have support from different areas” (Interview Participant 13). Interview Participant 22 remarked,

It makes a school stronger. The rounds process definitely builds collaboration among staff which, I think, improves instruction for students. The teachers are talking about what is going on or things that they want to do in their classrooms and people can come in and actually see whether they come in, and now, we video tape little snippets. We say here, “It’s a practice of making teaching public,” which most definitely improves instruction.

One participant noted,

I think it gave me more confidence. I don’t have a problem with somebody coming in and observing me as a teacher because I feed off of that feedback. My main goal is to be a better teacher to get my students to where they need to be. Sometimes I feel like I delivered this awesome, fantastic lesson and there are so many holes and gaps in it because I know my material. Someone who comes in and listens and seeing like a student, they can provide feedback to those holes so that I can become a better teacher, better deliverer of the contents. (Interview Participant 19)

The experience of the professional development provoked collaboration naturally as Interview Participant 5 mentioned,

The really important piece that came with rounds was ownership. It wasn’t that,

okay, here is your trickle down problem and here is the thing we are going to look at. It was more of a you need to gather data as a group, collaborate, find out – look at your data, find out what it is that you see, organize your thoughts, and, then, only then, do we begin to identify what that problem of practice was.

An interview participant captured the reasons and procedures for modifications within her school which allowed an additional opportunity to offer feedback with collaborative groups by describing,

Last year our powerful teaching and learning and our redefining professionalism teams worked together to tweak our rounds because before we were actually going trying to find common planning time or taking teachers out of the classroom. It was very difficult to restructure so we worked together and we videoed. (Interview Participant 19)

Other schools also modified the process to allow videotaping of instruction.

Debrief. The debrief component of instructional rounds professional development was very validating and esteem building because of the social persuasion resource of self-efficacy. An interview participant indicated this by expressing,

I think (debrief) makes me feel more confident. I felt good about that part. I feel like any time I'm working with a team and we are talking about things that we do in the classroom, it makes me feel like teachers try to point out the good things we do for each other, and here, it is usually good feedback. You usually have teachers that are giving you positive feedback. It builds you up when you are in the debriefing part. (Interview Participant 13)

“Somech (2005) found teacher empowerment led to school effectiveness in schools where collaboration was promoted and individuals were allowed to voice

opinions and share in decision making” (Mongillo et al., 2012, p. 553). An impact in leadership skills was documented related to self-efficacy by one of the interview participants. She articulated,

As a leader, I think it changed my self-efficacy being able to hold those meetings for the groups that we worked with and being able to weed through all the hundreds of things we saw happen and identify patterns. I was able to identify patterns, but it was a lot of fun helping other people identify patterns without just telling them what I saw or what I noticed. I definitely saw some of my leadership skills come out and improve through that. (Interview Participant 7)

Another study participant remarked,

I was sitting at the table with some people who had not been exposed to instructional rounds, and I was able to put them at ease about what was going to be going on in their classrooms. I was able to tell them from my experience and how it impacted me just going through the instructional rounds. (Interview Participant 12)

Another expressed,

The debriefing component was very eye-opening because we were able to analyze our results in a non-threatening way. We weren’t going over this is what you did wrong or this is what you should change. It was more of putting up facts of things we saw in the classroom when we observed. (Interview Participant1)

One study participant did share concerns she faced at her school site regarding the continuation of the professional learning her leadership team had encountered. She became frustrated during the debrief portion of the development due to lack of site-based administrative support. Her frustrations were captured in the following statement:

The only problem came with follow-up (at the school) because, again, we looked at the iterative process. If you can't go back in and do the evaluative component and then tweak it and look at okay where are we now and where is that problem, then it is like you only did part of the process. That is how it felt. It wasn't – it never was totally completed. (Interview Participant 14)

The debriefing portion of the instructional rounds professional development provided a forum for teachers to analyze group data and make adjustments to their own instruction based on the results of the data. Teachers were able to align the current standards to their instructional practice as verbalized by a study participant:

In our debriefing process we matched the strategies that were being used for the Common Core. In the process of doing it, matching it to the core strands to reading/language arts, we noticed that we were very weak in writing. Although it was not my data or information that was recorded, I knew that I would be in the same place as them. We all realized at that time, we all need to incorporate writing more in all of our reading strategies. We were doing a lot of quality strategies, but the writing piece was not integrated with it, and it was definitely not a focus for all of us. . . . We decided, "Okay, what are we going to do, or what are you going to use?" You know, if you were doing this what could you have done to incorporate writing. It's just making yourself more aware of it. I think it also made all of us try to concentrate on different aspects. (Interview Participant 2)

The debrief offered a forum for teachers to review the actual data they had collected during the rounds. A teacher in one school shared her thoughts on improving practice.

The debrief is excellent because it is a chance to listen to what everybody else is saying, but it is a chance for you to listen to other people's comments about what is going on. It definitely makes you feel good about what you are doing...it's a chance for you to re-evaluate what you are doing and reflect on your practices of what you do in your classroom. Sometimes its things you didn't even think of. It gives you new ideas or it makes you look at how you would handle a certain lesson a different way. It makes you add on to your lesson the next time. The actual reflection process at the end is good, and it's a chance for everybody to have a chance to say something. It's a chance to really think about what you've done and build upon that based on other people's ideas. (Interview Participant 21)

During the interviews, teachers shared the value in coming together during the debrief sessions and the impact they felt. Interview Participant 12 articulated,

We were all thinking the same thing. Every teacher really cares about what they are doing – only wants to do it better. When you sit at a table and you hear common things, common conversations and common words, coming from top notch teachers, it empowers you and makes you feel like you are on the right track.

Overwhelmingly, teachers shared, “you realize that you do have people that you can talk to about your practice and feel that it's doable” (Interview Participant 17); “We are helping each other and supporting each other” (Interview Participant 18); and “Collectively, the staff came up with this as a target. It was – it really did make us look at that block differently, and it improved overall” (Interview Participant 14).

Debrief was a natural venue for collaboration as indicated by Interview

Participant 2. She informed,

we came up with like lists of ideas or strategies to incorporate writing more . . . and we sent out via email to all the people involved. So, that was probably one of the biggest parts, you know, that it made it seem more worthwhile.

The debrief component of instructional rounds professional development afforded the opportunity for teachers to gain value from their experiences of collaboration.

Interview Participant 14 articulated,

The debriefing was, I thought, an absolutely critical component . . . I felt like there was a feeling of empowerment instead of getting a top-down approach. All of a sudden, we are picking apart it, and we are figuring out where the problem was, and we were solving it. Part of the debrief was getting to see how those solutions were playing out. I thought it brought our staff together.

Next level of work. The final component related to social persuasion was next level of work. Based on the responses of the study participants, this was the area which was most likely to have broken down or been abandoned. However, one study participant did share some thoughts concerning changes in instruction related to the next level of work. She verbalized,

I began to think about my own classroom and I wanted to change some things I was doing because it was very informative to hear that (next level of work) . . . I also like to know that every teacher is feeling like me and kind of doing the same things. We all do truly want to know what's best for us and what's best for the children. So, the next level of work was very eye-opening, I thought, because we had to gage what we needed to do next following the process of the rounds and the debriefing. (Interview Participant 1)

Teachers were impacted by the next level of work. Again, practice, planning, and preparation were all affected by the professional learning experience. An interview participant cut straight to the point and declared, “It improved my practice” (Interview Participant 17). Regarding planning, one study participant revealed,

I think the next level of work made me a better planner in my lessons. It made me look at all the different aspects of, well, what are they looking for, what I need to make sure that I hit on, so I planned better. I also became more of a team player with my colleagues because I didn’t hesitate to go ask them, “here is what I have for this lesson – what do you think? Will you look through this?” I think that made cohesiveness on my part and trust. It filled those gaps and holes.

(Interview Participant 19)

Another shared,

(next level of work) helps me plan better. After seeing the trends, it makes me more aware of why we need to maybe spend more time on that or approach it differently . . . I think it has been very effective in communication between grade levels – being more respectful, more effective, because teachers are taking it more as constructive criticism rather than something that is not positive. You have to have the mindset that this is positive. (Interview Participant 8)

Due to social persuasion, teachers felt the need to alter lessons as a result of participating in the next level of work with their colleagues based on verbal feedback they received. Having been involved in instructional rounds for several years, Interview Participant 21 expressed, “(next level of work) makes you take your lesson and look at it in a different way and think about (it) based on what people have said about your round.”

An example of next level of work being a collaborative process through social

persuasion was articulated by Interview Participant 22.

With the rounds process – when you have other people coming in then you can share what your concerns may be, your next steps with moving forward. It is easy to get feedback and because people know where you are and what you are trying to accomplish, and they see the students you have in the classroom which is important, too.

Again, a veteran teacher's account of an experience in which she participated indicated an opportunity to collaborate with another grade level which turned out to be effective and rewarding as well. She shared,

I was kind of isolated in my planning. I was a fifth grade teacher teaching ELA (English/Language Arts) and Social Studies. I just couldn't quite meet head to head with the other teacher who was on my grade level, so, I was largely planning alone. I did get to the grade level where the rounds took place and where I participated in the rounds. We were able to plan as I mentioned earlier those higher level stem questions. We were able to plan them better for that grade level. . . . It really broadened our thinking to work together on that, and, gee, do second graders really have the capacity to answer these kinds of questions? We found that they could and were successful. Those kids really achieved a lot that particular year. . . . Those kids made gains in reading levels, I believe their comprehension levels, were well above benchmark! (Interview Participant 5)

Social persuasion, also known as verbal persuasion or verbal feedback, was the self-efficacy resource where peers were able to influence each other. Multiple participants related to the influence of peers found in social persuasion evidenced by study participants' responses. All four components of the instructional rounds

professional development were implicated through this particular efficacy resource.

Emotional States

The final source of self-efficacy, emotional states or physiological states, deals with “stress, anxiety, fear, and fatigue in order to initiate a specific course of action” (Bembenutty, 2006, p. 6). Several of the participants in the study shared feelings of stress, anxiety, and fear as they were involved in the original instructional rounds professional development. The aspect of emotional states related by the interview participants was centered on the problem of practice and conducting the rounds components as evidenced by their remarks. There were no responses that indicated emotional states was involved in the components of debrief and next level of work

Problem of practice. Problem of practice provided opportunities for teacher efficacy to be impacted through emotional states. Their feelings were clearly articulated by Interview Participant 13 as she stated, “At first the whole process was overwhelming and I felt very frustrated because I didn’t really have a clear idea of what we were doing and how we were going to implement,” but she quickly communicated, “I feel more prepared than others who are just now hearing about it and I feel like I can help other people understand it and feel less anxious because I can explain the outcome of what to expect later.” Another interview participant mirrored the previous comments by saying, “I have to tell you that at first I was a little anxious about (problem of practice), and I’m sure other teachers felt a little bit leery of the process” (Interview Participant 5).

I feel like teachers in general know how we can help out students, but they feel a little bit nervous, embarrassed when consultants come in. So that’s why I think we are so adamant about not doing that. I guess since I’ve experienced it, I’m like bring it on! (Interview Participant 1)

There was one particular participant, a less experienced teacher, who felt inadequate to be the representative or teacher leader charged with going back and sharing the information with peers in her school. She summed up her thoughts by verbalizing, “I didn’t feel qualified to explain the benefits to my colleagues, and I’m glad I got the opportunity to go” (Interview Participant 3). She further articulated,

I think a lot of times because I am one of the younger teachers here, when I am selected and come back to our staff, I think that some who have been here longer don’t take me seriously . . . or I’m too eager and bubbly and they are on their way out. So, it’s hard for me to be taken seriously and have the confidence to deliver something to them that I know would help them in their classroom. (Interview Participant 3)

Conducting rounds. As previously indicated, emotional states was one of the resources for self-efficacy. Again, fear and anxiety prevailed as the participants experienced the component of initially conducting the rounds and was evidenced by, “Well, conducting observations at first was very concerning for me because we went into a school where we had never been in, never met the teachers, and so it was very nerve racking” (Interview Participant 1); however, positive impacts on self-efficacy were noted through the interview process. One interview participant shared,

you always question yourself, and you’re always wondering when people are in the room . . . if you are saying the right things or doing the right things, but it definitely sets up this level of trust that you are showing that you know what you are doing, but also that you laid out the things that you need to do the right way for everybody to see. (Interview Participant 21)

Related to emotional states, the fear and anxiety resource for self-efficacy,

participants in the study displayed empathy toward fellow educators regarding conducting the rounds process in their classrooms. Interview Participant 6 expressed, “teachers are very afraid that (evaluation) is what we’re doing (rounds) for and that they were going to mess up, and that they needed to do this awesome lesson plan.” Another added, “before we had been trained, I felt very nervous whenever the people were coming to do the rounds on me, because I wasn’t aware at that time it was a no judgment thing” (Interview Participant 4). One veteran teacher indicated, “I think that (someone in the room) makes you nervous. I think it makes you on edge, but I think it helps you become stronger in what you are doing to show your growth to other people” (Interview Participant 21). Again, positive benefits were reaped as clearly stated by one participant in the study:

I really appreciated seeing those teachers and knowing how nervous that you can be when outsiders do come in to your classroom. Not knowing them and not being from their school, I’m sure it did feel unnerving to be in there, but when they saw that we were not being judgmental, that we were only stating reality, only stating what we saw, their reaction was much more accepting. They understood and they were able to say, “Oh, well. I see what you’re saying, and I see what I did, so this is how I can improve and get better myself.” (Interview Participant 10)

Once more positive outcomes were noted,

teachers who were afraid to share or afraid of being judged are now more calm about (rounds) and we can’t help but complement each other when we see something really cool . . . and I can’t wait to try that with my kids . . . you see that teacher’s eyes just light up. (Interview Participant 8)

Another veteran teacher shared her reflections of changes in self-efficacy by communicating, “Okay, I went from being a little nervous about (conducting rounds) to feeling that we were very capable of handling it. I was a little proud” (Interview Participant 9).

Not all teachers reached the level of comfort with the rounds component of the professional development. Interview Participant 13 articulated,

This year we are conducting the rounds and I am still a little nervous about that because I think that teachers, most teachers, are kind of like, they want to be perfect and somebody coming into their classroom – you still feel like you are being evaluated . . . I know there is still a barrier there. . . . That part makes me nervous.

Finally, an interview participant shared, “I was real pleased that we were able to collaborate and (observe) non-judgmentally” (Interview Participant 9).

Summary

Substantial data were collected from interviews with teachers who had the opportunity to participate in instructional rounds professional development. The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of the instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy. Teachers shared their thoughts and opinions on each of the four components of instructional rounds which served as a large portion of the content described in this chapter.

Generally, teachers appeared to feel valued when they had the opportunity to make decisions and were treated as professionals which had a positive effect on their own self-efficacy. Interview Participant 11 suggested, “We were developing our own way to problem solve within our school.” Another study participant analyzed,

We took away a lot of strategies that we could do to identify our own problems of practice or help others identify their own problem of practice . . . instead of being told by the county or the state what needs to be done. When we are told to do anything, you can see the eye rolls and the body language even though you don't hear it. There are a lot of walls built up. I think developing our own (problem of practice) will help. It's the first step in creating any type of progress. (Interview Participant 11)

Teachers who participated in the initial instructional rounds professional development began the process with reservation; however, the data gathered from the interview participants indicated the component of conducting the rounds did make a positive impact on teacher self-efficacy. Most felt they were more capable of making instructional decisions to promote student success and achievement after experiencing the instructional rounds professional development. These responses were also aligned to the four resources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional states.

The majority of the study participants indicated through interviews the debriefing component of instructional rounds was beneficial and did impact their own self-efficacy. Some did struggle with the debrief component in the beginning and lacked knowledge of the purpose and process which substantiated a negative connotation. As Interview Participant 3 indicated, the

part that was very hard when we implemented (debrief) with our staff was attitude toward it all. "Why are we here for something else? This is my planning time." So, it's very hard to feel effective when you have the attitude of what else is this now.

Conversely, another participant stated,

it (debriefing) was largely notes (that) were written up anonymously. There were no names or finger pointing. Once we could get a handle on that and put aside our self-doubt, because you always doubt yourself, and think, “Gee, I could have done it better, or what are they looking for, or what have I done?” As soon as you could put that away and really start to focus on the instruction, we saw so much good practice. (Interview Participant 5)

Benefits of implementing instructional rounds were captured through the interviews with the participants concerning next level of work. Many positive remarks were shared as the process was discussed. One teacher articulated, “the purpose of instructional rounds is to develop an action plan for your school to better your school. It’s not just another thing for you to do” (Interview Participant 6).

Through next level of work, teacher self-efficacy was positively impacted evidenced by interview responses. These responses were also aligned to the four resources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional states.

Overall, study participants elicited responses which indicated positive impacts in their self-efficacy. Boosts in self-confidence and feelings of empowerment were results of the participation in the yearlong professional development. One teacher passionately indicated,

I really feel like the instructional rounds provided truly a glimmer of hope as far as improving our pedagogy, feeling empowered. I thought that was a really strong point of the instructional rounds. To me the whole reason would be to improve and ultimately help the students but (also) little relationships that spread

out from teachers to the principal to the county and district levels made it feel very empowering. (Interview Participant 14)

As one teacher stated, “you were asked to examine, self-examine, and improve. I think it really boosted my confidence as a classroom teacher” (Interview Participant 5).

In the end, teachers who have had the opportunity to participate in and work in environments which promoted instructional rounds professional learning recognized the impact the tools could have in building their collaborative, reflective, empowering teams. One such interview participant related,

when I have worked in other places and it was just really difficult to get into people’s classroom and to find time to observe and I just feel like that it (is) kind of called rounds for a reason . . . it’s kind of like when doctors have their own patients and everyone is listening and everyone is taking it in and everyone is giving their own feedback and it’s just a learning opportunity. I feel like that is what it truly should be in a school; a chance for everybody to look at everyone’s practices in the school and to really provide good positive feedback for growth in their lessons, in their classrooms and just for the year as a whole. I just feel like that as we have done the training that it has gotten better. I feel like the feedback is not really superficial and it has gotten really deep into the lesson and what teachers are doing, the background behind it, and then reflecting on their own practices and making that better. (Interview Participant 21)

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy. Data for this qualitative case study were collected through field notes and interview transcripts. The research question which drove the inquiry was “What is the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy?”

A discussion of the findings from the process is provided in this chapter. During the analysis of the findings, four themes emerged and served as the guiding framework for the organization of the data in Chapter 4. The emerging of themes was supported by grounded theory, which entailed theories arising out of the data and supported by the data (Gibbs, 2007; Gibbs, 2011; Hecht & Others, 1993; Saldana, 2013). A brief overview of the findings as they relate to current research considering professional development, efficacy, and instructional rounds is presented, as well as implications and limitations to the study. The chapter continues with suggestions for further study and a conclusion.

Analysis

Education in America requires more dramatic measures in showing improvement than ever (City et al., 2010). A search in the literature revealed effective schools employed continuous improvement models as guiding frameworks for creating settings where student performance was a priority (Lezotte & McKee, 2002). According to research, a major component of continuous improvement was to promote collaboration among teachers in an effort to refine practice and design instruction based on student data and student outcomes (Hirsh, 2013; Hirsh & Killion, 2007; Learning Forward, 2011). Additionally, teacher sense of self-efficacy was an important component of effective

teaching (Swackhamer et al., 2009). The analysis of the data collected through this qualitative study supported the findings in the literature correlated to high-quality professional development and teacher self-efficacy.

Instructional rounds, inspired by the process of medical rounds, offered opportunities for individuals to visit classrooms, observe, describe instruction, participate in conversations centered on the observations (data), and develop solutions and recommendations for improvement (Marzano, 2011; Roegman & Riehl, 2012). In instructional rounds, teachers were actively engaged in their own learning through nonevaluative, collaborative practice which occurred during their school day. This job-embedded collaboration met the most current standards and principles of high-quality professional development (Hirsh & Killion, 2007; Learning Forward, 2011).

A small, rural school district in the foothills of North Carolina employed instructional rounds professional development in two settings: with elementary school teachers implementing RtI and with teachers in the Early College through the New Schools Project. Teams of teachers participated in the professional learning and were interviewed to determine the impact of that professional development on their self-efficacy. Although the research interview questions were designed to elicit responses on the individual components of the professional learning, some teachers displayed difficulty in separating the components and answered based on the collective process. Even the prompting the researcher did to clarify and elicit responses for each component failed, resulting in most participants' conversation about the professional development as a whole. However, information from those responses did support the process as positively impacting teacher self-efficacy. Their statements attested to the types of activities and responses that indicated higher levels of self-efficacy from participating in

the professional learning. An interview participant articulated, “So, as far as self-efficacy goes, I really enjoy doing rounds because it makes me feel like I will be able to figure out a way to make it better each time” (Interview Participant 17). Interview Participant 4 stated, “After doing the rounds, I did start feeling more confident and like I could do better things for my students because I was so much more aware of what was going on in my classroom.”

Several studies defined the teachers’ perceptions of how effective they were in their professional practices regarding affecting student outcomes in academic achievement, student motivation, student behaviors, and even their own job satisfaction as a teacher’s self-efficacy (Viel-Ruma et al., 2010). One of the participants indicated an increase in student achievement that corroborated this aspect of efficacy by stating, “Those kids really achieved a lot that particular year. . . . Those kids made gains in reading levels, I believe their comprehension levels, were well above benchmark!” (Interview Participant 5).

In their book on effective schools, *Assembly Required*, Lezotte and McKee (2002) referenced Senge’s 11th Law of no fault/no blame where he expounded that educators work to the best of their abilities based on the knowledge and skills they possess. City et al. (2010) stated, “Most educators are working for better or for worse, at, or very near, the limit of their very knowledge and skills” (p. 8), as was evidenced by the following comment:

It affected me by doing the rounds to see, okay, “I do need to be more prepared,” or “Wow! He or she is really prepared in their lessons.” I need to do that more because if I watched them do something, I realize, wow, I really waste a lot of time switching centers or whatever, so I do need to be more prepared. (Interview

Participant 6)

High-Quality Professional Development

Teachers have a need to become learners themselves and can use the process of instructional rounds to promote learning and reflection on their own practice (City et al., 2010; Learning Forward, 2011; Lind, 2007). As collaborative work occurred in determining problems of practice, conducting rounds, debrief, and next level of work, instructional rounds professional development clearly supported raising teachers' operational knowledge and boosted teacher efficacy.

According to an article in *Educational Leadership*, Tom Loveless cites the National Academy of Education (Wilson, 2009), noting features of effective professional development which include “training that actively engages teachers, and training teams of teachers from the same school” (Loveless, 2013, p. 6). The research and policy brief for the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality indicates teachers are more likely to make changes in their instructional practices when they have participated in professional development where they were actively participating and engaged (Archibald et al., 2011).

Most research mentioned in the literature advocates collective practices or collaboration with adult learners providing forums for teachers to discuss experiences, practices, successes, and areas to improve. (Gibbs, 2011; Hirsh, 2013; Hirsh & Killion, 2007; Hodgson et al., 2011; Lind, 2007; Tournaki et al., 2011). “Within professional learning communities, teachers do more than share direct evidence of student learning; they also elicit feedback on how to improve their instructional practice while acting within a safe, stable structure of support for trying new approaches to teaching” (Archibald et al., 2011, p. 5). Overwhelmingly, teachers shared, “you realize that you do

have people that you can talk to about your practice and feel that it's doable" (Interview Participant 17); "We are helping each other and supporting each other" (Interview Participant 18); and "Collectively, the staff came up with this as a target. It was – it really did make us look at that block differently, and it improved overall" (Interview Participant 14).

In other related information concerning collaborative processes in professional development from the literature,

Darling-Hammond, et al., (2009, p. 48) found nations that outperform the United States on international assessments invest heavily in professional learning and build time for ongoing, sustained teacher development and collaboration into teachers' work hours. (Gibbs, 2011, p. 28).

One interview participant shared,

We determined our own next level of work as a team. Therefore, we had to collaborate among ourselves which was productive. . . . This gave us a chance to really, on a school day, see somebody else's classroom and that's hard to do when you just have your little planning time and that's it (Interview Participant 9).

According to Gibbs's (2011) research, collaboration and sustained teacher development are necessary; therefore, building administrators need to consider opportunities for such job-embedded practices.

Lind's (2007) research suggested high-quality professional development programs are those that "provide adequate time for practices that involve inquiry, reflection, and mentoring; are subject centered; and are rigorous, leading to long-term change" (p. 3). "Somech (2005) found teacher empowerment led to school effectiveness in schools where collaboration was promoted and individuals were allowed to voice

opinions and share in decision making” (Mongillo et al., 2012, p. 553). Empowerment was articulated multiple times by study participants as they sought to describe how the instructional rounds professional development had impacted their self-efficacy.

Interview Participant 12 shared, “(next level of work) empowers you and makes you feel like you are on the right track,” while Interview Participant 9 referenced, “I was, again, I am thinking proud and empowered.” Comments which supported positive impacts on teacher self-efficacy were, “(next level of work) did help my attitude” (Interview Participant 6), and it “gives you a higher self-esteem” (Interview Participant 13).

Interview Participant 10 shared thoughts about empowerment by saying,

It really empowered me to see how what I’m doing myself, and not being told what I was doing wrong, just stating what I was doing and bringing my attention to my problems and the way that I am saying things. Am I asking what I want my kids to truly learn? So, my self-efficacy, it really empowered me. . . . It felt like a positive outlook.

Research indicated that teacher participation in professional development initiatives significantly enhances or can change teachers’ beliefs about their teaching practices (Karimi, 2011). The author of one study stated “educational policy makers should consider launching quality professional development programs aimed specifically at raising teachers’ operational knowledge and content standards which in turn boosts the teachers’ efficacy” (Karimi, 2011, p. 59). “Because we determined our own problem of practice rather than having it dictated to us, I really felt empowered,” claimed Interview Participant 10.

The professional development opportunity validated some teachers, encouraged some, and supplied confidence for others as indicated in the interview responses.

Interview Participant 2 conveyed, “Well, I think any time teachers are involved in professional development, that typically, it encourages you or rejuvenates you,” while Interview Participant 4 stated, “I felt better and more confident about what I was doing.” Additionally, teachers considered the process noteworthy regarding positive aspects of the professional learning for their colleagues. Interview Participant 11 shared,

I definitely see the need for it (instructional rounds), and because we are given so many different things all the time, and I say, about 80% of the time, they don’t work. They don’t stay. They go away in a couple of years, but something like this develops us to make a permanent positive change that we identify and we fix ourselves.

The NGA Center for Best Practices issue brief entitled *State Policies to Improve Teacher Professional Development* stated, “Effective professional development should be intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice, focused on student learning, and tied to school improvement goals” (Grossman & Hirsch, 2009, p. 6). Many positive remarks were shared as the participants discussed the process. One teacher articulated, “the purpose of instructional rounds is to develop maybe an action plan for your school to better your school. It’s not just another thing for you to do” (Interview Participant 6), while another expressed, “I think that it (instructional rounds) is one of the more useful things that we have done with RtI . . . it would be something that would be a lot more useful school wide, and, I’m sure, countywide as well” (Interview Participant 4).

Efficacy

A search through the literature revealed teacher self-efficacy is the teachers’ own feelings of attitude, disposition, confidence, and how well they feel prepared to influence students in various facets of educational experiences (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012). Teacher

self-efficacy theory is “rooted in social cognition theory” (Viel-Ruma et al., 2010, p. 226) and conveys the belief that individuals have the ability to control their own actions. It has been defined in several studies as the teachers’ perceptions of how effective they are in their professional practices regarding affecting student outcomes in academic achievement, student motivation, student behaviors, and even their own job satisfaction (Viel-Ruma et al., 2010). Teacher sense of self-efficacy is an important component of effective teaching (Swackhamer et al., 2009).

Attitudes, mindsets, effectiveness, and affirmation were characteristics of teacher self-efficacy that surfaced during the interview responses. One interview participant indicated, “Again, my attitude has just made me look at what I do more, reflect deeper, but also feel good about what I am doing” (Interview Participant 12). Another shared,

I have this instructional rounds mindset now in my own teaching even though nobody is in here watching. I have used that to think about my own and reflect about my own teaching, so it has really helped that next process to know where to go. (Interview Participant 10)

A response from a veteran participant involved in the instructional rounds professional development voiced,

If I give an assignment, and they don’t do it, it may be they didn’t understand the instructions rather than they couldn’t do it. I think that was the biggest awareness that I got personally. That helped me be more effective. (Interview Participant 8)

Regarding affirmation, an attribute of positive self-efficacy, Interview Participant 18 declared, “It is affirming that you are doing the right thing and there is always some other way to approach it or attack it.”

An additional process incorporated in a self-efficacy theory dealt with teachers’

abilities to reflect on their own teaching abilities and suggested that with time and experience, self-efficacy becomes higher (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012). Reflection was one of the reoccurring words used by the study participants when questioned about the individual components of instructional rounds professional development.

I would say (problem of practice) really, it made you look a lot more at yourself (reflect), which you kind of hated to do, but with the observation on the video tape you could actually see a little bit more of what you were doing really well with students and what, maybe, you needed to improve. (Interview Participant 20)

Once again, a study participant referred to reflection as she expressed, “I realized that I was doing the work. . . . The students were doing too much sitting and listening, so after my instructional rounds, after I watched and reflected, I changed the next chapter in the book” (Interview Participant 12).

“When I heard the teachers kind of thinking out loud and reflecting on what they were seeing in their video, it helped me” (Interview Participant 12). Due to the verbal feedback that was given during the development of a problem of practice, teachers began to self-reflect even before the actual rounds took place. One teacher indicated,

I think that over our problem of practice, personally, I felt like my self-efficacy rose. I felt more confident in that I could examine my practice, examine my core instruction, and then, be a reflective practitioner and say this is what I see, and it gave me a starting point for improvement. I think that teachers by nature are reflective. (Interview Participant 5)

Research indicated one resource of self-efficacy, mastery experiences, was where teacher self-efficacy was judged based on how they have completed similar tasks in the

past (Bembenutty, 2006). During a discussion of the problem of practice component of instructional rounds, Interview Participant 2 displayed such efficacy as she expressed, “I feel that I am a strong teacher and . . . I feel my personality can actually influence other people.”

Vicarious experiences, another of Bandura’s (1993) resources of self-efficacy, occurred as individuals observed others’ successes in similar situations (Bembenutty, 2006). Data collected from the interview transcriptions supported such experiences related to the problem of practice. Interview Participant 8 shared, “(problem of practice) actually made me more aware of what I’m asking students to do, and how I’m asking them to do it.” Other interview participants reaffirmed the same sentiment by voicing, “When I heard the teachers kind of thinking out loud and reflecting on what they were seeing in their video, it helped me” (Interview Participant 12).

Social persuasion, when “others prompt one to initiate action, tasks, or behavior” (Bembenutty, 2006, p. 6), was present in the data collected from the interviews. One interview participant indicated, “It was something that I knew is one of the best ways to learn is from your peers or your colleagues” (Interview Participant 2). Another articulated, “That (problem of practice) made me feel better knowing that what I was doing was kind of what everyone else was doing too” (Interview Participant 7).

Fear and anxiety, the final resource of efficacy called emotional states, certainly were felt at some point in the professional learning by many participants because of previous evaluative and judgmental observations that had occurred in their schools. Interview participants conveyed feelings of nervousness, anxiety, or fear as they began experiencing the process of the instructional rounds professional development. Teachers, by nature, felt that someone coming into their classroom to *observe* meant they were

being critiqued, judged, and evaluated which resulted in them being threatened and uncomfortable. Simply stated, “Every time someone comes in you feel judged” (Interview Participant 7). However, as Interview Participant 9 suggested, the professional development contained

no judgments. Teachers are so accustomed to someone coming to their room to judge them or evaluate them, and this was just extra eyes in the classroom to help us to see what was going on and that was refreshing to me.

Meanwhile, another study participant expressed,

I just wish others could have some of the experience that I got to have with it (instructional rounds professional development) to see how empowering that it can be. It does feel overwhelming at first just hearing about it, but then you actually get to go and do it. So, I appreciate the county initiative to want to do that, to go and experience it for themselves. (Interview Participant 10)

Her statement indicated a positive impact in her own practice after she had the opportunity and participated in the instructional rounds professional development in this district.

The actual process of instructional rounds professional development revealed two significant concerns or issues teachers faced when participating. One area has been discussed which is teachers’ fear of being judged or evaluated during the professional learning. As previously stated, participants quickly concluded the four components of instructional rounds professional development promoted collaboration rather than a venue for critiquing. One participant declared, “we had no time to be judgmental . . . we were really focused on specific tasks of looking for what students were saying and what their teachers were saying” (Interview Participant 1). Interview Participant 4 added, “I

didn't feel like it was a judgment, but it made me just focus more on that specific thing which has helped me this year.” Finally, an interview participant shared, “I was real pleased that we were able to collaborate and (observe) non-judgmentally, what did we notice?” (Interview Participant 9).

The other issue or concern discussed as a barrier was time. Interview Participant 2 conveyed,

We tried to take time here or time there or get coverage from somewhere else and had somebody else and then that might upset another one because their assistant was leaving to watch the class for them to come to the debriefing. Then, if you did it after school, then you were taking their time.

Ultimately, the common goal of professional development regardless of the model is to produce more effective teachers (Tournaki et al., 2011), which in turn results in improved student achievement, school improvement. Several comments from the participants in instructional rounds professional development showed changes in practice, planning, preparation, instruction, reflection, and collaboration, which all lead to effective schools and school improvement. Interview Participant 8 commented, “It actually made me more aware of what I’m asking students to do, and how I’m asking them to do it.” Another suggested, “It helped me realize how prepared you actually need to be” (Interview Participant 6).

I think it has been very effective in communication between grade levels – being more respectful, more effective, because teachers are taking it more as constructive criticism rather than something that is not positive. You have to have the mindset that this is positive. (Interview Participant 8)

Limitations

As expected with a qualitative study, this study included some limitations. The first limitation identified was the interviews were conducted by the researcher rather than a proxy. This was done intentionally as the researcher had worked with all of the elementary teachers who participated in the yearlong instructional rounds professional development and wanted to collect the data to ensure validity in the transcriptions.

Another limitation which occurred was the researcher's personal involvement in the instructional rounds professional development as an administrator in the district. The researcher's program was responsible for bringing the instructional rounds professional development to the elementary teachers who participated. The design of the study was intended for data collection that was structured for uniformity and objectivity; all participants were aware of the researcher's role in securing the studied professional learning.

The quest for the inquiry during this process was to determine if the instructional rounds professional development had a positive impact on teacher self-efficacy which could be translated into improved student achievement. An intentional focus was employed to objectively search the data to find the themes that emerged and to gain meaning from them. The researcher needed to know if the professional development was something that warranted future use to help build collaborative groups and use data to inform instruction.

A final limitation to this study included the interview participants' inability to articulate component by component rather than discussing the instructional rounds professional development as an entire process. This limitation made it difficult to separate which components actually helped improve self-efficacy and which did not. The

instructional rounds process was intended to be implemented with all four components; therefore, overall generalizations should suffice in determining the impact of the professional development.

Implications

Much of the current research indicated that high perceptions of teacher self-efficacy positively influence student outcomes and can be related to higher academic achievement (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012). The research of Powell-Moman and Brown-Schild (2011) reported in *The Influence of a Two-Year Professional Development Institute on Teacher Self-Efficacy and Use of Inquiry-Based Instruction*, cited Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998), which indicated teacher self-efficacy is a motivational construct which means higher self-efficacy results in higher motivation for teachers; whereas, lower self-efficacy resulted in lower motivation for teachers to carry out routine expectations of teaching. Teachers who had a high sense of instructional self-efficacy tended to spend more time on areas related to student learning, while teachers with lower instructional efficacy spent less time on areas related to student learning, had less content knowledge, avoided working with students who displayed learning difficulties, and appeared more critical of their students (Powell-Moman & Brown-Schild). “There is evidence that teachers with high sense of efficacy beliefs engage in a high level of planning and organization (Allinder, 1994)” (Bembenutty, 2006, p. 5). Studies have shown that teachers who have a high sense of self-efficacy use more reform-based teaching strategies which are student-centered. Conversely, teachers who exhibited a lower sense of self-efficacy used more direct teaching methods such as lecture (Swackhamer et al., 2009).

According to Tournari et al. (2011), quality professional development exhibited

the following characteristics: “activities are ongoing and sustained over time and provide teachers with opportunities to actively interact and engage with each other around curriculum and instruction” (p. 300). Most research mentioned in the literature advocated collective practices or collaboration with adult learners which provided forums for teachers to discuss experiences, practices, successes, and areas to improve (Gibbs, 2011; Hirsh, 2013; Hirsh & Killion, 2007; Hodgson et al., 2011; Lind, 2007; Tournaki et al., 2011). This professional learning opportunity met many of the criteria of high-quality professional development and served its purpose which could help other building-level or district-level administrators in planning for future interactive, engaging professional development experiences for their staffs.

“Efforts to increase teacher efficacy . . . will also increase teacher effectiveness and student performance” (Powell-Moman & Brown-Schild, 2011, p. 48). Teacher self-efficacy is not only an indicator of teacher effectiveness, but it also serves as a gauge for school and program effectiveness (Calik et al., 2012). It is also a consideration when attempting to restructure and develop effective schools (Calik et al., 2012). School leaders attempting to improve education should implement professional learning, such as instructional rounds, which can increase teacher efficacy. Understandings from this study can promote the implementation of instructional rounds to develop continuous school improvement.

Recommendations for Future Studies

The findings from this study indicate possible topics for recommended future research. Additional studies on the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy conducted at school sites where all teachers had participated in the professional learning could support this qualitative case study.

As the interviews progressed, some teachers indicated a lack of administrative support in completing the process with fidelity at their schools. Frustration seemed to have set in as teachers felt the professional development was of value; however, they were unable to complete all the components in their building due to restrictions placed by the administration. A future study relating to the administrator's role in the implementation and sustainability of instructional rounds professional learning and the impact on student achievement could be warranted.

Another possible topic for future research would be measuring the effectiveness of a cadre of teachers using the instructional rounds process on student growth. A longitudinal study could be conducted to determine the use of the instructional rounds protocols and their effect on student growth in a particular subject area.

A fourth topic for future research would be the barriers resulting from implementing instructional rounds professional development. The most widely discussed barrier in this study was time. Interview participants relayed this issue by vocalizing, "It was all just a time factor of trying to figure out the best method to implement" (Interview Participant 2), "Time is the number one enemy!" (Interview Participant 14), and "I wish we had more time. Time is always an issue" (Interview Participant 7).

Finally, the subject of ownership, or buy-in, was mentioned by many teachers throughout the interviews. A study related to processes or practices that promote teacher buy-in would be extremely beneficial in education.

Summary

Data from this qualitative study substantiated that instructional rounds professional development met many of the components of high-quality professional development. The data also indicated that instructional rounds had a positive impact on

teacher self-efficacy. Involved in the instructional rounds professional development for several years, a veteran teacher remarked,

I would say definitely the entire process improved . . . my self-efficacy. I felt better about what I was doing. I could see results and I could pinpoint and I could tie it to student improvement and student engagement. So, I definitely think it helped me over all. It gave me specific feedback and it was much more centered to learning rather than just some checks to me on a box of what you are accomplishing. (Interview Participant 22)

The professional development opportunity validated some teachers, encouraged some, and supplied confidence for others as indicated in the interview responses.

(instructional rounds) helped me realize that I do a lot of things correctly, and that when my students aren't as successful as I think that they should be, it's not always my fault. It's confirming that I am doing the right thing more than not. (Interview Participant 18)

Interview Participant 4 conveyed, "I felt better and more confident about what I was doing."

Regarding affirmation, an attribute of positive self-efficacy, Interview Participant 18 declared,

It is affirming that you are doing the right thing and there is always some other way to approach it or attack it. Something could have been said or done to reach all of the kids instead of some of them or even the majority and the goal is to reach them.

While previous discussion has centered on the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy, final thoughts have been asserted and

considered noteworthy regarding positive aspects of the professional learning for colleagues. Interview Participant 11 shared,

I definitely see the need for (instructional rounds), and because we are given so many different things all the time, and I say, about 80% of the time, they don't work. They don't stay. They go away in a couple of years, but something like this develops us to make a permanent positive change that we identify and we fix ourselves.

Hope for the future was shared by one of the study participants as she reflected on how to continue with the professional development and the rounds process. She indicated,

I think that one thing we need to remember about the rounds is that with all the newness that we have this year in our county and all of the things we are being asked to do, teachers may be reluctant to participate, but that buy-in, if we can get that buy-in, I think they will be alright with it. (Interview Participant 5)

Conclusion

Education has noticed a movement to transition from working in silos behind closed doors to becoming more collective in practice by visiting classrooms and reflecting on what is occurring during instruction (Doyle, 2012). One model in particular, instructional rounds, promoted many of the characteristics identified in research as high-quality professional development (Chauncey, 2009). The educational model, based on the medical model of *rounds*, known as instructional rounds in education, was developed for administrators to observe and discuss best practices in the classroom (Roegman & Riehl, 2012). The model has been modified which enabled teachers to conduct instructional rounds following a protocol which assisted in pinpointing areas across grade levels or other groups or departments where instructional

improvement could be made for student success (City et al., 2010). Rounds, a four-step process, involved identifying a problem of practice that incorporated a theory of action, conducting actual observations, participating in a debriefing process, and developing the next level of work (Chauncey, 2009; City et al., 2010; D'Orio, 2013; Marzano, 2011; Roegman & Riehl, 2012). According to City et al. (2010), "The collaborative approach used in rounds networks separates people from their practice and creates norms that make individual and organization learning possible" (p. 171).

Research revealed specific criteria of high-quality professional development that included learning communities where teachers redefined their own teaching practices, activated learning of their own professional development, and promoted them to support each other's practices (Danielowich, 2012). The four-step instructional rounds process aligned with these characteristics of high-quality professional development.

This qualitative case study was conducted to measure the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy was not only an indicator of teacher effectiveness but it also served as a gauge for school and program effectiveness (Calik et al., 2012). Teachers in two settings, elementary and the Early College, participated in instructional rounds professional development. They were interviewed for this qualitative case study.

Study results indicated teachers in both settings had an increase in their own self-efficacy after completing the instructional rounds professional development. There were improvements in self-esteem, self-confidence, reflection, empowerment, and collaboration. Teachers found that "rounds can create a culture of creative problem solving when discussions are about the actual instruction in classrooms as opposed to people's projections of their own ideas of what's happening in classrooms" (City et al.,

2010, p. 52).

Marzano (2011), in an article in the publication, *Educational Leadership*, stated: Instructional rounds are one of the most valuable tools that a school or district can use to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills and develop a culture of collaboration The chief benefit of this approach resides in the discussion that takes place among observing teachers at the end of the observation as well as in subsequent self-reflection (p. 82).

A final testament to the impact of instructional rounds professional development on teacher self-efficacy was summed up by one of the interview participants as she asserted, (rounds professional development) resulted in that paradigm shift. I shifted from rather than being devalued, and powerless, and the scape goat of society, to the belief that we are intelligent responsible professionals who deserve to be trusted of that collaborative effort, of recognizing problems of practice, adapting to raise our own and our students' level of learning, and, then move forward to support one another; to decide how we will access our problems. Then, move to the next step (which) will be continue to work on the same or focus on a different problem of practice. (Interview Participant 9)

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Appendix A

IRB Approval



THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
of
GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY

This is to certify that the research project titled The Impact of Instructional Rounds Professional Development on Teacher Self-Efficacy
being conducted by Melessa B. Widener
has received approval by the Gardner-Webb University IRB. Date 11/11/13

Exempt Research

Signed _____

Department/School/Program IRB Representative

Department/School/Program IRB Member

Expedited Research

Signed _____

Department/School/Program IRB Representative

Department/School/Program IRB Member

IRB Administrator or Chair or Institutional Officer

Non-Exempt (Full Review)

Signed _____

IRB Administrator

IRB Chair

IRB Institutional Officer

Expiration Date _____

IRB Approval:

☒ Exempt ☐ Expedited ☐ Non-Exempt (Full Review)

Appendix B

Written Permission to Conduct Research

10/7/13

Caldwell County Schools Mail - Re: Permission to Conduct Research



Lesa Widener <lwidener@caldwellschools.com>

Re: Permission to Conduct Research

1 message

Steve Stone <sstone@caldwellschools.com>

Mon, Oct 7, 2013 at 10:52 AM

To: Lesa Widener <lwidener@caldwellschools.com>

I approve.

On Mon, Oct 7, 2013 at 10:44 AM, Lesa Widener <lwidener@caldwellschools.com> wrote:

She signed my Proposal Defense Approval two weeks ago.

Lesa

Lesa Widener
 Title I Director
 Caldwell County Schools
 828-728-8407, ext. 153
lwidener@caldwellschools.com

On Mon, Oct 7, 2013 at 10:37 AM, Steve Stone <sstone@caldwellschools.com> wrote:

Has Caryl signed off on this as well?

On Fri, Oct 4, 2013 at 1:20 PM, Lesa Widener <lwidener@caldwellschools.com> wrote:

Dear Dr. Stone,

As you are aware, I am currently enrolled in Gardner-Webb University's Doctoral Graduate Program. My dissertation topic is "The Impact of Instructional Rounds Professional Development on Teachers' Self-Efficacy." The purpose of this correspondence is to request your permission to conduct my research in the district which will consist of interviewing two teacher leaders at the elementary schools and four individuals at the Early College.

.Thank you for your consideration.

With regards,

Lesa

Lesa Widener
 Title I Director
 Caldwell County Schools
 828-728-8407, ext. 153
lwidener@caldwellschools.com

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Interview Question 1. Describe the professional development you received in the process of instructional rounds.

Research suggests teacher self-efficacy is defined as the teachers' own feelings of attitude, disposition, confidence, and how well they feel prepared to influence students in various facets of educational experiences (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012).

Interview Question 2. Given the definition of self-efficacy, how did the component of instructional rounds problem of practice affect your self-efficacy?

Interview Question 3. Given the definition of self-efficacy, how did the component of conducting instructional rounds observations affect your self-efficacy?

Interview Question 4. Given the definition of self-efficacy, how did the component of instructional rounds debriefing affect your self-efficacy?

Interview Question 5. Given the definition of self-efficacy, how did the component of instructional rounds next level of work affect your self-efficacy?

Interview Question 6. Please give an example of a success story where instructional rounds made a difference in how you felt about your instructional practices or in increasing academic achievement at your school site.

Interview Question 7. What would you like to tell me about the instructional rounds professional development that I did not ask?