ABSTRACT

Hugh D. Scott, II, FILLING THE VOID: BUILDING AND SUSTAINING COHESIVE AND CONSISTENT INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP (Under the direction of Dr. Matthew Militello). Department of Educational Leadership, May 2023.

The focus of practice for the study was to build and sustain a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team by supporting the growth and development of assistant principals as instructional leaders. This study took place in a mid-sized, high school setting in rural Eastern North Carolina. The study aimed to develop assistant principal's skills in diagnosing ineffective classroom practices and conducting consistent evidence-based observations. This provided more equitable outcomes for the school and all students involved. In a participatory action research (PAR) design, I worked closely with the assistant principals, who served as a group of co-practitioner researchers (CPR). Collectively, we learned to utilize common, observational tools and develop our inquiry-led conversation skills with teachers. The PAR focused on the development of the assistant principals' knowledge and skills with these instructional leadership activities over the course of the 18-month study. In the study, I conducted three cycles of inquiry in which the CPR members and I made improvements aligned with the PDSA model and Community Learning Exchange (CLE) processes. The CPR group continued to work together to develop their evidence-based observation skills and co-create strategies when working with teachers. Furthermore, the CPR group focused on developing these skills together and trusted in the learning experience that they would become better instructional leaders. With the assistant principals as my unit of analysis, I determined two major findings: Cultivating Better Practices and Fostering Collective Efficacy. In using stronger practices, the administrators co-developed collective efficacy for using more effective observation and post-observation practices. The study provides a blueprint for developing collaborative leadership through community learning

exchanges and for how secondary principals can effectively support assistant principals. The administrators in the study gained more knowledge and confidence in their instructional practices, developed more trust with teachers, and ultimately, provided more equitable outcomes for the students in classrooms.

FILLING THE VOID: BUILDING AND SUSTAINING COHESIVE AND CONSISTENT
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

By
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the educators and leaders

who carry on the fight for equitable opportunities for all learners.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The time committed to this dissertation serves as my toughest, professional accomplishment. Special thanks to some special people to help make this opportunity possible. To my head professor, Dr. Matthew Militello, thank you for believing in me and opening doors for opportunities, so my colleagues and I can carry out equitable work now and in the future. A special thanks to my Project I^4 doctoral coach, Dr. Sandra Garbowicz David: you were the guidance I needed on this journey. Thank you to the East Carolina University professors and staff members: Lynda Tredway, Dr. Lawrence Hodgkins, Dr. Ken Simon. Thank you to the entire Project I^4 team, including, Gwen Joyner, and Dr. Katherine Kandalec.

To my school district and superintendent, thank you for your commitment to empowering our staff to development equitable outcomes for our students. Thank you for trusting me to conduct this study in a district searching for the next generation of principals. To my assistant principals: this study is our work together, may it guide us in our continued growth and serve as a way to grow future leaders. To my teacher participants, thank you for your help to positively change our work and efforts when serving our students at our school.

Thank you to my Project I^4 colleagues, affectionately named the G-Unit: Gabe, Jo, Lori, Monica, and Tim. Our time together helped me learn from you all and reaffirm our convictions for a better education system. To my accountability partners, my new brother and sister, Leon and Krystal, thank you. To those who provided me encouragement but did not make it to see this work completed: Teicher, Courtney, and Randall. I say thank you!

Thank you to my family for the love, support, and prayers during this process. Your words of encouragement helped me along this journey. And of course, to my loving wife, Kelly Scott, thank you for your patience, support, and sacrifice to see my success. Thank you!

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CHAPTER 1: FOCUS OF PRACTICE

Some years ago, a message resonated as I sat listening to a sermon from my pastor. "You can learn either from a mentor or a mistake, people or pain." These simple words translate to many life situations—being a student, an athlete, a scientist, or an educator. Applying this principle to my life became problematic when my graduate professor challenged my instructional leadership framework by asking, "Who taught you how to be a good instructional leader?"

As I thought about "who" taught me how to do instructional observations, I did not remember any guidance beyond mock conversations in my Master's program. My reflection allowed me to recognize a void in cohesive leadership at the high school administrative level. As a principal, I believed it was time to break the cycle of inadequate instructional leadership by working closely with assistant principals. Specifically, I wanted to examine and track the development of assistant principals who were building their skills as instructional leaders over two years. My Focus of Practice (FoP) for this study was to uncover how to develop and sustain a cohesive instructional leadership team by supporting the growth and development of assistant principals as instructional leaders.

In my experience, there was little intentionality in developing instructional leaders' knowledge, skills, and dispositions. For example, I learned the traditional, normative traps of good classroom instruction by walking into various classrooms: students on task in an orderly classroom, teachers asking lots of questions, and students performing well on high-stakes testing. As I thought about "who" taught me how to do instructional observations, I could not remember any guidance beyond mock conversations in my Master's program. As an instructional coach and then as a young assistant principal, that void appeared again: I lacked the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to lead teachers effectively to better instructional practices. Every administrator

conducts teacher observations at my school, and every teacher receives different forms of feedback from the various administrators. Ideally, a cohesive administrative team would co-create clear and consistent instructional strategies with teachers at the school.

I recalled as a teacher that it was common practice to be observed several times a year for a cumulative 30-45 minutes. At the end of the year, the administrator would hold a meeting to share all the information collected over the course of a year. The observation and conversation process did not provide me with any constructive information to help improve my practice. Instead, the administrator would share a general comment like "good job!" and offer general reminders about managerial tasks and preparing for the end-of-course state exams.

This study aimed to support the next generations of school leaders by implementing a research-based approach to teacher observations with assistant principals, explicitly focusing on collecting meaningful classroom data and facilitating in-depth conversations with teachers about their instructional practices. Because administrators typically model what they have seen and experienced, a new process can impact many future leaders, teachers, and students. This cycle of implementation by learning from others was what I believe my pastor meant about learning through a person or pain.

In the next section, I discussed the rationale for the FoP and my study. I utilized the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) framework and a fishbone organizational tool to unpack the assets and challenges confronting the FoP. After that, I share the significance of the FoP to my context, practices, policies, and research. Finally, I explain the connection between equity and my FoP.

Rationale

My Focus of Practice (FoP) was to build and sustain a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team by supporting the growth and development of assistant principals as instructional leaders. The FoP is a way to examine an issue in a school closely and can impact change in the school organization and reach further in the field of education (Bryk et al., 2015). I agreed with Bryk et al. (2015) and moved from the deficit-mindset language of a "problem of practice" to the FoP, emphasizing the potential for change rather than focusing on the past problem. The FoP led to qualitative research methodologies, specifically a Participatory Action Research (PAR) study, which will be described in the following section.

I identified three main reasons why this FoP was necessary to unpack and investigate moving forward. First, it was time to break the cycle of inadequate instructional leadership. Over the last generation, the principal's primary role as a school manager has quickly transformed into a role of focal instructional leader (Glanz, 1990). However, new administrators do not always develop the skills and practices needed to be an effective instructional leader. Therefore, the FoP concentrated on the instructional leadership development of assistant principals.

The second significant aspect of the FoP involved the skills needed to provide meaningful classroom observation feedback. Through firsthand experience and recent surveys, administrators learned that feedback to teachers from observations and evaluations was not always considered valuable. Engaging in new practices provided teachers a space to be the lead analysts of their observational data. I anticipated seeing teachers' attitudes change toward observations and to accept necessary changes to allow students to be better learners in many ways. The FoP also enabled school administrators to learn how to effectively and consistently communicate with teachers about instructional improvement.

Lastly, the FoP fused equity into many aspects of whole-school processes and practices. The FoP helped administrators recognize the need to deconstruct deficit discourses and systemic barriers for marginalized students. All students should have access to instruction with appropriate opportunities to check for understanding. Students should also have access to learning where the content is relatable to their experiences. Therefore, administrators must be equipped with the proper tools and experiences to have meaningful conversations with teachers about their instructional practices.

Analysis of Assets and Challenges to the FoP

Analyzing the Focus of Practice to uncover the micro, meso, and macro assets and challenges helped bring the FoP into clarity. The FoP goal strived to build a cohesive administrative team with a common collection of skills and knowledge to use consistently when analyzing classroom instruction. Historical structures and current implementations at the school, district, and state levels influenced the work surrounding the FoP. With the FoP as a driving force for inquiry and change, I knew the importance of listening to other's perspectives on the focus area. Therefore, I gathered my administrative team to explore the Focus of Practice deeper.

I conducted a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) with site administrators at my school. A CLE is an opportunity for community members to come together and engage in a meaningful learning activity and encourage the members to deepen their relationships with one another (Guajardo et al., 2015). In the CLE, a common idea evolved: administrators learn from one another in good and bad experiences, including instructional leadership. Yet, we also discovered that "instructional leader" covers many leadership qualities and practices.

The CLE established a great place to gather this data. Figure 1 shows the summary of the conversation captured from the CLE held with the administrative team. Bryk et al.'s (2015)

MICRO	MESO	MACRO
Classroom or School level or a smaller unit within the school (grade level, department, or team) **District-level** unit or team	**Organizational level**: Full school level or district context, particularly including all the district level programs or people who have primary influence or control on FoP	**Structural level**: social reproduction systems that affect the FoP State or national policy and research
ASSETS		
MICRO	MESO	MACRO
● Administrative team behaviors: learning from one another and comfortability of asking questions of one another ● Drive to become better observers ● Practice of Reflection	● AP Academy for all assistant principals at the district level ● Assistant principals are familiar with some observation literature ● Autonomy to work and develop Aps at the school level ● With blended learning occurring, the school district has purchased observation equipment for teachers.	● The necessity of observations and walkthroughs already aligned for FoP ● Literature about principals being instructional leaders is available
CHALLENGES		
MICRO	MESO	MACRO

● Blended Learning environments new to teacher instruction
● Evaluation vs. Observation
  ○ Relational Trust
● Administrator turnover potential
	● New superintendent; unsure of new initiatives
	  ○ District Low-Performance Status
	● General AP Academy training
	● The level of blended learning is the gold standard.
		● Apathy for evaluative model
		  ○ Financially Incentivized
		● North Carolina Educator Effectiveness System (NCEES) timeline

Figure 1. Potential assets and challenges for the Focus of Practice.

needs analysis model outlined the gathered data at each influence level. The data collected helped magnify the influences shared by the different voices. The CLE's authors proposed four foundational principles, or axioms, for cultivating the proper learning environment. One CLE axiom states, "Learning and Leadership are Dynamic Social Processes" (Guajardo et al., 2015). Therefore, I gathered the data by asking questions such as, "What was your best professional learning experience?" During the CLE, participants dissected each response using a series of "why" questions to capture the attributes and concepts that made their experiences memorable. Collectively analyzing each CLE member's experience with these attributes helped frame the influences and provided the opportunity to build a stronger bond between administrators. The CLE allowed the team to unpack the FoP to identify the assets and challenges hidden within the FoP.

Micro Assets and Challenges

During the CLE, three micro-level assets emerged for the FoP. First, the administrators shared conversations that showed evidence of a foundation of instructional leadership. As we began this study, our administrative team varied in administrative experience from first-year experience to over eight years of experience. Yet, every person shared an experience that molded their administrative practice. Then, administrators discussed aspirations to learn more from one another and build a stronger, cohesive team. As illustrated in Figure 1, the group described a spirit of improvement, a wide variation in perspective and experiences, and the willingness to grow as a leader from one another.

Through a reflection protocol in the CLE, the final micro-level asset materialized. The administrative leaders realized there were collective practices and skills they wanted to improve in their careers. Spillane (2013) explained that principals could not simply prescribe prepackaged

instructional programs to their very different schools. Throughout our CLE conversation, we discovered a common experience: administrative professional development is often generalized to address the needs of many rather than directly focused on a specific school or person's needs. Conversely, the conversations in the CLE were authentic, purposeful, and, most of all, meaningful to each administrator.

The FoP came with a set of challenges at the school level too. First, the educational world took a dramatic shift in the midst of a global pandemic. The CLE school administrators admitted that moving to a remote learning platform and blended learning environments made it very difficult to focus on instructional goals. The pandemic exposed that our staff had the nuances of blended learning as a low priority. As we moved forward and with the anticipation of some students remaining in a remote learning setting for the foreseeable future, teachers and administrators found meaningful ways to properly serve all students, which also posed new challenges. School leaders provided a space for teachers to adjust to these changes, which meant the observations were adapted to an in-person, blended, or virtual environment.

Another challenge arose from the pandemic yet was historically driven: the difficulty in changing the mindset around observational conversations and the state evaluation system. The administrative team reflected on their experiences with teachers guarded by their instructional practices, especially when they believed that the conversations led to punitive actions in their evaluation system. Bryk et al. (2010) explained that relational trust is a significant factor in instructional leadership and would be a very important component to changing this education mindset. There should be a strategic approach to eliminate teacher anxieties with the evaluation-observation process.

The final challenge at the school level was the uncertainty of administrators' job security. In our school district, which was classified as low-performing, school administrators shuffled around to various schools every year. This uncertainty caused implementation inconsistencies, a constant change of practices, and a lack of follow-through with new initiatives at the school. When the principal's job was in constant jeopardy, the reluctance to start a new initiative made it difficult to build and sustain a cohesive leadership team to support their growth and development as instructional leaders, knowing that a new group of administrators may be present the next school year.

Meso Assets and Challenges

At the meso level, I identified several district-level assets from the CLE. First, our district invested in its administrators, a tremendous human capital asset. The district administrators designed an Assistant Principal Academy (APA) in which all veteran and new assistant principals are involved. There was a district team devoted to new assistant principals for more focused discussions on managerial tasks. Included with this asset are the APA offered book discussion groups for the assistant principals. During the CLE, several administrators identified readings that would benefit the FoP.

Another asset was district administrators allowing principals the freedom and flexibility to implement school-based interventions and instructional initiatives. The administrators in the CLE discussion shared their disdain for "cookie-cutter" initiatives. In a low-performing school district, a one size fits all initiative is often passed down to all schools, even those not in low-performing status. During the study, the blanket initiatives were lightly monitored in the district, which benefited the FoP.

Finally, one positive side effect of the pandemic and blended learning models was the investment in technology needed for virtual classes. The district staff ordered webcams for teachers to record their lessons with students and simultaneously move about the room. Administrators now have access to classroom recordings, which has historically been uncommon in the traditional classroom environment. With this technology readily available, classroom observation recordings could become second nature in the observation process.

The district-level challenges were just as prominent and could detract from the FoP. During the past five years, three different superintendents have served in the top district leadership role. Each new superintendent brought new initiatives and expectations when entering the district. Most recent initiatives surrounded the traditional models of school improvement, focusing on state test performance and elevating the district from low performing school status. Although these initiatives are important for the district, some instructional strategies were generalized to serve the needs of the overall district rather than the individual school's needs.

Additionally, the administrators discussed the district's Assistant Principal Academy (APA). The administrators shared a general topic approach that district administrators used for their professional development activities. The program provided general tips and practices assistant principals should possess as skills, but there was no personal skill development designed in the program. The APA's mandatory initiatives and required implementation practices could distract from the FoP or vice versa, making time management and commitment difficult.

Macro Assets and Challenges

At the macro level, the assets of the FoP aligned with North Carolina state teacher and school administrator expectations. To begin, the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation

Effectiveness System (NCEES) required the principal to conduct classroom observations and instructional walkthroughs. Another asset was the growing research on effective instructional leadership, and researchers identified a shift in principal responsibilities from a school manager to an instructional leader. Furthermore, the team found much literature to support and develop a cohesive leadership team around the topics of equity and instruction.

State legislation and policies provided a set of challenges for the FoP. The first challenge surrounded policymakers threatening to incentivize teacher evaluations along with school report card grades and job performance. Policies like this redirect teachers from focusing on their instructional practice to concentrating on their evaluation scores. The second challenge was a common one for most administrators: lack of time. The state officials required two abbreviated observations for career teachers and three required observations for new teachers and renewal year teachers. The CLE administrators admitted to feeling rushed or rushing through teacher conferences because there were so many evaluations to complete. With a large teaching staff, principals found the task cumbersome to provide meaningful and detailed feedback, constructive suggestions, and follow-up.

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Significance

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The significance of the FoP was to break the cycle of inadequate instructional leadership. I identified a need to fill the void of cohesive leadership by developing assistant principals' knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become stronger and more consistent instructional leaders. The cohesive leadership team's collective experience could ignite an impact beyond the FoP. Below I shared where the Focus of Practice held significance in context, policy, and research.

Context

The Focus of Practice took place at one high school. The administrative team worked with teachers in the mathematics and science courses. The context of this study was important to understand the issues and find solutions. Guajardo et al. (2015) submitted that "The people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local concerns" (p. 4). Through firsthand experience, teacher conversations, and recent surveys, administrators learned that feedback to teachers was not considered valuable; this point is shared in more detail later in the study from various perspectives. By consistently engaging in new practices that provide teachers a space to be the lead analyst of their observational data, the administrative team anticipated seeing teachers' attitudes change toward observations and accepting the constructive feedback necessary to allow our students to be better learners in a myriad of ways. The FoP enabled school administrators to learn how to effectively communicate with teachers' instructional improvement. Ultimately, the Focus of Practice benefited the entire school environment.

Practice

The Focus of Practice concentrated on developing assistant principals' knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become stronger instructional leaders. At the time of the study, the current professional development practice for assistant principals did not include the power of teamwork amongst administrators or the development of skills to co-create strong instructional practices. Furthermore, assistant principals had little to no formal training in holding conversations about instructional practices with teachers. Therefore, every teacher at a school received inconsistent feedback from different administrators at the school. This FoP and research study has the potential to change administrative practice to strengthen leadership to be more consistent, which in practice empowers teachers, and impacts learning outreach to all students.

Policy

The FoP was significant to local and state policy. Current policies focus on vague standards and require judgmental, evaluative marks for each teacher. The FoP focused on administrators helping teachers improve their practice, the gold standard of teaching. This FoP allowed administrators to show other ways for teachers to reflect on their actions from their observations. It could provide meaningful information for a teacher to learn more about how to affect change in their class with the facilitative protocols that the administrative leaders will practice. The study could also affect local policy. By requiring a research-based approach to teacher observations with assistant principals, specifically focusing on collecting meaningful classroom data and facilitating in-depth conversations about their instructional practices, teacher satisfaction and student academic growth would rise.

Research

Educational research is blossoming in the field of instructional leadership and the Focus of Practice could provide insight into an administrative team consistently using evidence-driven teacher conversations about classroom observation. Furthermore, the FoP will add to a growing area of research focused on evidence-based observations and principal professional learning communities.

This study unveiled huge implications because replicating the practices and tools would be easily possible at many different types of schools and educational institutions. A research model gains strength and influence by being repeated at different levels of education. This FoP could spark the instructional reform of classrooms worldwide to provide more data-driven opportunities for teachers to improve their classroom instruction.

Connection to Equity

The Focus of Practice allowed administrators to co-create equitable instructional practices for all teachers and all students. All students should have access to instruction that allows them to learn with opportunities to check for understanding and to make the content relatable to their own experiences. This ideology is not new, yet leaders' practice and development in school leadership preparatory programs do not always cultivate these skills. School leaders do not have to know all the content knowledge in all areas; however, they should be equipped with the proper tools and experiences when entering a school as an instructional leader to have meaningful conversations with a teacher about their instructional practices in relation to student needs. This study allowed administrators to provide feedback to teachers but utilize uniform observational tools and collective experiences to be more confident and effective instructional leaders.

The equity scope of this Focus of Practice was at the level of the school administrators. There were several equity frameworks to understand. The psychological framework challenged the assumptions within our students' capabilities. The political framework recognized the need to deconstruct deficit discourses and systemic barriers for marginalized students.

Psychological Framework of the Focus of Practice

Most educators are very guarded about their teaching practices. Although we are reminded of the educational jargon to be "life-long learners," many educators are not fond of change in their educational practices. When leaders start at school and identify areas of instructional change needed, they cannot accomplish this feat alone. Leverett (2002) states, "Equity is hard work and requires the collective commitment and energy of the entire school or district education community" (p. 1). The principal cannot change things alone, but creating a

team to deliver consistent and evidence-based practice with teachers is an effective approach to improving instructional practices for the student's needs. Leverett (2002) explains that "equity warriors" are found at all levels of the organization and occupy all positions within the organization. They empower other administrators to work with teachers to analyze their own practices and see the gaps in their instruction could result in significant instructional gains if practiced consistently (Leverett, 2002).

Political Framework of the Focus of Practice

For years, designers of standardized teacher evaluations utilized a checklist system that allowed teachers to check boxes for their instruction. The growth model embedded in these evaluation instruments does not fully capture the practice of instructional improvement. These instruments connect with ideas Labaree (2008) addressed about political arenas "educationalizing these problem-solving efforts, we are seeking a solution that is more formal than substantive" (p. 453). In many states, the evaluation standards are an umbrella for generalizing specific skills and expectations needed in an evolving classroom construct. Furthermore, governments have pushed to tie teacher pay scales to these standardized evaluations or standardized testing rather than focusing on students' instructional needs. Therefore, if students already possess the tools to be successful, the teacher and the school benefit. But in many low-performing schools, this is not the case, so with this research I am preparing a cohesive team of instructional leaders to have enriching conversations with their teachers to improve instructional practices.

Sociological Framework of the Focus of Practice

Studies have shown that the principal has a significant influence on the instructional development of the school. Traditionally, this is tied to measurable goals, benchmarks, and

certain non-negotiable accountability factors. However, current observational evidence and surveys show that equitable practices specific to teacher instruction are an opportunity for growth. Rigby and Tredway (2015) concluded that explicit use of equity language is more likely to lead to equitable opportunities and outcomes for teachers and students. Yet, school leaders must model this language and the conversations. It cannot simply be a measurable checklist created in many traditional educational practices. Whether explicitly or implicitly stated, there must be a desired equitable outcome that the school leader wants to work towards in order to arrive at appropriate action steps aligned with equitable outcomes.

Participatory Action Research Design

Participatory action research (PAR) is an approach to research in a particular community driven by inquiry and experimentation. McTaggart (1991) describes action research as "the way groups of people can organize the conditions under which they can learn from their own experiences and make this experience accessible to others" (p. 170). In this case, the community represents one high school in North Carolina. The purpose of this research design was for researchers and participants to work collaboratively and use data to support cycles of inquiry that address the study's research questions.

Herr and Anderson (2014) determined, "Action research is best done in collaboration with others who have a stake in the problem being investigated" (p. 4). The participatory action research model allowed me to create a process to build and sustain a cohesive leadership team by supporting the growth and development of assistant principals as instructional leaders. The administrative team acted as Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPRs) in the PAR study. This meant that although I was a lead researcher in the study, I was also an active participant in the praxis established for the other administrators in the study.

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My PAR was grounded in the improvement science principles, specifically the cycles of inquiry. I utilized the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model to execute these PAR cycles (see Figure 2). McTaggart (1991) described PAR as "a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and then re-planning" (p. 175). This model allowed for an initial collective discussion about the instructional practices the administrative team anticipates seeing, followed by implementing the observation, analysis, and reflection. Militello et al. (2009) presented a shared belief for this PAR study format which states that "The collaborative, inquiry-action cycle is grounded in the belief that successful leaders for instructional improvement cannot operate in isolation" (Militello et al., 2009, p. 29). Instructional leaders must realize they cannot work alone to change teachers' instructional practices into equitable opportunities for all students. As co-practitioners, the administrative team should possess some foundational practices that all school administrators adhere to together. Thus, the PAR will assist the administrative team in becoming a cohesive unit with similar expectations and instructional practices.

Purpose Statement, Research Questions, and Theory of Action

This participatory action research study aimed to design praxis to build strong instructional leaders in a high school. The purpose of this PAR was for the administrative team to co-create consistent reflective practices while conducting evidence-based observations with teachers around classroom practices. The CLE participants identified and unpacked the assets and challenges surrounding the FoP. The overarching research question which guided this study was: How does a high school principal build and sustain a consistent and cohesive leadership team with assistant principals to support their growth and development as instructional leaders? As a further refinement, the following sub-questions were developed:

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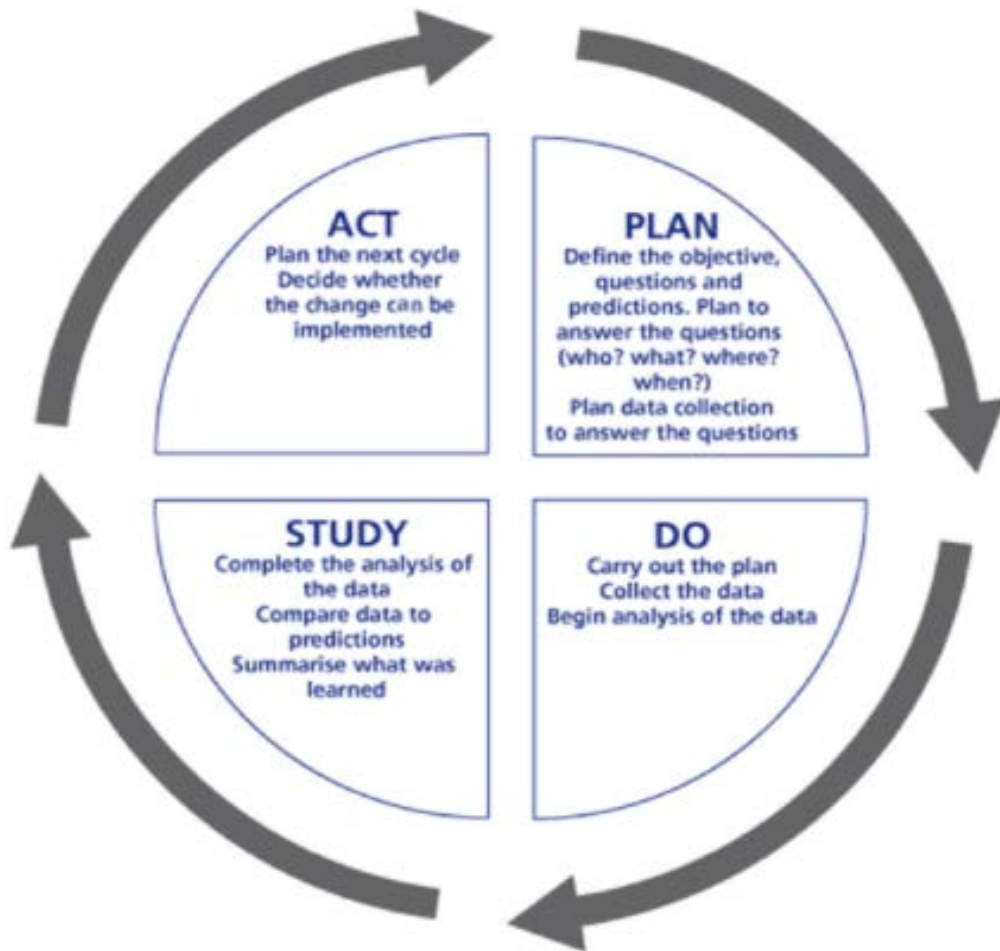
Note. (McTaggart, 1991).

Figure 2. PDSA model.

1. To what extent do high school administrators use academic discourse to build cohesion?

2. How does a high school leadership team consistently work together and on their own to sustain instructional leadership?

3. How does supporting the growth and development of high school assistant principals build my capacity as an educational leader?

For this study, it was important to unpack the terms "cohesive" and "consistent". The term "cohesive" refers to a two-step process in instructional leadership. First, the administrator diagnoses areas of strength and improvement for the teacher based on their instructional observation. The second step requires a different skill: communicating or facilitating a conversation with the teacher to understand their strengths and areas that need improvement.

The term "consistent" refers to the ability of any administrator to observe a teacher's classroom and provide common, cohesive feedback to the teacher. The observation notes identified and talking points prepared should be similar for every administrator because each administrator would have common foundational knowledge. This term provides a link to filling the void of instructional leadership challenges.

My PAR Focus of Practice (FoP) was to build and sustain a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team by supporting the growth and development of assistant principals as instructional leaders. I used qualitative research methodologies and a PAR study design to address the research questions. I served as the modus for the actual growth and development of the high school administrative team. The theory of action was as follows: If a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team is built and sustained through the development of

assistant principals, then all teachers will have consistent and meaningful feedback toward their growth and development.

Proposed Study Activities

To accomplish the PAR study, I planned several activities throughout the study. Figure 3 outlines the steps needed to prepare the high school administrative team for the research and the time required to accomplish three PAR cycles. With this schedule, I focused on what tools were used and what actions were taken to complete the study in a timely manner. Throughout the remainder of this study, I refer to the high school administrative team as the Co-Practitioner Researcher (CPR) group.

As the PAR lead researcher, I believe the Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR) must be familiar with effective instructional practices and work collaboratively with teachers. During the PAR Pre-Cycle, the CPR group had conversations and professional learning discussions about cooperative learning, relational trust, evidence-based observations, and academic conversations. Next, the CPR group practiced gathering objective data from an observation and having productive evidence-based conversations. To familiarize the CPR group with exemplary conversation practices, I accessed East Carolina University's Project I[4] videos that showcase coaches discussing in a mock classroom observation and navigating through the next steps for the teacher. With the entire CPR group observing the same recorded conversations, the follow-up discussion allowed each co-practitioner to align ourselves to a common goal or expected outcomes. Finally, an overview of how the evidence was collected will be discussed but not fully introduced until PAR Cycle One.

In spring 2022, the anticipated PAR Cycle One began, followed by a PAR Cycle Two later in the fall 2022 school year. In the last two PAR Cycles, the CPR group used the Calling-on

Fall 2021	Spring 2022	Fall 2022
PAR Pre-Cycle	**PAR Cycle One**	**PAR Cycle Two**
CPR Group Introductions	Observational Tool Implementation	All Staff CALL Survey
Micro Community Learning Exchange Establishment	Post-Observation Conversations Discussion and Practice	CPR Group Reflect on Practice
Classroom Observation Review	Teacher CLE One	Observational Tool Re-Implementation
Observation Tools Introduction		Classroom Observation Review

Figure 3. PAR timeline and activities.

observational tool to record observational data of the teacher and their interactions with students. We used this prescribed tool to provide teachers with objective-based data to make informed inquiries about their teaching practice. This provided teachers the opportunity to reflect on their actions in the classroom. It was important that the CPR group was familiar with this tool and implemented the tool throughout the study, not only for PAR data collection but also for teachers to be aware of the new observation model and reflective practice. Teachers and the CPR group members met and discussed these observations during post-observation conferences. Community Learning Exchanges were created at the end of the last two PAR cycles. For each PAR cycle, I gathered valuable artifacts about the study and analyzed the data to determine the next steps and only then did I start the next cycle of inquiry.

Confidentiality, Ethical Considerations, and Limitations

With any Participatory Action Research study, there were an array of limitations because of the study design. For example, my PAR study had several subjective practices embedded in the process because each administrator in the CPR group has their own experiences and leadership styles. Other limitations mentioned in the previous section include time due to three PAR cycles condensed into three semesters, research bias due to the experiences and individuality of each researcher, and generalizing post-observation conferences due to the limited time in the study.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) advised to anticipate a myriad of ethical considerations before the start of and throughout a study. For example, my PAR setting was designed to be executed in the school where I am a principal. The security of the data collected and the confidentiality of the participants were essential in this study. Because the goal was for teachers to feel no risk for their participation and only see it as a benefit to improve their practice, I kept

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all documents locked. All names were changed so that others did not know what teachers said, and I altered the observation protocols from any identifying information.

Furthermore, to keep teachers anonymous in the post-observation conferences, the video recording focused on the CPR member rather than the teacher. For authenticity in the post-observation conversation, the teacher's name may have been stated with prior approval, even though they might not be seen on the recording. If the teacher felt more comfortable with an alias, we agreed upon one. After completing the study, all names were changed for simplicity purposes. For hard copy evidence, it was secured in my office cabinet behind lock and key. I address additional security information in Chapter 3.

Summary

It is time to break the cycle of inadequate instructional leadership and fill the void in cohesive leadership at the high school administrative level. The group members unpacked the Focus of Practice (FoP) in a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) with other high school administrators to discuss the assets and challenges that confront the FoP. During the research, it was important to remember the CLE axiom: those closest to the problem are often best suited to finding a solution (Guajardo et al., 2015). With the co-practitioner team close to the problem, we explored the FoP by engaging in a Participatory Action Research (PAR) study specific to building a cohesive instructional high school administrative team. With co-created activities over the course of each PAR cycle, I explored the development of the assistant principals' knowledge, skills, and dispositions around cohesive and consistent instructional leadership.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The famous automobile revolutionist Henry Ford once said, "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is a success." I used this quote to reflect on my research question: How does a high school principal build and sustain a consistent and cohesive leadership team with assistant principals to support their growth and development as instructional leaders? This thinking brought me to identify three areas of literature to synthesize concerning my research study's Focus of Practice (FoP), which was building and sustaining a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team by supporting the growth and development of assistant principals as instructional leaders. Figure 4 outlines the three literature bins and provides the sub-bins under each.

Each literature bin offered me the opportunity to explore concepts and ideas I believe could help fill the void in my FoP. The instructional leadership literature bin allowed me to look at the current roles and responsibilities of school principals and assistant principals. The second literature bin addresses becoming stronger instructional leaders. The final literature bin addresses the concepts of collaborative leadership. Like Henry Ford's idea of togetherness, several components exist to make collaborative leadership effective.

Instructional Leadership

The role of instructional leadership is one of many standards an administrator is evaluated and valued upon. In North Carolina, there are seven executive standards used for administrative performance: strategic, instructional, cultural, human resource, managerial, external development, and micro political. Historically, these leadership standards, although important, do not have equal emphasis. The principal position was pulled out of the classroom as a supervisory role to help manage the school for the superintendent. The principal could possibly
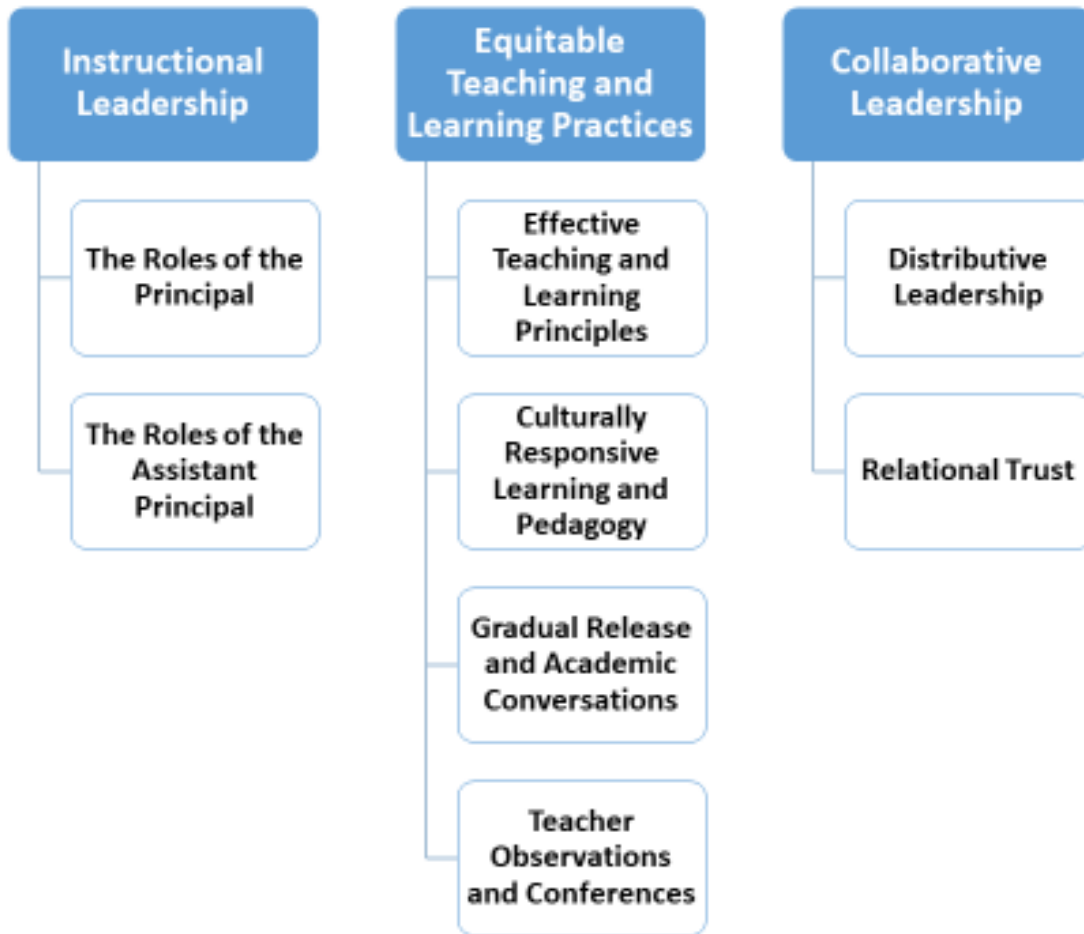
Figure 4. Literature bin outline.

still have some duties in teaching, but their instructional responsibilities were limited (Brown, 2006). This literature shows that one cannot focus solely on instructional leadership to become an effective administrator. The North Carolina standards fall into four theoretical leadership frames or paths for administrators. Johnson (2018) describes these paths, from which she aligned this model with like-minded authors. The paths are structural, human resource, political, and symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 2019; Leithwood et al., 2010). Each frame or perspective reflects those actions directed by leaders that amplify specific activities to navigate and achieve targeted goals within the school (Bolman & Deal, 2019). The four frames model is explained within the principal's roles of strategic and instructional leadership.

The Roles of the Principal: The Four Frame Model

I found it helpful to use the four frames model to capture how instructional leadership is developed and present in all perspectives of a principal's actions. Leithwood et al. (2010) explains how school leaders can affect student outcomes through indirect means of leadership and actions. It is the control and actions that a school principal possesses that affect the student achievement in a school.

The structural framework of a principal's leadership reveals itself in the policies and rules used within the organization to run effectively (Monahan et al., 2015). Building leaders are responsible for creating systems and structures that support the vision and mission of the school. When looking at the structural frame, it is important to analyze what motivates the principal's decisions: input from the district, community, and school stakeholders. With the structural path, clear communication of roles and responsibilities, organizational charts, school policies, and procedures are all helpful to accomplish aspects of a principals' role in instructional leadership

(Johnson, 2018). Essentially, transparent processes allow the focus of the school to move back to instruction.

The human resource framework provides a clear connection to instructional leadership. This framework is not solely based on the hiring process at the school. For most principals, choosing the staff is not always an option afforded to them. Providing professional development and carving out time for planning with colleagues is a responsibility of the principal (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2015). The principal has the power to design time for teachers to prepare for equitable instructional practices. Researchers stress the importance of intentional teacher planning to properly implement lessons in social justice, with a key component of accessing authentic student voice (Berry et al., 2020; Muhammed, 2018).

Ramsey (1999) describes another aspect of the human resource framework: "Morale is the catalyst that brings together all of the human element in the organization and produces results" (p. 34). The human resource perspective builds on the nature of relationship-building as a means of growing an organization. Teachers are more receptive to working with one another within a positive work environment and exploring the new initiatives presented by the district and administration (González-Falcón et al., 2020). This helps develop the relational trust needed between the teachers and administrators to produce positive change (Nash, 2019).

The political framework relates to instructional leadership with most of the stressors surrounding the principal role. Political pressure is part of the fabric of management, and principals and assistant principals are subject to daily stressors associated with having to do more with less (Bolman & Deal, 2019). With the onset of the No Child Left Behind Act and the state accountability model, principals regularly find themselves in the "hot seat," which correlates

back to the eighth standard within the North Carolina School Executive Standards, Student Achievement (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2015).

The symbolic framework relates to the interpretation of the culture of the school. What symbols and messages drive teacher practices in the school? Nia Johnson (2018) describes this part of the principal's responsibilities as such: "habits of belief, patterns of behaviors and actions are interpreted by the way in which they are valued" (p. 33). Some schools adopt an "ALL IN for the students" mission or a growth mindset. However, it is the responsibility and challenge of the principal to execute and evaluate this task, which is the juggling act of reminding educators of our "why" and following through with actions.

These four frameworks embody the many parts of a principal's role as an instructional leader. Each of these components contributes to instructional development of our teachers in the school. Whether this requires a refocus of a professional learning team, an appropriate time to develop and collaborate with other educators on culturally responsive pedagogy, or simply reminding teachers through the tough times of our purpose, mission, and vision, principals' roles have developed into a complex world beyond just the day to day operations of the school (Glanz, 1990). Principals must strategically align all their responsibilities: government mandates, the school district initiatives, the school, teacher, student, and community needs. Principals must find effective ways to embody and align these ever-changing priorities.

With these roles aligned with student instruction, principals consider many variables and responsibilities throughout the school day. These tasks simply cannot be achieved without the help of others. Historically, lead teachers have stepped up and assisted in other operations of the school. These roles and responsibilities evolved into the position we now formally call the assistant principal.

The Roles of the Assistant Principal

Historically, in simplest terms, the assistant principal was simply that: a person, usually a teacher leader, who was designated to assist the principal with clerical and routine tasks (Gillespie, 1961). However, these common responsibilities, including discipline and attendance issues, have significantly progressed in roles more significantly aligned with student learning, staff development, and instructional leadership (Calabrese, 1991; Calabrese & Tucker-Ladd, 1991; Glanz, 1994a; Marshall, 1992). The rise of importance of the assistant principal positively correlates with the expansion of duties and responsibilities that position is involved in over the years. Acknowledging the role and responsibilities of the assistant principal is important to remind principals and other school administrators that building a cohesive administrative team will have its challenges. This is particularly true with the focused lens of equitable, instructional leadership being a goal.

Glanz (1994a) produced many publications on school leadership, and in particular, the work assistant principals do in the schools. Glanz (1994b) conducted an empirical study gathering information from assistant principals in New York City in which participants answered questions about their current duties, their perspective on the duties they should be doing, and the greatest satisfaction of their job. In these findings, he discovered that over 90% of the assistant principals felt they were regularly spending most of their time dealing with items they felt were not the most important parts of their job. These included disruptive students, parent phone calls, lunch duties, scheduling class coverages, and handling mundane administrative paperwork. Concurrently their greatest satisfaction came when they were able to work with a small group of students or teachers on instructional tasks, which is what over 90% of the participants felt they should be doing. Many assistant principals in the study considered themselves underutilized

assets to their schools. He concluded that given this history of how the assistant principal role was developed, there is no surprise the roles still focus on administrative, supervisory, or clerical tasks (Glanz, 1994b).

Years later Hausman et al. (2002) found similar findings in Maine. In their study, their findings confirmed that assistant principals spent most of their time on student management duties, such as discipline and supervision. For the remainder of the responses, their time priority was as follows: personnel management which included talking and coordinating with other staff members, public relations, which follow up with parent phone calls, low amounts of professional development, and similarly lower amounts of focus on instructional leadership (Hausman et al., 2002). This study is a further example of how there is a realization that assistant principals must be involved in instructional leadership, but the structures of most schools do not allow for that function of time investment.

With this consistent information, researchers decided to take this knowledge a step further with gathering the perspectives of veteran and novice assistant principals. Barnett et al. (2012) surveyed administrators from south Texas in face-to-face interviews to gather their data and analyze the nuances between experienced and novice assistant principals. There were three major takeaways from this study. First, managing time and performance expectations was a difficulty among both groups. Second, the struggle of building of relational trust and strong working relationships with the staff in the school among novice administrators. Finally, realizing the "importance of understanding curriculum and instructional strategies for teacher and school improvement" (Barnett et al., 2012, p. 116). Dealing with multiple tasks simultaneously while being flexible and processing organizational skills is necessary for the assistant principal (Barnett

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et al., 2012). Therefore, the conclusion settles on the fact that the principal must assist in building proper structures for their assistants to be successful.

These particular studies are essential in identifying the roles of the assistant principal. Throughout history, the roles of the assistant principal have only increased in demand with the added importance of instructional leadership. However, the research also suggests that not enough time has been devoted to developing the assistant principal as an instructional leader (Barnett et al., 2012). In nearly every article surrounding the preparation and development of assistant principals, it is abundantly clear that many have difficulty balancing the essential managerial functions of the job that take up most of their time and the necessary instructional leadership, which provides satisfaction to their job (Glanz, 1994a). While the authors of literature expressed such difficulties, they also offered suggestions for providing assistant principals opportunities for growth in instructional leadership. In this section, I will share the common approaches suggested by researchers to strengthen the skills of the assistant principals.

The first recommendation was shared by Glanz (1994a), who stated that it is important to find ways to save meaningful time for the assistant principals. As many roles are considered disciplinary or supervisory, training other staff members to complete some tasks can be helpful. For example, most minor disciplinary issues can be handled by a dean of students. Also, finding creative ways to cover lunch duties or other extracurricular activities can provide the assistant principals an opportunity for professional development or instructional leadership. Completing these recommendations accomplishes multiple goals: increasing the morale of APs, building capacity amongst other leaders in the building, and a greater chance this new time can be used for instructional improvement (Glanz, 1994a).

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A second recommendation stems from researchers' conclusions: too many administrator preparation programs and professional development opportunities focus mainly on the effective ways to be a principal, not preparing leaders for most of their initial roles as assistant principals (Hausman et al., 2002; Marshall, 1992). The idea is that a teacher leader who aspires to be a principal needs to understand the roles and responsibilities of an assistant principal. Also that the position is an important and valuable career position (Glanz, 1994a). The professional development needed can focus on balancing personal and professional life duties, creating time to balance the multiple tasks, and attending professional development opportunities with teachers to work collaboratively on new instructional practices while in the space (Barnett et al., 2012; Gerke, 2004; Good, 2008).

The final recommendation for developing assistant principals to become stronger instructional leaders is to develop a form of professional mentorship for the administrator. Several higher education programs have designed administrative internship opportunities for their students who are learning to become administrators. There are two approaches reviewed in the literature as to how a mentorship program can benefit the growth and development of an aspiring administrator.

Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd (1991) discuss several qualities required to develop a professional mentorship as the principal. The first quality is initiation, or the willingness to mentor the assistant principal. The second quality is collaboration. They found opportunities for the assistant principal to build their leadership skills with responsibility or expertise they already possess. This quality allows the principal to serve as a coach or observer to provide immediate feedback, leading to another quality of coaching.

The fourth quality requires some vulnerability for the principal; this is inclusivity. This is where the principal opens up about some of the more principal roles in confidence. This could include staff evaluations, the micro political process of negotiating a program approval process, or even the school's financial reports. This vulnerable act can provide a broader and important perspective into the principal role.

The fifth quality Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd (1991) discussed is modeling. Modeling can embody everything from punctuality, professional attire, and expressing gratitude to the staff publicly. The principal must remember that they are leading by example daily. The next quality is something that the principal should model regularly as well; it is reciprocation. So often, the principalship is a lonely role, so it is important to share leadership ideas with the assistant principals with the expectation that they can share their thoughts and opinions as well. This quality helps validate the assistant principal role as important and builds the confidence needed for the final two qualities.

The final two qualities shared are development and separation. Development is when the principal addresses the assistant principal on the personal, social, technical, and leadership skills needed for success. These skills can relate to work-related or personal problems. However, this quality allows the assistant to build their confidence and faith to take risks in their abilities. Because the ultimate goal and quality the principal is striving towards is the quality of separation. A separation is usually a natural event, where the principal identifies that in a particular skill, task, or role, guidance is no longer necessary. These qualities vary in time and range for all administrators but utilizing all these qualities can lead to success (Calabrese & Tucker-Ladd, 1991).

The absence of a principal or the principal's time or ability to mentor the assistant principal is the other form of mentorship. The leader, in this case, can still offer guidance and opportunities for the assistant principal or aspiring leader to observe others and potentially bring back the skill or strategy to their school to implement (Glanz, 1994b). This strategy provides the essential development of an assistant principal, building leadership skills for the future principal program.

When considering the structure of instructional leadership, it is important to know where and how that leadership quality is built and established. As one of the main emerging roles as an instructional leader, the principal must learn not only how to balance their controls and actions but must consider the impact of those actions on all other stakeholders. As the leader, the principal must provide a structure of opportunities for the school staff to grow and develop. These opportunities must include the assistant principals who also need support to grow into the instructional leaders they desire to become. Whether that is creating time to focus on other productive duties, mentoring the assistant principals, or organizing professional development, assistant principals cannot be left out.

As Barnett et al. (2012) explain in their study, one of the greatest challenges of the development in instructional leadership is convincing teachers to change. This is accomplished by providing appropriate instructional strategies to replace the ones that are no longer effective. To build and sustain a cohesive team of instructional leaders, the leaders must intentionally prepare. This leads to the next focus in this literature review: Equitable Teaching and Learning Practices.

Equitable Teaching and Learning Practices

I chose this literature review area to explore the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to fill the void of inequitable classroom practices. The FoP aims to explore the cohesiveness of the administrative team. Simply identifying effective classroom practices is not enough, instructional leaders must also learn how to communicate what is missing in the classrooms with the teachers. I recognize that all teachers are different with varied experiences, therefore, there is no "cookie-cutter" approach to helping all teachers receive the feedback they need from administrators.

In this section, I explore effective, foundational principles all teachers can use to create equitable practices in their classrooms. I review the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy. Lastly, I review the adjustments made to teacher observations to make that experience more effective.

Effective Teaching and Learning Principles

There are several key elements every teacher should be aware of when providing any form of instruction: a learner must access their prior knowledge, combine several types of learning styles, and mentally build access points of knowledge retrieval (Lee, 2005). First, students will have an assortment of knowledge molded over time based on cultural, social, and biological contexts. This prior knowledge is based on experiences that can strengthen new information but may also be filled with biases and misconceptions that can attack the retention of this new knowledge (Lee, 2005). Next, memory is constantly changing due to the exposure to multiple types of learning being experienced in the math setting. "Memory is not a unitary capacity; it is a set of processes by which a learner reconstructs past experiences and forges new connections among them." (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018, p.

3). Therefore, a teacher must be intentional about the type of learning. Finally, an individual's brain makes and builds logical connections to the information to be retrieved later. So a teacher can assist in memory retrieval by creating cues for the learning process (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). A teacher must be prepared to address all factors of learning so the new knowledge will have the potential to be synthesized and continue to be built upon in the future.

Another effective teaching strategy is the focus on academic rigor. Teachers who plan and implement task-based learning provide students with a framework to complete cognitively demanding tasks. Task-based learning has several components needed for students to succeed, including intentional learning outcomes, solid classroom protocols, and consistent, supportive student experiences working with high-task cognitive demands (Tekkumru-Kisa et al., 2020). However, the authors and researchers of task-based learning emphasize the importance of teacher professional development with this activity. "Teachers need professional development opportunities to learn how to facilitate students' sense making and productive classroom interactions and discourse as students are working on these complex tasks" (Tekkumru-Kisa et al., 2020, p. 612). Teachers need professional development to facilitate the cognitive demand of the learning tasks with students and reflect and adjust their own beliefs towards student-centered learning. With the proper teacher involvement in a district or school wide implementation of task-based learning, teachers can help modify current curriculum guides to incorporate consistent, high-quality tasks throughout the plan, which benefits all students (Johnson et al., 2016). Teachers need the opportunity to plan and prepare task-based instruction for the learning to be successful and sustainable.

When teachers can create extensions and improvements to their instruction through rigorous tasks, student learning enhances in the classroom. For example, Boaler (2016) offers suggestions in her book on how we can transform fixed mathematical tasks into rigorous ones for greater student learning opportunities. Students practiced problems with exponents, like shown in Figure 5, until they answered four problems right in a row. Then they were asked to move onto a quiz with similar questions.

The original math problem answer choices were given with different equivalencies; there was no exploration, simply procedural problem solving. By modifying the tasks, teachers could open the creativity and exploration of student learning and embrace a growth mindset. When a teacher allows students to develop their representations and pathways to the teaching, students' cognitive demand increases, subsequently increasing the encoding of new material while reconstructing prior knowledge with the new information. These creative, rigorous tasks can give students the confidence and perseverance for the future.

Culturally Responsive Learning and Pedagogy

A good teacher can identify effective teaching strategies and facilitate conversations with students. However, to fully embrace the concept of equitable teaching practices, more is needed. Teachers can help students embrace and unpack the multiple identities each student comes to school with every day, as well as how these identities can empower the learning environment and not be a burden to the learner. This is where culturally responsive teaching is impactful.

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) stems from the work of Ladson-Billings and her work on culturally relevant pedagogy. In her work, three central components emerge. First, student learning: all students possess the ability to grow intellectually and develop morally. She continues that all students have the ability, with the proper support, to problem solve and reason.

Which expressions are equivalent to $5^{12} \cdot 5^8$?

Choose 2 answers:

(A) 25^{20}

(B) $\left(25^5\right)^4$

(C) $\left(5^3 \cdot 5^2\right)^4$

(D) $\left(5^5\right)^4$

Figure 5. Math problem example.

The second is cultural competence: developing skills to affirm and appreciate the student's own culture of origin while developing appreciation and respect for others' culture. The last is critical consciousness: the ability to diagnose, analyze and solve problems like social inequities (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

CRT is a research-based approach to teaching. It connects students' cultures, identities, and life experiences with what they learn in school. Hammond (2015) shares the potential for marginalized students who often are overlooked and need these relevant connections from a neurological perspective. She encourages teachers to take internal steps to unpack their implicit bias and to prepare students for CRT. First, teachers must "identify their cultural frame of reference" (Hammond, 2015, p. 55). Second, teachers must "widen their cultural aperture" (Hammond 2015, p. 58), which means being willing to open their perspective beyond their frame of reference. Third, teachers must identify their key triggers. "When we feel a threat of any sort - including threats to our belief systems - we are vulnerable to an amygdala hijack" (Hammond 2015, p. 64). Identifying and addressing the triggers beforehand can help teachers grow their cultural understandings of all students.

Gay (2018) provides some guidelines for teachers as well. She adopts cultural organizers, cultural mediators, and orchestrators of contexts for learning from the previous work of Diamond and Moore (1995). As cultural organizers, teachers must provide students with the opportunity to create an atmosphere for cultural and ethnic diversity throughout their daily activities. Cultural mediators take the time to bridge the gap of understanding between the dominant cultural ideas and different cultural systems and identities. Being a mediator helps students learn to affirm and celebrate differences and work together for mutual success. A cultural orchestrator of social

context refers back to the teacher's cultural frame of reference when designing lessons compatible with the students in the classroom (Gay, 2018).

Gutiérrez (2016) parallels the recommendation for teachers to identify their cultural frame of reference with understanding the power of "Conocimiento", which represents knowledge. She challenges teachers to understand how oppression operates at the individual level, like within their classrooms, and systemically, like within school policies or the community. With "conocimiento," teachers learn new ways to advocate for their students by helping to deconstruct the deficits (Gutiérrez, 2016).

Berry et al. (2020) review a case study that began to incorporate the CRT principles and go beyond its original scope. A new research praxis developed a pathway of integrating mathematics lessons with social justice awareness. This contemporary praxis incorporates elements of skill development and provides culturally relevant access to the learning space. Berry et al. (2020) explain that connecting the math lesson to a local, community concern or issue can help increase student engagement in the lesson with new personal connections to the learning task. In connection with learning theory, we know reframing prior knowledge with new understandings assists in the retrieval and encoding process. However, teaching mathematics for social justice requires an additional level of reflection. Muhammed (2018) describes this as criticality. Criticality goes beyond deep thinking and intellectualism and teaches youths to understand power, inequality, social justice, and oppression in systems and relationships (Muhammed 2018, p. 139). All authors stress the importance of intentional teacher planning to properly implement lessons in social justice, with a key component of accessing authentic student voice (Berry et al., 2020; Muhammed, 2018). This new praxis shows that discussions on

social justice do not have to be confined to a civics or electives class, but rather that this practice can be sustainable in other areas of content with proper guidance and intentional planning.

Culturally responsive learning and instruction should not take place just inside the classroom. Khalifa (2018) challenges leaders to learn the practice of critical reflection and spaces for student self-reflection. He witnessed principals being vulnerable with their teachers, students, and community with open discussions. These conversations were admissions to being complicit with barriers affecting marginalized students. With their willingness to identify and dismantle barriers through dialogue, trust was built amongst all stakeholders. The practices suggested by Gay (2018) are not exclusive to only teacher practice.

Equitable teaching practices must have equitable school leadership. Khalifa (2018) states, "Culturally responsive school leaders hire and develop teachers who will humanize students in their classroom" (p. 162). This means not only building a relationship with students but learning their experiences and identities. Principals assist teachers with the cultural assets and perspectives of their students and the community. Furthermore, the principals should promote a culturally responsive culture through the school decision-making process and provide opportunities for the teachers to enter the communities and learn from community members (Khalifa, 2018).

Gradual Release and Academic Conversations

Another equitable teaching and learning practice comes from providing time and space for students to communicate their understanding with the teacher and with their peers. This practice is considered academic conversations. Quaglia et al. (2020) writes about the benefits of student voice in their work: the necessity of voice recognizes the importance of all stakeholders. However, in order to understand academic conversations and its benefits, I first explored how

teachers get to a place to release control to their students. Next, I share the benefits of academic conversations and how they are a valuable equitable learning practice.

As educational practices have evolved over the decades, a growing practical concept emerged to provide students more ownership of their learning. The Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model afforded teachers to provide students opportunities to work collaboratively and independently to solve problems and answer questions. Pearson and Gallagher (1983) acknowledged that the GRR explains the intricate transactional process that occurs during reading comprehension—control of an activity shifts from teacher to learner during instruction. Examples of this shift used in reading is shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading (Fisher & Frey, 2013). All possess important components and qualities for effective learning outcomes.

Several authors refer to the GRR model and the four main phases of gradual release. In the literature review most authors coined common terms for the four main phases. For this reason I focused much of the review on authors who regularly appeared and utilized their terminology (Fisher & Frey, 2008, 2013; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Webb et al., 2019). Fisher and Frey have published articles and written books on the GRR concepts developed from Pearson and Gallagher. I use Fisher and Frey's (2013) terminology to simply these concepts. Starting with the most traditional phase, where the teacher possesses the most control and responsibility, which is largely described as Focus Instruction or the "I Do" phase. This phase provided students with the learning purpose, teacher modeling of skills and concepts, and teacher think aloud to provide students the opportunity to hear the cognitive thought process and problem-solving steps. The next phase is Guided Instruction or the "We Do" phase. Teachers use robust questions, prompts, and cues to scaffold students' use of new knowledge during this phase. The next phase supports

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the concept that more learning begins as teachers provide students more responsibility (Kong & Pearson, 2003). This phase is called the Collaborative Learning or the "You Do It Together" phase. In this phase students collect information, make observations, and focus on evidence to help problem solve and reason. Students consolidate their thinking during this time as they encounter novel tasks that challenge their thinking. This time supports the final phase of GRR, Independent Learning or the "You Do It Alone" phase. At this phase, the students should be able to demonstrate mastery over the concepts introduced by the teacher in the first phase (Fisher & Frey, 2013). The GRR can be used to support student learning and exploration in the learning objective if students are provided the opportunity.

From the GRR model, my study focus was on the two intermediate phases, the Guided Instruction and the Collaborative Learning phases. From these two phases we can explore the power of academic conversations with the teacher to student and with student to student. From the literature review three prominent educational theorists supported the need for academic conversation from the student perspective supported a student centered learning model, including Piaget, Dewey, and Vygotsky (Quaglia et al., 2020). Piaget (1936) and Dewey (1938) stated that active methods should be used to allow all students the opportunity to construct their own truth. Vygotsky (1978) supported this idea and believed that students should be given the ability to construct knowledge and take ownership of their own learning. Shor (1996) provides support to the GRR and the efforts towards student voice being utilized with the concept of "power sharing." This concept "creates the desire and imagination of change while also creating the experience and skills for it" (Shor 1996, p. 176). Zwiers and Crawford (2011) elaborate extensively on the benefits of academic conversations. From their book they describe many advantages when academic conversations are used appropriately:

- Builds Vocabulary (p. 12)

- Builds Critical Thinking Skills (p. 15)

- Promotes Different Perspectives and empathy (p. 16)

- Fosters Creativity (p. 17)

- Helps students co-construct understandings (p. 19)

- Helps teachers and students assess learning (p. 19)

- Builds Relationships (p. 20)

- Builds Confidence and Academic Identity (p. 23)

- Builds Student Voice and Empowerment (p. 25)

All of these authors support opportunities for students to use their voice and explore through the Collaborative Learning phase. However, structures must be in place to support teachers in the shift of responsibility. Fisher and Frey (2013) argue the task's design determines how much learning occurs. A task that requires little interaction with one another other than dividing up the work will not result in new ideas. It's simply repeating what is already known. Four desks pushed together does not guarantee collaborative learning or purposeful academic conversations. Quaglia et al. (2020) identify a regular teacher misconception: the falsehood that teachers are natural and great communicators. Many teachers do not utilize all phases of the GRR model because they have not received the appropriate support for tapping into student voice. To make progress with the voice framework being built into the school, leaders must first listen with genuine intent to learn from the voices of others, and then lead by taking action together (Quaglia et al., 2020). Administrators can support this need with the appropriate implementation of the next practice.

Teacher Observations and Conferences

Within the literature review, the next step to equitable teaching and learning practices is to know the strategies and identify and relay them to the teachers. In the study, I refer to cohesive instructional leadership as a two-step process. In summation, "cohesion" refers to diagnosing a teacher's instructional skills and facilitating a conversation with the teacher about developing those skills. This section unpacks the research around this process, the teacher observation, and the conference that occurs afterward.

Blase and Blase (1999) explore the effectiveness of teacher observations and feedback from the teacher's perspective. The study sought to gather data from teachers on what they believed was helpful to their instruction for the classroom observer. Blase and Blase (1999) found two significant themes unveiled from the data: talking with teachers to promote reflection and promoting professional growth. For this literature review, I focus on the first theme.

A key tenet of talking with teachers to promote their reflection about their instruction is that teachers valued dialogue from principals that encouraged them to be aware and critically reflect on their practice. Principals used five main strategies when promoting teacher reflection:

1. making suggestions,

2. giving feedback,

3. modeling,

4. using inquiry, and

5. giving praise.

Principals who make suggestions that were purposeful, appropriate, and non-threatening received praise. The principals' suggestions were not directives because Blase and Blase (1999) found that the principals listened, shared their experiences, used examples, gave teachers a choice,

encouraged risk-taking, and offered professional literature. When giving teachers feedback, the principals focused on skills identified as effective and focused on the observed classroom behavior, was detailed and specific, expressed support, provided praise, provided a problem-solving focus based on trust and respect, and expressed principal availability for a follow-up talk. Modeling offered the opportunity for teachers to see the principals demonstrate the desired instructional techniques. However, there was a warning to ensure the principal cultivated respectful and trusting relationships with teachers, so the modeling and follow-up discussions were not offensive.

The fourth strategy was using inquiry and soliciting advice or opinions from the teachers. This approach can be very effective for a novice principal or one who has limited experience with a particular content teacher. In this strategy, instead of giving direct suggestions or demonstrations, the principal asks the teacher questions about why they are doing what they are doing and what the desired outcome is in the scenario. Blase and Blase (1999) found that "using inquiry and soliciting advice were related to a positive impact on teacher motivation, self-esteem, efficacy, sense of security, and reflective behavior" (p. 362). This strategy could hold the key to providing teachers with deep reflection and critical thinking about their instructional practices. Coupling the fourth strategy with the fifth, giving praise on specific and concrete teacher behavior, was very effective. Teachers developed more reflective behavior, creativity, and risk taking towards reinforcing effective teaching strategies when principals praised and developed trusting relationships with their teachers.

Blase and Blase (1999) provide a solid foundation for the skills principals should develop to become effective instructional leaders. Regardless of the principal's experience, these strategies offer principals effective strategies to interact with teachers daily. Additional authors

expand on these strategies and provide their perspectives on effective instructional leadership through teacher observations and conferences.

A study by Grissom et al. (2013) determined the effectiveness of principals in the broad scope of a school's achievement. The primary goal of this study was to examine the extent to which overall and specific instructional time use was associated with student achievement growth and with the trajectory of schools' student achievement growth over time. The researchers found that time spent on teacher coaching, evaluation, and developing the school's educational program predict positive achievement gains. In these support interactions, principals focused on how teachers could improve their teaching, support students academically, and discuss curriculum areas and classroom management. They also found that time spent on informal classroom walkthroughs negatively predicts student growth, particularly in high schools. Grissom et al. (2013) clarifies that this does not mean walkthrough practices are not helpful, but cautions that how principals traditionally use the data from walkthroughs may be less beneficial. This study helps reinforce the strategies Blase and Blase (1999) discovered from the teacher's perspective of what provides the greatest impact in their classrooms, which leads to a positive impact on the school.

Collaborative Leadership

In order to build and sustain a cohesive instructional leadership team, I unpack the qualities needed to build that team. This study is grounded in the shared belief from Militello et al. (2009) that successful school leaders cannot operate in isolation. In this section, distributive leadership and relational trust are explored.

Distributive Leadership

High performing schools widely and wisely distribute leadership (Leithwood et al., 2009). Therefore the idea of distributive leadership needs to be defined to gather its characteristics. Harris et al. (2007) identify two defined models of distributive leadership. In the theoretical sense, Spillane et al. (2001) assists with the definition that distributed leadership is best understood as "practice distributed over leaders, followers, and their situation and incorporates the activities of multiple groups of individuals" (p. 20). This implies a social distribution of leadership where the leadership function is "stretched over the work of a number of individuals and the task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders" (Spillane et al., 2001, p. 20). Another view provided by Harris et al. (2007) describes a normative definition where there is no hierarchal model of leadership. In this model there is a shared leadership where duties are distributed amongst a team or organization.

When utilized with limited structural and cultural barriers, distributive leadership tends to have a positive relationship with organizational change (Blase & Blase, 1999). Harris et al. (2007) highlights two key conditions necessary for successful leadership distribution. First, leadership needs to be distributed to those who have, or can develop, the knowledge or expertise required to carry out the leadership tasks expected of them. Second, effective distributed leadership needs to be coordinated. The authors recognized that much depends on the way in which leadership is distributed, how it is distributed, and for what purpose. With appropriate parameters distributive leadership can impact change (Harris et al., 2007).

Militello et al. (2009) identifies one structure of meaningful collaboration is the community of practice, often called professional learning communities. Three characteristics are needed in a community of practice: joint enterprise, mutual engagement, and a shared repertoire.

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Joint enterprise is the collective understanding of accomplishing something together. Mutual

engagement is the understanding that throughout the process the collective group will develop

new skills and refine old ones through dialogue and shared experiences. A shared repertoire

acknowledges that, over time, common resources are shared such as artifacts, language, and

vocabulary (Militello et al., 2009; Wenger, 1999).

Relational Trust

A common theme throughout this chapter is the importance of trust in relationships with

leadership and the working environment for growth and success. Nash (2019) states that a

positive working environment "helps develop the relational trust needed." Yet, while many

intuitively understand the term, "trust," a formal definition may be difficult to compose.

Tschannen-Moran (2014) provides a definition for trust as "one's willingness to be vulnerable to

another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent, honest, open, reliable, [and]

competent" (p. 17). And Baier (1994) provides a slight alternative, "Trust is the assurance that

one can count on the good will of another to act in one's best interest (p. 99). With these working

definitions, we can identify and develop the characteristics needed to build relationships amongst

teachers and in a team setting.

Tschannen-Moran (2014) often reiterates that trust must be cultivated over time. In early

stages, trust in one's reputation supports that initial perceived trust. However, over time, personal

factors like values, attitudes, moods, and emotions can influence the relationship. The cultivation

of trust takes root when the participants in the relationship gain experience and learn more about

one another. This trust continues to build upon its support through structural supports like

protocols and a culture of cooperation towards a common goal or mission (Tschannen-Moran,

2014).

Hammond (2015) shares ways of developing this trust over time and it starts with the act of listening. Ruder (2010) and Hammond (2015) agree that a powerful way to build rapport and trust is to give one's full attention to the speaker and to what is being said. The use of subtle body language can reinforce the act of active engagement. Next, understand the feeling behind the words and be sensitive to the emotions being expressed. Sometimes, the tone of how something is said is more important than the words expressed. Then, one must suspend judgment and listen with compassion. Remember, the speaker may be providing a vulnerable moment in which you, as the active listener, have the opportunity to provide empathy. Finally, to build trust through listening, we should honor the speaker's cultural way of communicating (Hammond, 2015).

As these authors have identified the power of listening, Quaglia et al. (2020) recognize the power of the voice, the other element of dialogue. Quaglia et al. (2020) recognize that building a foundation of trust and respect helps form positive relationships, which can lead to buy-in for leaders. This trust does not develop overnight; the leader must be willing to listen and value the speaker's voice as an active participant. Three guiding principles of voice emerge that greatly affect the academic motivation forged by trust and respect: self-worth, engagement, and purpose. The power of voice does not materialize without the foundation of trust (Quaglia et al., 2020).

Ruder (2010) provides another perspective on trust in collective leadership. Collective leadership develops from a group focus on a common cause coming together to build trust and safety over time. With trust and safety comes commitment. This is why companies and institutions form strong mission statements, so their constituents all know the common goal. Another aspect of collective leadership is building deep relationships with those in the group. In

this process group members learn about each other, which requires group members to be present in the shared experience. This attention allows for response to an opportunity when it presents itself in the collective learning. Instead of following a step by step process, this leadership built on relationships is shared and flexible and evolves over time (Ruder, 2010).

Linden (2002) provides a framework for collaboration that succinctly outlines the principles needed for collective leadership. In the context of this study, our steps are to first, get the basics in place: a shared purpose, a pursuit of collaboration towards a solution, the right people at the table, and a champion. Second, for the principals to have an open, trusting relationship with one another, which is described as the glue. The development of high stakes, which in this case is growth of instructional leadership which ultimately affects student achievement. Next, a group of collaborators—our CPR group. The final element is building collaborative leadership, which is providing leadership with the lack of positionality or authority over each other—distributive leadership (Linden, 2002).

Collective leadership plays an essential role in study my FoP. Linden (2002) helps summarize clear steps that can be taken in the PAR process. The development of the CPR group is based on many factors identified in this section: a shared goal, dialogue, trust, respect, and competency of knowledge.

Conclusion

Throughout the literature review common strategies, themes, and ideas emerged about instructional leadership. One common thread woven throughout all the literature was the quality of relational trust. This trust must be developed and present with teachers, administrators, and even the students who are engaged in instruction. Figure 6 captures the concept that strengthens

Figure 6. Literature bins relationship.

instructional leadership. A collaborative mindset built with trust must be established along with the knowledge and skills of identifying equitable teaching and learning practices.

The four-frame model coupled with the myriad of expectations and administrators' duties can make instructional leaders lose focus on their goals. These expectations make collaborative leadership an excellent way to distribute leadership amongst administrators to accomplish the common goal: building and sustaining a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team. This review provides effective instructional strategies that can be shared with teachers and how to facilitate those conversations with teachers for buy-in.

From the literature review and the theory of action, a conceptual framework has emerged. Figure 7 provides a conceptual framework of the PAR study. When entering a school environment, each administrator comes with his or her personal experiences, beliefs, and skills of instructional leadership. Administrators should have a common purpose and understanding of what instructional leadership looks like and how to implement it within the school. Therefore, if a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team is built and sustained through the development of assistant principals, then all teachers will have consistent and meaningful feedback towards their growth and development.

Chapter 3 unpacks the methodology for the study. It showcases how the information in this literature review correlates with the plan of action. Furthermore, Chapter 3 further reinforces the importance of the selected literature bins and how they are essential to the study.

Collective Growth and Development

Administrator

Administrator

Administrator

Administrator

Cohesive Administrative Team

Consistent Instructional Leadership

Meaningful Teacher Feedback and Academic Conversations
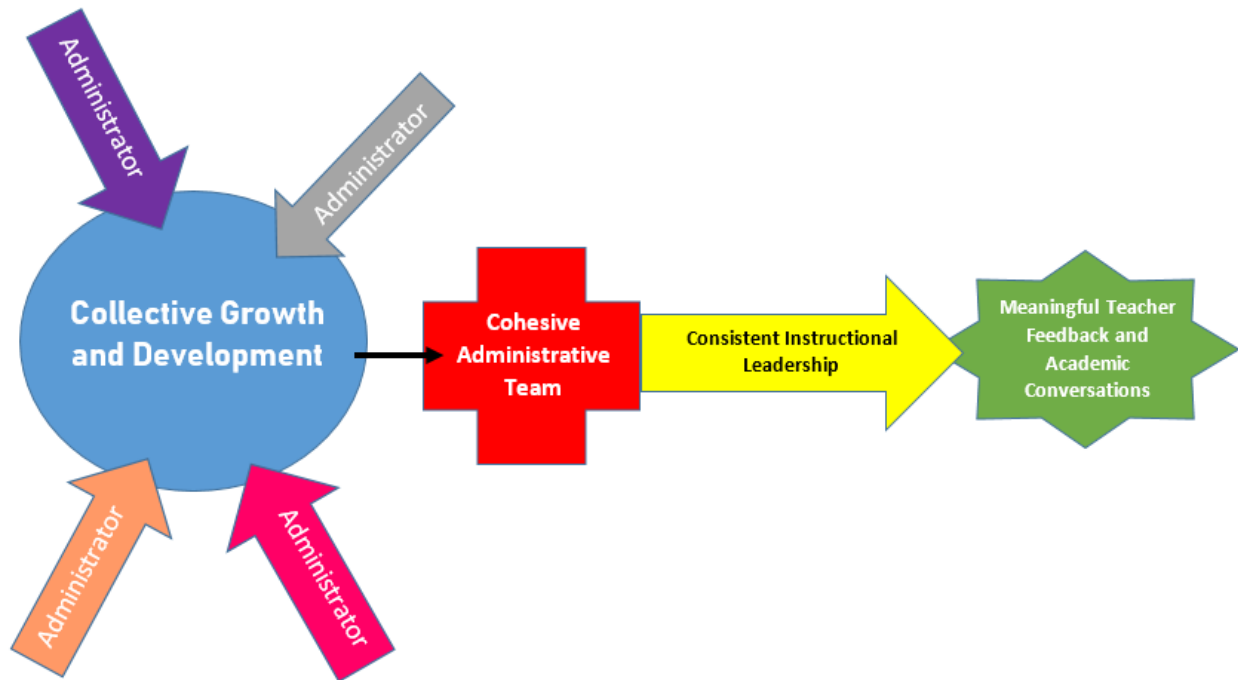
Theory of Action:
If a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team is built and sustained through the development of assistant principals, then all teachers will have consistent and meaningful feedback towards their growth and development.

Figure 7. Conceptual framework of the theory of action.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

This research study took instructional support back to a familiar place for administrators: the classroom. Teacher observations and interactions are critical for administrative impact on student achievement (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2014). Specifically, I examined four assistant principals from a mid-sized high school in eastern North Carolina over two years to support their growth and development as instructional leaders. The study began with three assistant principals, and one transitioned to a district position. A new administrator joined the CPR group during PAR Cycle Two. This PAR aimed to expand their confidence, knowledge, and skills by conducting consistent teacher observations and facilitating evidence-based conversations with teachers afterward. As a result, this study's Focus of Practice (FoP) was how to build and sustain a cohesive and consistent high school instructional leadership team.

This chapter outlines a qualitative research methodology followed by the specific Participatory Action Research (PAR) design employed. I then introduce the participants of the study. Next, I discuss the data collection process and the plan for analyzing it. I conclude with the limitations of my research before concluding with the legal dynamics of the study with confidentiality and ethical considerations.

Qualitative Research Process

Creswell and Creswell (2018) identify three research designs: quantitative research, qualitative research process, and mixed methods research. Quantitative research consists of a survey and experimental research, both represented by numerical results. Qualitative research stems from the humanities and social sciences. Mixed methods research collects both quantitative and qualitative data. I aligned my study with qualitative research based on the

methods of data collection, the role of the researcher, and the inductive nature of the data analysis.

A qualitative research methodology aligned with my Focus of Practice. More importantly, qualitative methods supported answering the research questions for this study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative researchers typically conduct their work in a natural setting. Qualitative studies also allow the researcher and participants to engage in reflective practices and allow the researcher and participants to discover and explore new information while participating in the designed process. Some examples of qualitative research include narrative research, grounded theory, case study, and participatory action research.

I used qualitative methodologies, specifically a Participatory Action Research (PAR) design. This research design aimed to use data to support cycles of inquiry to answer the research questions. Data collection included classroom observations, post-observation conferences, teacher conferences, reflective memos, and Community Learning Exchange (CLE) artifacts.

Participatory Action Research

The participatory action research model was best suited for my Focus of Practice. I co-created structures and protocols that helped build and sustain a cohesive instructional leadership team by supporting the growth and development of assistant principals as instructional leaders. PAR is an "inquiry done by or with insiders to an organization or community, but never to or on them" (Herr & Anderson, 2014, p. 3). My initial Community Learning Exchange with school administrators confirmed a willingness to engage in a learning process with one another. Herr and Anderson (2014) state participatory action research "is best done in collaboration with others who have a stake in the problem under investigation" (p. 4).

Furthermore, Herr and Anderson (2014) share that "one uses PAR to pose and solve problems within businesses to raise productivity, while others use PAR to pose and solve problems to transform consciousness and ultimately society" (p. 11). Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) support the PAR methodology as "fundamentally participatory, where participants go to work on themselves, examining the relationship between knowledge, identity, agency, and practice" (p. 567). They go on to state that PAR "is reflexive in that the object of investigation is to change the world for the better in several ways: practice, knowledge of practice, social structures, and social media (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p. 566). Finally, PAR "aims to transform both theory and practice and views these as mutually dependent" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p. 566); therefore, for my PAR, this means that we simultaneously accomplished the research work, and we would discover how to build and sustain a cohesive, instructional leadership team.

For these reasons, the PAR design helped me answer questions about building and sustaining a cohesive instructional team and concurrently develop the knowledge and skills needed for the assistant principals to become stronger instructional leaders. I worked with assistant principals in this PAR study to develop their instructional leadership skills while building a strong administrative team.

Improvement Science

Bryk et al. (2015) outline six necessary principles in Improvement Science research to consider when working as a collaborative team. The first principle is to ensure the work is user-centered and focused on a specific problem. This principle reflects the constant reference to the FoP and the decision to use a PAR model to conduct this study. The second principle is to understand how variation in performance is core. Each contributor has a different knowledge

base, skill set, and life experiences, which are essential to a successful PAR. Knowing that all my participants have other knowledge, skills, and unique experiences was crucial to me as I designed this study. The third principle refers to seeing the system that produces the current outcomes. For this principle, I made sure the research questions and theory of action were clearly stated and revisited throughout the study. The fourth principle summarizes that we cannot improve what we do not measure (Bryk et al., 2015). The unit of analysis and the specific data collection and analysis designs are described later in this section. The fifth improvement principle is the necessity to anchor improvements in disciplined inquiry. For this PAR study, I anchored the investigation in the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model, which included three cycles of inquiry. These Improvement Science principles combined with Networked Improvement Communities (NIC) and Community Learning Exchanges (CLE) accelerated learning within the study group (Bryk et al., 2015; Guajardo et al., 2015).

NICs are a small group of people aligned with a common focus to investigate a problem. NICs are grounded as a scientific learning community with a well-defined, common aim (Bryk et al., 2015). Another characteristic of the NIC is for members to compare results and learn from one another. Common language and measures are developed within the NICs to enable social learning. NICs provide a sound alternative to actively organizing different contributors of expertise in small groups to solve educational issues (Bryk et al., 2015). CLEs are mechanisms for bringing in more voices through structured procedures and protocols (Guajardo et al., 2015). For this study, the CPR group will function as a NIC.

Community Learning Exchange

A CLE allows community members to come together and engage in learning activities. The learning exchange provides a gracious space to welcome everyone to learn together and

from one another. The activities also encourage the members to deepen their relationships with one another (Guajardo et al., 2015). In the context of this study, I describe two versions of CLEs. The Micro-Community Learning (MCLE) exchange is the regular learning exchange between the CPR group members. The term "Micro" references the small size of the CLE. The other type of CLE in this study is considered a Teacher Learning Exchange (TCLE); this learning exchange includes the teacher participants in the study as well as the CPR group. The teacher participants are discussed later in the chapter.

Guajardo et al. (2015) provide five foundational principles, or axioms, to keep in mind when conducting a CLE. The first two include *learning and leadership are dynamic social processes,* and c*onversations are critical and central pedagogical processes*. These two principles reinforced the construct of a PAR study being a collaborative process. The third principle, *the people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local concerns*, provided the backbone of my PAR design. I focused on the administrative team in my school for this improvement effort. The fourth principle is *crossing boundaries enriches the development and educational process*. The final principle is *hope and change are built on the assets and dreams of locals and their communities*. The TCLE highlighted the last two axioms and offered each member the opportunity to learn from others in various settings and from others who may have different experiences than one's own (Guajardo et al., 2015). Figure 8 shows how these axioms are connected and not stand-alone principles. I embraced these five principles as I conducted several CLEs during my PAR. The CLEs are an excellent opportunity to learn from other community members.

Figure adapted from Guajardo, M. A., Guajardo, F., Janson, C., & Militello, M. (2016). *Reframing community partnerships in education: uniting the power of place and wisdom of people*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Figure 8. CLE axioms.

Research Questions

The overarching research question which guided this study was: How does a high school principal build and sustain a consistent and cohesive leadership team with assistant principals to support their growth and development as instructional leaders? To examine this topic more closely, I examined the following sub questions:

1. To what extent do high school administrators use academic discourse to build cohesion?

2. How does a high school leadership team consistently work together and on their own to sustain instructional leadership?

3. How does supporting the growth and development of high school assistant principals build my capacity as an educational leader?

Action Research Cycles

Participants, Data Collection, and Analysis

I designed this PAR study to build and sustain a cohesive and consistent leadership team of instructional leaders. Therefore, a group of Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR) assisted with collecting data for the PAR. The CPR group met with teachers to strengthen their skills and dispositions around instructional leadership through classroom observations and post-conference conversations.

Participants

The participants for this PAR study included assistant principals, teachers, and me. I serve as a high school principal and lead researcher for the study. All participants were from the same high school in eastern North Carolina. At any given time, the three current assistant principals and I made up the Co-Practitioner Research (CPR) group, which served as my NIC.

Table 1

PAR Cycle Overview

Research Cycle	Time Period	Activities
PAR Pre-Cycle and Context	August-November 2021	Familiarize CPR Group with Observational tools PD on conducting observations and post-observation conferences using evidence-based observations Classroom Observation Video Reviews
PAR Cycle One	January - April 2022	MCLEs to discuss the utilization of an observational tool Conduct classroom observations using the Calling-on Observational Tool Captured video recordings of classroom observations and post-conference observations with teachers. Conduct MCLEs with CPR group to reflect on their practice with evidence-based observations Hosted TCLE 1 to triangulate evidence
PAR Cycle Two	May - October 2022	CALL Survey shared with the entire school staff MCLEs continued with the CPR group and reflected on their practice with evidence-based observations Conducted 2nd round of classroom observations with teacher participants Hosted TCLE 2

High school teachers served as the other participants. Four high school mathematics and four science teachers worked closely with the assistant principals. I invited these teachers to participate. I secured participant consent forms from the assistant principals and the eight high school teachers participating with the assistant principals (see Appendix D). During PAR Cycle Two, a new assistant principal transitioned into the school, and one math teacher participant transitioned to an elementary school. The new assistant principal also signed a consent form to participate, and I did not replace the math teacher in the last cycle. As the lead researcher and supervisor of the assistant principals and teachers, I recognized and gave them the authority to leave the study at any time without retribution. I informed all participants that this study would not be for district evaluations or used as evidence for any repercussions.

Data Collection

A number of data collection activities provided a robust data set to understand the research questions. Each data set aligned with the overarching research question and subsequent research questions. I outlined the data sources in Table 2 and provides a narrative in the following paragraphs.

Community Learning Exchanges (CLE)

Using Community Learning Exchanges provided opportunities to collect meaningful information and feedback and obtain various perspectives on the FoP. CLEs are structured meetings with large or small groups of people. The bi-monthly CPR group meetings for this study were called Micro-CLEs (MCLE). These meetings differed from other administrative meetings because they focused on instructional leadership. Teachers participated in larger CLEs. For this study, I call them Teacher CLEs (TCLE). During the TCLEs, the members provided feedback about the process, while engaging in reflection activities. The data from these TCLEs

Table 2

Overarching Question: How does a high school principal build and sustain a consistent and cohesive leadership team with assistant principals to support their growth and development as instructional leaders?

Research Sub-Question	Data Source	Triangulation
To what extent do high school administrators use academic discourse to build cohesion?	● Micro-CLE ● Classroom Observations and Post-Observation Conferences ● Memos ● Documents	● Micro-CLE Artifacts ● Lead Researcher Memos
How does a high school leadership team consistently work together and on their own to sustain instructional leadership?	● Micro-CLE ● Classroom Observations and Post-Observation Conferences	● Teacher-CLE Artifacts ● Lead Researcher Memos
How does supporting the growth and development of high school assistant principals build my capacity as an educational leader?	● Micro-CLE ● CALL Survey ● CLE Artifacts	● Memos ● Lead Researcher Memos

was important for the purpose of the PAR and allowed teachers to share their voices about the value of the observational tools and the coaching conversations. I collected data from agendas, meeting minutes, and other co-created artifacts, such as graphs, visuals, and audio recordings of the CLEs (see Appendix E). I coded the artifacts from the CLEs to help me answer the research questions.

Classroom Observations and Post-Observation Conferences

The CPR group's preparation for their classroom observations provided another data collection instrument: observational tools which offered an objective look at the teacher-student interactions and the depth of questioning in the classroom instruction (see Appendices G and H). With these tools, the CPR group observer tracked how often specific students were called upon and what the response was to the teacher's actions. We used an audio or video recording to provide more accurate tracking. Therefore, when the information was provided to the teacher for the post-observation conference, there was be minimal bias to what was seen or said in the lesson. This data collection step took time to master with the CPR members. This construction of familiarity with the data collection instruments took place in the PAR Pre-cycle and the beginning of PAR Cycle One. To provide consistency among the CPR group members, I provided professional development within the MCLEs. We reviewed and watched video recorded lessons to practice with the observational tools and watched recorded post-observation conversations of others to better use the I^4 Conversation Guide.

Memos

We used reflective memoing throughout the study as another formal data collection instrument. Each member of the CPR group wrote reflective memos after participating in the MCLEs. According to Birks et al. (2008), memoing and memos assist the researcher in moving

from actual data to abstract themes within the study context. "Through the use of memos, the researcher can immerse themselves in the data, explore the meanings that this data holds, maintain continuity and sustained momentum in the conduct of research" (Birks et al., 2008, p. 68). The purpose of the memoing process is so the researcher can "articulate, explore, contemplate, and challenge their interpretations when examining data" (Birks et al., 2008, p. 71).

The memoing process was personal and subjective. Therefore, Kolb (1984) designed a process to complete consistent reflective memos. Kolb adapted a model from the Swiss psychologist Piaget, who conducted extensive work in cognitive development. The reflective memoing structure contains four parts:

1. engaging in the experience,

2. reflecting on the experience,

3. contextualizing the experience, and

4. planning for the future (Kolb, 1984).

The memos helped collect evidence by way of tracking participants thinking and feeling. Which, after coding and analysis, helped answer the research questions. For the CPR group, we completed reflective memos throughout each PAR cycle for a total of eight reflective memo activities.

The memoing process directly aligns with the PDSA model and this PAR study. My lead researcher memos served as a chronological log of actions, steps, and adjustments to the study. They also provided a historical context to understand my thought process during the time of specific actions, events, or experiences. Saldaña (2016) advises that the researcher should write reflectively on the coding processes, encoding choices, and how the inquiry process is taking shape in the emergent patterns, categories, themes, and concepts in the data (see Appendix I).

Documents

Throughout the PAR, I collected other forms of data sets. Data came from agendas, meeting notes, field notes, and articles read, among others. I analyzed and coded this data, searching for themes and emergent understandings that might help answer my research questions.

CALL Survey

The Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership for Learning (CALL) survey is a data collection instrument that provides school and district leadership teams' feedback (Halverson & Kelley, 2017). I used the CALL survey data indirectly in this study. Not to answer the research questions, but instead to inform the CPR group of the impact of the PAR study on instructional leadership across the school. I shared the CALL survey with the entire staff at the beginning of PAR Cycle Two (see Appendix F). I used this data in the PDSA cycle to reflect and ask more profound questions to the participants about why some results may have populated.

Data Analysis

There were several sets of data to analyze. This data analysis process aimed to move the data to common codes, then from codes to common categories and themes (Saldaña, 2016). The claims aligned with the FoP and helped answer the research questions proposed. Each data collection instrument provided raw data and I coded it for its commonalities throughout the three PAR cycles.

The data collection came in many different formats; therefore, I used Saldaña's (2016) method for coding data to synthesize data into codes. Figure 9 outlines the Saldaña coding process. These codes revealed some common themes discussed within the CPR group (Saldaña,

Particular ————————————————— To ——————————————→ General

Data					
Data					
Data	Codes	Category			
Data	Codes		Emergent Theme		
Data	Codes	Category		Themes	Assertions & Claims
Data	Codes		Emergent Theme		
Data	Codes	Category			
Data	Codes				
Data					

Chapter 5   Chapter 5   Chapter 7

Raw Data ⟹ Information ⟹ Codify Info ⟹ Knowlege
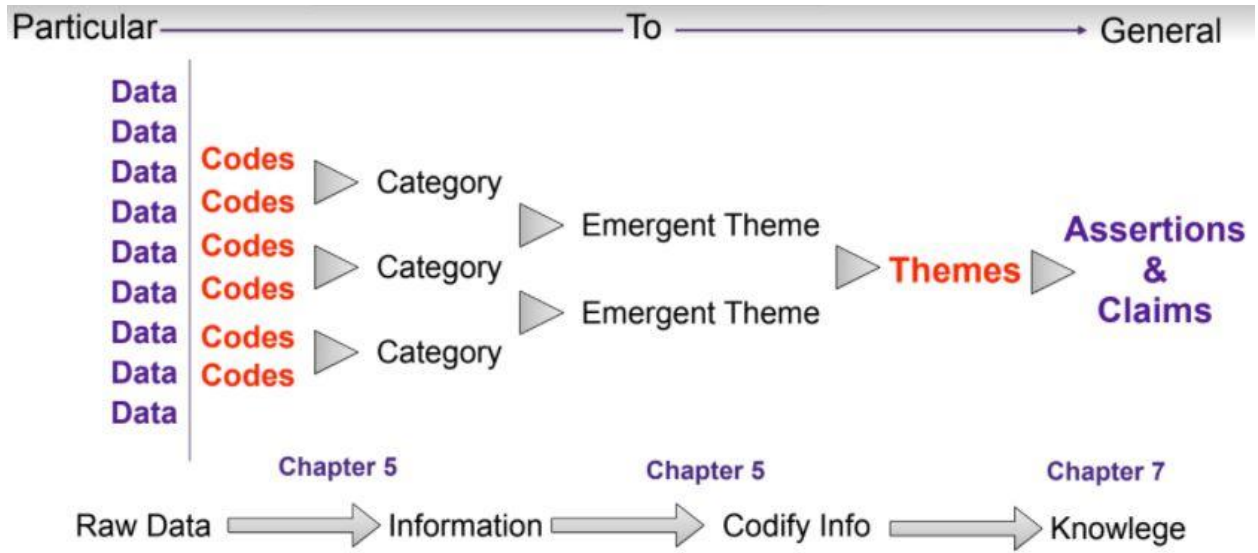
Note. (Saldaña, 2016).

Figure 9. Coding process.

2016). The outcome of this process was that the themes could be formed into an assertion and claim. This claim related to and helped answer the research questions.

Study Limitations

This PAR study had several limitations that Quierós et al. (2017) outlined and warned that I might encounter. I encountered the following restrictions and worked to ease their impact on the study: time, the difficulty of collecting data in real time, the researcher's biases, and generalizing observation data into codes.

Qualitative Research, by nature and specifically PAR, is time-consuming. To reduce the time constraints, I intentionally embedded the PAR study activities within the timeframe of the school day. Therefore, it did not add much more to the participants' day or responsibilities. For the same reason, I kept the meeting dates confined within the dates of the yearly school schedule. Collecting data using the Calling -On observations tool, scheduling and conducting classroom observations, and post-conference sessions required extra time. The CRP members also had to complete the formal state-required evaluation process with all non-participating teachers, which also involved classroom observations. Time played a significant role when I had to analyze and code data, which took longer than expected. On the other hand, the three PAR Cycles made the study organized and timely.

A researcher's bias can occur throughout any study. As the lead researcher and the principal with direct oversight of the CRP members and the teachers, I was transparent and consciously aware of how the teachers perceived the CPR members. I was also aware of how the CPR members might have the desire to please me by providing socially desirable responses.

Before participation, all participants gave informed consent without any coercion or sense of obligation; in addition, all participants could terminate consent at any time during the study

without reprisal. Furthermore, I paid close attention to the phrasing of the questions in the TCLEs, MCLEs, and during the CPR group meetings. These measures helped mitigate the researcher's bias.

In addition, the size and context of this study limit the findings and outcomes. As a result, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to other contexts; however, the process used in the study can be replicated in different contexts.

Internal Validity

The term "internal validity" addresses the study's trustworthiness (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, in my participatory action research, I disciplined myself not to coerce ideas and themes into the data. This process is termed "referential adequacy" (Gerdes & Conn, 2001). To strengthen the internal validity of my study, I asked follow-up questions for other participants' perspectives to elaborate on their ideas and used reflective memos regularly. For memos, there are four parts: (1) the experience that took place, (2) the reflection on that experience, (3) how my experience and reflection apply to the literature known as abstract conceptualization, (4) what my next steps would be. I used these reflective memos in the MCLEs (Kolb, 1984). Over the course of the PAR cycles, I reviewed the change in my views, perspectives, formulation of ideas, and shifts in my study design. I continued using the memos to gather my thoughts, questions, and realizations about how I interact and build a cohesive and consistent instructional team. According to Saldaña (2016), memoing is "the transitional process between coding to a more formal write-up of the study" (p. 54). The practice of memoing, if implemented consistently, leads to discovering new codes within the data collection.

A second safeguard to address internal validity was using multiple validity processes as a check and balance process. This method reinforced consistency in data collection and analysis

among the CPR group. Denizen (1970) uses the term "triangulation." This method uses multiple investigators, multiple data sources, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings (Denizen, 1970; Merriman, 1988). During this method, the CPR group used the same observational tools to observe each participant's classroom. We video-recorded the observation to ensure that teacher questions and actions were documented accurately in the Calling-on observation tool. During the post-observation conference, we also recorded the teacher and administrator discussion. This served as a data collection step and a systematic design for validity purposes. As the lead researcher, I reviewed the post-observation and the administrator involved in the observation and conference. In the triangulation method, the objective is to determine if common findings come from different sources.

I implemented Community Learning Exchanges (CLE) to add another layer of triangulation that strengthened internal validity. The participants of the CLEs played an essential role in providing data from discussions about the FoP. By gathering the results, I coded other forms of data to further look for common findings while reducing the researcher's bias.

The PAR's structural Member Checks are designed to help make the data more trustworthy for those in the study and others who may want to replicate this PAR or implement instructional leadership team-building practices. The importance of maximizing integrity in a qualitative study meant that consistent measures must exist. The recordings and journals assisted with this need (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Guba and Lincoln (2005) share that the trustworthiness of a research study is essential to evaluating its worth. For my PAR, I co-created protocols and practices that enhanced the validity of the study with the CPR group during our regular administrative meetings. The study's validity

involves establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. With the proper safeguards in place, I provided a blueprint for other researchers to follow.

External Validity

The term "external validity" refers to the applicability of the study and processes in another setting or context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study has future implications on how administrators work together, how they are trained as instructional leaders, and how they design protocols and practices for classroom observations. This study might be included in literature reviews of authors who develop team-building strategies for leaders. Therefore, data consistency was paramount when adhering to the PAR design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gibbs, 2007).

In my PAR design, I created several protocols to ensure the objectivity of the data collection process and how this information could be transferred to other school settings. As shared in the internal validity section, I incorporated video recordings into the observation and post-observation conference process. This allowed for the objectivity of the data. We conducted regular CPR Member Check within the MCLE, persistent observations, and peer debriefing (Gerdes & Conn, 2001). With these protocols, I created a schedule for regular check-ins with the CPR group, both formal and informal.

I implemented clear definitions for my coded terms as the final internal validity safeguard. Creswell and Creswell (2018) caution not to overlap definitions of codes while analyzing data. I combated this by continually comparing data with the codes and recording them in my researcher's memos and codebook (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gibbs, 2007).

Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations

As the lead researcher and supervisor of the assistant principals and teachers, I recognized my positionality and gave authority to the teachers or a member of the CPR group to stop at any time without retribution. I created this study as an opportunity for a learning process and did not consider district or state evaluations in any way. Therefore, participants did not have to fear career repercussions during this learning process.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) advised to anticipate a myriad of ethical considerations before the start of a study and throughout a study. For example, I designed my PAR to take place in the school where I served as principal. The security of the data collected and the confidentiality of the participants were essential in this study. Because the goal was for teachers to feel no risk for their participation and to only see participation as a benefit to improve their practice, I kept all documents locked up. I changed all names so that others did not know what teachers said, and I cleaned the observation protocols of any identifying information.

Furthermore, to keep teachers anonymous in the post-observation conferences, the video recording focused on the CPR member rather than the teacher. For authenticity in the post-observation conversation, the teacher's name may have been stated with prior approval, even though they may not be seen on the recording. The teachers' names were changed as well for confidentiality and security purposes. For hard copy evidence, I secured all documents in my office cabinet behind lock and key. I received permission from the district to use school resources for electronic documents, which utilized email virus software and encryption programming. For electronically shared files, the district's encryption software covered the usage of the Google Suites tools and the privacy settings being reviewed in the shared folders. For

transcription purposes, I used a secured website, Rev.com, where my files were secured with password protection.

To uphold ethical standards and confidentiality, my study went before the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval before this study began (see Appendix A). I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI program) that reviews the standards in research, ethics, and compliance (see Appendix B). The local school district approved permission for the study to take place (see Appendix C). In addition, written participant consent was obtained before proceeding with this study (see Appendix D).

Ethical considerations took place during the study. One consideration was not to deceive the participants. Although the participants may not have known the entire scope of the study, to reduce biased results, I shared the purpose of this study and what data would be collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). An additional consideration was the temptation to only record positive results. The safeguards of regular MCLEs and the TCLEs helped reduce this bias threat. Still, it was important to record the contradictory results, leading to new revelations in the study. One final, primary consideration during the study was the storage of information. I stored this data on the encrypted school drive, with the ability to download and save the information to an external hard drive as a backup.

Conclusion

I conducted my qualitative research study in the form of Participatory Action Research. As affirmed in a CLE Axiom, "the people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local concerns" (Guajardo et al., 2015, p. 25). The constructed research questions helped address my FoP. I explained the forms of data collection required, including the CLEs, and I explained the analysis needed to complete the study. I discussed the importance of

safeguarding the data and ethical considerations to ensure the study is secure. In preparation for

the PAR, I reflected that the puzzle pieces slowly began coming together on the timeline of the

PAR cycles. I was anxious to gather the team of participants and get started on this work to make

a difference for many educators for the future on how to build a cohesive instructional leadership

team.

CHAPTER 4: PAR PRE-CYCLE

I started the participatory action research (PAR) with a Pre-Cycle. Conducting a Pre-Cycle was crucial and critical because it allowed me to practice research techniques and set the stage for future PAR Cycles. During this study phase, I engaged the CPR group of three assistant principals in the MCLEs. During these learning exchanges, we discussed the purpose of the study, shared our experiential backgrounds as administrative leaders, and explored observation tools that we would use to observe classroom teachers.

This chapter details the PAR context, including the study's location and participants in the CPR group. I share the activities conducted to gather evidence and the raw data used in my coding process. I continue by explaining how emergent categories surfaced through my coding process. The chapter concludes with my reflections on learning and steps for PAR Cycle One.

PAR Context

When entering a school environment, each administrator comes with personal experiences, beliefs, and a set of skills for instructional leadership. Administrators working in the same school building, observing and working to elevate teachers, should have a common purpose and understanding of instructional leadership and how to implement it within their school. They should also work as a team so that all teachers move the instructional practices in the same direction. Therefore, if I build and sustain a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team through the development of assistant principals, all teachers will have consistent and meaningful feedback toward their growth and development. In this section, I share the context of the study and its participants, thus strengthening the advancement of my theory of action.

Context (Place)

Geographic counties determine North Carolina's school districts. This study takes place in a high school located in eastern North Carolina. Based on student population, the high school is classified as a midsized school in the state, serving just over 1,000 students annually. The high school is one of four traditional high schools within the district and has one predominant feeder middle school. The school is also considered a rural school, serving the vast southern region of the county, which encompasses about ten zip codes. For the purposes of this study, I refer to the school as Eastern High School.

Historically, the school was built in the late 1960s, which started racial integration. The school motto matches that era of change: "Strength through Unity." The school became the common thread that connected all of the small townships. During the study, I witnessed generations of families who had all attended the school and who returned for family nights and other special events. During my ten years of administrative experience at the school, the community embraced a sense of pride for the school, it is their crown jewel of common ground.

The school is considered one of the most diverse schools in the county. According to the 2021 enrollment, Eastern High's student body consisted of approximately 45% White students, 30% Hispanic students, and 22% African American students. About 16% of students identified as students with a learning disability, about 10% identified as academically and intellectually gifted, about 8% identified as English Language Learners, and over 53% of students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The school staff consists of 63 teachers, including 14 teachers classified as beginning teachers. From 2018 to the 2021-22 school year, we had a shift in staff diversity. Table 3 outlines the shift in staff demographics.

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Table 3

Staff Diversity from 2018 to 2021

Race and Gender	2018	2021	Difference
Black, Female	5	10	5
Black, Male	5	5	0
Hispanic, Female	2	3	1
Hispanic, Male	1	3	2
White, Female	42	36	-6
White, Male	26	24	-2

We host various clubs and activities at our school, including the Future Farmers of America Organization, BETA Club, Key Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Student Council Association, Black Student Union, Hispanic Student Union, and a Gay Straight Alliance. Students can lead these clubs and provide input into other school climate and culture areas, including school policies, through the student council. Eastern High offers a wide variety of athletics for boys and girls. As administrators, we shared supervisory duties for all extracurricular activities when they involved our school.

Eastern High prepares students for several opportunities in their post-secondary school career. We offer the most career and technical education courses in the school district, including Agricultural Sciences, Health Sciences, Automotive Services, Business Education, and Family and Consumer Sciences. For students preparing for higher education, we offer college-level courses in two formats: community college dual enrollment courses and college board AP courses. Our community college courses are available online or students can drive to the local community college to take classes on campus if their schedule permits. The AP courses are available online and in-person, including AP Biology, AP US History, AP Seminar and Research, AP Art, and two AP English courses. From our rural community, our data shows that most students committed to attending a community college after high school (approximately 60%), followed by joining the workforce (20%), next a four-year college or university (16%), and a small portion join the military (4%).

Over the last five years, the School Leadership Team shifted its focus to teachers' instructional practices. Over this same timeframe, educators, teachers, and administrators' roles transformed from instructors of knowledge to facilitators of learning in our school district. However, this has not been a smooth transition for the teachers at Eastern High School. As the

head instructional leader, I constantly work with other instructional leaders or the CPR group to provide constructive feedback towards this instructional paradigm shift.

In discussion with the CPR group members, we identified the School Improvement Team as an emerging asset. The School Improvement Team created ambitious goals and revised the mission and vision statements for the school's personnel to better align with the purpose and needs of the students, teachers, and community. My PAR study aligned beautifully with the revised mission of growing and developing educators to empower student learning.

The CPR group recognized friction between some teachers' values and the agreed upon mission of the school. During an earlier MCLE discussion focused on assets and challenges, the CPR group recognized that while many staff members consider the School Leadership Team an asset, it also held a challenge for the CPR group. A challenge manifested in the majority of teachers who had also graduated from this high school. The challenge was that they were familiar with how they grew up and how they were taught, and unfortunately, some of them held a narrow focus on change. They seem to believe that since old educational practices worked for them, they should also work for the current students. This challenge reinforced my FoP that the CPR group needed to be cohesive and consistent. When providing feedback and collaborating with teachers for our school, teachers needed a common vision to positively and equitably promote change.

Another challenge facing the CPR group was a swift change at all levels of administrative leadership. District leadership shifts and school leadership shifts occurred regularly on an annual basis. The administrative changes slowed down the relay of district instructional priorities and jumbled the communication on what was important. The changes also thwarted teachers' focus on personal growth and development in their classrooms, as teachers tried to find balance

between learning and implementing something new. These assets and challenges were why I thought having an administrative team consistent with their instructional practices and feedback was important. This consistency would allow teachers to focus on the school's vision to empower each student by preparing them to be socially responsible and driven lifelong learners through healthy relationships and rigorous instruction.

Context (People)

Over 65% of staff members had attended the school themselves. In comparison, only one school administrator attended high school in this district. Only two CPR group members even attended secondary school in North Carolina. This is not uncommon for administrators at all levels in this district. This trend starkly contrasts with staff members who work at the school. With a school rich in hometown pride and tradition, our school administrators must be very aware of the school's cultural values and find delicate ways to continue to move student learning forward with subtle shifts to the status quo. Like the school itself, the administrators are diverse in our backgrounds and experiences and the journeys we took in becoming school administrators. Table 4 provides a brief overview of the contrasting school leaders.

The members' aliases, such as Ms. Marie and Mr. Grant, are used throughout the study for identifying purposes. In the first MCLE, each CPR group member completed a leadership journey line to discuss the reflective experience described by Dewey (1938) and Freire (1970). From this activity, we gained a more profound understanding of each other's paths to school administration. Table 5 outlines the experiences that answered the question: What leadership experiences have shaped your identity as an educator and administrator? The CPR group possessed unique qualities and ambitions all surrounded by becoming better instructional leaders for the teachers and students in our school.

Table 4

CPR Members

Member	Gender and Racial Background	Years of Experience (Education, Administration)	State/Country of Origin
B. Marie	Female, White	12 years, 3.5 years	Ohio
M. Grant	Male, White	19 years, 8 years	South Africa
B. Rose	Female, Black	8 years, 1 year	North Carolina
B. Wilson*	Female, White	17 years, 7 years	North Carolina
H. Scott	Male, Black	15 years, 10 years	Ohio

Note. *Joined the CPR group during PAR Cycle Two, August 2022.

Table 5

Leadership Journey Lines

Age (Years)	Marie's Events	Grant's Events	Rose's Events	Scott's Events
0-10	-	-	-	Church Speeches
10-15	-	-	-	Peer Tutoring
15-20	CA Trip	South African (SA) Schooling	-	Teach Baltimore
20-25	TFA NM & TFA ENC/ NCMS, Cross Country Coach	SA Primary/ Coaching/ Ms. Tyler, Mentor SA Teacher	ECU Practicum, Mentor Elementary Teacher, Ms. Garner	TFA ENC/ Basketball Coach
25-30	Mr. Spell Mentor Principal/ NELA	Ms. Collins Mentor Teacher (USA)/ ROMS, Soccer Coach/ TOY	PBIS Chair/ Basketball Coach	Instructional Coach/ NELA
30-35	Parent Phone Conference/ Impromptu Grade-Level Meeting	APOY/ Ms. May/ Interim Principal	Summer School AP & STEM Teacher/ SSA Administrator	TRA/ SNHS
35-40	APOY	Mr. St. Clair/ Mentor Principal	-	ECU Project I[4]
40+	-	SNHS	-	-

B. Boss

The first assistant principal started their administrative career at the site of the study. She began as an assistant principal during her administrative internship in her master's degree program in April 2018. From her time at the school, she advanced from the new assistant principal to the most tenured assistant principal in only 2.5 years. Recently, she earned the honor of Assistant Principal of the Year for the school district in only her 3rd full year as an administrator. Her journey into education and school leadership did not start at her current school but in her home state of Ohio.

In college, Ms. Marie had no initial plans to be a teacher or administrator. She majored in international studies and wanted to work for the United States government. In the first micro-Community Learning Exchange (MCLE), she shared how she preferred to work behind the scenes rather than have any attention on herself. She wasn't into leadership roles in high school or college clubs but participated in a few high school sports. She never stood out as a vocal leader. Before she graduated college, she learned of the Teach for America (TFA) program through a friend who taught in Los Angeles, CA. She visited her friend in California and visited her classroom. She saw her friend serving students and thought she could do this as a backup to her original career plans. At college graduation time, in 2008, the recession hit, and jobs were sparse. TFA became a more viable option. Ms. Marie was accepted into TFA and placed on a reservation in the rural New Mexico region. Within the first weeks of arrival, she became homesick, deferred her TFA duties until the following year, and moved-back to Ohio. This deferment was an important low point for Ms. Marie. She felt she quit something worthwhile, and she told us of her determination that it not happen again. This became her catalyst as an educator.

As Ms. Marie continued to share in the MCLE, her first year in NC was rough, but she refused to quit. Ms. Marie described her greatest challenge as a lateral entry teacher as being extremely overwhelmed and unprepared for the classroom. The most experience she'd had before starting in her own classroom was spending a few days in her friend's classroom a few years prior. Typical struggles like classroom management were present in her class, but she believed the students knew she cared for them and wanted the best for them. TFA has a two-year commitment to the program. She exceeded that commitment by staying at her placement school for four years before moving to another school district to continue teaching middle school math. This led her to another step toward leadership.

At her new school was the first time an administrator showed attention to her leadership potential. Her principal invited her to meetings to listen but not lead, which was still not in her comfort zone. Ms. Marie took on a new role at her school, coaching sports. She was asked to assist with the cross-country team and serve as an athletic trainer for the school, which got her even more involved. From there, her principal nurtured her leadership abilities and encouraged her to become an administrator. She applied to the Northeast Leadership Academy (NELA) program through North Carolina State University. She credited the NELA program for pushing her out of her comfort zone and flushing out her insecurities to overcome them. She practiced these skills within the coursework before ever serving as an administrator.

She credited the NELA program for preparing her for some real-world experiences. As an actual administrator, she recounted two specific events that pushed her out of her comfort zone. First, during an angry parent conference as an elementary school principal intern, she learned to see multiple perspectives and stick to facts. The second event occurred as an impromptu grade level presentation filling in for the principal with 300 students in the gymnasium. These

experiences helped shape the leadership journey around determination and stepping in front as a leader.

M. Grant

In our first MCLE, Mr. Grant shared with us that his original plans were not to go into education but to become a pharmacist. Born and raised in South Africa, his parents could not financially support him in pursuing his dream. He decided to apply to college with his friend who was going to school to become a teacher, which was offering full scholarships at the time. He began loving the idea of becoming a teacher during his practicum period, three months of training in school placement. A large passion while teaching was coaching the sports he participated in while in college to his students. Later, he realized that teaching was a true career path for him.

Mr. Grant began teaching fifth graders and then high school students in South Africa, where he met his mentor teacher. After teaching primary school for two years, he took a position at a high school teaching his home language, Afrikaans, to students. It was here that he found a mentor teacher who held him accountable for his work performance and provided guidance as a young teacher. His mentor helped him focus more on teaching rather than coaching a sport. As a very young teacher, there was no mentor-established program. He wishes there was more guidance for younger teachers to help them focus on their priorities and transition into school.

After getting his priorities in order, Mr. Grant traveled to America on a work visa, which increased his educational leadership opportunities. Through an international teaching program, he found an opportunity to teach 5th grade math and science in an elementary school in the PAR study school district. From that school, he transferred to a middle school in the district to pursue his passion for coaching once again. He became the soccer coach and taught social studies at that

middle school for eight years. During his time at the school, he found his strongest mentor teacher, who reminded him to put students first and build relationships with his students. Later during his time at the school, he was named middle school teacher of the year and achieved many honors while coaching soccer, including teacher of the year. After these accolades, he was approached by his principal about considering administration.

Mr. Grant shared various experiences that shaped his administrative leadership perspective. Within one and a half years of being an assistant principal, he was named assistant principal of the year for the district and offered an interim principal position the next day. He stated that this experience was one of the most negative experiences as an educator. He was tossed into a school where the staff was divided, with little to no support. For that year and a half at the school, he stated that it was so negative he questioned putting that timeframe in his resume history. After that time period, he turned down continuing as an interim principal and was placed at a high school as an assistant principal. This pivot in position provided a huge positive impact on his educational experience. His new principal pushed him into instructional roles of leading professional learning community meetings with staff and focusing on observations. Mr. Grant shared that his principal felt it was important for all administrators to observe the same teachers and compare notes afterward. This allowed the administrative team to strengthen their emphasis on instruction in the school. This process took over two years to complete the buy-in and understanding for the teachers. After that two-year period, the principal was moved to another school, and Mr. Grant transferred to the current school. At the time of the study, Mr. Grant has completed two years of experience as an administrator at this location.

B. Rose

Ms. Rose serves as the newest and youngest administrator in the CPR group. Born and raised in the PAR study school district, she graduated from another high school. Ms. Rose is still considered a new administrator since most of her initial experience was in the unique time period during the 2020-21 COVID-19 pandemic during remote learning. As an administrator, she had no experience at the secondary level except for serving as a coach for the high school girls' basketball team at the PAR study school. Her educational journey is different from the other CPR group members.

In our MCLE on October 8, 2021, Ms. Rose joked about how her learning journey is much shorter than the other members, since she has less than ten years in her educational career. However, three powerful women in her life guided her path toward education. After graduating high school, she attended East Carolina University. She had no intentions of becoming a teacher throughout high school until a teacher made a powerful gesture. Her high school math teacher forgot about a scheduled tutoring session at a local bookstore. Within the hour, there was a knock on her family's door, and her teacher was standing there, ready to keep her promise. That selfless act of service made her want to make the same impact on other students' lives as well.

Another inspirational figure to shape Ms. Rose's leadership potential was her mentor teacher during her teaching internship. Her mentor teacher empowered Ms. Rose to use effective strategies with her students and pulled out the confidence to lead in the classroom. Ms. Rose's practicum experience in an elementary school became her first teaching job. The same school hired her out of college. She never looked back, as she worked seven and a half years as a teacher. She credits her mentor teacher for regularly pushing her into leadership roles like PBIS chair, and never forgetting her potential. During her elementary school experience, she earned

teacher of the year honors at her school and began her master's degree in administration at East Carolina University.

Ms. Rose continued sharing about another impactful woman, her mother. Her mom worked as a teacher her whole career. Her mother is always available for guidance and inspiration. She even followed her into the same sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Incorporated. Her mother served many times as a department lead and encouraged her daughter to return to graduate school for her administrative degree. She reminds her daily to never give up on herself.

H. Wilson

Our newest assistant principal, Ms. Wilson, replaced Ms. Marie midway through PAR Cycle Two. Ms. Wilson began at Eastern High at the beginning of Fall 2022. At the start of the school year she began her 17th year in education and seventh year as an administrator. Ms. Wilson served as an elementary PE teacher for ten years, while also coaching high school volleyball. She served four years as an elementary assistant principal and two years as a high school assistant principal in a neighboring school district.

Ms. Wilson desired a new change in her career. She explained to the CPR group when we first met that she had felt overwhelmed with responsibilities and underappreciated with limited opportunities to advance her career. Although she appreciated working with a team, when other administrators didn't complete a task effectively, Ms. Wilson was given the task to complete without exchanging a responsibility she maintained. She also saw other administrators gaining opportunities to be principals, who may not have had the complete background of experience that she possessed, but continued to be overlooked.

Ms. Wilson interviewed with the CPR team of Assistant Principals at Eastern High School before obtaining the assistant principal job in 2022. After her first interview, she reached

out to Mr. Grant, who she knew from his time in the neighboring school district. Her initiative and actions to seek improvement helped make the decision to invite her back for another interview. In the next interview with the CPR group, she was asked different and deeper questions about her experience, values, and beliefs. For example, we asked about her instructional leadership, what data she collects in an observation, and what information she shared with teachers. Another question set asked about her philosophy for instructional leadership and expectations for a school and what qualities are you looking for in an administrative team. Ms. Wilson answered each question thoroughly, which showed growth from her last interview at the school. The CPR group all felt confident that we were hiring an administrator with great potential for the school and to participate in the study.

H. Scott

As an active participant in the study, I shared my leadership experiences with the CPR group. Early in life, I learned to take advantage of opportunities. In church as a teenager, I followed my sister's example and gave speeches at regional youth days. This experience made me comfortable speaking in front of others. I also helped tutor a former classmate in math at my dining room table. I then learned that not all students learn the same way and that other methods may have to be used to help someone succeed. This led to delivering a commencement speech at my high school graduation's baccalaureate service. My message was, "With great opportunity comes great responsibility," which may have been modified from the 2002 Spiderman movie.

After high school, I continued to serve others in educational roles. At Johns Hopkins University, I became a public health major. Over my last two summers in college, I participated in a summer learning loss prevention program called Teach Baltimore. Here, I gained my first true teaching experience, teaching summer school to first and third graders in inner city

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Baltimore. Enjoying my experience, I discussed providing a more significant impact with the program director, and she recommended the Teach for America program, similar to Ms. Marie. In 2006 I moved to eastern North Carolina and began teaching science at a high school for four years. I fell in love with working with my students in the classroom and coaching on the basketball court, but I felt there was something more for me to do in leadership.

After teaching, several opportunities presented themselves very quickly; I was offered a position at the district level as the only instructional coach for high school math and science teachers. My main task was to provide resources to them and introduce the work of professional learning communities. As my career continued the following year as the only male professional development coordinators in the district, I was offered the opportunity to apply to the Northeast Leadership Academy for school administration. As I entered the NELA program, I never forgot the adage I shared with my peers at my high school graduation about opportunity and responsibility.

I needed to remind myself of Uncle Ben's adage as opportunities continued to move in my favor, and I quickly had to learn and adapt to each experience. During my first year in the NELA program, the superintendent at the time assigned me to my former high school as an interim assistant principal. I learned to balance personal and professional relationships since I was only a year and a half removed from the classroom. A new principal meant new expectations and adjustments. I learned many managerial and accountability responsibilities. After that semester, I was placed at the PAR study high school to complete my official NELA program principal internship. I was named assistant principal two months into the new school year. Throughout these events, much of my learning came during the experience before learning how to prepare for them in the academic setting. I served four years as an assistant principal and

became a principal at the district alternative school in my fifth year. I served as a principal there for one year before being placed back at the PAR study school by the next superintendent. At the start of the PAR study, I began my fifth year as principal. I recognize my leadership path is unconventional, but I create these opportunities and experiences to sharpen my leadership skills.

During the MCLE on October 8, 2021, each CPR group member mentioned they liked to learn from one another in many school experiences. They collectively stated an asset of working on an administrative team was the ability to ask questions to one another and learn from experiences in real time with each other. This asset benefits this study, knowing that the motivation to build and sustain a team is there. The following section describes the intentionally planned efforts to develop a consistent and cohesive instructional leadership team.

PAR Pre-Cycle Process

The PAR Pre-Cycle took place over one academic semester, the fall of 2021. Table 6 gives the activities and the timeframe of the Pre-Cycle. During this cycle, I primarily focused on the skills and knowledge development of the CPR group to prepare them for future PAR cycles. The CPR group met in Micro-Community Learning Exchanges four times over the semester (MCLE). At the end of each MCLE, each CPR group member completed a reflective memo about their experience.

The CPR group was selected based on the nature of the PAR study. The Focus of Practice is to explore the building and sustainability of an instructional leadership team by building on the knowledge and skills of the assistant principals at the PAR study location. Therefore, identifying the CPR group members was embedded in the study. Recognizing my position and authoritative role to the assistant principals, I thoroughly reviewed the participant consent form with each assistant principal. I allowed each participant to sign the formal participant consent form

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Table 6

PAR Pre-Cycle Timeline of Activities

Timeline	Activities
September 2021	Received IRB Approval
	Invited Co-Practitioner Researcher (CPR) group to be a part of the study
	Established MCLE schedule with the CPR group
	Assigned Journey Line Activity on Leadership Experience
October 2021	Hosted first MCLE
	Provide literature on evidence-based observations
	Discussed Journey Line Activity
	CPR group reflective memo activity
November 2021	Conducted three MCLEs
	Discussed which teachers to invite as participants in the study with the CPR group
	Familiarized CPR Group with Observational tools
	Practiced with observational tools and evidence-based observation with online resources of classroom observation videos
	CPR group reflective memo activity

(see Appendix D). An asset shared in the first MCLE was the excitement the CPR group members expressed in wanting to collaborate and learn from one another. This eased any hesitancy within the CPR group about signing the agreement.

For the MCLEs, I prepared and used a consistent agenda template (see Appendix E) that provided opportunities to build relational trust, learn from participants, and gather essential information required for the study. Each MCLE, except for the first one, took place on a Monday, which coincided with the regularly scheduled administration meetings. As part of the first MCLE, the CPR group agreed that during these experiences, they would focus specifically on instructional leadership rather than the managerial tasks of school administration.

Each MCLE consisted of five parts: an overview, dynamic mindfulness, a personal narrative, an activity, and a reflective memo. The overview explained the purpose of the study and the meeting and allowed the CPR group to refocus on the purpose. The Dynamic Mindfulness (DM) activity allowed the CPR group to center on the instructional focus of learning together rather than the stress of other managerial duties and tasks. The Niroga Institute in Oakland, CA developed Dynamic Mindfulness. The DM practices focus on calming our mental state by centering on ourselves, focusing our breathing, and making slight actions. DM transformed our stress sensations to rest and restore responses (Niroga Institute, 2021).

The Personal Narratives are designed as an opportunity for each participant to provide their story or experience that resonates with a question, a reading passage, or even a picture. They were a unique portion of the MCLEs that allowed for trust-building, perspective challenges, and set the tone of the MCLE. I prepared questions and collected data during the Personal Narrative portions of the meetings through reflective memos and the MCLE audio transcript. Personal Narratives stemmed from the Community Learning Exchange research and

axioms (Guajardo et al., 2015). The first MCLE provided the opportunity to discuss a learning journey centered on what shaped the participants' leadership experiences and path to administration. This discussion allowed us to learn more about one another, acknowledge our common ground, and appreciate our different paths to leadership. Appendix Q provides an example of the Journey Line Protocol used as a Personal Narrative activity. This activity provided the necessary background information for each CPR group member. In most MCLEs, the majority of data collection occurred from the final two sections, the Activity, and Reflective Memo sections.

During the Activity section of the MCLEs, we worked together to understand the purpose of the PAR and how we could answer the research questions. During the activity section of the November 1, 2021 and the November 15, 2021 MCLE, I introduced the CPR members to the Calling-On and Selective Verbatim classroom observational tools. We learned how to collect and analyze data from the classroom observation tools. During the MCLE on November 1, 2021, I shared the Calling-on tool and gauged the reactions and responses to the tool. Many CPR group members were a bit overwhelmed with the tool, and we discussed this emotion in the second MCLE. Like the Questioning tool (see Appendix G), the Calling-on Observational tool (see Appendix H) is very specific, with a set of given codes for responses. The observer must have a firm understanding of the codes before going into an observation so the observer can quickly identify the student and what kind of interaction occurred. The CPR Group discussed hesitation based on the amount of time needed to execute this type of tool appropriately. Ms. Marie shared how her experience with a specific tool made her nervous. She worked with another administrator who used a feedback tool, and the teacher commented how they appreciated the feedback from that tool. Ms. Marie continued that her concern stemmed from a fear that if the

tool was too specific and the observation tool did not match up, then she would struggle to support that teacher and the other CPR group members agreed. So, with this information, I revisited the Plan-Do-Study-Act model and changed course with which tool to use.

The more flexible Selective Verbatim tool was introduced and discussed at the MCLE on November 15, 2021 about how it could be used. Figure 10 provides an example of the Selective Verbatim Observational tool. During the final two learning exchanges, the CPR groups observed two classroom observations together and discussed the data with the Selective Verbatim tool. In the final MCLE on November 30, 2021, after the observation notes were discussed, we built talking points as the next steps we would share with the teachers during a post conference.

The final agenda section, Reflective Memos, provides a metacognitive perspective on the thought process of each CPR group member, including myself. Time dedicated to the MCLE allowed for the moment to be captured as a reflection on the activities and conversations. I designed questions based on Kolb's (1984) four-part model of experience, reflection, contextualizing the experience, and planning for the future (see Appendix I). Although it took some time for the CPR group members to get used to this writing style, I used this information to help create the agenda for the subsequent meeting.

The PAR Pre-Cycle coding consisted of data collected in the MCLEs with the CPR group members. I used my phone to make audio recordings that captured the discussions in each MCLE. Appendix D addresses the use of audio and video recordings in the consent form. Then, I used the transcribing software of Rev.com to convert the audio files into transcribed words. With the transcription, I placed the raw data into my digital codebook. My other raw data source came from reflective memos. Table 7 describes the questions used in the MCLE agendas to gather the

Teacher		Observer	Scott		Date	11/15/21
Duration of Observation __0:00_____			to _____16:00_____			

Time Stamp	Evidence from observation	Code
0:00	T: To set the stage we are going to look at two ways of solving a problem. To make claims and checking others claims; helping them improve their claims (make them better) Use table, charts, and graphs to help justify your answers	
0:45	T: Take a minute to look at this diagram and annotate (underlining important things, or arrows for change, or calculate the slope, look at the arises list on the graph)	
1:15	I'll give you all one minute on your own to annotate this diagram Students began writing their own notes about the diagram.	
2:10	T: about another 30 seconds No students have spoken during this time	
2:40	T: Flip over your paper and on the backside of the worksheet there is another activity T: reads through the activity data Who is right? How do you know? What picture better represents the correct answer? Students will be in small group or partner up to discuss this activity	

Figure 10. Selective verbatim tool example.

Table 7

MCL Questions

Agenda #	Date	Question(s) Activity	Question(s) Reflective Memos
1	10/8/21	Journey Line Discussion	Write a reflective memo on what you hope to accomplish as an instructional team and an instructional leader.
2	11/1/21	How do we make our instructional team cohesive and consistent when we do observations? What are we looking for in observations?	What does a consistent and cohesive instructional leadership team look like? On a scale of 1-10 how cohesive are we as an instructional leadership team? On a scale of 1-10 how consistent are we as an instructional leadership team?
3	11/15/21	What were some teacher/student actions you noticed that were significant? Did you find something that you'd likely generate feedback for the teacher?	Based on the activities today, what do you think helps make you better in your instructional leadership? What do you think is still missing to make our team more consistent?
4	11/29/21	What were some teacher/student actions you noticed that were significant? Did you find something that you'd likely generate feedback for the teacher? What questions did this generate for you to ask the teacher in post-observation?	After the activities today and the preparation so far in this study, what have you noticed about yourself becoming a stronger instructional leader? What are some questions or talking notes you'd prepare to have with this particular teacher?

coded data. Each CPR group member had the opportunity to respond during the activity and the reflective memo portions of the MCL. I gathered a robust set of raw data from all participants.

During the final two MCLEs, the discussion became more focused on the classroom observation activities. The CPR group observed two videos together, one math and one science classroom, during MCLEs. After a few minutes of viewing the video, the CPR group would stop the video and discuss what they saw and what data to collect. Based on my reflective memo, this practice was modified in future activities because the CPR group members focused more on how they felt and observed in the observation but recorded miniscule notes for the activities, so an artifact could not be recorded. The lack of evidence, in this case, re-emphasized the importance of data collection for the teacher's benefit rather than an impulsive discussion. The audio recordings in the latter portion of the MCLEs became raw data from the classroom observation activity.

After having all data transcribed, I inductively coded the data, using open coding that was primarily descriptive or what Saldaña (2016) calls exploratory coding. In my digital codebook, I coded each data set and began gathering a list of codes. For each code, a definition was created, and a tally was started to determine the frequency of the code in the raw data.

To analyze the data, each time a code appeared, I added a number in the codebook column representing the code. I used a formula to count all the marks across all forms of data. After coding several pieces of data, I completed a second round of deductive coding in which I looked at the emerging codes and adjusted them as more raw data was gathered and coded (see Appendix K). Some codes were kept due to the potential significance in the future but currently may be considered outliers. As I coded the evidence, I began to see patterns or categories. I placed these potential category names in my digital codebook. As I gathered more raw data, I

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refined and adjusted the living codebook for the PAR Pre-Cycle data collection emergent categories.

Emergent Categories

Throughout the PAR Pre-Cycle, I found several concepts that emerged across the data. By implementing Saldaña's (2016) exploratory coding process, I recognized that some coding categories organically occurred based on the nature of the PAR itself. Two categories quickly emerged while gathering the data and coding, but the final category shared in this section took some time to recognize and name. The coded categories that emerged through the evidence during the PAR Pre-Cycle are the Observation Process, Team Building, and Learning Experiences.

Observation Process

While coding, the Observation Process emerged midway through the PAR Pre-Cycle with a high-frequency rating of 78. This category aligns with the PAR study, which focuses on instructional leadership through collaboration with teachers after a classroom observation. Within the category, I collected several codes through the discussions in the MCLEs with the CPR group, as described in Table 8. I identified three main common codes throughout the PAR Pre-Cycle: collecting data, post-conference, and feedback.

Collecting Data

The most recorded code in the Observation Process category was collecting data. I recorded this 17 times in the analyzed data. This prominence of this code occurred due to the discussions and reflections about observation consistency and the observational tools. Once I introduced the Calling-On tool to the CPR group, we discussed the purpose and function of using it during a classroom observation. During the conversation, it was clear to me that I needed to

Table 8

PAR Pre-Cycle Code Analysis: Observation Process Category

Code	Frequency	Code Definition	Key References
Collecting Data	17	Reference to specific or general data points mentioned during a classroom observation that could be recorded for later analysis	MCLE2
Evaluation	3	Reference to the state evaluation instrument used to evaluate all certified staff members	MCLE2
Feedback	12	Refers to the information shared with a person normally after a teacher observation; can be in the form of questions, praise, or suggestions	Memos, MCLE2
Look Fors	6	Refers to a clear, intentional statement that describes an observable teaching or learning behavior, strategy, outcome, product, or procedure.	MCLE2
Notes vs. Evaluation	6	Refers to the discussion about using separate observation notes versus solely using the state described standards for the classroom observation process	MCLE2
Post-Conference	13	Refers to the setting after the classroom observation with the teacher and observer	Memos, MCLE2
Tools	7	Refers to an observational instrument used to gather data from a classroom observation	Memos, MCLE2

back up and start with the Selective Verbatim protocol. In my reflective memo, I stated, "After conversations in the MCLE, it appears that a Selective Verbatim approach may be more beneficial to the consistency factor we are wanting to achieve together." I stayed committed to the reflection and shared the Selective Verbatim protocol during our next MCLE. The Selective Verbatim tool provided the CPR group more flexibility to capture various interactions in the classroom. With the Selective Verbatim tool, the observer can write down teacher-student interactions, student-student interactions, document questions asked during the observation, and record the time stamp when each action occurred. In the final two MCLEs, we utilized the Selective Verbatim protocol to gather data from two classroom observation videos. We recorded our data in the Selective Verbatim observation tool that we would potentially share with the observed teacher in the video. I recalled in my memo the following, "The conversations [about classroom observations] are great; however, the discussion was all over the place about what we should share with the teacher in the Selective Verbatim notes and the conversation with the teacher." The CPR group appreciated the opportunity to discuss the same observation. Still, during our discussion about the classroom, I noticed that the CPR group reverted back to more subjective data rather than objective data. When observing their Selective Verbatim Observational tool electronic document, the CPR group collectively had minimal notes written down. The skill set on how to collect classroom data for teachers did not advance in the final MCLE of this cycle either. I needed to re-evaluate our method of practice because the skills for using an observational tool were not improving with practice.

Post Conference

The second dominant code that emerged for the Observation Process category is Post-Observation. This code appeared 13 times when I defined the term as the "setting after the

classroom observation with the teacher and observer." As described in Chapter 1, the post observation is considered the second half of the cohesive observation process after gathering data in the original classroom observation. Through the MCLEs, the CPR group often referenced teacher interactions. They spoke about praising teachers on the lesson or asking questions to the teacher about the teacher's process—without formally naming it, we were discussing the post-observation. In one of my reflective memos, a CPR group member questioned the likelihood of whether we could all be consistent in the process of the post-observation practices and conversations, "...and perfect consistency/cohesiveness is improbable, but how close can we get to being cloned instructional evaluators?" Although we might not do things identically, I believe how we gather information and construct discussion points for the post-observation can make us more consistent. This gets us closer to answering the question prescribed by a CPR group member when we began this process, "The magic is in how close we can get to transform our team into a unified operation centered in instructional leadership." With this PAR design, the coding system began to uncover common data points and ideas that appear later in the other PAR cycles.

Feedback

A prominent code in this category was feedback. In my codebook, I defined the term as the information normally shared with a person after a teacher observation; this can be in the form of follow up or probing questions, praise and highlighting positives within the observation, or suggestions on how to improve a specific area of the teacher's methods or instruction. As the PAR Pre-Cycle began, our CPR group identified the issue of not being consistent in classroom observations and teacher feedback. I referenced this concern in a memo, stating, "Each had a different purpose when going to observe teachers, and each had a different outcome when

meeting with teachers." Ms. Rose relied heavily on the standards from the state evaluation system to discuss a classroom observation with a teacher.

In comparison, Ms. Marie admitted to taking notes and jotting questions electronically during the classroom observation. Still, she would only send that set of data back to herself and not the teacher. In this discussion, we recognized that the state evaluation instrument did not always provide the best discussion point for topics administrators wanted to address with teachers. With the PAR purpose in mind from this discussion, we re-centered our purpose: to become consistent with feedback as an instructional team. The CPR group agreed that an additional observation tool is better suited to getting teachers more observation information that needs to reflect on their practice.

The Observation Process is an emerging category mainly because there is much more to develop to become a consistent instructional team. The upcoming PAR cycles will have more focused measures within the observation process, especially when we meet with teachers. I can foresee this emerging category getting too large for the broader codes and, thus, revisiting the current codes again in PAR Cycle One.

Team Building

The Team Building category emerged early and held a high-frequency rating of 79. As I used open coding, I noticed several common codes throughout the MCLEs and the reflective memos. Table 9 captures an overview of the code definitions that further allowed me to analyze the Team Building category. Two codes captured high-frequency with 17 and 15 tallies, respectfully, Collaboration and Confidence. Two additional codes are also worth analyzing, Common Goal and Trust; each had eight tallies.

Table 9

PAR Pre-Cycle Code Analysis: Team Building Category

Code	Frequency	Code Definition	Key References
Collaboration	18	Refers to working with someone to create a product or produce a desired result	Memos, MCLE2
Common goal	8	Reference to a set of desires the same mindset, outcome, mission and vision	Memos, MCLE2
Common Language	5	Refer to words or phrases that are commonly used by a set of people; in this PAR classroom observation data	Memos,
Confidence	15	Refers to the feeling or belief that one can rely on someone or self	Memos, MCLE2
Doubt	7	Refers to the feeling of uncertainty or lack of conviction; comments of self-doubt	MCLE2
Trust	8	Refers to the firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something	MCLE2

Collaboration

A naturally developing concept in this category is the idea of working with someone, collaboration. Collaboration shared two origins: working with the CPR team and working with teachers during the observation process. Evidence from the CPR group members' memos emphasized the importance of working as a unit. Mr. Grant expressed his desire for this team to have more opportunities to discuss classroom observations with one another and report back as a team when we work with teachers. In other memos, the idea of experiencing things together helps with collaboration. Ms. Marie reflected in her memo, "These activities provide me with the opportunity to collaborate with my colleagues on ways to become a stronger instructional leader." She expressed her gratitude for having the opportunity to observe the same classroom observation video. The CPR group expressed appreciation for having time to experience the classroom observation together and discuss it collectively.

The code of Collaboration emerged when describing the process of working with teachers during the post-observations. Collaboration with teachers takes on different forms. Sometimes, the instructional leader offers suggestions, assists with problem-solving, or asks questions. One objective of the PAR study was for the CPR group to use the classroom observation data to help the teachers improve their instructional practices. Ms. Rose described a moment while working with a teacher who wasn't fully receptive to her suggestions but polite. The teacher patiently listened to Ms. Rose's subjective suggestions, only to share counterexamples of how she believed those suggestions wouldn't be so helpful in her classroom. This conversation derived from the consequence of having only suggestions and no data. Ms. Marie later described a situation where she problem-solved with a teacher but lacked the knowledge to offer a profound suggestion for student engagement. In her example, the teacher and administrator identified the concern but

could not find a reasonable solution to address it. Ms. Marie felt frustrated that a teacher who was willing to listen asked for help, and then she couldn't provide the support needed. After explaining the evidence for this term, I considered that the term collaboration could easily become its own category since so many ideas and concepts could fall under the umbrella of collaboration. I explore collaboration in the following PAR Cycles.

Confidence

A surprise code emerged as the second-most prominent code in the Team Building category: confidence. I consider this a surprise because this code wasn't always explicit in context; instead, most of these codes were implicit within the scope of the MCLE conversations. I shared my aspirations in a reflective memo, "I hope to see this team build up tools that they feel confident using and discussing with teachers." This confidence was identified throughout the MCLEs as a growing comfort in discussion observations and developing questions to work with teachers. The CPR group members discussed the need to seek confidence in themselves before having someone follow them or work with them. Ms. Rose expressed her desire to inspire confidence in others but stated that right now, she lacks it herself. She feels being new to the school and having a large learning curve from the elementary school background caused her to lack confidence when speaking to high school teachers. Mr. Grant expressed that his motivation for more confidence was learning how to offer suggestions to the veteran teachers who are doing a great job in the classroom. He explained that he tries to give them a suggestion, but at least one teacher is always willing to challenge the observer's suggestion and push back on their current teaching practice. He said he wants to gain more confidence at the post-observation conference. Based on these conversations, I noted that confidence was not an independent code or category. Confidence was contingent on the positive or negative experience of another code.

Trust

The Trust code captured two derivative meanings, which occurred eight times under the Team Building category. First, I used the Trust code to identify the reliability within the instructional leadership team to work together. Ms. Marie openly shared her experience about considering another job. She took an interview with the company and wanted to share with the CPR group. She interviewed for experience in the interview process and shared how she wanted to find ways to keep her skills heightened for thinking on her feet. She embodied vulnerability at that moment to reinforce trust with the team. Secondly, I used the Trust code to identify the relationship skill set needed for collaborative learning between the teacher and the observer. Mr. Grant shared in a learning exchange his value of the trust after reflecting on the Personal Narrative activity. He said, "If you don't trust someone, you find it hard to believe in them or to buy in." He later describes a situation requiring leaders to act and build trust. I believe both forms of trust will continue to be reinforced in the upcoming PAR cycle and serve as a foundation for team building.

Common Goals and Common Language

The common goals and language codes were often coupled in the learning exchanges. They both appeared when the CPR group discussed classroom observation look-fors, and having consistent data collection. The common goal and language codes occurred eight and five times, respectively. After the second MCLE, I commented in a memo, "After today, I think my CPR group is beginning to have a common goal and language towards instructional leadership." With a common goal and language, the CPR group can communicate with teachers what they are looking for in the observation and have a specific focus in the classroom to collect helpful instructional data. I referenced three components that make the team consistent, "goal of

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observation, notes/data of observation, feedback to the teachers for the observation." By finding consistency with these three components, I believe we can provide teachers with data and processes they can use to become better teachers. In my memo after the final MCLE, I share the same beliefs, "we may not be the experts in their fields of instruction, but we need to be a consistent lens of reflection through which teachers can sharpen their craft."

The emergent Team Building category was a predictable category that appeared. This category aligns with the PAR study and the Focus of Practice. With this category likely to appear in future PAR cycles, more definitive codes may be necessary to pinpoint more substantial claims.

Learning Experience

In coding this final emerging category with a frequency rating of 81, the connection between codes was not an obvious discovery like the other categories. Table 10 shows how this category emerged through the recognition that the activities, conversations, and reflections all created an opportunity for learning and managing experience. Three major codes formed this category: Conversation, Reflections, and Experience. This emerging category could become one of the more essential concepts in the PAR study.

Conversations

The most prominent code in this category was Conversations. This code's frequency rating was 18 tallies. The Conversations code was not quickly identifiable but increased in tallies after I defined the code tile for conversation. I defined Conversations as talking or discussing educational content between two or more people in which ideas and information are exchanged. With this meaning, the vast majority of learning experiences in this PAR study involved conversations. Conversations between CPR members help us grow stronger as a team and learn

Table 10

PAR Pre-Cycle Code Analysis: Learning Experience Category

Code	Frequency	Code Definition	Key References
Activity/Session	8	Refers to the setting in which things are happening	Memos
Conversations	18	Refers to a talk or discussion between two or more people in which ideas and information is exchanged	Memos, MCLE2
Experience	13	Refers to the acquisition of knowledge or skill over a period of time; work-related	Memos, MCLE2
Prior Knowledge	6	Refers to the learning a person gathers before entering a new experience; knowledge acquired before encountering a topic or similar experience again	Memos, MCLE2 Memos, MCLE2
Process	5	Refers to a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end	Memos
Reflection	15	Refers to a series of thoughts or consideration; an idea about something, especially one that is written down or expressed	Memos, MCLE2

from one another. The Conversations code also occurred when the CPR group members discussed their conversations with teachers in post-observation conferences. As a novice administrator, Ms. Rose shared the importance of conversations with teachers as a personal goal, "I would like to have a conversation regarding having those post-observation meetings with teachers, especially veteran teachers." This code will continue to emerge with the increase in post-observation conferences and discussions.

Reflections

The second-most reoccurring code in the learning experiences category was Reflections. Another code inherently present in the MCLEs and memos but extremely important to the learning process. The Reflections code appeared 15 times. Kolb (1984) shares how a powerful reflective approach can assist the learning process. The Reflections code is intuitively in the code definition, referring to a series of thoughts or considerations. The Learning Journey activity captured reflections and the CRP group members' learning process. Each CPR group member reflected on how they became a leader and what experiences shaped that journey. Reflections are an important part of the learning process, and the frequency of the code in the PAR Pre-Cycle supports this theory.

Experience

Experience and learning were mutually agreeable codes and concepts for the CPR group learning from one another. The Experience and the learning codes appeared thirteen and six times, respectively. In one MCLE discussion, I recall asking Ms. Rose to observe a phone conversation. I asked her to "come back in the office to hear how Ms. Marie is talking to the other person because Ms. Marie had experience in knowing what or how to say something" was a learning experience. Ms. Marie had prior knowledge and a skill set that Ms. Rose could learn

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for her next phone call or encounter. Learning from others is a powerful experience; it allows the learner to discuss the practice with others and gain other perspectives. One CPR group member shared, "The video activity allowed me to provide feedback on what I observed...listening to my colleagues' feedback which provided me with different viewpoints as well as skills which I can use in the future." These learning experiences take on different forms, where even the discussion in the MCLEs themselves and the reflection memos are all learning experiences. I believe that "learning experience" will continue as a strong concept throughout the PAR study because of the activity and interactions with the observation process. This projection is confirmed by a comment in one of the final CPR reflective memos, "Even though we are fairly early in the study, I am already thinking more critically about the observation and teacher feedback process." The Learning Experience was the surprise emerging category, and the codes were potentially overlooked by the inherent nature of learning. I established the Learning Experience category with continued reflective memos, MCLEs, and teacher post-observations.

Reflection and Planning

The PAR Pre-Cycle created opportunities for reflection, learning, and discovery. When asked the right question, reflections can be a powerful learning tool; I learned in reflection several action steps are needed before moving forward to PAR Cycle One. As a participant, I learned much more than expected about the backgrounds of each CPR group member. Each described a person who helped mold their administrative leadership and educational prowess. As the lead researcher, I connect to my last research question and wonder how this study helped make me a better leader to provide a meaningful impact to the CPR group. In the following sections, I reflected on how the PAR Pre-Cycle affected my leadership in answering my research

questions. I also discuss how changes would be made in the next PAR Cycle, followed by the conclusion of the chapter.

Reflections on Leadership

This section reflects on the PAR Pre-Cycle process and helps evaluate my third research sub-question: How does supporting the growth and development of assistant principals build my capacity as an educational leader? I recognized needed adjustments in facilitating MCLEs and changes to my preparation for the study. This reflection is important, as Dewey (1934) explains that we do not learn from the experience but from the reflection of the experience.

Throughout the PAR Pre-Cycle, I recognized that preparation and being deliberate in some actions is necessary. In the MCLE on November 1, 2021, I introduced the Calling-on Tool to the CPR group members. After sharing the tool, I considered the Selective Verbatim Tool, which provided more flexibility for the CPR group members to record data. However, I did not anticipate the CPR group's struggle with recording objective data in the observational tool. Furthermore, the tool's flexibility created the opposite effect towards a desired outcome. During the discussion in the MCLE about the observed video, the CPR group members continued to revert to the pitfall of creating subjective data. They discussed how they felt about the observation rather than writing down what they saw in the observation. When reviewing their documents after the observation, I had three pages of notes, where some CPR group members only had a few lines on their tool completed. As another example, Ms. Marie shared how there was a moment when observing that she got distracted thinking too long about what depth of knowledge level an asked teacher question was to record. She stated that she struggled with distinguishing between levels two and three, which took time away or caused her to miss the next interaction or question. I recognized that the flexibility of the tool and not being specific

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enough to the type of data to be collected contributed to an undeveloped skill set, recording objective data in the tool. With this recognition, I plan to return back to the Calling-on Tool so that the focused, observational task contains specific criteria when observing a classroom.

Another reflective discovery refers to the preparation for the CPR group and myself as the lead researcher. I wrote about this in a personal reflection on November 9, 2021. I stated how I used the prior MCLE data to help guide the next learning opportunity. As the lead researcher, I must continue to be proactive in sharing agendas with the CPR group, especially if pre-work is required. This understanding became beneficial in practice to normal administrative meetings from the PAR study activities in subsequent weeks. Since I recognized the need for agendas and pre-work to be given to participants earlier, I started preparing all my administrative meeting agendas earlier. This helped me focus on myself and facilitate the meetings. I also learned that when I prepare in advance, I successfully delegate and distribute the leadership responsibilities to the assistant principals. This lightens my load while building their skills as school leaders. Without prior planning and preparation, I tend to take on more responsibilities, thus cheating them of growing as leaders.

The final reflective discovery comes from the emerging categories. More specifically, how the Learning Experience category developed. Concerning the research questions, I recognize the importance of having quality experiences and sharing that experience with others. Dewey (1938) describes every experience as a moving force but cautions these experiences should be authentic and not forced. While driven by Personal Narratives and agenda activities, the rich conversations between and among the CPR members created an environment for authentic learning.

Furthermore, when the participants shared everyday classroom observation experiences and data collection tools, it quickly became a learning environment about learning, the teachers' and theirs. The reflections are what contribute to the growth and development of skills. Similarly, reflections can be powerful for teachers in the post-observation process if framed properly with objective data they can reflect on as well.

Planning for PAR Cycle One

Throughout PAR Pre-Cycle, I used the principles of the Plan-Do-Study-Act model to inform my decisions for the subsequent MCLE. In reflection, three main action steps will be adjusted in PAR Cycle One. These adjustments are restructuring data collection methods, framing data collection more towards reflective actions and CLEs, and adjusting my timeline for coding information. Each of these adjustments should provide a more efficient study and ensure that I remain focused on my research questions.

By the nature of the study, I gathered significant data, so I needed to develop a more streamlined methodology for gathering data moving forward. In PAR Cycle One, I planned for the CPR group to gather classroom data using the Calling-on Observational tool and facilitate a post-conference with the teacher. During both activities, the expectation was for the CPR group to video record the sessions. This is still the expectation for accountability and validity. However, the amount of time required to analyze that data is not reasonable for the study's parameters. I considered time as one of this study's limitations from the start. I planned adjustments for the new PAR Cycle that would still allow the necessary activities and processes to take place but modified how I would collect data. In the new method, the CPR group follows through with the process and then writes a reflective memo after reviewing the post-conference footage. This data captures each CPR group member's individual growth and skill development.

During the MCLEs, the CPR group will collectively discuss their reflections on the PAR process for additional data collection. MCLEs were geared towards collective reflection sharing. More designed collaboration opportunities are a must in the upcoming PAR Cycles. This includes planning more skill development on how instructional leaders should facilitate collaboration and be inquiry-driven. I anticipate these data sets to provide significant amounts of data to analyze and code.

The final adjustment to the PAR Cycle One process is deliberately setting aside time immediately to code the data. The personal adjustment was based on the recognition in the PAR Pre-Cycle that coding was time-consuming and some items I could not code with fidelity. I reduced the amount of data, but open coding still requires time and attention for a second coding session. By coding more frequently, I can review the codes, definitions, and categories forming to determine if revisions are needed. Furthermore, coding analysis in a short timeframe from data collection allows for analysis in context with what is occurring in and outside the study. This will also allow me to have more focused lead researcher memos for the next steps in the study. As a novice coder, I am certain that I missed some important pieces of information and that my categories might change as they seem to be large constructs. While I understand that facilitating MCLEs and authentic learning environments was imperative to growing and developing the APs, my own skill set of being a lead researcher, complete with data collection, organization, and coding, will continue to re-center my focus during PAR Cycle One.

Conclusion

During the PAR Pre-Cycle, I introduced the CPR group to the study and cultivated a desire for the CPR group to become stronger instructional leaders as our purpose. I introduced the CPR group to several observational tools they practiced using in the MCLEs. I noticed a need

for more skill development in using an objective, data-driven observational tool. However, the CPR group appreciated the opportunity to work together and listen to others' perspectives on the classroom observation process. As the cohesive practice requires classroom observation and post-observation discussion, the CPR group took some time to discuss some ideal follow-up questions that we could consistently use during the post-observation conferences. By co-creating some questions in advance, we could develop the confidence the CPR group desired. The research questions helped drive the focus of the MCLEs. They helped the CPR groups' attention to the Focus of Practice: to build and sustain a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team by supporting the growth and development of assistant principals as instructional leaders.

As the lead researcher, I identified several emerging categories aligned with the future PAR Cycle results. These categories were Learning Experience, Observation Process, and Team Building. In creating and developing these codes, I recognized that revisiting collected data on a more consistent basis is paramount in order to code data with integrity and fidelity accurately. Also, I realized that my coding practice might embody too large of a data set to be considered codes. I needed to appreciate the details and capture how I led to the categories that emerged more closely.

Furthermore, I plan to modify the focus on the data collection to the individual CPR group member reflections and the CLE artifacts and transcriptions. Coding the recorded classroom observations and post-observations would cause too much data to analyze, and the FoP could get lost in the data analysis. Modifications to the MCLE agenda and reflective memos would take place to accurately identify the speaker.

The PAR Pre-Cycle created a solid starting point for the implementation of the study. Throughout this cycle, discoveries like the Learning Experience category and the ability to

practice Saldaña's (2016) exploratory coding occurred. In the next chapter, PAR Cycle One, I explain the work with the CPR team with a focus on the observational tool and post-observations with teachers when the CPR groups put the practice into action with the teacher participants. I also examine the CPR group's move to the classroom observations on campus and conducting of post-observation conferences focusing on the observational tool data. A review of new coded data and the analysis of the emerging categories when teachers were incorporated into the study is also described.

CHAPTER 5: PAR CYCLE ONE

PAR Cycle One was the next step in the process for the CPR group to move from discussions into practice and engaging in real experiences. This cycle provides the actions needed for the CPR group to develop consistency in our instructional practice and offers data-rich information for the observer, teacher, and researcher. In this chapter, I share the process of CPR group members focusing on one observational tool to provide a consistent and cohesive post-observation conversation with the teacher. Later in the chapter, I share the themes from observed data. I also share my reflections and implications for the data before moving on to PAR Cycle Two.

PAR Cycle One Process

The PAR Cycle One took place over one academic semester, spring 2022. Figure 11 gives the activities and a timeframe of PAR Cycle One. This PAR cycle focused on action and execution. The cycle consisted of CPR meetings, gathering the teacher participants, classroom observations and post-conferences, and teacher Learning Exchanges for data triangulation. During this cycle, the CPR group discussed new revelations in their practice, and teachers expressed their discoveries and perspective on the administrative team's latest classroom observations and post-conversation practices.

Process

At the beginning of this cycle, the CPR group met and agreed to start our practice with the Calling-on Observation Tool. In the CPR group meeting, we decided that deliberating on the best tool only delays the opportunity for practice with any tool. During the first two MCLEs, we revised the Calling-on Observational tool used in the Project I^4 program (see Appendix H) to a format the CPR team felt comfortable using and that still provided significant information for the

	Week 2 (Jan 10-14)	Week 3 (Jan 17-21)	Week 4 (Jan 24-28)	Week 5 (Jan 31-Feb 4)	Week 6 (Feb 7-11)	Week 7 (Feb 14-18)	Week 8 (Feb 21-25)	Week 9 (Feb 28-Mar 4)	Week 10 (Mar 7-11)	Week 11 (Mar 14-18)	Week 12 (Mar 21-25)	Week 13 (Mar28-Apr 1)	Week 13 (Apr 4-8)
CPR Meetings (n=5)		●	●				●	↑		●			●
Classroom Observations (n=8)								District and School Cognia Accreditation Visit	●	●			
Post-Observations (n=8)										●	●		
Teacher Participant Agreement (n=8)			●	●	●								
Teacher CLE (n=2)								↓				●	●

Figure 11. Activities: PAR cycle one.

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teacher. I converted the original observation tool from a word document to an electronic spreadsheet that calculated the total tallies for each section and student. Before going into each class, the CPR group uploaded the class roster into the spreadsheet to save time by not having to hand write each student's name.

I gathered the math and science teacher participants for the study. After discussing with the CPR group which teachers they wanted to work with, I approached the teachers. I met with each potential teacher volunteer in person. I decided that an individual approach would allow me to utilize the established relational trust I had with each teacher. I recognized the positionality factor as well; with me being the principal, it could have been intimidating for the teacher to turn down an opportunity to be observed. Bryk et al. (2010) reminds us that relational trust is significant when moving towards positive change between teachers and administrators.

For this reason, I decided email was much too impersonal, intimidating, and dismissive; the teacher could easily misread the tone and intent of the message. Therefore, I met with each teacher individually. During my discussion with the teacher, I shared information about the study. I shared that the focus of the study was to explore how to build and sustain a cohesive instructional leadership team by supporting the growth and development of assistant principals as instructional leaders. I informed them that this was not tied to the state evaluation instrument and that the data could be beneficial to their classroom practices. I approached a total of nine teachers, and only one declined. He stated that he did not feel comfortable with his class being recorded even though I explained its non-evaluative aspect. Most teachers immediately agreed and stated that they appreciated feedback on their teaching. I gave each teacher a consent form that we reviewed together, and which they signed and returned it to me (see Appendix D). The teachers' years of experience ranged from the first year to over 25 years of teaching. It benefited

the study to gather data from both beginning and veteran teachers; this allowed me to analyze our consistent approach across all teacher experience levels.

With the Calling-on Observation Tool learning tool prepared and teachers in place, the next step included the start of classroom observations. For each observation, the CPR group agreed to video record the classroom observation and record the calling-on data on the agreed upon observation tool while in the classroom. These adjustments saved the observer time and allowed them to focus on the actions in the classroom. The video recording served two purposes: first, as a cross-reference to ensure accurate data on who spoke, and second, as an instructional tool that teachers could view to have another perspective on their teaching practice. Each classroom observation lasted 25 to 45 minutes, depending on the lesson and the observer. The CPR group shared the data collected during the classroom observation with the teacher within 24 hours. The CPR group members scheduled a post-observation conversation with the teacher within a week of the classroom observation.

The post-observation conversation was an area during the PAR Pre-Cycle where the CPR group indicated they needed some support from me and each other. Therefore, during the first two MCLEs of PAR Cycle One, the CPR group reviewed the Project I[4] Conversation Guide (see Appendix L). It is a guide specifically designed to assist school personnel in conducting post-classroom observation conversations that focus on the data collected during the classroom observation. We hoped the Conversation Guide (CG) would bring the consistency and structure the CPR group needed.

By following the CG, we started each post-observation conversation with the following questions: *What do you think about your data? What do you notice?* We allowed the teacher to reflect on their data during the post-conference discussion. After listening to the teacher's

reflection, we used a set of questions that the CPR group designed with inspiration from the CG: *Based on this data, do you think each student learned the information? What worked? What can we do differently?* These conversations were recorded. The CPR group member used the recordings to review and reflect on their post-observation conversation practice.

We also used the MCLEs to discuss and reflect on the overall cohesive practice of classroom observations and post-conference conversations. Depending on the timing of the MCLE, some CPR group members could not complete the post-observation conversation with their teachers during this PAR Cycle. They used this time to listen to others' experiences and refine their practice before their next meeting.

The last data collection set for PAR Cycle One came from the teacher CLEs. Due to time constraints and teacher availability, I scheduled an agreed-upon time to meet with the teachers during their planning periods. Luckily, the four science and math teachers had common planning, respectively. This open discussion consisted of five questions and I requested that teachers answer honestly and speak freely to help us as administrators improve our instructional practices. Table 11 provides the five questions asked to each teacher CLE.

Codes to Categories

In PAR Cycle One, I expanded the details of my coding process with its original codes and sub-codes. Throughout this process, I looked back at my original categories and noticed the codes shifted into newly created categories. This shift in new codes is consistent with adding teacher input, conducting classroom observations, holding post-conferences, and facilitating MCLEs and teacher CLEs. In the refined codebook, 21 new codes were created (see Appendix M). Some codes were sub-codes of more specific data analysis, while others were created with the onset of recent actions in this PAR Cycle.

Table 11

PAR Cycle One: Reflection Questions from Teacher CLE

Question Order	Question
1	When you were shared the observation tool data, was there anything that was surprising or interesting about your data?
2	Did you find the data and the post-conference beneficial towards your practice?
3	Is there anything in this practice you would think could benefit adjusting or tweaking in this observation process?
4	Did you discuss any next steps with your administrator? Have you seen a change in your instructional delivery?
5	Follow-up: Did you have a chance to review the classroom observation video? Do you think it is helpful or the observation data is sufficient?

With the new data sets, it was important to revise the categories. I identified the major categories after combining PAR Cycle One with the PAR Pre-Cycle data (see Appendix N). I found it important to refer back to my research questions to ensure my codes aligned with my FoP. I recognized this necessity when so many new codes formed with new information. Referring back to the research question kept me centered while coding the PAR Cycle One data: How does a high school leadership team build and sustain cohesive instructional leadership? With that focus in mind, I tackled the task of discovering my emerging themes.

Categories to Themes

I used a deductive coding technique to connect the emerging themes with the data collected. The deductive coding process is when the researcher takes a top down approach to open coding (Vanover et al., 2021). After getting stuck after the inductive open coding process, I recognized there were some emerging themes. I identified ways to clarify the categories necessary to bridge the path between codes and emerging themes. With this process, I successfully remodeled the codebook and identified two emerging themes from the data. The emerging themes are Cultivating Better Practices and Creating Collective Efficacy between the CPR group. Table 13 provides a glimpse of the data from categories to their related themes. One category, Focused Skills, was so data rich that I created subcategories to help organize the data. Awareness is a unique category that connects the two emerging themes due to the unique data set captured in this PAR study. In Table 12, the subcategories are displayed, and the frequency of each data set is listed in a cumulative format.

In the next section, I discuss the emerging themes in more detail. I explain the connections to their categories. I show the evidence of the themes down to the code level. Finally, I connect the emergence of the themes to the overall research questions.

Table 12

Snapshot of Data Frequency for Themes and Categories

Theme	Category	Subcategory	Subcategory Freq	Category Freq	Theme Freq
Cultivating Better Skills	Reflective Practices	-	-	61	-
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Data Usage	82	-	-
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Observation Protocol	67	-	-
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Post-Observation Strategies	103	252	313
Creative Collective Efficacy	Shared Expectations	-	-	29	-
Creative Collective Efficacy	Team Building Skills	-	-	90	119
	Awareness	-	-	41	-

Emergent Themes

An emergent theme represents the transformation of the real-time data and codes into an overarching concept or idea within the PAR Study. Saldaña (2016) describes themes within qualitative data analysis as the term used to provide a broader, overarching idea of the data collected. During this PAR Cycle One, two themes emerged: Cultivating Better Practices and Creating Collective Efficacy. I connected each theme to the FoP: how to build and sustain a consistent and cohesive instructional leadership team. Figure 12 displays these emerging themes with their reconstructed categories.

In this section, I describe how the CPR group developed skills and formed protocols to address the FoP and utilized reflective practice strategies to learn about oneself and others. Next, I explain the connecting force of the awareness category that bridges the two emerging themes together. Then, I explain the concept of collective efficacy, which is needed between the CPR group members throughout the PAR study. Finally, I connect the themes to the research questions.

Cultivating Better Practices

In PAR Cycle One, the CPR group actively engaged in practices and experiences that helped develop their skills, knowledge, and dispositions within their instructional leadership abilities. Two main categories helped develop this theme. Figure 13 outlines these two categories. Focused skills encompassed such a large data set, so I created three subcategories to explain the data further. First, the CPR group recognized the need for an objective observation protocol. Therefore, the team adopted and modified the Calling-on Observation Tool. Next, the CPR group learned the importance of being data-focused as an instructional leader. Lastly, the CPR group discussed and refined our skills around post-observation strategies. The second major
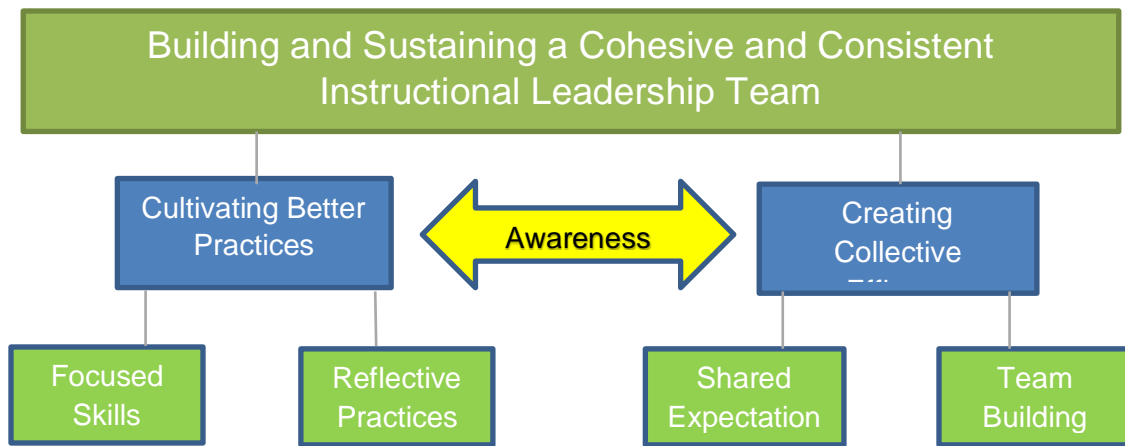
Figure 12. Three emerging themes with categories.
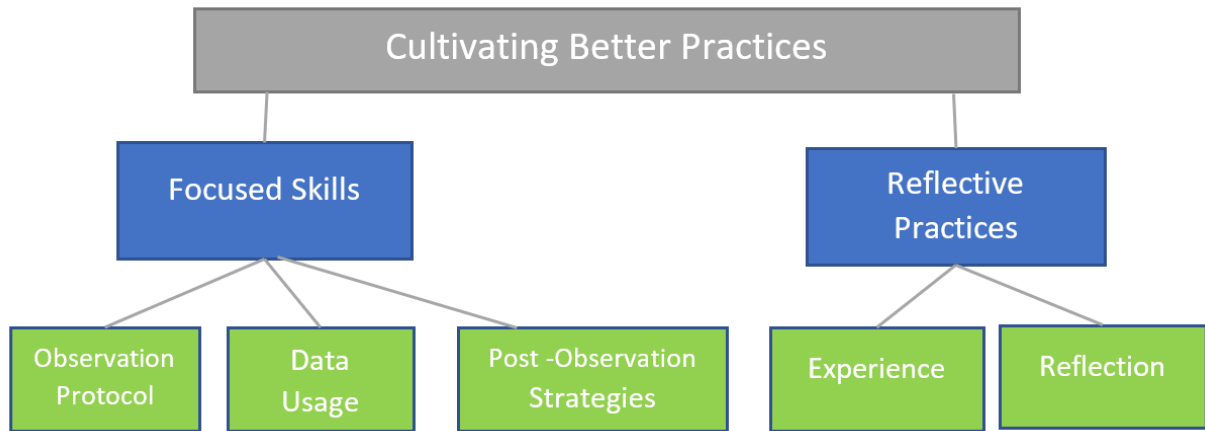
Figure 13. Cultivating better practices with instructional leaders.

category addressed under this emergent theme was the meta-cognitive approach and the importance of reflective practice.

Focused Skills

In the PAR study, the MCLE discussions revealed the need for a skills-driven approach emphasizing data collection and the observation process. Within our current practice, we identified that administrators provide inconsistent feedback to teachers. Furthermore, the CPR group acknowledged the lack of data collected or shared in the current observation process. The CPR group discussed what we do as instructional leaders in the first two Micro-Community Learning Exchanges (MCLEs). I reviewed the codes and data, and the absence of the data code became blindly evident. The CPR group agreed on finding a strategy that we could all use consistently to collect classroom data that could then be shared with teachers in their post-observation conferences. This huge component is lacking in our current process.

Observation Protocol. In order to address the practice of inconsistent administrative feedback, the CPR adopted the Calling-on Observational tool. We practiced with a selective verbatim observation tool, but recognized we needed a more efficient data collecting protocol. So, the data collection strategy we agreed to implement was the Calling-on Observational Tool. The significance of the Calling-on Observational Tool allowed the administrators to capture the number of students interacting with the teacher through various styles of engagement. The Calling-on Observational Tool (see Appendix H) offers a clear picture and counts to teachers on what strategies they use most often in the class and what students they interact with most often. This tool also allows the teacher to recognize students they may not have called on in the class for quite some time, uncovering the pattern of students hiding in plain sight in the classroom. Before implementing this tool in the classroom, the CPR team met twice to modify and clarify

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any questions about using the tool. These MCLEs served as the practice ground for familiarizing ourselves with the data instrument. During a reflection activity, Mr. Grant stated, "I am already thinking more critically about the observation and teacher feedback process. I feel more equipped to collect observational data and to share it with teachers in a constructive manner."

Data Usage. The CPR group recognized another epiphany: data usage allows for more objective data for teachers to reflect on versus subjective comments from an observer. During an MCLE, Ms. Marie shared how the Calling-on Observation Tool helped her narrow the focus on student engagement. "The NCEES tool is so broad, the Calling-on tool was nice to focus on something important to our school right now, student engagement." The CPR group used the tool for accurate data, not what teachers assumed occurred in their classrooms. Table 13 summarizes the data collected from each CPR group member and their teacher participants.

Data usage became a priority when the CPR group walked into a classroom. In the study, the CPR group discussed filling out the observation tool with the list of students before arriving at the class. This would allow for data collection and accuracy immediately when walking into the classroom. However, the triangulation data from the teachers provided a keen insight and a helpful suggestion for greater data accuracy. In the math teacher CLE, one teacher stated that depending on where the administrator sits in the classroom may alter whether or not all students can or cannot be heard when they respond to a teacher. An astute insight came from a math teacher who wanted us to recognize and consider how administrators in the room may influence the participation and the data, the teacher stated, "Maybe sitting in a different spot just because you're hearing different students." A suggestion to create more accurate data came from the science teacher CLE. One teacher suggested that administrators can request a seating chart from

Table 13

Calling-On Observational Tool: Teacher Totals - Round 1

Teachers	Raised Hand CO: R	Cold Call CO:CC	Cold Call Discipline CO:CCD	Calling Out CO:C&R CO:B-A CO:B-I	Equitable Methods CO:ES	Simple Rep TR	TPS	SG	Other	Totals
KR	0	0	0	47	0	8	0	0	0	55
JB	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	4	0	7
CB	1	11	0	0	0	9	9	9	0	39
SW	1	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	9	16
PA	1	14	0	27	0	0	0	1	0	43
AA	4	1	0	40	1	2	0	0	0	48
CK	9	3	7	42	0	1	0	0	12	74
AB	2	4	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	13
Totals	18	33	8	167	1	22	9	16	21	295

the teacher. This helps make the data more accurate and minimizes interruptions. These suggestions helped the CPR group make appropriate adjustments for PAR Cycle Two.

Post-Observation Strategies. In order to create a consistent and cohesive process, the CPR group recognized we could not rely on data alone. The post-observation conference with the teacher was just as meaningful as the data itself. The goal of the post-observation conversation was to avoid the cliché, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." In the case of the PAR study, we relied on the conversation to help the teachers review and reflect on their data. In several informal meetings, I discussed with the CPR group the Project I[4] Conversations Guide (see Appendix L). While referencing the CG, the CPR group discussed a process like a flowing agenda when discussing the classroom observation. During the March 18, 2022 Micro-Community Learning Exchange (MCLE), the group explained how we would discuss the data with the teacher, ask probing questions about their data, and eventually ask the teacher about their personal action steps and offer a suggestion or strategy. Mr. Grant shared, "when [the teachers] saw their totals; they, immediately wanted to defend them…." However, eventually, through the practice of conversation, Mr. Grant shared the teachers finally had an accountable revelation, "You know what these numbers do? [They] show me that I do not call on all my students." Our revised practices in the post-observation helped teachers come to their own realizations, and we helped them reflect on their practices in their classrooms.

Reflective Practices

Throughout PAR Cycle One, the CPR group met formally and informally about our new approach to teacher observations. In the MCLEs, we discussed the new focused skill of data collection using the Calling-on Observation Tool. At the end of each formal MCLE, I would capture the group's reflections on the Learning Exchange and their immediate experience in the

process. The reflective memos captured the inner workings of how the experience of collaboration inside the group and during the observation process helped develop the APs' skill set. Bugg and Dewey (1933) share with us that we do not learn from an experience alone; we learn from reflecting on the experience itself. The practices of writing reflective memos developed as prominent skills for the CPR group. They began writing more in their reflective memos and their written thoughts about concerns and lacking confidence began to change as they wrote about what they were actually doing. As a lead researcher, encouraging the APs to be reflective practitioners was an important skill to teach, cultivate, and practice.

Throughout the study, the experiences and interactions shared between the CPR group helped mold their skill set and build their confidence. At the beginning of the study, the CPR shared and reflected on their past experiences. Then as a CPR group, we reviewed the same classroom observation videos and discussed what our comments and next steps would be if we were observing that teacher. One CPR group member shared, "The video activity allowed me to provide feedback on what I observed, but more importantly listen to my colleagues' feedback which provided me with different viewpoints as well as skills which I can use in the future." Vygotsky (1978), a constructivism theorist, suggested that experiences should be authentic learning opportunities; hence I designed all the activities in the MCLEs to be as authentic as possible.

Later in the study, the CPR group reviewed and modified the Calling-on Observational Tool. This allowed the assistant principals to dissect the tool from abbreviations to protocols before implementing the tool with the teachers. During these MCLEs and informal administrative meetings, the CPR group would still share their hesitancy to try the new tool. Still, we collectively scheduled dates with our teacher participants and jumped into action. The

experience itself is a huge part of this study; otherwise, the CPR group would try to develop their instructional leadership skills without the "Do" phase of the Plan-Do-Study-Act process. When the administrators finally put their preparation into practice, they confirmed that skill development took place. As one administrator stated, "This experience has been interesting so far, and it is allowing me to see and understand evaluations in a different light." Based on their reflections, these consistent experiences and practices will benefit the APs in the future, as individuals and as a team of administrators.

Throughout this study's coding process is a consistent reflective practice coupled with experiences. During every action, the practice of reflection existed to capitalize on the skill development process. In PAR Cycle One, when we discussed the Calling-on Tool, the CPR group wrote a reflective memo. When we began the observation process with the tool, the CPR group wrote a reflective memo. After completing the first round of observations, the CPR group met with teachers to reflect on their classroom experience. After the post-conference observations with teachers, the CPR group wrote a reflective memo, and the teachers met in a CLE to collectively reflect on the process. In one reflective moment, Ms. Marie discussed the lengthiness of her post-observation process stating in her reflection she would try to expedite the process for the post-observation moving forward with her teachers. When practicing reflective practice, teachers noticed the same areas of improvement after reviewing their data. As one math teacher states in the Teacher CLE, "It just made me, you start to think about, okay, how am I going to fix this?" When the teachers and administrators engaged in reflective practices, it became a part of the skill development process in this study. For teachers, the reflective process allowed them to think about what they could do differently in the classroom. The process allowed the administrators to think about how to fine-tune their instructional practices.

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This emerging theme showcased a concept that aligns with the Focus of Practice and the research questions. The following emerging theme, awareness, appears through more abstract means. Awareness helps explain why developing instructional leadership skills is important in this study.

Awareness

One category bridged strong bonds between the two emergent themes. Awareness of one's self through the cultivation of better practices during the PAR and creating a culture of collective efficacy strengthened the CPR group members individually and as a team. The CPR group members shared how they doubted themselves and their abilities to conduct teacher observations and evaluations. Ms. Rose shared a moment when meeting with a veteran teacher where she doubted herself due to her limited years of experience, "I'm always thinking in my mind, they're probably like, you know, what does she know The other assistant principals agreed with this comment in the MCLE, which surprised me since the other two administrators had served as instructional leaders for over three to eight years. This phenomenon amazed me, and I took to my field notes and tried to capture this lack of confidence within the CPR group. I found an extreme term I shared with the CPR group: Atelophobia. It is an obsessive fear of imperfection (Lindberg, 2020). Although this condition is not what I believe plagued my CPR group, the exaggerated condition helped generate conversation about the cause of the lack of confidence.

Throughout the initial MCLEs in PAR Pre-Cycle and PAR Cycle One, the CPR group acknowledged their concern for making a mistake. This overwhelming doubt weaved itself into all areas of PAR Cycle One. Doubt emerged when the CPR group stated they didn't feel confident collecting the data in the tool, then the apprehension before using the tool before their

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initial observations, and finally doubt or stress before meeting with the teacher to review the data in the post-observation conference. This doubt overwhelmingly caused the CPR group to lose sight of what skills they possessed and what they knew from prior knowledge and their degree program. In the MCLEs, we often talked about not wanting to do something wrong or doubting the knowledge of speaking with a veteran teacher. As the principal with the most administrative experience at the school, I felt, at times, the CPR group simply wanted me just to tell them what to do. Instead, I shared with them this comment about the usage of our observational tool data: "There is nothing shared with them that is content-specific…the more we allow teachers to speak about their data from the observation, the more they benefit from the post-observation conversation." I went on to share that this addressed veteran and beginning teachers alike because the data is no longer our opinion of what we see but an unbiased data set about what is occurring in the classroom with student interactions. I found myself often motivating outside of the MCLEs to the CPR group about simply completing the observations with the data tool so they would be more comfortable. This usually occurred with my novice assistant principal, Ms. Rose, who had previously experienced tough teacher conversations during the school year. Her doubt spawned from those veteran teachers questioning her highly subjective observation practices. Our conversations together about what we were trying to achieve with the utilization of the observation tool helped sway their doubt to the hope for confidence. However, a fascinating phenomenon occurred: the doubt about their own abilities and skills gradually faded away with the encouragement and empowerment of the team while creating collective efficacy.

Creating Collective Efficacy

When placing on my researcher's lens, I found it challenging to find the right term for this emerging theme. I wanted to capture a term that describes the mutual cooperation between

the CPR group and the work between observer and teacher. I found the term collective efficacy matches the concept portrayed in a group of people agreeing upon shared expectations to accomplish a goal (Bandura, 1977). Collective efficacy is defined as "a group's shared belief in its conjoint capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment" (Bandura, 1977, p. 477). In terms of this study, I focus on the collective efficacy of the CPR group as we sharpen our skills in the teacher observation process. Figure 14 shows how this theme developed.

In this study, I use the term "collective efficacy" to describe the process by which the shared expectations are developed and executed to the desired outcome. This is why the category of team building skills was necessary. The Team Building category captures actions needed in the CPR group to address the FoP and how to build and sustain a consistent and cohesive instructional leadership team. This section addresses the expectations required and developed for the CPR group and the techniques used to build the team of administrators' instructional skills.

Shared Expectations

Throughout the study, the CPR group discussed our hopes and expected outcomes for participating in this study. From the first MCLE, each CPR group member shared that they wanted to become a better instructional leader. One administrator enthusiastically proclaimed, "I hope to accomplish bringing instruction to the forefront of my job!" The CPR group realized that to be a cohesive instructional team, our actions and expectations should be aligned. Our young administrator recognized that in her first reflective memo: "Being a consistent and cohesive instructional team means that we look, sound, and act like one. We make it our goal to strive for unity." This unity was formed by focusing on several ideas: a common goal, a focus on student learning and accountability, and establishing and building trust within the CPR group.

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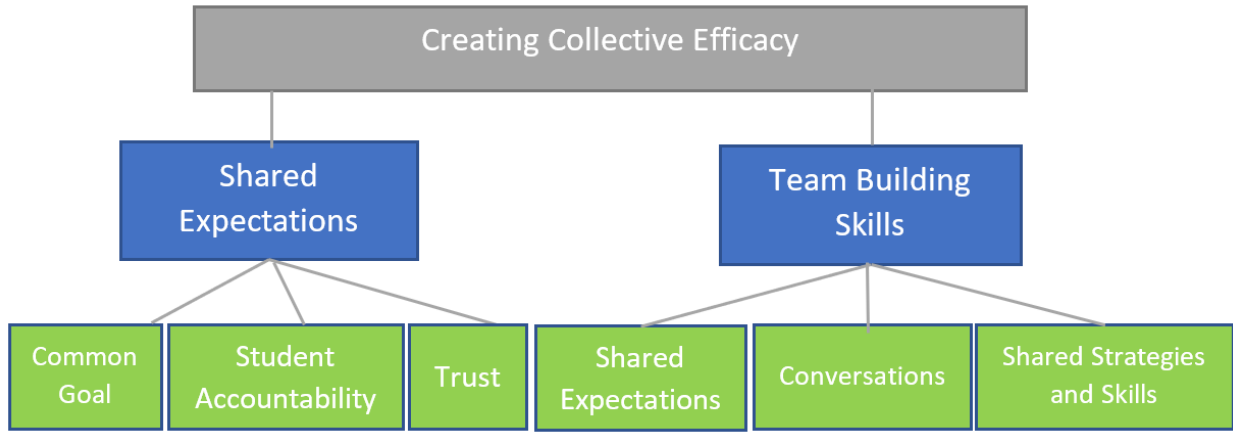
Figure 14. Developing an environment of collective efficacy.

The common goal for the CPR group went beyond just appearing to act the same way. Our common goal as instructional leaders required us to dedicate time for classroom observations. As discussed in the PAR Pre-Cycle, we solidified a data-driven approach to the observation process. We agreed upon the Calling-on Tool, which complimented our then-current school goals. Our school goals for the 2021-22 school year, after the remote learning year, focused on how we engage students in the lesson and facilitate academic discourse with them. As Ms. Marie shared, "...I like that we were capturing one thing that's important to our school right now…" referring to the academic discourse in classrooms. We established this common goal not only to collect data but to facilitate meaningful discussions with the teacher participants. The CPR group wanted to help teachers unpack their data and unveil their strengths and weaknesses in their classroom practices.

Another shared expectation presented itself as the embedded reason for classroom observations: the development of classroom engagement provides more opportunities for students to use their voices and ultimately be accountable for their learning. Piaget (1958), the developer of the constructivism learning theory, states, "Assimilation and accommodation require an active learner, not a passive one" (p. 10). Therefore, the student must play an active role in their learning. Measuring the number of interactions students participate in the lesson and how the teacher facilitated that participation allows the CPR group to have a deeper conversation with the teacher on our school's goal of student engagement through academic discourse. The CPR group and the school staff believed building a culture of collective efficacy meant establishing high expectations for student success.

Trust is another code that seemed to bind all the categories together, and appeared throughout the study. "Trust" in the concept of collective efficacy is paramount. The CPR group

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needed trust to sign on for this shared experience in exploring the FoP. When looking through the data and codes of this study, trust circulates throughout the study. In Chapter 2, I described trust as an act of vulnerability in relying on the strength of someone or something (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Ms. Marie showed trust in the process during the reflection activity in the first MCLE. She stated, "The compilation of a mindset shift, [the researcher's] research interventions, and our team's "buy in" has the potential to extraordinarily impact the instructional atmosphere of our school…" In the second MCLE, the CPR group explored the idea of trust as part of a learning exchange activity. This idea of collective efficacy couldn't simply be shared with the CPR group. The teacher participants had to share some trust in the administrators as well. Mr. Grant explained how doing the small things and sharing suggestions with teachers can go a long way when establishing trust with teachers. This trust continued in PAR Cycle One as teachers partnered with the administrators to review their data. Mr. Williams elaborated on a shared point from the other teachers. He stated how there was be a willingness to improve from both the teacher and administrator when they discussed the data with him. It was a directive but a deliberate goal for both wanting to do better. Ms. Rane supported the notion that the teachers and administrators were forming trust because it was time well spent. She stated, "It [post-observation conference] is a longer process, but that's a good thing. …There is an actual conversation. We are getting actual information out of the conversation." Trust and this category aligned with the other category for this emerging theme as well.

Team Building Skills

In this study, collective efficacy focuses on the common goals and expectations to execute consistent and effective teacher observations. This subcategory helps address the research sub question: How does a high school leadership team consistently work together and

on their own to sustain instructional leadership? In order to build and sustain an effective

instructional team, the team must develop some team building strategies. In this section, I

describe strategies and processes of collaboration, conversations, and shared strategies.

As in the Micro-Community Learning Exchanges (MCLEs), the CPR group participated

in several tasks that cultivated an environment for dialogue and collaboration. Ms. Rose wrote

this after the November 15, 2021 MCLE and after we observed a classroom together: "These

activities provide me with the opportunity to collaborate with my colleagues on ways to become

a stronger instructional leader." Vygotsky (1978) differed in their learning styles for

constructivism. This study embraced the foundations of CLE axioms (Guajardo et al., 2015) and

Vygotsky's idea that learning occurs through social interactions. The MCLEs were designed as a

place to communicate and collaborate with each other for a common purpose. As the lead

researcher and principal, I created conditions using the CLE practices and protocols to

intentionally build the team's intentions, goals, and purpose.

Through the MCLE process, the CPR group members shared skills and strategies that

helped build the CPR group's team-building skills. The conversations in all MCLEs helped

affirm administrators that their current practices were becoming consistent. The MCLEs also

provided a space for the CPR group members to learn new strategies from each other. This was

evident when we modified the observation tool to accommodate the comfort level and

knowledge base of CPR group members. We spent valuable time discussing what needed to be

adjusted and what needed further clarification to increase each member's confidence before

using the tools. During an informal administrative meeting, the CPR group reviewed the Project

I[4] CG (see Appendix L), and designed important starter and follow-up questions for the post-

observation conversation to get teachers better suited for reflecting during a post-observation

conference. Ms. Marie wrote and shared our agreed upon collective starter questions for the post-observation conference (see Appendix O). This question forming process allowed the CPR group to openly share and learn from one another. More importantly, it built confidence with the questions, and created a stronger bond with one another. This simple activity of working together, showcased our aim for collective efficacy in the classroom observation process.

Leadership Reflection and Action Steps for PAR Cycle Two

When reflecting on PAR Cycle One and the entire study, I noticed my efforts in leadership being more intentional for the sake of others. Just like in the classroom, the teacher must intentionally prepare a structure for students to learn; likewise, I found myself doing the same for my CPR group. As I shared advice or encouragement, I metacognitively caught myself reflecting on the Focus of Practice and the alignment of my words to the study. I noticed myself being very tactful in what I said in the MCLEs so that my positionality bias does not interfere with the overall process and effect of the study. As a part of the CPR group, I also played a role in the collective efficacy of the study and the overall results. Being mindful of my words and actions helped mitigate my biases.

Another realization through this study is my role within the assistant principals' doubt or lack of confidence. I believe that part of their doubt comes from the idea that with my positional power comes all the answers, and they do not want to do something wrong in front of me. In my field notes, I shared with them that I am going to push back more on them to respond to questions, problem-solve, or give them the space to develop their skill set before sharing with them how I would do something. Although we hope to build a consistent instructional leadership team, I cannot provide all the answers or determine all the decisions if we are to function with

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collective efficacy. I must continue to interchange my roles as the lead researcher and, most importantly, a participant in the CPR group.

Another form of leadership I noticed in the study is how many of the emerging themes and categories complement the constructivist learning theory. This theory was introduced to me in the Project I[4] program. Developed by Piaget and enhanced by Dewey (1938), the constructivist principles are rooted in the aligned learning principles:

1. Learning is an active process

2. Learning is a social activity

3. Learning builds on the connections between new experiences and prior knowledge

4. Learning is a reflective process

5. Knowledge is personal (adapted from Mcleod, 2019)

Each of these principles represents an important component of my study. By making this connection, I believe there is a correlation between the learning process and the skill development of the CPR group.

When I consider the connection between the PAR Pre-Cycle and Cycle One, I imagine the PDSA cycle on the macro and micro levels. On the macro level, it took the CPR group both PAR cycles to complete one cycle of observations. First, the CPR group planned and prepared for the desired outcome of the FoP, a consistent feedback process for teacher classroom observations. Next, we adjusted the observational tool and began collecting data for teachers. Then, we shared that data with teachers so they could reflect on their classroom practices while the CPR group reflected on their post-observation practices. Finally, the CPR group discussed the process, and what we learned to make considerations and decisions for the future, which is PAR Cycle Two. However, on a micro-level, I completed the PDSA cycle after each CLE

process. As the lead researcher, I constantly moved through the cycle to adjust and realign my actions. I analyzed the collected data and considered my desired outcomes, which are answering my research questions.

This PDSA cycle continued in PAR Cycle Two. I planned on scheduling our study observations earlier in the semester. I wanted to gather data earlier with the participating teachers and see if the CPR group utilized their newly refined skills. I was interested in reviewing the future data particularly around the awareness connection. Also, I wanted to capture if this study's practice transfers beyond the participating teachers in the study. For this data set, I planned on using CALL survey data for the whole school to see how it aligns with the comments made in the math and science CLEs. Hopefully, these skills have shifted to a wider scope of teachers in the school building.

Conclusion

In PAR Cycle One, the full range of activities and data collection emerged and the CPR Group better understood the expectations of the study. With the conversations in the micro-CLEs and the teacher-CLEs, most action steps will remain the same for administrators. The CPR group members and the teacher participants will complete one major observation cycle in PAR Cycle Two. However, some activities may be adjusted within the MCLEs to observe whether common data sets remain that support the emergent themes from this chapter. Data sets involving the growth of the CPR group through the study and conversations on how this process can be sustainable will also be addressed. In Table 14, I share a timeline for the PAR Cycle Two.

Table 14

PAR Cycle Two Overview

Timeline	Activities
May 2022	CALL Survey with whole staff
August 2022	MCLE with CPR group about reflections on their first year in the new process. • Learning Journey Activity describing their first year • CPR group reflective memo activity o Vulnerability inquiry
September 2022	CPR group members complete observations with their teacher participants • 1 science teacher and 1 math teacher each • Send the teachers the classroom observation tool data and video recording • Arrange post-observations with the teacher participants utilizing the information from the conversation guide MCLE during the month to have group discussions about the observation process. • CPR group reflective memo after reviewing the post-observation data/footage for "pros and grows" reflection activity • CPR group reflective memo activity o Write a reflective memo on what next steps will be taken in the future. Teacher CLE 2
October	MCLE to finalize the PAR study

CHAPTER 6: PAR CYCLE TWO AND FINDINGS

PAR Cycle Two's activities and data collection took place during the latter part of the spring 2022 academic semester. We recessed over the summer and resumed at the start of the fall 2022 semester. In mid-August, a unique twist appeared in my study. After being highly sought after, Ms. Marie, my closest and longest-tenured assistant principal, moved into another position in our school district. With intentionality toward this study and the students, I hired a new assistant principal. The CPR group welcomed Ms. Wilson onto the team. This chapter provides a culmination of the data collected and analyzed to best understand this question in my context: *How does a high school principal build and sustain a cohesive leadership team with assistant principals to support their growth and development as equity leaders?*

Chapter 6 focuses on the last of three PAR cycles, including the process of activities, data collection, and coding results. This chapter offers a set of findings from the cumulative analysis of the three PAR cycles and continues with the study's overall findings, and ends with a conclusion.

PAR Cycle Two Process

PAR Cycle Two took place at the end of spring and early fall of 2022, with a short break over the summer months. Although the focus of PAR Cycle Two remained consistent with the Pre-PAR Cycle and PAR Cycle One, I shifted slightly in the direction of the research questions to address the sustainability component of the study. Table 15 shows the activities, dates, and participants for PAR Cycle Two. In this section, I explain PAR Cycle Two activities, data, and combined data from all the PAR- Cycles.

Table 15

Activities: PAR Cycle Two

Activity	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14
MCLEs (Total 4)		●		●		↑				●			●
Reflective Memos (Total 2)				●		Opening Schools							●
Classroom Observations (Total 7)						Teacher Workdays			●	●			
Post-Observations (Total 7)						(Optional and Mandatory)				●	●		
Teacher CLE (Total 1)						And First Days of School				●			
CALL Survey	●												
CPR Group Transition			●	●		↓							

PAR Cycle Two Activities

PAR Cycle Two spanned over two academic semesters with transitions for summer break and adding a CPR member and Assistant Principal (Ms. Wilson). I continued the data collection strategies and analysis to answer the research questions. The MCLEs were held with the CPR group members throughout the cycle. Our new assistant principal, Ms. Wilson, replaced Ms. Marie midway through this cycle. The CPR group completed reflective memos after two MCLE sessions. After completing one more round of teacher observations, I hosted one final Teacher Community Learning Exchange (TCLE) with all the teacher participants and CPR group members together to discuss the process, reflect on the lessons learned, conduct a member check, and brainstorm the expansion of the process to a larger school setting. At the beginning of my study, I used the Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership for Learning (CALL) survey with the entire staff at Eastern High School. I implemented it once during the final PAR cycle. The following sections go into greater detail about the activities in PAR Cycle Two and what the significance of each activity brought to the study.

CALL Survey

PAR Cycle Two began at the end of the 2022 spring semester by administering the Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership for Learning (CALL) Survey (Blitz & Modeste, 2015; Halverson & Kelley, 2017) to the entire teaching staff at Eastern High School. While the data collected did not impact the results of this study, the CALL survey provided unique and specific data sets to assess leadership effectiveness in different activities and areas in the school setting. I used the CALL survey data in two ways. First, I initially started using CALL data in the Fall of 2019 to recognize and support the limitations of administrators' current practice towards instructional leadership and the impact on our classroom observation practices. Secondly, in the

MCLEs throughout the study, the CALL data is used as a reference and reminder that we, as administrators, can do things differently to support our teachers. I also used the CALL Survey results in the teacher CLE. By comparing the survey results to the teacher experience in the study, I could gain better insights into the effectiveness of our instructional leadership activities. Appendix P is a snapshot of the overall survey results that support the work in my study and my Focus of Practice. I discuss the CALL Survey data and usage further in the Teacher Community Learning Exchange (TCLE) section.

Micro-Community Learning Exchanges

During this study, I held eight Micro-Community Learning Exchanges (MCLE). Half of the MCLEs took place in PAR Cycle Two. Two with the original CPR members and two with a new member, Ms. Wilson. With the transition of Ms. Marie moving to another instructional leadership position by September, I held MCLE Six on August 19, 2022 with the original CPR group to capture reflection data from their first year in the study. I began the MCLE with a Personal Narrative activity about vulnerability. I selected the topic because I saw this code throughout the earlier PAR Cycles. After moving from the Personal Narratives, the CPR group participated in the Journey Line discussion focusing on the CPR group's personal reflection on growth over the last year of the study. MCLE Six captured my last group discussion and data with the original CPR group. Appendix Q provides the last two MCLE agendas and their formats.

After a few weeks of interviews and transition, our new assistant principal, Ms. Wilson, joined the CPR group. Her previous district graciously released Ms. Wilson early which allowed us to begin the school year with her in place. Ms. Wilson welcomed the idea of learning together with an administrative team focused on equity-centered instructional leadership. During Ms.

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Wilson's first informal MCLE on September 26, 2022, I invited the other CPR group members to share and explain what we did over the last year. I also asked them to share what the classroom observation process looked like. I was proud to listen to the other CPR group members explain my process to a new member. This helped me understand and recognize any gaps or misunderstandings about why we were doing this. Also, the CPR group members supported each other in their explanation, thus providing a robust picture of the PAR study to Ms. Wilson. She agreed to the process, signed the participation consent form (see Appendix D), and set a schedule to observe the teacher that Ms. Marie observed. Ms. Wilson only observed one teacher participant from the 2021-22 group. One teacher left the school and accepted a position at a local elementary school. It worked well since Ms. Wilson needed time to learn about the school and the staff.

I conducted the last MCLE with the CPR group on October 17, 2022. In this MCLE, I wanted the CPR group to conduct a data review and member check. We review and reflect on our data from this PAR cycle and compare our data to the PAR Pre-Cycle and PAR Cycle One. These activities allowed me to gain participant feedback to help validate the data, improve accuracy, and allow for the transferability of this study. During this MCLE, I also outlined the new observation data from the second-round of using the Calling-on Observation Tool (see Table 16). In addition, we discussed strategies with the teachers to support their teaching style and further engage more students in their classrooms.

Teacher Community Learning Exchange

I hosted the final Teacher Community Learning Exchange (TCLE) on September 28, 2022 with both sets of teachers and the present CPR group. During the TCLE, I asked the group some reflective questions about the overall process and whether they believed this could be

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Table 16

Calling-On Observational Tool: Teacher Totals: Round 2

Teachers	Raised Hand CO: R	Cold Call CO: CC	Cold Call Discipline CO: CCD	Calling Out CO: C&R CO: B-A CO: B-I	Equitable Methods CO: ES	Simple Rep	TR	TPS	SG	Other	Totals
KR	0	11	0	16	0	0	0	1	0	28
JB	1	1	0	32	0	0	0	0	0	34
CB	0	2	0	1	5	5	0	0	0	13
SW	2	27	1	22	0	0	0	2	5	59
PA	0	12	0	18	0	0	0	0	0	30
CK	7	14	4	27	0	0	0	0	15	67
AB	1	8	0	5	7	7	0	0	0	28
Totals	11	75	5	121	12	12	0	3	20	259

useful in a wider implementation model. Appendix Q highlights the agenda and activities in the last TCLE. Similarly to the MCLEs, I opened the TCLE with a Dynamic Mindfulness session, acknowledging that all participants had just completed a long day at school and we needed to re-center on the work of the study. The Personal Narrative used in the TCLE focused on change. This opened the discussion in the frame of mind about how we all can collectively move toward the same goal of student achievement. From there, the TCLE consisted of an open discussion about several topics. First, we discussed whether we had moved the instructional leadership measure for administrators to teachers using the CALL Survey data. Then, we discussed the experience of data-centered observations and post-observation conversations and how it affected their instruction. We wrapped up the TCLE by discussing how the experience of working on this study could transfer to the entire school. We also discussed the possibilities of implementing classroom observations as experienced in this study on a larger school wide scale. Later in this chapter, I share extensionally the data and remarks from this TCLE.

Reflective Memos

The reflective memos served as a different data set to solidify the organized thoughts of the participant. In this study, each assistant principal completed the reflective memos right after the MCLE session. In PAR Cycle Two, the CPR completed one reflective memo with the original CPR group with Ms. Marie and the second memo with Ms. Wilson. The reflective memo consisted of four main parts that each CPR group member wrote about after the MCLE. The responses were collected in a Google Form and then converted to a spreadsheet for coding purposes and included four parts:

1. Concrete Experience (What happened?)
2. Reflection (What did you feel?)

3. Concept that applies (What concept or generalization applies?)

4. Plan (What next?)

Codes to Categories

Throughout this Participatory Action Research study, I expanded the details of my coding process with its original codes and sub-codes. Using this process, I looked back at my original categories and noticed the codes shifted into newly created categories. This shift in new codes derived from the completion and conduction of the following activities:

1. Facilitating MCLEs and teacher CLEs.

2. Conferring about consistent, evidence-based observations and reflecting on them.

3. Completing two rounds of classroom observations with an evidence-based tool with the teacher participants.

4. Analyzing and reflecting on post-observation conversations and experiences for the teacher participant and the CPR group member

These activities helped refine the codebook into new, distinct codes which transformed into categories (see Appendix M). After coding the data and completing the three PAR Cycles, the evidence reaffirmed that the categories aligned with creating emerging themes about the work.

Categories to Themes

Throughout the PAR Cycles, I updated the categories in light of new data sets. I found it necessary to return to my research questions to ensure that my codes corresponded to my FoP. While coding all the data, I kept returning to the research question: How does a high school leadership team build and sustain cohesive instructional leadership? With that goal in mind, I set about discovering my emerging themes. I used a deductive coding technique to connect the emerging themes with the data collected. The deductive coding process occurs when the

researcher approaches open coding from the top down (Vanover et al., 2021). During this process, I noticed some emerging themes. I identified strategies for clarifying the categories required to bridge the gap between codes and emerging themes. With this process, I successfully remodeled the codebook and identified two emerging themes from the data. The emerging themes were Cultivating Better Practices, and Creating Collective Efficacy between the CPR group.

Data Collection and Analysis

Throughout PAR Cycle Two, I remained consistent with my data collection methods. I audio-recorded the sessions for the MCLEs and the TCLE, and I would then have the audio files transcribed on my secured Rev.com account. For the MCLEs, I also had the CPR group complete a reflective memo to capture any other thoughts missed in the discussion. Appendix Q and R provide an overview of the CLEs during this PAR cycle for both the CPR Group and the teacher participants.

I extended the collection of my coding process by analyzing the PAR Cycle Two data and then combined that with data from the PAR Pre-Cycle and the PAR Cycle One data. A complete representation of data is in Table 17. The snapshot provides the emergent categories and themes. From the data breakdown, I acknowledged the supported emerging themes by the additional data from PAR Cycle Two, thus, reaffirming the overarching themes for the study. The emerging themes were Cultivating Better Practices and Creating Collective Efficacy between the CPR group.

When reviewing the data from PAR Cycle One to PAR Cycle Two, the Focused Skills category captured an extensive data set. This shift occurred in PAR Cycle One due to the onset of live classroom observations with the teacher participants. I separated the category because I

Table 17

Snapshot of Data Frequency for Themes and Categories from All PAR Cycles

Theme	Category	Subcategory	Subcategory Freq	Category Freq	Theme Freq
Cultivating Better Skills	Reflective Practices	-	-	149	-
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Data Usage	138	-	-
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Observation Protocol	200	-	-
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Post-Observation Strategies	221	594	743
Fostering Collective Efficacy	Shared Expectations	-	-	71	-
Fostering Collective Efficacy	Team Building Skills	-	-	164	235

did not want to lose sight of which focused skills emerged as the more vital skills the CPR group developed. First, the CPR group recognized the need for an objective observation protocol. Therefore, the team adopted and modified the Calling-on Observation Tool. Next, the CPR group learned the importance of being data-focused as an instructional leader. Lastly, the CPR group discussed and refined our skills around post-observation strategies. I distilled the category of Focused Skills into the following subcategories: Observation Protocol, Post-Observation Strategies, and Data Usage. The second major category addressed under this emergent theme was the meta-cognitive approach and the importance of reflective practice. After breaking down the data, Table 15 from Chapter 5 and Table 18 show the significant progression in the data frequency in this category. I reflected back on the overall data-supported theme and confirmed that Cultivating Better Practices is a strong theme.

After coding and analyzing all the data, I made a small change to the second theme. Instead of "Creating" Collective Efficacy, I recognized through evidence the more appropriate term is "Fostering" Collective Efficacy. Fostering an action or idea represents supporting the growth and development of something. In this study, I used the term "collective efficacy" to describe the process by which the shared expectations are developed and executed to the desired outcome. Throughout the three PAR Cycles, the CPR group consistently found common goals to agree upon in order to support our eagerness to develop our instructional leadership skills. In the study, I recognized a need for foundational team characteristics. These included open collaboration and communication, sharing knowledge and skills with each CPR group member, and developing a strong trusting bond with each CPR group member. The CPR group already possessed the foundation for collective efficacy, it simply needed to be nurtured and explored.

The data from PAR Cycle Two supported the second theme, Fostering Collective

Efficacy. To see the significance of data from all three cycles of inquiry, I rendered a data distribution chart for the two major themes (see Figures 14 and 15). The figures provide the total count of data per PAR Cycle and a percentage of occurrences related to the total count for each theme. The figures show a progression over time of data that grew into the support for each finding. In the first PAR cycle, the data only consisted of the CPR group working with one another and observing digital classroom observations. In the second PAR cycle, the data collected increased with the onset of the teacher participants and the actual observation process. In the final PAR cycle, I collected the most data to support the findings because the CPR group became more aligned and aware of the practices and processes to address the FoP. Appendix S supports figures 15 and 16 by showing the combined codebook data spread for all three PAR cycles. This appendix goes from the theme level all the way down to the code level to identify what kind of data I collected throughout the study.

Findings

After 18 months and conducting three cycles of inquiry that focused on answering the primary research question: *How does a high school principal build and sustain a cohesive leadership team with assistant principals to support their growth and development as equity leaders?* The data supports two findings. First, Cultivating Better Practices. Second, Fostering Collective Efficacy. To achieve the most significant impact, high school principals must implement both findings.

121 (16.3%)

227 (30.6%)

395 (53.2%)

■ Pre-PAR ■ PAR 1 ■ PAR 2
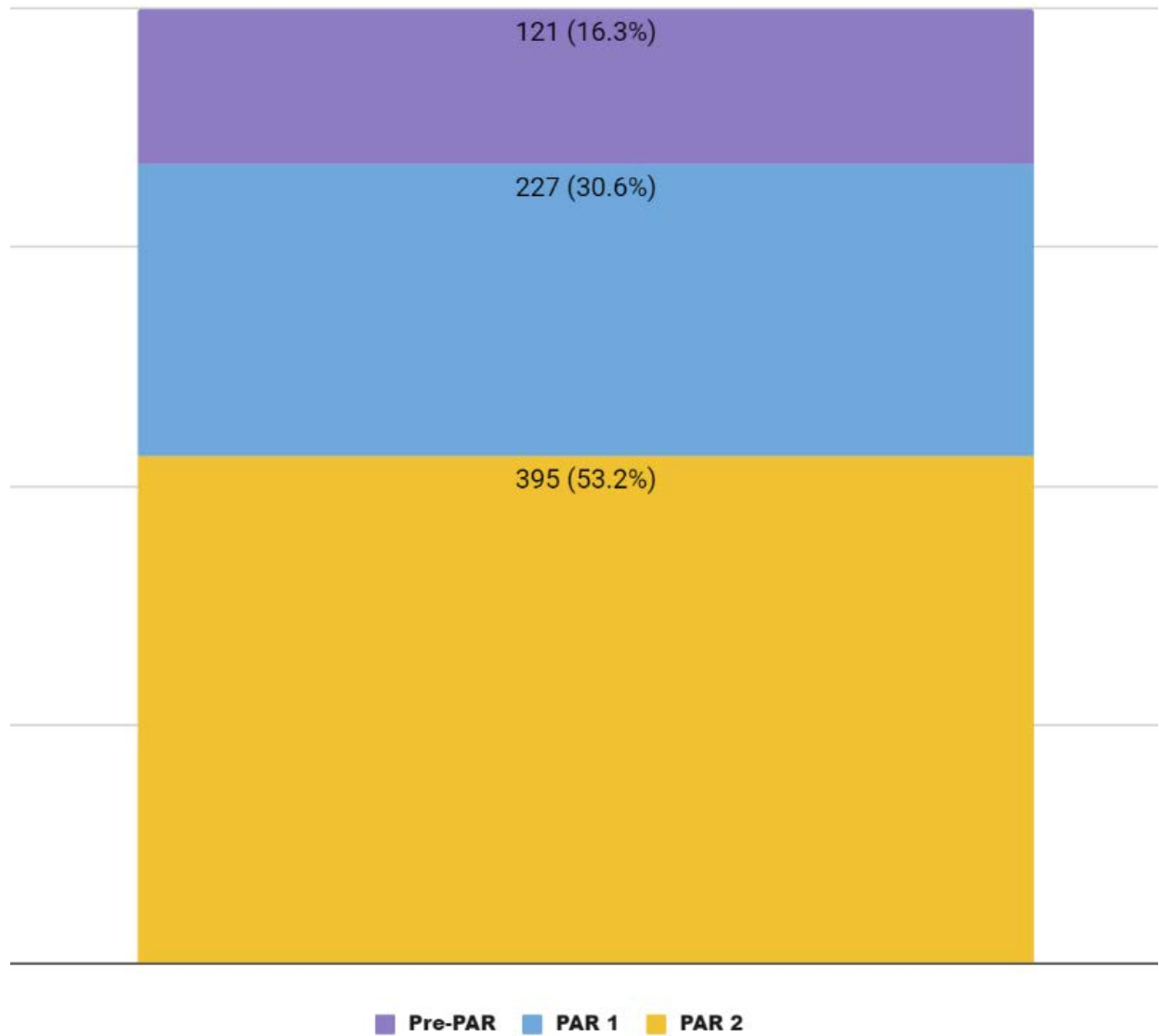
Figure 15. Cultivating better practices data breakdown across all PAR Cycles.

49 (20.9%)

62 (26.4%)

124 (52.8%)

Pre-PAR   PAR 1   PAR 2
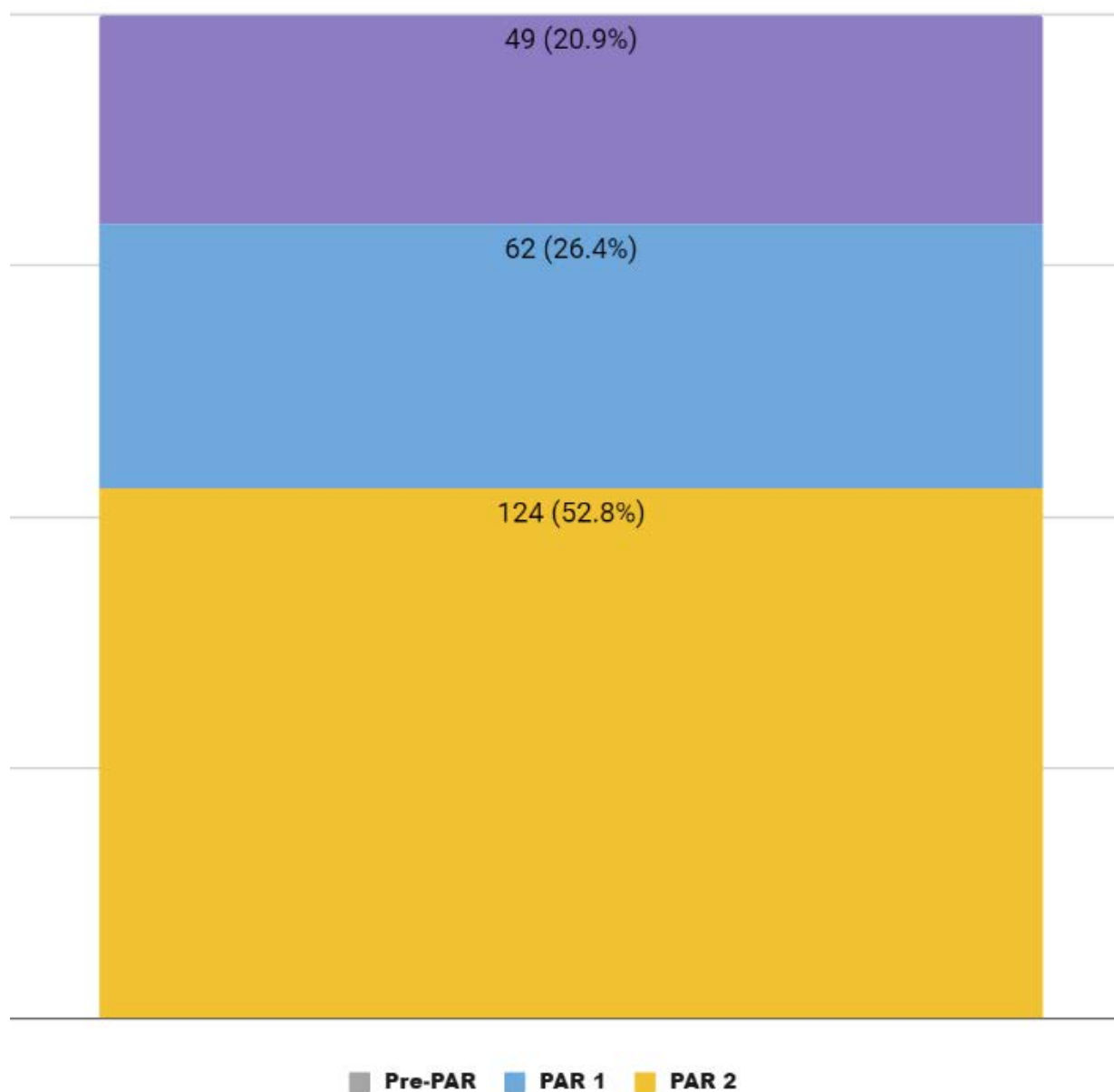
Figure 16. Creating collective efficiency data breakdown across all PAR Cycles.

Figure 17 represents the FoP with both findings: Cultivating Better Practices and Fostering Collective Efficacy. Cultivating Better Practices is formed from the major categories of Focused Skills and Reflective Practices. These categories developed over all three PAR cycles to form a solid finding. Fostering Collective Efficacy started from two major categories Shared Expectations and Team Building. A third theme emerged as the first PAR Cycle began. I termed it Awareness. As I gathered data, the idea of Awareness didn't capture enough data. However, it did make a clear and solid presence in the study. At one point I tried to use Awareness as a theme to serve as a bridge connecting Cultivating Better Practices and Fostering Collective Efficacy. By the end of the PAR Cycles, that theory was not supported. I discuss the relevance of Awareness to my study later in Chapter 7.

Figure 18 outlines Saldaña's coding (2021) process, which I used throughout the PAR cycles to reach the findings. The data collection started with simple codes that I combined to create categories that I collapsed into larger themes, which I converted to the results of my study. This section reviews my coding processes and thinking that leads to the findings.

Next, I discuss the findings in complete detail. I explain the connections to their categories. I give the evidence of the findings down to the code level. Finally, I connect the findings to the overall research questions.

Cultivating Better Practices

As a farming term, "cultivate" means preparing and using the land to raise crops. This means the farmer intentionally tends to the soil, provides water, sows seeds, and does other actions so the crop can thrive and grow. Likewise, in this study, intentionality in the learning exchange space, time, and activities helped foster the growth of the CPR team. Next, the term "better" means that something was already established but made more effective. Finally, the term
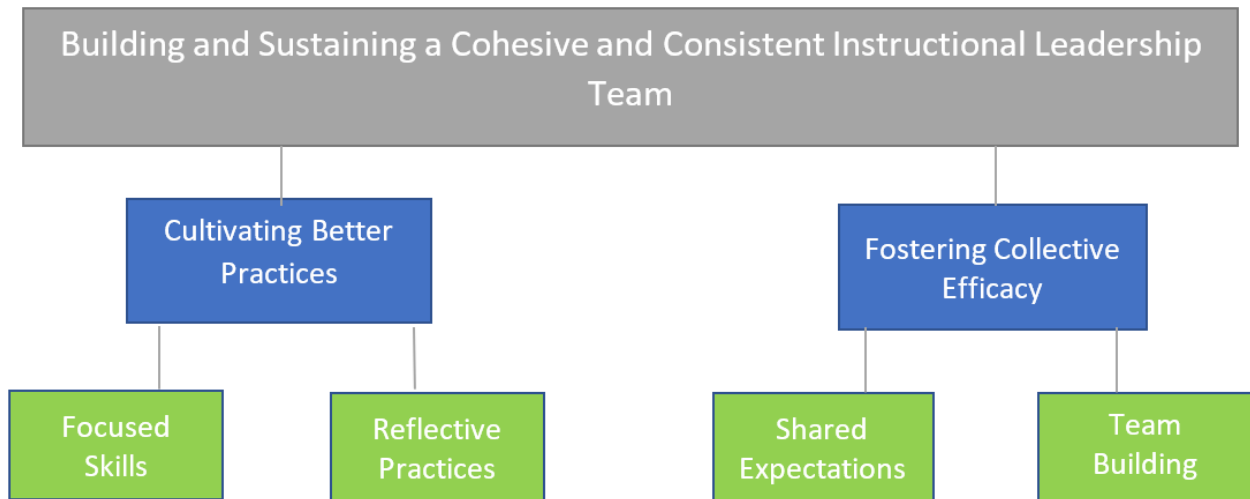
Figure 17. Findings confirmation.
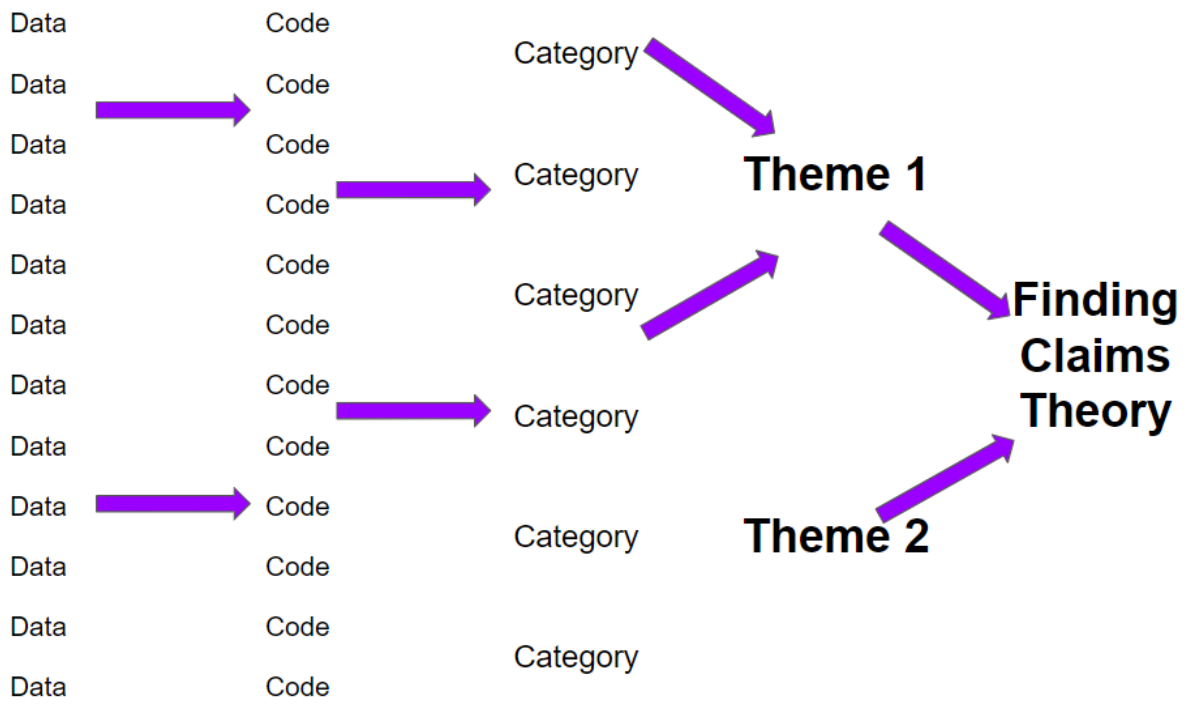
Figure 18. Saldaña's (2016) data to findings protocol.

"practices" means the actual application or a repeated or customary action. Combined, these terms create the following question: How does a high school principal build and sustain a consistent and cohesive leadership team with assistant principals to support their growth and development as instructional leaders? By Cultivating Better Practices and Fostering Collective Efficacy, I intentionally provided a safe space for the CPR group to practice and reflected on their current skill set; the CPR group collectively developed more effective methods of instructional leadership. The data suggest that in order for me to Cultivate Better Practices, I must focus on skills and reflection.

Skills Focused

The MCLE discussions in the PAR study revealed the need for a skills-driven approach that prioritized data collection and the observation process. In the initial PAR Cycle, the CPR group discovered that administrators provide inconsistent feedback to teachers in our current practice. During our second MCLE, the CPR commented on the broad scope of activities and actions we looked for in a classroom observation. We agreed on a proper next step being an observational tool to help focus our attention on specific tasks in the classroom. After coding the first MCLEs of the study, the lack of objective evidence to support administrators being data-driven in the observation process helped form this category. Throughout all three PAR Cycles, conversations among the CPR group members helped me develop stronger skills in using an objective data collection observational tool and how to relay the data back to the teacher for the most effective outcomes. I submit three subcategories that comprise the Skills Focused category.

Observation Protocol. The CPR group implemented the Calling-on Observational tool to address the practice of inconsistent administrative feedback. The CPR group did not use this tool until the second PAR cycle since the first PAR cycle explored other observational tools and

classroom observation techniques. We believed the purpose of the Calling-on Observational tool helped identify the inequitable practices in the classroom. We used the tool to identify who the teacher requested to answer a question in class, how often the teacher asked a particular student to answer, and what method(s) the teacher used to call on a student in the class (see Appendix H). This tool also allows the teacher to recognize students they haven't called on in a long time, revealing a pattern of students hiding in plain sight in the classroom.

The CPR group used the MCLE space to question and modify certain qualities of the learning tool. By adjusting the tool to an agreed format, each CPR group member invested their mental focus and complete understanding of the observation tool. During the last two PAR cycles, the CPR group observed the teacher participant's classroom using the observation tool. After using the tool, the administrator would tally the data in the tool and share it with the teacher participant. From there, the teachers were given some time to review their data, and generally, within a week's time, the teacher and administrator met for a post-observation conversation.

Another skill in the observation process became just as important as the data itself: the post-observation meeting with the teacher. The post-observation process helped solidify the consistency and cohesion amongst the CPR group. We hoped to provide a collaborative approach for the teacher not just to see the data from the observation but to use it to change their practice in the classroom. During the first and second PAR Cycles, we used the Project I^4 Conversation Guide as a resource to ground our discussion about what to do after the observation (see Appendix L). During the March 18, 2022 MCLE, the group described how we would discuss the data with the teacher, inquire deeply about their data, and eventually inquire about the teacher's personal actions and offer a suggestion or solution. According to Ms. Berry, a science teacher

participant, this was indeed a pivotal event in the observation process, "… [With] this study and everything, the one difference for me was I actually got feedback, and it wasn't just feedback but it was suggestions."

As a part of the skill development, the CPR group developed some initial conversation starters for the group, so we did not get sidetracked and waste time with unnecessary questioning. These conversations helped drive the teacher's actions to a true critical reflection of their actions. Mr. Grant reflected on his initial concern that teachers would simply skew future observations by merely calling on students because an administrator is present. However, after the post-observation conversations, the teachers informed him that they appreciated the data and wanted to adjust for the right reasons. The reasons for the conversations and actions remaining on track are further understood later in this chapter with the next major finding.

Data-driven evidence and an observation tool refined this administrative skill set from the CPR group's original practice. Before participating in this study, the CPR group members rarely provided objective data to the teachers during an observation process. Based on the conversations in the MCLEs, the group discussed normally providing subjective feedback and suggestions to teacher only. This knowledge, revealed early in the PAR study, helped develop a stronger focus in the MCLEs on the next subcategory.

Data Usage. As a result of using the tool, teachers had a clearer picture of what the teacher's classroom discussion looked like in a given classroom. Many teacher participants shared how they rarely, if ever, were presented with data that showed them student interactions in class. Ms. Rane, another teacher, shared her appreciation of the data, "from this study…the one difference for me was I actually got feedback and it wasn't just feedback but it was suggestions." Our CPR group members agreed with the teachers as well. The state evaluation

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tool requires several elements to be observed in one session. We enhanced our skill set from traditional evaluations by using the Calling-on tool. One administrator explains the difference between the two tools, "The NCEES tool is so broad, the Calling–On tool was nice to focus on something important to our school right now, student engagement." Table 17 provided an overview of the final data collection within classroom observations. But in order for this skill to be meaningful, the impact must transfer to the teachers, so I needed to get evidence from them in the teacher CLE. In the final CLE, Ms. Keller, a math teacher, shared how this study positively affected her instruction:

> In the 27 years, probably 90% of the time, one of my negatives, I don't know if it's a negative, but an area of improvement is doing better about calling on more people and not doing an all call. And I've known this and administrator after administrator after administrator told me this, and I say I want to change it, and I would do maybe a little bit better, but I would go right back. And seeing that data, I think, made me want to change it more than ever.

The data usage skill set continued to be refined with the assistance of teacher conversations. The teachers' triangulation data provided a keen insight and a helpful suggestion for greater data accuracy. One teacher stated in the math teacher CLE that where the administrator sits in the classroom can impact whether or not all students can or cannot be heard when responding to a teacher. Another math teacher shared a shrewd observation, urging the administrators to recognize and consider how administrators in the room might influence participation and data; the teacher recommended, "Maybe sitting in a different spot just because you're hearing different students." After receiving feedback and comments from our teacher participants, the CPR group

debriefed on the next steps about how we could use their comments to better our practice during our follow up MCLE.

One of the comments from teachers came as an opportunity to develop a plan of action that could transfer to our whole school. In the final CLE, the participants were asked how frequently an administrator should use the Calling-On Observational Tool with a teacher. A consensus came with the comment from one teacher, "I don't know that you would have to do that every time. Yeah. Because it was eye-opening, and now I think all of us are being more conscious about it." With actual data being visible and broken down for teachers to easily use and decipher, teachers became immediately more aware of their interaction with students. Ms. Brown, another math teacher, used another great analogy to embody the use of data. "I compared it to the whole dieting thing. I think when we talked about this before, like I say I'm going to eat better, but then make you write down everything you eat."

Reflective Practices

Cultivating Better Practices requires a continuous cycle of improvement. The usage of data to help drive instruction seemed so obvious but was rarely practiced prior to this study based on the MCLE conversations. Throughout the study, we continued to reflect on and refine our practices in implementing the observation tool and providing objective data to teachers. After each MCLE, the CPR group wrote a reflection on the process we engaged in daily during the study. The MCLE's personal narratives were additional ways we engaged in a collaborative discussion with one another and pushed ourselves to reflect on past and current experiences. For example, I used the learning journey line protocol at two separate times at the start of the first PAR cycle and during the last PAR cycle. This protocol allowed the CPR group to reflect on what experiences provided the most impact on their leadership styles and approaches. These

reflective exercises allowed each CPR group member to learn more about their colleagues and connect their prior experience to current practice. Bugg and Dewey (1933) share that we do not learn from an experience alone; we learn from reflecting on the experience itself. This reflective practice transferred to our actual practice within the study when we could take a reflective approach to review data with teachers in the post observation conference.

In the last PAR cycle, the reflective practice amongst the CPR group strengthened. Members recognized that our instructional leadership journey was not about ourselves but how we improved each other. Mr. Grant reflected in an MCLE about working as a team and helping each other get stronger:

> [W]hen I get a task, I like to go ahead and get it done. But along the line somewhere [in the study], I stopped and realized that it might be easier to bring someone along with me, and I don't have to do everything myself.

Through the evidence in this study, I affirmed the following about Cultivating Better Practices: To achieve our refinement of practice and skills, time and space must be provided for active reflection and discussion of the group's experience.

Fostering Collective Efficacy

My second finding acknowledged the understanding that by practicing more we become better together. President Eisenhower stated, "To be a leader, one must have followers, and to have followers one must have their confidence." So as the purpose of the study was to sustain and develop a team of instructional leaders, there are tangible and intangible factors that foster collective efficacy. Bandura (1977) describes collective efficacy as "a group's shared belief in its conjoint capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment" (p. 477). The term collective efficacy refers to the idea that through collective

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actions we can improve student achievement (Donohoo et al., 2018). In terms of this study, I

focused on the collective efficacy of the CPR group as we sharpened our skills in the teacher

observation process. Sampson (2017) explains the collective efficacy concept as a process and

provided examples of how collective efficacy unites social cohesion. He shared expectations for

control and social action needed to complete the agreed task (Sampson, 2017). As a lead

researcher, I recognized that "collective efficacy" is not explicitly stated in any data set. This is

why the full coding process is essential. Table 18 shows the codebook information as a code

frequency-based trail to the Fostering Collective Efficacy finding.

From the emerging themes to these findings, I changed a subtle but powerful verb:

switching from Creating to Fostering Collective Efficacy. When reviewing the data, I knew the

necessary shift in terminology fit the actual praxis conducted in the study. Each administrator

came to the school with different experiences and skills; furthermore, each administrator shared

throughout the study how they wanted to become a better administrator. By establishing the

MCLEs and opportunities to practice and reflect on their skills, their skills were enhanced. So by

definition, I encouraged and promoted the development of our administrative team's focused

skills that were already being used: Fostering Collective Efficacy. The sections that follow are

categories that are supported by evidence of Fostering Collective Efficacy. The main categories

are Shared Expectations and Team Building. These two categories fueled the study with the

interactions between the team of CPR group members and the conversations between the

teachers and administrators.

Shared Expectations

The CPR group discussed our hopes and expected outcomes for participating in this

study. Since the first MCLE, each CPR group member has expressed a desire to become a better

Table 18

PDSA Cycle for the Participatory Action Research Cycles

Theme	Category	Codes and Sub-codes	Total Code Count	Total Category Count	Total Theme Count
Collective Efficacy	Shared Expectations	Common Goal	28		
Collective Efficacy	Shared Expectations	Student Accountability	25	66	
Collective Efficacy	Shared Expectations	Trust	13		
Collective Efficacy	Team Building Skills	Collaboration	45		244
Collective Efficacy	Team Building Skills	Collaboration: Teacher Sharing	8		
Collective Efficacy	Team Building Skills	Collaboration: Conversations	63	178	
Collective Efficacy	Team Building Skills	Prior Knowledge	12		
Collective Efficacy	Team Building Skills	Shared: Strategy/Skill	50		

instructional leader. One administrator enthusiastically proclaimed, "I hope to accomplish bringing instruction to the forefront of my job." The other CPR group members wanted the same as well. As an instructional team, we united by focusing on several ideas, including a common goal, a focus on student learning and accountability, and the establishment and building of trust within the CPR group.

At the start of the study, these expectations were not explicit, but one concept supported these expectations throughout the study, which became the common goal -- improvement. The administrators wanted to improve, becoming stronger instructional leaders, and the teachers to support them in improving their instructional delivery. Likewise, in the post-observation conference, the collaborative reflection of the data reminded teachers that we are collectively working towards the same goal, improvement. To support this common goal of improvement, several shared expectations and actions took place. During the first PAR cycle, the CPR group observed classroom observations from a video together. This allowed us to collect data on the same timeline and discuss what data we captured in our notes. This practice allowed us to calibrate our goals and expectations when walking into a classroom; however, we learned during this practice that we still fell into the trap of subjective comments and data collection. Therefore, at the end of the first PAR cycle, we agreed we needed to practice a data-driven approach in the observation process. Ms. Rose reflected on this practice in one of her memos, "The video activity allowed me to provide feedback on what I observed, but more importantly listen to my colleagues feedback which provided me with different viewpoints as well as skills which I can use in the future." In the second PAR cycle, we decided to use the Calling-On Tool for our data collection method. The established common goal of improvement grounded our expectations. Not only did we want to collect data for teachers, but wanted to facilitate meaningful discussions

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with the teacher participants so their practice could improve. The CPR group wished to assist teachers in deciphering their data and identifying the strengths and weaknesses in their classroom practices. In order for this to occur, we ensured a common foundation with teachers.

In order to get teachers to buy-in to the new observation practice, the CPR group established trust and focused on student learning and accountability. I found trust first with teachers on how I approached them in the study. This study is non-evaluative and concentrates mainly on the practices of the administrators improving as instructional leaders. When meeting with the teachers, the CPR group members established deeper trust by sharing the data and providing guiding questions to promote deeper thinking about what the data revealed and how to adjust with suggestions. Teachers recognized this was a different approach to student accountability in the perspective of how the teacher can engagement more students equitably. One teacher shared this about the process and the data discussion, "It's a longer process. You know it's going to be an actual conversation, and it's a good thing. You're getting good information out of the conversation." (We sustained teachers' trust in the process by providing the data-driven observation tool instead of subjective classroom data. Holding oneself accountable is powerful by having another collaborator with objective data. In the first science TCLE, Mr. Williams, a novice teacher, shared:

> When you're in a classroom, and you're interacting with your students or doing a lesson, it goes a certain way in your head. But then to be able to come back and look at it more objectively when you're outside of that moment, you can see things a little bit differently

Using the data to focus back on the shared expectations, allowed the teacher to move past any subjective critiques he had for himself or from the observer.

The CPR showcased the development of trust with their teacher participants, but the expectation of trust also flowed through the CPR group. The CPR group needed trust to sign on for this shared experience of exploring the FoP. When looking through the data and codes of this study, trust is evident throughout. In Chapter 2, I defined trust as a vulnerable act of relying on someone or something's strength (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). The idea of trust spread over both major categories in Fostering Collective Efficacy. With trust established, we strengthened our team.

Team Building

In this study, collective efficacy is characterized by the common goals and expectations for carrying out consistent and effective teacher observations. In order to sustain a consistent execution of the praxis, the CPR group must develop team building strategies. I already established trust being a foundational concept in team building; the others involve the art of conversation, collaboration, and sharing strategies.

Similarly to Cultivating Better Practices, in order for team building processes to exist, time and space for growth must be developed. In the safe space of the MCLE, the CPR group learned to be vulnerable and learn from one another their personal reflection. During a personal narrative activity, Ms. Marie expressed her vulnerability by sharing how she has grown through the study. "[Where] I grew the most were the times that were the hardest…I feel like this past year, [Mr. Scott] has given us room to make mistakes." Ms. Marie shared how some experiences pushed her out of her comfort zone and forced her to manage responsibilities since the assistant principal role isn't solely focused on instructional leadership. Another perspective from this finding on trust and team building came from the Learning Journey protocol in the last PAR cycle. During MCLE Six, many CPR members shared individual experiences that helped make

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the CPR group stronger as a team. However, the CPR group attributed them to our team because they prepared for the experience. Ms. Rose shared the experience of leading summer school for the second time at our school. "What made me even more confident was that the team wasn't all here. So some days or some weeks, I was here by myself." She continued and shared, "Luckily, I was able to work with [Mr. Scott] on how to build a schedule. And I think from there that really helped me going into the next summer because I was more confident." The evidence supported that previous experiences and conversations can strengthen the team for the future.

Sharing experiences and strategies became a consistent practice in the MCLE and administrative conversations. Throughout the study, the CPR group thrived on organized and natural collaboration opportunities. During MCLE, Mr. Grant shared his experience with some of the strategies he suggested to his teachers in the post-observation conference process. "During my second round of observations, I noticed my teachers using some of the techniques I shared with them, and it was great to see that the students enjoyed the activity as well as benefitted from it." By sharing this, the conversation ignited deeper inquiry into strategies he shared and other CPR group members disclosing other strategies shared with their teachers. In the MCLEs, no team member tried to overpower another with comments and ideas. The conversations allowed each CPR group member an opportunity to speak and probe deeper into the strategies or experiences the other administrator shared. At the beginning of the study, I modeled extending the conversations with the CPR group with follow up questions during personal narrative activities. By the final MCLE, the other CPR group members explained the observation protocol process to the new assistant principal, Ms. Wilson, and naturally asked follow up questions through the MCLE. The consistent practice of the learning exchange made the process smoother and made us stronger as a team. Mr. Grant reflected on the process like this, "As a team, we have

become more consistent in our instructional focus as well as the way we complete the observation process."

As a by-product of the study, the teacher participants also found a space to discuss, reflect, plan, and act out new strategies. The teacher participants shared in the final TCLE how they compared data and practices with teachers inside and outside their subject areas. They felt motivated to adjust their practice knowing they shared a common experience. Ms. Rane shared, "Sometimes it's helpful to have others that are willing to change with you and try new things."

Conclusion

The findings of this study answered the question: How does a high school principal build and sustain a consistent and cohesive leadership team with assistant principals to support their growth and development as instructional leaders? Cultivating Better Practices focused on the skills and tools administrators use to help teachers in their instructional practice. Fostering Collective Efficacy revealed that certain expectations must be discussed to ensure the group is focused on the same goal. Over the course of this study, I completed three Participatory Action Research (PAR) cycles of practice and inquiry to support and solidify these findings. The design and structure of the Community Learning Exchanges provided a space for administrators and teachers to come and share, challenge, and grow together. I grounded the PAR study in the five Community Learning Exchange axioms (Guajardo et al., 2015), which allowed the CPR group to focus on the observation process and the desire to improve our skills. In my final chapter, I expand on the interconnectedness of the CLE axioms and my PAR study.

So, as I approach a resolution to "filling the void" of instructional leadership inadequacies, I consider what is next to ensure sustainability. What does this study mean to me as a researcher and a leader? What does this mean for my assistant principals? The next chapter

tackles such questions in order to learn how practices can be changed and sustained for an

instructional leadership team in other settings.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This 18-month study included three PAR cycles of inquiry designed to address the Focus of Practice (FoP) and overarching research question: *How does a high school principal build and sustain a consistent and cohesive leadership team with assistant principals to support their growth and development as instructional leaders?* I collected most of the data using the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) practices based on the CLE framework and its guiding axioms. I set up Micro-Community Learning Exchanges (MCLEs) with the CPR group and Teacher Community Learning Exchanges (TCLEs), which included both teacher participants and the CPR group. I collected data from the CLEs and through reflective memoing practices. I coded data into categories during the PAR Pre-cycle. With the additional data from PAR Cycle One, themes started to emerge. In the end, after collecting data from the final PAR Cycle, two significant findings emerged.

The chapter is a culmination of the research study brought full circle. In this chapter, I discuss an overview of the PAR study and connect the findings to the literature discussed in Chapter 2. Next, I share responses to answer the research questions and offer an expanded framework for building and sustaining a consistent and cohesive instructional leadership team. Then, I discuss the implications of the study on practice, policy, and research. I continue by reflecting on my professional growth and development as a school leader before closing with a conclusion.

Study Overview

The CPR group and I dedicated 18 months and worked in Eastern High School to learn together how to build and sustain a consistent and cohesive leadership team. In this study, I facilitated three cycles of inquiry in which I made improvements aligned with the PDSA model

(see Figure 19). The CPR group completed activities to collect data and address the research questions during each research cycle. Table 19 outlines the different activities conducted in each cycle of research. During each cycle, I collected and analyzed data into coded frequencies to see what commonalities arose in the data to answer the research questions. In Figure 18, I defer to the PDSA model; if the data did not help answer the research questions, I re-evaluated the activities for the next PAR inquiry cycle.

The first PAR cycle allowed me to establish the purpose of the PAR study with my assistant principals, who served as the CPR group. We used the structure of a micro-Community Learning Exchange (MCLE) to provide our space for learning and growing with one another as a social process. Our agendas followed a similar protocol restating the purpose of the study and a Dynamic Mindfulness (DM) activity to center ourselves for the study's work. We followed DM with a Personal Narrative (PN), a focus activity, and a closer. I used the PN to intentionally draw our attention on specific skills, mindsets, prior knowledge or personal experiences. The PN sets the tone for the meeting by grounding the participants in a personal but collective space. It requires participants to reflect and share their thoughts and feelings on a selected piece of writing, image, or song. Appendix Q provides an example of the PN in an agenda. The PN prompts align directly with the CLE axioms for collaborative learning. One axiom is that *Conversations are critical and central pedagogical process* (Guajardo et al., 2015). PN drove the learning process of the CPR group forward and helped strengthen trust among us. Table 20 outlines the Personal Narratives and activities used throughout the entire study.

In the first PAR Cycle, I committed to one classroom observational tool when we observed some digital classroom observations together. By the end of this cycle, I learned that the CPR group's skill set did not allow them to feel comfortable with an instrument that required

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Figure 19. PDSA cycle for the participatory action research cycles.

Table 19

Participatory Action Research Cycles

Research Cycle	Time Period	Activities
PAR Pre-Cycle	August – December 2021	Received IRB Approval Invited Co-Practitioner Researcher (CPR) group to be a part of the study Initial MCLE (Journey Line Activity) Hosted three additional MCLEs Reflective Memos after each CLE
PAR Cycle One	January – April 2022	MCLEs Reflective Memos Invited teacher participants to the study Classroom Observations and Post-Observation Conferences TCLEs (Math and Science)
PAR Cycle Two	May – October 2022	CALL Survey MCLEs Reflective Memos Classroom Observations and Post-Observation Conferences TCLE (All teachers and CPR group)

Table 20

MCLE Personal Narratives and Activities

MCLE # and Date	Personal Narrative	Activity
MCLE 1 10/8/21	Leadership Journey Line Protocol	Journey Line: Discussion and Appreciation
MCLE 2 11/1/21	Poem: A Leader	Open Discussion: How do we make our instructional team cohesive and consistent when we do observations?
MCLE 3 11/15/21	Introduction Onward (pages 3-4)	Selective Verbatim Tool Practice and Discussion: Classroom Observation Video Data Review
MCLE 4 11/29/21	Personal Metric: What is a sighting about yourself (personally or professionally) that you are taking into 2022?	Selective Verbatim Tool Practice 2 and Discussion: Classroom Observation Video and Data Review
MCLE 5 3/8/22	n/a	Review the Conversation Guide (see Appendix L) Co-create our own Post-Observation Questions
MCLE 6 8/19/22	Being Vulnerable Passages	New Leadership Journey Line: Last Years' Experience and Growth
MCLE 7 10/16/22	ASCD Article on Collective Efficacy	Data Discussion and Review: Last Round of Observations

a broad scope of teacher feedback. We needed a tool to isolate specific and objective data to share with teachers. As a result, I adjusted the observational tool in the next PAR cycle.

The second PAR Cycle started with the CPR revisiting the use of the original observation tool and shifting to the Calling-on Observational tool (see Appendix H). This tool provided the specific data set the CPR group could objectively look for in the classroom with the teachers. After familiarizing the CPR group with this new observation tool, we each observed one math and science teacher who agreed to participate in the study. After we completed the first round of observations and post-observations, we met again in our MCLE to share our practices and insights. While in the MCLEs, the CPR groups used this time and space to discuss their perspectives and experiences with each other. After discussing their experiential commonalities or learning a new approach based on someone's perspective, I asked the CPR group members to reflect. I used a reflection memo protocol to allow each member to meta-cognitively process what this experience is for them in their journey and as a team. In order to assist the members with their reflective practice, I provided guiding questions after each MCLE. Table 21 displays the guiding questions from the MCLEs.

Additionally, I hosted the first two Teacher Community Learning Exchanges (TCLE). In this second PAR Cycle, I met with the math teachers in one session and the science teachers in another session. The TCLE was the first time the groups of teachers came together regarding the PAR study. With a similar format, the TCLE data served as a validity check for the CPR group and provided triangulation of data within the study. As a byproduct of the TCLEs, the teacher participants began discussing their observation data with one another and reflecting on how they would and could change their practices moving forward.

Table 21

MCLE Reflective Memo Prompts for CPR Group Members

MCLE #, Date	Reflective Memo Prompt
MCLE 1, 10/8/21	Write a reflective memo on what you hope to accomplish as an instructional team and an instructional leader.
MCLE 2, 11/1/21	How do we make our instructional team cohesive and consistent when we do observations? On a scale of 1-10, how cohesive are we as an instructional leadership team? On a scale of 1-10, how consistent are we as an instructional leadership team?
MCLE 3, 11/15/21	After the activities today and the preparation so far in this study, what have you noticed about yourself becoming a stronger instructional leader?
MCLE 4, 11/29/21	After the activities today and the preparation so far in this study, what have you noticed about yourself becoming a stronger instructional leader? What are some questions or talking notes you'd prepare to have with this particular teacher?
Reflective Memo Activity, 2/28/22	Before starting with the teacher observations, where are you at in terms of your comfort and confidence level with using the observation tool? Have you noticed your instructional leadership growth in what ways? How do you think this process will improve your practice?
MCLE 5, 3/18/22	After the first cycle of observations and post-observations, what are some meaningful takeaways from the work?
MCLE 6, 8/19/22	During this past year, what leadership experiences have shaped your identity as an educator and administrator? During this past year, what leadership experience(s) shaped your learning and thinking as an instructional leader?
MCLE 7, 10/17/22	After completing the second round of observations with the Calling On Observation tool (or the first time), does anything else stand out? What changes do you feel about using a tool like this in the future? Do you feel more confident? Explain. Have you noticed your instructional leadership growth, and in what ways? Have you noticed any effects on our team members? (Positive/Negative) How do you think this process will improve your practice?

In the last PAR Cycle, I aimed to reinforce all the supported and coded evidence from the first two PAR cycles. I started this cycle by conducting a CALL survey with the entire teaching staff at Eastern High School. Appendix F provides an overview of the CALL survey, and I explain its uses deeper in Chapter 3. This data provided me with an additional data point for how the instructional leadership team progressed in the whole school environment. During the summer of this cycle period, Ms. Marie, my lead assistant principal, accepted another instructional leadership position at the district level, and Ms. Wilson joined our team. The change in leadership allowed the study to test the second component of the Focus of Practice: sustainability. During this cycle, we held one MCLE with the original CPR group and one MCLE with the new CPR group. We conducted one more round of teacher observations and post-observation conferences with our new CPR group member. In our final MCLE, we discussed our last observation process, made comparisons to the first round of observations, and self-evaluated our skill set level after the study. I hosted another TCLE with both groups of teachers and the CPR members. In this TCLE, we discussed teachers' perspectives on the process, reflections on how this could or has already changed their practice, and what implications this could have for expanding it to other teachers in the building. At the end of this cycle, I reviewed all the data from all three cycles and established my findings that address my research questions. These inquiry cycles provided evidence for the PAR findings detailed in the previous chapter. How do these findings reflect what others have promulgated as building level instructional leaders? How do my results align with other related studies in the field? Next, I will re-examine my findings using the previously reviewed literature (see Chapter 2).

Discussion

To further analyze the findings of this study, I re-visited the three literature bins I examined in Chapter 2 as a lens for the findings. The bins included: Instructional Leadership, Equitable Teaching and Learning Practices, and Collaborative Leadership. Throughout this section, I join the research to practice and bridge the literature to my findings. Then, I share a new framework for building and sustaining consistent and cohesive instructional leadership as it relates to the growth and development of the assistant principals. Finally, I revisit the research questions and analyze their interconnected to this research study.

Instructional Leadership

When reflecting on the literary review completed before the PAR study began, many concepts and findings align and confirm the evidence that supports the findings. When discussing assistant principals' roles and responsibilities with the CPR team at our first MCLE, the conversation mirrored this realization. The CPR team discussed specific responsibilities which pulled them away from instructional duties, such as buses, testing, discipline, and facility usage. After this MCLE, Ms. Marie shared her aspirations in her first reflective memo about the study. She writes:

> As I reflect, I realize that with so many other responsibilities as an AP, I tend to sometimes neglect the most important responsibility of being an instructional leader. Therefore, I am very excited to refocus and work alongside my administration team as we make the needed changes to become the best instructional leaders we can be for our teachers and students.

The research aligns with these findings, as several authors agree the role of the assistant principal outlined a focus on managerial tasks such as discipline and supervision. Since the focus is on

managerial duties, there are limited opportunities for an assistant principal to expand their skill set within instructional leadership (Glanz, 1994a; Hausman et al., 2002). Militello, Fusarelli, Mattingly, and Warren (2015) found assistant principals were focused on management duties- what they wanted to do was more aligned with the standards that has a clear and present focus on the instructional side of leadership. These studies confirm that dedicated time and space to learn collaboratively are keys to growing administrators' instructional leadership skills.

These time-consuming tasks, while necessary, take one away from instructional leadership being a primary focus for the administrator (Barnett et al., 2012). For instance, Mr. Grant felt guilty when conducting our everyday observations. He shares, "As an assistant principal, we are often pulled in various directions, and observations often become rushed events, which does not always become a productive and meaningful event." My review of the literature combined with my inquiry findings led me to this: *My CPR group wanted to improve their skills towards classroom observations and post-observation conferences, but they treated this instructional leadership skill like a managerial skill*.

Herein lies the *void* this study is trying to fill. In several studies, assistant principals shared why they entered administration and the need to become more effective and advance to the principalship. However, many professional development opportunities for assistant principals are based on gaining a better understanding of policy and procedures rather than balancing duties and commitment to a focus on instructional practices (Barnett et al., 2012; Gerke, 2004; Good, 2008; Militello et al., 2009). This study provides a praxis for finding a balance between managerial responsibilities and personal development that focuses on instructional needs and skills used to support teachers within the observation process.

That is, praxis vis-à-vis theory, as exemplified by Ms. Marie, who shared insights in her

reflective memo about the difference between her use of the Calling-On Tool and her normal practice with North Carolina Educator Evaluation System's (NCEES) tool:

> With the NCEES tool, I feel like I just give a picture of what I see [in the classroom], and share with the teacher, this is why I marked you for this [the teacher's rating]. With the Calling-on tool, we are able to include the teacher's input, which is very important and significant to student engagement and growth. This tool allows me to have more dialogue with the teacher as far as coming up with ideas and next steps collaboratively.

This study provided the assistant principals with the necessary and dedicated time to practice their instructional leadership skills. But for the instructional leadership to be consistent and cohesive, the CPR group must be aware of the same equitable strategies to help teachers in their classroom. How this is reflected in equitable practices is examined next.

Equitable Teaching and Learning Practices

In the literature review, I explored the value of teacher observations in the Equitable Teaching and Learning Practices section. Blase and Blase (1999) gathered teachers' perspectives on what they believed was important in the observation process. They discovered teachers wanted to promote conversations for their reflection on instruction and an opportunity to promote their professional growth; in the PAR study, the teacher participants confirmed their findings by thriving on evidence-based observation data. Teachers preferred the data that gave them a true picture of their classroom and valued the conversations and suggestions on which their administrators collaborated. In this study, prior to ever visiting the teacher's classrooms, the CPR group calibrated our observational skills together. We during our MCLE sessions we would observe a video of a classroom teacher and make observation notes and compare our findings. In the first science TCLE, Ms. Rane shared, "The post-conference was more like being a beginning

teacher again. The observation was actually looking at what I did and what was going on in the classroom versus trying to find your way in the state evaluation instruction that doesn't really tell you anything."

The literature asserts the value of academic voice and equity. Zwiers and Crawford (2011) shared the power of academic conversations and providing students the opportunity to speak and learn from the teacher and one another. Academic conversations aided many student skills, like building vocabulary and confidence, which helped teachers properly assess their students. In parallel to the study, this equitable practice became a focal point of data collection in the PAR study. The Calling-On Observational tool helped objectively measure the frequency of academic conversations between teachers and students. It provided a space to capture student-to-student engagements like small groups or cooperative pairs. The study's initial results allowed teachers to realize the limited opportunities they provided all students to interact throughout their lessons. The academic conversations between the administrator and teacher provided the necessary space to review the data and operate in collaborative leadership. As cited in Chapter 6, together the administrators and teachers used real classroom data for powerful academic conversations. These conversations helped me reflect on the data, problem-solve the results and discuss action steps to equitably serve students in the classroom.

Collaborative Leadership

Before embracing the inner workings of collaborative leadership, I recognized an element woven throughout the literature review and the PAR study. In the literature review, I expanded on the concept of *relational trust* in this section. Trust served as a necessity with the work and bond between principals and assistant principals in the Instructional Leadership literature bin and a crucial component for teachers to respond positively to the shared Equitable Teaching and

Learning Practices. Similarly, in the PAR study, the CPR group could not function in our CLEs without trust. From the literature review, Tschannen-Moran (2014) describes trust as "[a person's] willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent, honest, open, reliable, and competent" (p.17). With trust defined, I reflected on times when this element revealed itself. I recall at the final MCLE with Ms. Marie, where she commented, "Vulnerability is a like a risk cost analysis. [I think] Is it worth the risk to be vulnerable? But I recognize that in this past year, Mr. Scott has given us room to make mistakes." Her trust in the principal made her feel more confident in independently making decisions. Mr. Grant extended from Ms. Marie's comments about making mistakes and expressed how the bond and trust of our team help him:

> It's sort of like being brave and open, knowing that you might make a mistake along the way, but you're going to learn from it, and also knowing that your peers are around to rely on. I know, that I'm not in this job alone.

I realized trust is an element that is foundational for the PAR study's execution. Trust became the glue that allowed for collaborative leadership. With trust intact, our collaborative leadership continued to grow through our practice and environment. Later in this chapter, I discuss the connection between the CLE's structure and the CPR group building stronger relationships. In the MCLEs, we practiced instructional leadership together.

This literature bin became the essence of the work in the PAR study. To progress in the study, I had to work alongside my CPR group members. Wenger (1999) and Militello et al. (2009) shared three characteristics needed in a community of practice: joint enterprise, a shared repertoire, and mutual engagement. I aligned these characteristics to the findings and praxis of my study.

We entered into a joint enterprise by assembling a group of administrators together and providing time for investigating instructional practices. We then shared our assets and gifts (Militello et al., 2009) and we shared our repertoire, such as artifacts, language, and vocabulary (Wenger, 1999). The third characteristic is mutual engagement. This is the understanding that the collective group will develop new skills and refine old ones through dialogue and shared experiences (Militello et al., 2009). This characteristic is not only aligned with the findings but also with the study's praxis. I practiced the Community Learning Exchange format and principles in the PAR Study. From the agenda arrangement to the activities performed throughout the study, the CLE axioms provide the CPR group with the trusting environment needed to develop our skills and re-evaluate our current status quo with our current instructional leadership practices.

Additionally, the literature review provided a perspective illustrating the principal's responsibility in developing new leaders with collaborative leadership. Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd (1991) offer several qualities a principal can possess to provide a principal mentorship to the assistant principal, another form of collaborative leadership. The authors suggest, "A strong mentoring relationship exhibits the qualities of initiation, collaboration, inclusiveness, coaching, reciprocation, development, separation, and modeling" (Ladd, 1991, p. 69). When reflecting on this study, I recall practicing these mentoring characteristics in the Community Learning Exchanges throughout the study. All of the activities in the MCLEs did not simply contribute to personal mentorship for assistant principals, but instead, created the conditions for building a consistent and cohesive leadership team.

As I recognize the link between the CLEs and collaborative learning, I also acknowledge that CLEs are missing from the literature review. I explained the Community Learning Exchange

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in Chapters 1 and 3 but did not expand on this powerful tool in my literature review. This missing component under collaborative leadership is the ever-apparent, mutualistic relationship between the PAR study and the CLE's five axioms. In my implications for the research section, I expand on this connection. Next, I offer a framework for collaborative instructional leadership.

Throughout the 18 months of the PAR study, the CPR group continued to work together to develop their skills and co-create strategies when working with teachers. These actions align with the finding of Cultivating Better Practices. During the PAR study, the CPR group focused on developing these skills together and trusted in the learning experience that they would become better instructional leaders – Fostering Collective Efficacy. Next, I offer an element that connects the two findings.

Framework for Collaborative Instructional Leadership

In school administration, administrators are often not from the communities that or schools they serve. In the past, school administrators had been hired from within, meaning teachers often became assistant principals in schools where they taught. However, at Eastern High, only one administrator grew up in the same district. This trend starkly contrasts staff members who work at the school, in which approximately 65% of the staff are alumni. With a school rich in hometown pride and tradition, our school administrators must be aware of the school's cultural values and find tactful methods to make incremental changes to the status quo while advancing student development.

In this study, the CPR group approached these subtle shifts through the teacher observation process. We found difficulty with this approach because each administrator possessed prior experiences with this skill that did not necessarily align with each other. I reflected after the first MCLE on how the CPR group's experiences are vastly different and

lacked a data-driven observation skill set. As an administrator in the same situation when I started as an assistant principal, I wanted to find a way to fill the void of not only the skill set but also of empowering the team to sustain the data-driven skill set in the future.

This study led me to a new framework for collaborative instructional leadership. I found in this study that the CPR group enjoyed improving their skill set. Even more evident, they enjoyed developing this new skill with each other, making them aspire for more since they were not in this learning experience alone. With the full scope of this study, I offer a missing link to the two findings: *Collective Motivational Awareness*. This element of the study is a driving force that catalyzes both findings. As one finding is supported or strengthened through the collaborative work together, Collective Motivational Awareness gives all stakeholders the opportunity to reflect and realize the benefit of the finding, which empowers them to work toward collective goals together. In the research codebook, subtle hints of awareness arose in low frequencies in each PAR cycle. I believe this is because collective motivational awareness is such an abstract idea, I would have had to intentionally search for deeper explicit data that supported this phenomenon. Two examples of collective motivational awareness are useful in demonstrating the connection to other data. Ms. Wilson, who only joined the study briefly in the last PAR cycle, shared this in her reflection, "This tool [practice] has made me realize that I can provide more in-depth feedback to teachers that may also be more meaningful for them." Even my novice administrator, who, at the beginning, of the study, expressed her fear about coming, her observation skills grew. She stated, "I feel more confident using this tool for the second time, and being able to problem solve [with teachers] through the kinks was a lot easier." These quotes reflect their awareness of how Cultivating Better Practices drives the work the assistant principals wanted to develop. Ms. Marie commented in her final MCLE, "I think we've

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empowered each other and ourselves as an administrative team. Regarding the instructional piece, I have grown much more this year instructional than I have any other year that I've been an AP." This quote is an example of the awareness of how this study drove Fostering Collective Efficacy through personal growth and team-building skills.

Figure 20 displays a visual representation of this new component that propels Cultivating Better Skills into Fostering Collective Efficacy and vice-versa. Collective Motivational Awareness describes the meta-cognitive experience that developed due to the trust and reflective practices embedded in the study. Each acknowledgment that leads to a finding returns to a place of reflection, strengthening the experience and praxis of improvement. I strongly believe that awareness breeds motivation to do more and to become better. However, in this PAR study this realization did not reveal itself easily. In the implications section, I wonder, what conditions are needed to grow awareness?

From this study, I offer a new perspective, an adjusted theory of action. I caution that this theory of action is not self-evident at the beginning of the study; it takes time to develop and nurture. But within the parameters of this study, I believe this new approach can be developed in further studies as a Theory in Action. For this study, I offer this as the Theory in Action: When a team's shared purpose is to develop a skill and are allowed to reflect on their progress throughout, the team's motivation drives a culture of continuous improvement. Figure 21 outlines the process of moving from a Theory of Action to a Theory in Action.

Research Questions Re-Examined

The research questions provided a consistent compass needle to point the vast data and discovery back to a purpose. I developed these questions based on my love for empowering others to better themselves. As my assistant principals become principals, I want them equipped
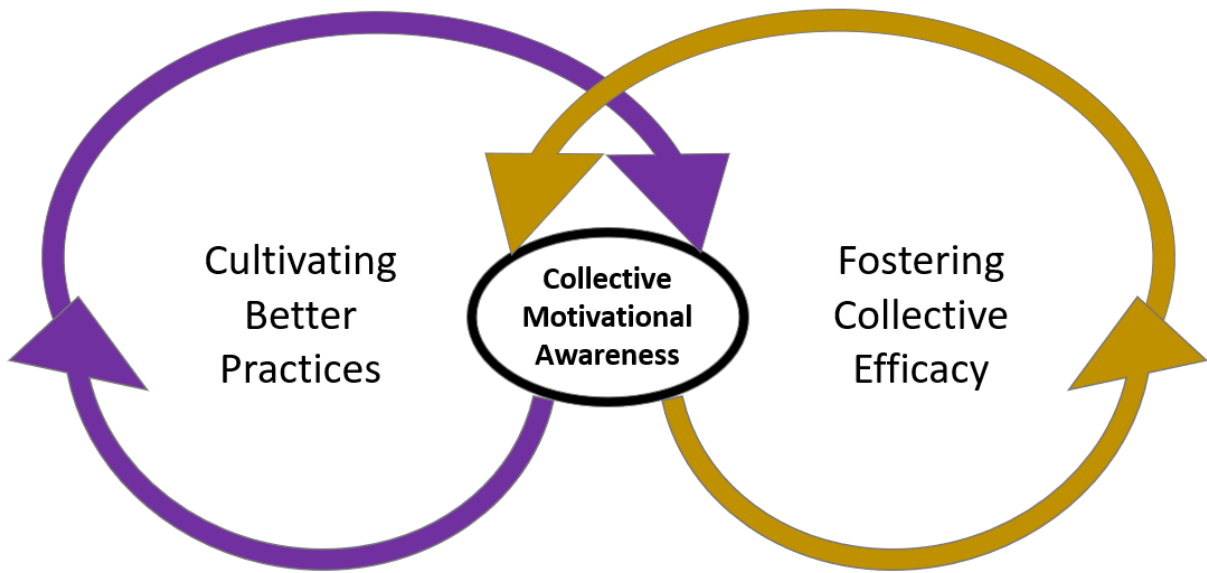
Figure 20. New conceptual framework: Findings supporting each other.
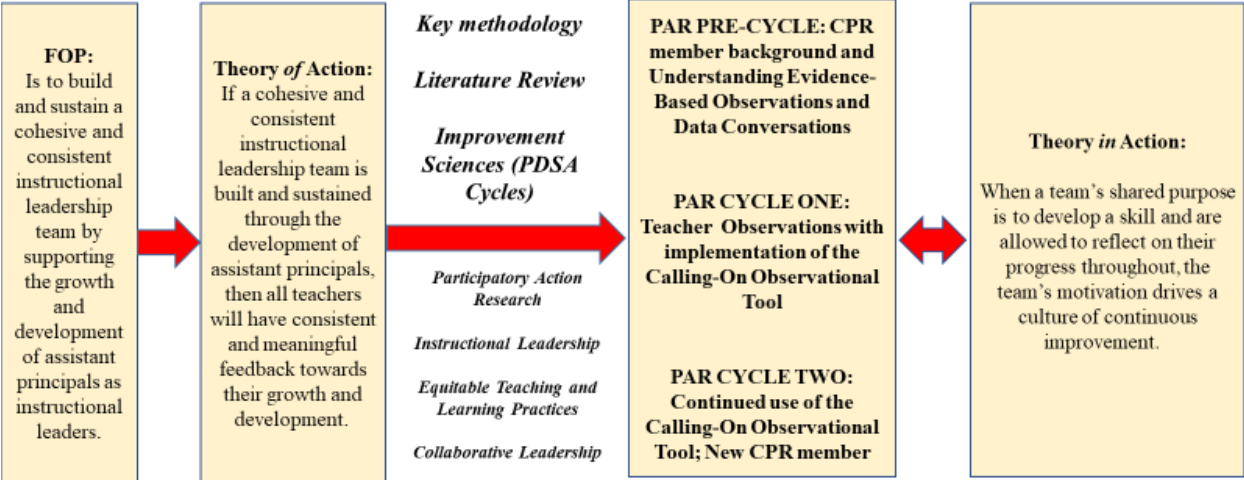
Figure 21. PAR conceptual framework: From theory of action to theory in action.

with the proper skills, knowledge, and disposition to be equitable instructional leaders. Therefore, my research questions guided the CPR group to understand how to address this need. The conversations and data covered so much information. The CPR group discussed and explored their developing skills. I used the questions to lock-in on my FoP and not be overly distracted by tangential data that could lead me away from answering my research questions. The overarching question guiding this study was: *How does a high school principal build and sustain a consistent and cohesive leadership team with assistant principals to support their growth and development as instructional leaders?* There were three sub-questions that accompanied the main one:

1. To what extent do high school administrators use academic discourse to build cohesion?

2. How does a high school leadership team consistently work together and on its own to sustain instructional leadership?

3. How does supporting the growth and development of high school assistant principals build my capacity as an educational leader?

Below I walk through the learning related to the first two sub-questions leading to a response to the overarching research question. Later in the chapter, I expound on the third sub-question, which focuses on leadership development.

The first research sub-question was: *To what extent do high school administrators use academic discourse to build cohesion?* Throughout this study, our Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR) met regularly in a Micro-Community Learning Exchange (MCLE). In these MCLEs, I presented the questions each time to center our focus on what the purpose of our gathering entailed each time. Using the CLE framework for open discussions and collaborative learning

helped provide a space for the CPR group to learn together. Table 21, presented earlier in this chapter, shows the Personal Narratives and activities. These activities allowed the CPR group to learn as a team and discuss and share their perspectives, prior knowledge, and experiences together. This time and space for discussion strengthened the bond between the administrators working as a team and developing their skills.

The second research sub-question: *How does a high school leadership team consistently work together and on their own to sustain instructional leadership?* Similar to the first sub-question about cohesion, the consistency of the CPR group developed in the MCLEs. In each PAR cycle, the CPR group made a concerted effort to discuss how we approached our classroom observation skills and compare our current practice to our desired consistent practice. This proved helpful on several occasions, especially within the first PAR Cycle, when the CPR group was still developing skills to become objectively data-driven versus using their traditional subjective remarks and feedback to our teachers. In the subsequent PAR cycles, the CPR group would meet in an MCLE to discuss our results from the Calling-on Observational tool and our reactions to the post-observation conversations with the teachers. During these MCLEs, we reviewed the Project I[4] Conversation Guide and co-created some questions to use in our discussions with teachers. Although our suggestions and strategies may have been different for the teacher's needs, our mode for collecting data and discussing the results with teachers became more consistent. This allowed teachers to receive more consistent feedback regardless of the administrator.

I knew this research question was answered when I asked Mr. Grant and Ms. Rose to explain our process to Ms. Wilson, who came in the final PAR cycle. During this informal administrative meeting, I could sense the hesitation through Ms. Wilson's body language about

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the process in my PAR study. This was the same doubt that the original CPR group members expressed during the early stages of the first two PAR cycles. So, as I recognized this tension, I turned to the other assistant principals to provide their insight and explain the process. During this discussion, I learned they could consistently share the same perspectives on the process, and the skills developed using the Calling-on tool. This recognition served two purposes. First, Mr. Grant and Ms. Rose strengthened their learning through the practice of explanation, and second, Ms. Wilson now found allies willing to encourage her and help her with this new instructional leadership skill, which made her feel even more appreciative of joining our team. The transfer of learning from the principal to the assistant principal was successful.

The question also asks how the team grew independently to sustain instructional leadership. This part of the question is answered by what occurred during our time together. The CPR team shared knowledge, skills, and experiences. They worked and developed as a team, which helped the team grow more when given some time to develop skills on their own. In their principal mentorship model, Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd (1991) share that separation after preparation is a valuable learning tool for developing the assistant principal's leadership. Ms. Rose shared in an MCLE how one of her greatest learning experiences through the study was:

> It was the time I worked solely as the summer school administrator of the school. The principal became ill and unavailable, and I had to make decisions on my own based on the experiences we shared and the past conversations with Mr. Scott.

This supports the idea that independence works when skills are developed collaboratively first.

Throughout the study, I realized that the practice of inquiry and reflection through the CLE framework became the praxis that fueled the work with the CPR group. The overarching research question is answered in patches throughout the study. So, breaking down the question

may be the most reasonable to answer the question fully. *How does a high school principal build and sustain a consistent and cohesive leadership team with assistant principals to support their growth and development as instructional leaders?* In sum, the principal:

- Builds and sustains this process by establishing a common purpose and goal for improvement in instructional leadership (Fostering Collective Efficacy).
- Carves out dedicated time for administrators to practice building their observation skill set collaboratively and independently (Cultivating Better Practices).
- Creates a space for the team to come together to share, discuss, and reflect on what they learned from the experience so that they can share or explain the process to others in the future (Collective Motivational Awareness through CLEs).

This study provided an excellent opportunity for me to fill my instructional leadership gaps as a classroom observer, a learning facilitator, and a principal mentor. I next explain how extensions to this study can be made through practice, policy, and research.

Implications

The PAR study helped the CPR team reimagine how instructional leadership and the observation process can look at Eastern High School. In the study, we emphasized the newly found importance of evidence-based observations and post-observation conversations with teachers afterward. The study outlines some foundational factors that should be considered or established before implementing or replicating this PAR study. In this section, I detail the practice, policy, and research implications of the study's findings.

Practice

This PAR study provides practitioners and researchers with a praxis for strengthening their instructional leadership team at the secondary and elementary levels. The practice

implications found in this study provide a constant and reflective challenge for school administrators. This study forces our CPR group to reconsider how we approach classroom observations moving forward. The CALL Survey data and the TCLEs provided evidence throughout the analysis that we needed to change our approach to classroom observations with teachers. This study prompted the CPR group to consider why teachers rated most classroom observations by administrators as having little influence on their instruction or methods. The CPR group strengthened our skills as instructional leaders by accepting the data and using that evidence to help answer the FoP and research questions.

The observation protocol with evidence-based observational tools at the school level provoked a new experience for the teachers and administrators. Teachers provided input about utilizing the Calling-on Observational tool with a broader range of teachers at the school. Ms. Keller, a veteran math teacher, shared her thoughts, " I don't think we would need to be observed in this format every time. This observation experience was eye-opening, and I think a few times makes us more conscious about our classroom practices." I agree with this practice strategy; as we went back into the classrooms, the CPR group witnessed a more concerted effort from teachers to call on various students instead of just allowing a few students to call aloud the answers. This practice acknowledges that teachers will make proper adjustments with their have the evidence to show that there needs to be a change. Using an evidence-based observational tool is the consistent praxis, however, administrators can change the observational tool of focus when observing teachers to provide other areas of reflection.

Furthermore, as the team developed these skills, our camaraderie and willingness to collaborate increased throughout the PAR study. The idea that we worked together to improve our skills, knowledge, and dispositions about instructional leadership meant that we harnessed

our new framework. This study provides a blueprint for developing this teamwork and cohesion through Community Learning Exchanges. The MCLEs served as the safe, non-judgmental space needed to practice our skill set and strengthen our administrative team.

In this study, I carved out time to provide space for learning together. Militello et al. (2009) explains how at times the leader has to serve a bridge and buffer for his staff. In this study, there were several tasks that I committed to in order to help our CPR group focus on instructional leadership. As a buffer, I made sure that during our MCLE sessions the dean of students, school resource officer, and counselors were available to assist with the needs of students. As a bridge, I designed and dedicated specific days of the week for each administrator to focus on classroom observations. And cleared their calendar of other tasks. For example, if on Wednesday Mr. Grant was scheduled to focus on classroom observations, then the other two administrators and I would cover his duties all day, so he could focus on instructional leadership.

I believe the interconnectedness of the PAR to the CLE axioms provides another consideration for practice. The deep conversations for adjustment and change also occurred in a safe and structured environment. This space allowed for conversations to flourish with truth and vulnerability, not to degrade anyone or their abilities but to provide perspective to a group of people willing to learn from one another. The CLE principles are an effective way to ground collaborative learning into practical action.

Policy

In this study, CPR group members and teacher participants highlighted the policy implications for this study. Throughout the study, group members and teachers compared the observation protocol with the Calling-on Tool with the state standard evaluation instrument with which all teachers are observed. The state tool covers a large scope of teaching standards with a

vague scale of evaluative markings for teacher feedback. Teachers believe this comprehensive evaluation tool is subjective, and general feedback rarely gets transferred into classroom improvement. However, a data-driven approach like the one in this study provided an objective view for the teacher and data that translated to direct classroom impact. The participants credited the Calling-on tool observation protocol and the post-observation conversations with being more informative, useful, and meaningful to see the improvements needed in the classroom. As discussed in the final TCLE, teachers stated this observation tool doesn't have to be used every time an observation is required but can be helpful to occasionally do one throughout the school year to calibrate a teacher's interaction with students.

Currently, our district's assistant principal professional development is still not centered around instructional leadership. District leaders usually survey the administrators to decide what professional development to offer assistant principals. However, during these assistant principal roundtable meetings, the assistant principals return to their school with limited progress toward advancing student learning and growth in the classroom. It's not that districts are doing a poor job of offering appropriate professional development; I believe that the void described in this study serves as a blind spot for many schools, with the limited focus aimed at the details of a strong observation process. Literature and impact data scales were shared that showed the impact of the principal at the school, but discussions were more like presentations. Administrators had limited conversations about the skill set that was valuable to their effect on the school community. This study provides the framework to change the normal presentation style meeting into a Community Learning Exchange. The structures in the CLE help nurture the outcomes of administrators collaborating and creating an environment of openness to learn from one another.

Also, at a district level, other instructional leaders can benefit from this study. Ms. Marie connected her new role and this study. This study could be a foundational tool for praxis on data-driven observations and conversations. As Ms. Marie shared, many teachers she encounters in her new position are unfamiliar with her, and she has not had the opportunity to establish solid relational trust. However, this study provides a path to lead to objective, data-driven observations from an administrator or instructional leader to any given teacher. Likewise, this study can also produce expectations across the district at the school level by providing professional development to other administrative teams who can also implement the Calling-on Observation tool protocol in their buildings.

Research

This PAR could provide insight into an administrative team consistently using evidence-driven teacher conversations about classroom observation. Educational research continues to grow in the areas of equity, participatory action research, Community Learning Exchanges, and collective efficacy. This study can provide a practical approach for practitioners to bolster their instructional leadership teams through a collaborative learning process. The Community Learning Exchange framework provides an excellent design to support participatory action research.

Research Process: PAR Process/CLE-Inspired Protocols

The CLE axioms served as a blueprint for the praxis of my participatory action research (PAR) study. The axioms guided the work of CPR members throughout this study. I grounded both the MCLEs and TCLEs with the following principles, which Guajardo et al. (2015) provides as five guiding axioms:

1. Learning and leadership are dynamic social processes.

2. Conversations are critical and central pedagogical processes.

3. The people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local concerns.

4. Crossing boundaries enriches the development and educational process.

5. Hope and change are built on the assets and dreams of locals and their communities.

The first two principles reinforced that a PAR study is a collaborative effort. I gathered the majority of my data for this study through conversations. The third principle aligns with the purpose of a PAR study. For my study, I wanted to learn how to strengthen my instructional leadership team, so they became the people I worked with the most, my CPR group. We practiced the last two axioms when adding the teacher participants in the TCLE. The TCLE showcased the opportunity for each member to learn from others who may have had different experiences than their own.

Future Research

I recommend this type of research to principals who have one or more assistant principals in their schools. This study provides a guide on how the CLE axioms can be used to produce collaborative work even from a small number of leaders in a school. Although this study took place in a rural setting, this study can exist across the scope of school identities. In a smaller setting, other instructional leaders like lead teachers, instructional coaches, or administrators from another school could commit to the PAR study and serve as the CPR group. A larger school setting simply requires more CPR group members and more teacher participants. Another idea could be that a principal may want to focus on a few administrators to show the growth of the assistant principals' skill set, similar to a scientific method approach.

With the need for administrators becoming strong instructional leaders, this PAR study can be replicated and extended for research. As a future researcher, administrators can manipulate the current research questions to discover new findings when developing and sustaining an instructional leadership team. In the creation of new research questions, I would encourage more exploration on the Collective Motivational Awareness element and the benefits of trust or reflection in a cooperative learning setting. *A research question to assist could be: How do we establish conditions to focus on awareness?* This would require some skill or focus development on the power of reflective practices. Another area to explore would be the mentality shift for administrators if they express doubt in the learning process of a new skill to the confidence exhibited by the end of the study. Each of these extensions to my PAR study have the potential for enriching discovery, but like every research study, limitations must be addressed as mine are in the next section.

Limitations

This PAR study had several limitations, which Quierós et al. (2017) detailed and warned about. I encountered and worked to mitigate the following constraints on the study: time, the difficulty of collecting data in real-time, the researcher's biases, and generalizing observation data into codes.

By definition, qualitative research, particularly PAR, takes time. I purposefully embedded the entire PAR study within the timeframe of a school day to reduce time constraints. As a result, it didn't add much to the participants' days or responsibilities. For the same reason, I limited the meeting dates to yearly school calendars. A limitation within the time constraint is the role of the principal vs. the part of the lead researcher. Several obligations and meetings cannot be delegated to others and require the principal's attention. Several days the high school work demanded the

time I set aside for the PAR study. Therefore, I knew I needed extra time for data collection using the Calling-on observations tool, scheduling and conducting classroom observations, and post-conference sessions. The CPR group also required time to complete the formal, state-mandated evaluation process with all non-participating teachers, which included classroom observations. When I analyzed and coded data, my time became an issue because it took longer than expected. However, the three PAR Cycles made the study more organized and structured to reduce the threat of data overload.

A researcher's bias can occur throughout any study. As the lead researcher and the principal with direct oversight of the CRP members and the teachers, I was transparent and consciously aware of how the teachers perceived the CPR members. I was also aware of how the CPR members might have the desire to please me by providing socially desirable responses. Before participation, all participants gave informed consent without any coercion or sense of obligation; in addition, all participants could terminate consent at any time during the study without reprisal. Furthermore, I paid close attention to the phrasing of the questions in the TCLEs, MCLEs, and during the CPR group meetings. These measures helped mitigate the researcher's bias. In addition, the size and context of this study limit the findings and outcomes. As a result, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to other contexts; however, the process used in the study can be replicated in different contexts.

Leadership Development

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of convenience and comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." ~ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 1963

As a high school principal, I face split-second and urgent decisions daily. Over my tenure as a principal, I thought I handled most situations equitable and swiftly. However, when I embarked on this journey of educational advancement, I found myself in a place of discomfort

and frustration. My frustration and discomfort correlated directly with the void I wanted to fill in my instructional leadership career. As I committed to this doctoral process, I identified my calling through an autobiography assignment and a digital story protocol. Militello and Guajardo (2013) describe digital storytelling as an introspective process that allows participants to utilize their creativity to express their emotions, feelings, and views on a topic. I reflected on these activities and recognized that I am an uplifter, encourager, and supporter of others.

My discomfort and frustration came when I noticed I still had a void in my instructional leadership. I love developing and supporting future leaders under my direction, but there was still a void. I loved seeing them promoted to their own principalship and other aspirations, but there was still a void. I loved them calling and asking for advice on how to handle a situation, but there was still a void. I recognized that I would continue to have a void in developing other leaders if I didn't address the instructional void I experienced during my entire administrative tenure. I needed to address my skill to provide better observational data and post-observation support for teachers, an instructional leadership quality.

I discovered the void and when it intersected with my desire, I formed my Focus of Practice: How does a high school principal build and sustain a consistent and cohesive leadership team with assistant principals to support their growth and development as instructional leaders? In creating the FoP, I recognized that the study helped me as a leader just as much as it supported my assistant principals. I believe this study gave me three lasting changes to leadership: my instructional approach to all observations, my leadership decisions, and how I prepare my assistant principals for their current and future tasks.

As an instructional leader, I found this study continued to sharpen my observation skills while participating as a CPR group member and the lead researcher. I recall sharing with the

CPR group that as administrators at the high school level, we are no longer the content specialist; our shared goal is to focus on the teaching practices of our staff and support them with the ways they can be more effective. This became one of my biggest opportunities to learn from the CPR group. We co-created question prompts to ask the teacher to ensure we began asking the same appropriate, reflective questions. However, none of this wouldn't be possible if I didn't allow the time for this work to take place. Providing a buffer to the assistant principals to focus on more than just their managerial duties allowed them the proper time and space to grow in our, once neglected, instructional leadership area.

Beyond the PAR study, the CPR group also discussed other forms of data to specifically look for when we complete walkthroughs and other observations in the school. The other focused areas other than student calling-on included the district's instructional framework, the number and type of depth of knowledge questions, and the classroom management strategies used in the class. Our expanded focus on the whole school also appears to be positively impacting the school environment. Appendix P highlights the change in ratings for our instructional leadership work for Engaging in Classroom Observations and Formative Feedback Practices: an increase from 3.08 in 2019 before the study to 3.5 in 2022 after we completed two PAR cycles.

As a decision-maker, I felt confident with split-second decisions or relied on my memory too much. As a result of this study, I recognize the power of experience for others. My goal is to provide them with a powerful experience in making a well-rounded decision as though they served as principals. In our school, duties, and responsibilities are divided up. When a staff member approaches me about a decision on their responsibilities list, I respectfully ask that they see the assistant principal. The assistant principal knows my expectation is for them to come to

me with an answer, not my opinion. If I think their answer strays away from a reasonable decision, I force myself to ask probing or clarifying questions rather than telling them how I would answer. Planning, organizing, and implementing a system like the one suggested takes time and discipline, but I understand the value this has for the administrative team and their development.

As a mentor and developer of leaders, I became more proactive in my support of my assistant principals. I learned that when I prepare in advance, I successfully delegate and distribute the leadership responsibilities to the assistant principals. For example, I now use an agenda similar to our MCLE agenda for our regular administrative meetings. The formal and consistent structure helps the team prepare for the distribution of duties, focuses us on the common goal or task, and lightens my load while building their skills and experience as school leaders. Without prior planning and preparation, I tend to take on more responsibilities, thus cheating them of growing as leaders.

Conclusion

I engaged in three inquiry cycles of research designed to explore how to build and sustain a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team. The Focus of Practice included supporting the growth and development of assistant principals as instructional leaders. This process practiced in this study helped develop the evidence-based observation skills of the administrators involved in the study, otherwise called the Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR) group. The study spanned over two academic years and included five administrators and eight teacher participants in either the math or science curriculum. The study was rooted in an exploration of academic discourse to build cohesion and exploring collaborative and independent

methods to practice consistent instructional leadership. The study also became an exploration of my growth and development as the principal and lead researcher.

I found a void in my educational practice as an administrator. I did not engage in direct instructional leadership that provided consistent feedback for teachers and equitable outcomes for students. To become an equitable instructional leader, I needed to work more directly with my teachers. And, I need to engage in meaningful classroom observation experiences where data was replaced with evidence and feedback with conversations about practice. I knew that if I, as the principal, missed opportunities to serve my teachers with valuable information, then my assistant principals may be experiencing the same void I did. As a result, I began with my own self improvements as an instructional leader and then worked with my APs.

Through the MCLEs, I learned this to be true, and the assistant principals were motivated to be stronger instructional leaders as well. The CLE structure and CLE axioms became the blueprint for our collaborative learning and reflective experiences. The Calling-on tool aided the CPR group with developing their data-driven skill set. The Project I[4] Conversation Guide and co-created questions provided the CPR group with a beacon to navigate our conversations, questions, and teacher reflection. During the study, the CPR group empowered each other with their prior knowledge and their newly developed skills. As they became more confident in their skills, they felt more motivated to learn and grow from one another even more.

The void is slowly diminishing. This study accounts for bringing attention to the need for a more evidence-based approach for classroom observations rather than the historical trap of subjective notes and recommendations. No longer do teachers have to think administrators are doing observations to just "check a box." We can now provide teachers with data to show their interactions with students in their class. This process provides teachers with the evidence need to

change their practice and ensure that every student is held accountable to the learning process. The data they receive is now their data that they reflect on.

The CLE axioms provided a foundation for the study, and the Project I[4] protocols, agendas, and activities provided a framework for incorporating reflective practices into the present work. With this PAR study complete, a research model gains strength and influence by being repeated at different levels of education. This PAR study could spark the instructional reform of classrooms across the district, state, and nation to provide more data-driven opportunities for teachers to improve their classroom instruction. Table 22 outlines the interconnectedness of the CLE Axioms, the PAR activities, and potential implications for future research, policies, and practice.

I found that meaningful experiences and powerful reflection produce a gateway to change. I am confident that this study can continue its practice as a roadmap for building and sustaining a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team. After the study, I felt confident that the CPR group members could replicate this practice. I wish for them what I want for me: to use this experience to forever change my practice. To transform my work into an equity-focused, collaborative instructional leader. I have become a practitioner-researcher. And, in turn, I hope to have inspired the next generation of school leaders to become the same equitable, instructional leaders I learned to become and develop in this study.

Table 22

Connections among CLE Axioms, PAR Study, and Implications

Axiom	My PAR Study Connection	Research, Policy, and Practice Implications
Learning and leadership are dynamic social processes.	Micro-Community Learning Exchanges' Personal Narratives	Practice: Establish a safe space for learning and developing skills together (see Table 21)
Conversations are critical and central pedagogical processes.	Micro-Community Learning Exchanges focused on evidence-based observations and data-driven post-observation conferences	Practice: Be intentional with CLE activities. Academic conversations build confidence and academic identity (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011) Research: Focus on the process of learning, rather than the end product of it.
The people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local concerns.	FoP: Build and sustain a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR) group = The Administrative Team	Research: Consider your research questions and who would be the best allies to help answer them. Action Research is best done in collaboration with others who have a stake in the problem being investigated. (Herr & Anderson, 2014)
Crossing boundaries enriches the development and educational process.	Teacher Community Learning Exchanges Teacher discussion with reflection, insights, and recommendations	Research: "Action Research intimately links research to practice such that each informs the other. Action, or practice talks with theory – this practice/action has been called praxis" (hunter et al., 2013)
Hope and change are built on the assets and dreams of locals and their communities.	Teacher Community Learning Exchanges Personal Narrative on Change Reflections from teachers and administrators about our next steps	Policy: This study can expand beyond the school building. (1) Reaching into graduate school administrative programs (2) Re-examining the state evaluation system with a new scope of evidence-based observations

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284 ·
rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/

Notification of Exempt Certification

From:	Social/Behavioral IRB
To:	Hugh Scott
CC:	Matthew Militello
Date:	9/21/2021
Re:	UMCIRB 21-001663
	FILLING THE VOID

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 9/20/2021. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category # 1 & 2ab.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

Document	Description
Scott Interview Conversation Guide Example.pdf(0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Scott PAR Recruitment Script.docx.pdf(0.01)	Recruitment Documents/Scripts
Scott_Agenda.docx(0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Scott_Complete Proposal.docx(0.01)	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Scott_Consent Document_9-8-21.docx.pdf(0.01)	Consent Forms
Scott_Observation Tool_1.docx(0.01)	Data Collection Sheet
Scott_Observation Tool_2.docx(0.01)	Data Collection Sheet

For research studies where a waiver or alteration of HIPAA Authorization has been approved, the IRB states that each of the waiver criteria in 45 CFR 164.512(i)(1)(i)(A) and (2)(i) through (v) have been met. Additionally, the elements of PHI to be collected as described in items 1 and 2 of the Application for Waiver of Authorization have been determined to be the minimal necessary for the specified research.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

APPENDIX B: CITI TRAINING CERTIFICATE

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 03-Jan-2021
Expiration Date 03-Jan-2024
Record ID   40169067

This is to certify that:

Hugh Scott

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Human Research
(Curriculum Group)
Group 2.Social / Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

East Carolina University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w3c97e9ea-1939-418c-8c7e-808081a4e666-40169067

APPENDIX C: DISTRICT APPROVAL

Nash County Public Schools

Steven J. Ellis, Ed.D.
Superintendent

June 29, 2021

Dear Hugh Scott,

Nash County Public Schools recognizes the benefits of participating in relevant, well-designed research studies proposed by qualified individuals. Approval for conducting such studies is based primarily on the extent to which substantial benefits can be shown for Nash County Schools and its mission of educating students. The purpose of this letter is to notify you of the **approval** to use conduct your dissertation study research with participants in our school district on the inquiry: "How do we build and sustain a cohesive instructional leadership structure in a high school?" at Southern Nash High School with participants in our schools. We also give permission to utilize the following spaces at Southern Nash High school to collect data and conduct interviews for your dissertation project: in-school principal professional learning teams, community of practice experiences, and onsite classroom visits and conferences.

The project meets all of our school/district guidelines, procedures, and safeguards for conducting research on our campus. Moreover, there is ample space for you to conduct your study and your project will not interfere with any functions of Southern Nash High School. Finally, the following conditions must be met, as agreed upon by the researchers and participants and district office staff:

> Participant data only includes information captured from the state data collection strategies.
> Participation is voluntary.
> Participants can choose to leave the study without penalty at any time.
> Any issues with participation in the study are reported to the school administration in a timely manner.
> An executive summary of your findings is shared with the school administration once the study is complete.

In addition to these conditions, the study must follow all of the East Carolina University IRB guidelines.

We are excited to support this important work.

Respectfully,

Dr. Steven Ellis
Superintendent, Nash County Public Schools

930 Eastern Avenue • Nashville, North Carolina 27856 • (252) 459-5220 • fax (252) 459-6404 • www.ncpschools.net

Informed Consent to Participate in Research
Information to consider before taking part in research that has no mor minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: FILLING THE VOID: BUILDING AND SUSTAINING COHESIVE AND CONSISTENT INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Principal Investigator: Hugh Scott (Person in Charge of this Study)
Institution, Department or Division: College of Education
Address: East 5th Street Greenville, NC 27858-4353
Telephone #: 252-328-4260

Participant Full Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Please PRINT clearly

Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) study issues related to society, health problems, environmental problems, behavior problems and the human condition. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

Why am I being invited to take part in this research?
The purpose of this research is to discover how we build and sustain a cohesive instructional leadership structure in a high school. You are being invited to take part in this research because you are a high school math or science team at Southern Nash High where the study will take place. The decision to take part in this research is yours to make. By doing this research, we hope to learn how assistant principals develop their knowledge and skills as an instructional leadership team.

If you volunteer to take part in this research, you will be one of about 12 people to do so.

Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?
This research study has minimal but evident risks. Being that the observations and conferences are recorded, confidentiality and security of information are of utmost importance. The data will be used for research purposes only. If data files need to be used beyond the scope of this study, additional notification and permission will be requested before any release of information. The data in this study will not be used as punitive measures in evaluating teacher performance. The practice within the study is to be considered a collaborative, growth model for both the teacher and the administrator.

What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?
You can choose not to participate. Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate will not result in a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate but change your mind later, you may withdraw from the study.
Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?

The research will be conducted at Southern Nash High School. You will need to come to Southern Nash High during the study. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is approximately 15-20 additional hours over the next 18 months.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, your school's data will be used with confidentiality. An assigned administrator will observe your classroom regularly and provide you with observational data from each observation. After each observation, you will meet with the administrator to discuss the findings of the observation. These observations and post-observation conferences may be recorded to capture all data and interactions between the teacher and the administrator. Furthermore, throughout the study, there will be scheduled meetings to discuss the learning experience and practice collectively.

- Questions that will be asked and/or interviews or surveys that may be conducted, focus groups in which the person may be asked to take part.

- Reflective memos may be requested monthly.

- Participation in a learning forum with other participants.

- Audio or videotaping will be implemented or photographs taken of the participant. The records of this study will be kept private in the researcher's office for five years. In published reports, no information will be included that will make it possible to identify the research participant. Research records will be stored securely. If you withdraw from the study, your individual information will be destroyed as well.

What might I experience if I take part in the research?

We don't know of any risks (the chance of harm) associated with this research. Any risks that may occur with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life. We don't know if you will benefit from taking part in this study. There may not be any personal benefit to you but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future. However, this study may be beneficial to your instructional practice since the study is to be considered a collaborative, growth model for both the teacher and the administrator.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research?

We will not be able to pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

Will it cost me to take part in this research?

 It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?

ECU and the people and organizations listed below may know that you took part in this research and may see information about you that is normally kept private.

How will you keep the information you collect about me secure? How long will you keep it?

The records of this study will be kept private in the researcher's office for five years. In published reports, no information will be included that will make it possible to identify the research participant. Research records will be stored securely. If you withdraw from the study, your individual information will be destroyed as well.

What if I decide I don't want to continue in this research?

You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

The people conducting this study will be able to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the Principal Investigator at 252-451-8520, ext. 244 (work) (M-F, between **8 AM to 3:30 PM**).

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director for Human Research Protections, at 252-744-2914.

I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?

The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.

- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.

- I know that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.

- By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.

- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

Participant's Name (**PRINT**)   **Signature**   **Date**

Person Obtaining Informed Consent: I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above, and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

Person Obtaining Consent (**PRINT**)   **Signature**   **Date**

APPENDIX E: AGENDA EXAMPLE

Agenda
XXX High School
Date: XX/XX/20XX
Strength Through Unity

Agenda

Time EDT	Activity	Facilitator
5 min	**Welcome & Overview**	
10 min	**Dynamic Mindfulness** *ABCs of Dynamic Mindfulness*	
15 min	**Personal Narrative:**	
40 min		
10 min	**Debrief**: Next Steps	

APPENDIX F: CALL SURVEY

The Comprehensive Assessment for Leading and Learning (CALL) is a nationally valid and reliable instrument based on the distributed leadership theory designed to assess leadership as a function in a school. The CALL survey was customized for Project I^4. Specifically, the Project I^4 CALL survey was framed in four categories: (1) Focus on leadership for learning, (2) Promote effective teaching practice and services to support ALL students, (3) Build professional capacity for teaching and supporting ALL students, and (4) Relational trust (see Appendix P for more detailed Project I^4 CALL survey results). The CALL reporting system disaggregates the data by roles, thereby showing the differences in experiences between administrators and teachers. The comparison supports school leaders in identifying discrepancies in school activities and opportunities for growth (Blitz & Modeste, 2015).

https://www.leadershipforlearning.org/

APPENDIX G: QUESTIONING TOOL

Project I[4] Observation Toolkit - Question Protocol
The tool is designed to collect basic information for the teacher to record question forms. Use selective verbatim by selecting and recording teacher questions. If the teacher addresses a question to a specific student, name the student and recognize if the student name is first or last and if there is think(wait) time or not. Record time if possible. Use as many pages of the same recording as needed. Then in Step Three, you name the question form in the last column by using the abbreviations.

Teacher _____ Observer _____ Date _____
Duration of Observation _____ to _____

TIME	Teacher Questions	Question Form

In the third column of the question form evidence, use these abbreviations in column one below to name the question form. You may have more than one code for a single question as there are many parts to the question form.
Then tabulate the number of instances of each question form below.

Question Form Abbreviation	Question form explanation	Number of instances
Y/N?	Yes/no questions	
QW or NQW	Question word (question starts with question word) or No question word (question does not start with question word)	
FIB?	Fill in the blank question. Usually the teacher starts to make a statement and seems to decide halfway through the question to change to asking and says…. Is what? at end of sentence	
SNA / SNB	Student name after question Student name before question	
TT NTT	Adequate Think Time for type of question No think time used	
Other	Anything else you observe about question form	

What are statements of factual evidence from the observation?
Use the evidence categories from the data collection and use marks to record to make 5-6 factual statements about the data.
Examples of Evidence
• The teacher asked ____ questions in ____ minutes.
• In ____ questions in which the teacher called on students, the teacher used the student name at the start of question ____ times and used the student name at end of questions ____ times.
Adapted from Project I[4]. (2019). Questioning form tool. East Carolina University Department of Educational Leadership. https://education.ecu.edu/projecti4/resources/

APPENDIX H: CALLING ON TOOL

Project I^4 Observation Toolkit - Question Protocol
What You Need to Do in the Observation
Project I^4 Observation Tool Calling-On Tool 1.A

The tool is designed to collect basic information for the teacher to see how the teacher (or a student leading a discussion of a math problem) is generally calling-on students in classroom setting.

Make a seating chart.

If possible, write student names if you know them. Either use STUDENT NAME or identity (F/M

or race/ethnicity): AA= African American; L= Latinx; W=White; AsA= Asian American.

Make a slash mark (/) for every instance of the items in the tool. Try to indicate with short abbreviation of the type of calling on or teacher response that was used (after the slash mark). It will take a bit of practice to get used to the names of calling on (chart below), but this offers precise data with which to have the conversation with the teacher

R*	Raised hand
CC**	Cold Call
CCD	Cold Call for Discipline
B-A	Blurt out-Accepts
B-I	Blurt out-Ignores
C&R	Call and Response: Teacher asks for group response or indicates students should "popcorn"
ES	Uses equity strategy (equity stick or card to call on student)
TR***	Teacher repeats student response to class verbatim
TRV***	Teacher revoices student response
TPS	Think and Pair and then Share
Other	Any other strategy you note

*Raised hands are not always ineffective. See Chapter 1. However, if primary mode of interacting, this reduces equitable student access.

** Cold calling is not incorrect or ineffective if used in ways that support student thinking and full access (wait/think time) and student name at end of question after think time.

*** Note difference between simple repetition, effective repetition, and revoicing on charts.

Teacher:_____   Observer: Date
Duration of Observation _____ to _____

Student Name OR number	Raised hand CO: R	Cold Call CO: CC	Cold Call Discipline CO:CCD	Calling out CO: C&R CO: B-A CO: B-I	Equitable method CO: ES	Simple Rep TR	Teach Revoice TRV	Other

Notes and Summary:

Adapted from Project I[4]. (2019). Calling-on tool. East Carolina University Department of Educational Leadership. https://education.ecu.edu/projecti4/resources/

APPENDIX I: REFLECTIVE MEMO EXAMPLE

Google Form

Reflective Memos

What is a reflective memo? A reflective memo is similar to a journal entry, but includes more than reflection or emoting about what you think or feel about an experience.

Step one is observing and/or participating (even if this is observing self as a reader, writer or researcher).
Step two is reflecting.
Step three is thinking about how the observation/participation and reflection fit into a larger concept or idea. How does the experience relate to what you know or have read in the literature, for example?
Step four is using the reflection in order to act differently: What might you do differently? Or: How does the reflection support metacognitive (learning) and meta-affective (emotional or dispositional) learning?

XX/XX/2021 Write a reflective memo on the thought process and decision for choosing mini-CLE participants.

Your answer

Submit

APPENDIX J: AGENDA EXAMPLE FROM MCLE

XXX High School
Date: 11/1/2021
7:45 - 9:00 AM
Strength through Unity
Agenda #2

Time EDT	Activity
5 min	**Welcome & Overview**
5 min	**Dynamic Mindfulness**
25 min	**Personal Narrative: Activity** Poem: A Leader What line or lines resonated with you in the poem? What does it make you think about in your own journey as an instructional leader?
25 min	**How do we make our instructional team cohesive and consistent when we do observations?** **What are we looking for in observations?** Introduction to Observation Tool: Calling On Tool
10 min	Reflective Memo #2
5 min	**Debrief**: Next Steps *Next Meeting: Nov. 15th* *Practice with the observation tool and video* *Post observation guide and debrief*

Focus of Practice Overview

FOCUS OF PRACTICE	PURPOSE STATEMENT
Is to build and sustain a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team by supporting the growth and development of assistant principals as instructional leaders.	The purpose of this study is to build a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team that is sustainable through the growth and development of assistant principals as instructional leaders.
RESEARCH QUESTION	
How does a high school leadership team build and sustain cohesive and consistent instructional leadership?	
Sub Questions	
To what extent do the assistant principals use academic discourse to build cohesion? How does a high school leadership team consistently work together and on their own to sustain instructional leadership? How does supporting the growth and development of assistant principals build my capacity as an educational leader?	

A Leader?

I went on a search to become a leader
I searched high and low. I spoke with authority, people listened but alas, there
Was one who was wiser than I and they followed him
I sought to inspire confidence but the crowd responded.
"Why should we trust you?"
I postured and I assumed the look of leadership with a countenance that glowed
with confidence and pride.
But many passed me by and never noticed my air of elegance.
I ran ahead of others, pointing the way to new heights.
I demonstrated that I knew the route to greatness.
And then I looked back and I was alone.
And I sat me down and I pondered long.
And then I listened to the voices around me.
And I heard what the group was trying to accomplish
I rolled up my sleeves and joined in the work.
As we worked, I asked,
"Are we all together in what we want to do and how to get the job done?"
And we thought together and we fought together
And we struggled towards our goal.
I found myself encouraging the fainthearted
I sought ideas of those too shy to speak out.
I taught those who had little skill.
I praised those who worked hard.
When our task was completed, one of the groups turned to me and said, "This would not have
been done but for your leadership."
At first, I said, "I didn't lead, I just worked with the rest."

And then I understood, leadership is not a goal.
It's a way of reaching a goal.
I lead best when I help others to use themselves creatively.
I lead best when I forget about myself as leader and focus on my group, their needs and their goals.
To lead is to serve, to give, to achieve
TOGETHER.

Author Unknown, from Gold Nuggets, Jim Schoel and Mike Stratton

APPENDIX K: PAR PRE-CYCLE CODES SNAPSHOT

CATEGORY	CODE	Memos	MCLE2	Total	Total Category
Learning Experience	activity/session	8		8	
Learning Experience	Conversations	11	7	18	
Learning Experience	Experience	8	5	13	
Learning Experience	Learning	5	1	6	
Learning Experience	mistakes	1		1	
Learning Experience	practice		4	4	81
Learning Experience	prior knowledge	4	2	6	
Learning Experience	process	4	1	5	
Learning Experience	reflection	3	12	15	
Learning Experience	strategy/skills gap		3	3	
Learning Experience	Understanding	2		2	
Observation Process	academic discourse		4	4	
Observation Process	collecting data	2	15	17	
Observation Process	evaluation		3	3	
Observation Process	feedback	4	8	12	
Observation Process	listening		2	2	
Observation Process	look fors		6	6	
Observation Process	Notes vs. Evaluation		6	6	78
Observation Process	post-conference	7	6	13	
Observation Process	reactions and emotions	3		3	
Observation Process	Strategy/Skill		4	4	
Observation Process	Subjectivity		1	1	
Observation Process	tools	7		7	
Team building	buy in	1	2	3	
Team building	Collaboration	9	9	18	
Team building	Common goal	5	3	8	
Team building	Common language	4	1	5	
Team building	confidence	8	7	15	
Team building	doubt		7	7	79
Team building	helping others	4	2	6	
Team building	team	4		4	
Team building	trust	1	7	8	
Team building	unity	3		3	
Team building	vulnerability	2		2	

APPENDIX L: CONVERSATION GUIDE

Project I[4] Conversation Guide for Effective Conversations in Post-Observations
EFFECTIVE CONVERSATIONS
"We come to praise; we come to learn; we come to have conversations about practice"
Frank Lyman

By: Lynda Tredway

Based on research and tools form
Glickman, C. (2003). *Leadership for learning.* Alexandria VA: ASCD
Bloom, G.S., Castagna, C. L. , Moir, E., & Warren, B. (2005) *Blended coaching: Skills and strategies to support principals.* Thousand Oaks, CA.: Corwin Press.
Saphier, J.
Special thanks to Jim Warnock of Research for Better Teaching for input.
Note on pronouns: We have not fully converted to pronoun use for persons who identify they and their as pronouns of choice.

OVERVIEW
A conversation (formal or informal) that follows an observation (also formal or informal) has several components that include preparation for observation, observation with tool that collects evidence, data analysis and preparation for conversation, and, finally, the conversation. Think about the parts of the conference as we think about parts of a lesson and "task analyze" the approach. Obviously, the conversation following an observation is premised on **establishing trust between the teacher and the observer**. Trust is enhanced by the observer's ability to have a substantive reflective conversation about practice and provide useful **data and coaching questions** that support the teacher's reflection.
Note that the conversation following a relatively short observation (10-20 minutes) may be different than the actual formal post-conference for evaluation purposes. Because the formal process of evaluation in a state or district process requires written evaluation using a prescribed format, that conversation may require a different process than a conversation following an informal observation. However, an administrator can use the informal observations to build a set of evidence that can serve both the teacher and the administrator for the formal evaluation process. Through observations and conversations that occur throughout a school year, sustaining trust in the total process can deepen through frequent observations and conversations about practice. A key guideline: Follow-up conversations should be held as close as possible to the date of the observation.
There is no one right way to have a conversation. However, the formats we introduce are useful for **most** conversations. Some conversations require coaching moves, as the teacher may have not made changes in practice after several attempts to observe and provide feedback. Or, in some cases, a teacher has done something that is egregious which requires administrator intervention.

As one administrator said: *Every principal has to analyze the staff and decide how you can have a coach role and when you have to be clear about your administrator-evaluator role and have someone else on staff take on the coaching role.*

The suggestions offer guidance, but not "rules". Every teacher is different, and knowing how each teacher learns/thinks is vital to setting up the trusting relationship necessary for any conversation.

NOTE: See **hyperlinks in the text for deeper explanations.**

GENERAL PREPARATION FOR CONVERSATION AFTER OBSERVATION

The primary objective of the conversation is to **support the teacher to (1) analyze the data from the observation; (2) make decisions about what s/he proposes to change; and (3) make a clear plan to improve instructional practice**. We, as administrators and coaches, have been schooled to give "feedback", and teachers often say they want feedback. However, Project I[4] posits that what teachers want is more consistent and deeper attention to their teaching so that the conversation uses the evidence from the observation to provide a "tailor-made" observation and conversation process (Paryani, 2019). Thus, the administrator's objective is not to give feedback about what the administrator thinks should change. The main objective is to support the teacher to talk about his/her practice so that s/he can make decisions about what to change. Typically, with veteran teachers, the observer can proceed and engage in cognitive coaching, supporting the veteran to draw on his/her knowledge and skill base to make decisions. For novice teachers that may be different; they are new to instructional practices. Thus, supporting their analyses and decisions about changing practice(s) is often necessary as they do not yet have a repertoire of knowledge and skills to fully make decisions.

If the observation and conversation are used for the formal observation required for the evaluation process, there is considerable value in a substantive pre-observation or planning conference. A fruitful planning conference supports the teacher to have a more thoughtful, well-planned lesson and a more productive post observation conversation. Attached is a guideline for conducting a planning conference that moves teacher thinking from the activity teaching to the learning objective/outcome of the lesson.

The following are steps after the observation:

Step One: ANALYZE THE DATA/EVIDENCE from observation

Any analysis is premised on an observer collecting observable, **objective**, non-judgmental data to analyze in preparation for the conversation. Analyzing the data helps the observer decide on an objective/purpose for the conversation. Even if the district evaluation tool does not require evidence, effective administrators should use evidence-based observation tools (and not checklists or other judgmental tools).

To prepare for the conversation with the teacher, the administrator can make choices about analyzing the data: send teacher the data before the conversation, analyze for the first time when you meet together, or share what you, as observer, have analyzed. There is no one right way to

present the data, but this question is critical: What factual evidence does the observation yield?. The important part is that you use objective data and share that data/evidence with the teacher. The data should not include any notes to yourself or questions that may indicate pre-judgment. **Step Two:** Think about the APPROACH for the conversation based on Glickman. The approach informs the kinds of questions you ask and how you ensure that the teacher makes decisions about what to do. Two of the four approaches apply to most teachers.

- **Direct-informational**: Teacher who needs more information in order to make decisions about an improvement choice. In other words, the knowledge base of the teacher may not include what s/he needs to know to make improvements. Typically, a novice teacher or a veteran who does not know current thinking can benefit from coaching. If the conversation requires that you provide specific instructional direction, ask permission to be instructional -- *Is it all right if I provide instructional options?*

- **Collaborative**: Teacher who is knowledgeable about practice and for whom the evidence is supportive. The conversation is two-way. The responsibility of the observer (now coach) is to ask the kinds of coaching questions that elicit teacher talk and teacher decisions.

Think about the range of coaching stances from instructional to facilitative coaching, remembering that **transfer to teacher practice** is the objective. GATHER MATERIALS Something may emerge from the data analysis that the observer does in advance that may require materials for deeper understanding or next steps. Prepare materials with a copy for you and for the teacher. You may or may not use in the conversation; use your judgment about providing materials. Alternatively, keep a list as you talk and summarize the materials you can provide to the teacher.

Step Three: PREPARE AN OPENING QUESTION FOR CONVERSATION: BEYOND ASKING "HOW DO YOU THINK THE LESSON WENT?"
Preparing a **thoughtful opening question** for the conversations can alleviate the tension that an administrator sometimes feel sat the beginning of the post-observation conversation. The question depends on the type of post-conference approach that you use: (1) direct-control (2) directive-informational (3) collaborative or (4) nondirective (Glickman, 2002). Most conversations fall in category 2 or 3 of Glickman and correspond to the instructional to facilitative range of coaching in the *Blended Coaching* (Bloom et al., 2005).
Depending upon the type of approach you use (See Glickman chart), start with this introduction: *"We had decided before the observation that I would look at _____ (or use ___ tool to observe your class). What I would like to do is look at the data together and see what we observe."*

Step Four: Ask follow-up coaching questions during the conversation. As much as possible, do not put your 2 cents worth in the conversation; rely on coaching through paraphrasing moves/questions.

See coaching questions below in Coaching for Equity: Paraphrasing

Step Five: Summarize and Debrief (optional)

Summarize

End the conversation with a decision about what is next in terms of teacher practice and a possible follow-up observation. Often, the observer can use the summarizing and organizing function to summarize what has been said (see **Coaching for Equity: Paraphrasing**)**.** If the conversation is a part of a formal evaluation process, the administrator must translate the objective observation and conversation to the district or state forms.

Discretion is advised at this step of the process as the collaborative process in which you have engaged has the potential to drift toward hierarchical (because of bureaucratic requirements or because you may revert to feedback and telling). Depending on the teacher need and assessment of Glickman types, you may have to engage in a direct-control conversation with a teacher who needs improvement.

Use summarizing statements/questions:

- Let's review the key points of the discussion.

- What next steps are you taking? OR The steps I heard you talk about are_____

- What evidence will you look at to ascertain if those next steps are working? OR The evidence I need to collect next time I come is _____

- How does this connect to student learning/equity? I heard you say ___ and that clearly connects to student learning/equity in these ways: _____

DEBRIEF

Debriefing may or may not feel like the right thing to do. As an administrator, you are model reflection. Thus, depending on the situation, ask for feedback on the structure, tone, and usefulness of conference, using the + and △ (delta=change) format or use a written feedback form for the teacher to reflect on and complete if s/he wishes. However, In some cases, debriefing would not be an appropriate choice.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Set the tone:** Of course, you want the conversation to go as well as possible, so make the teacher feel comfortable. Many administrators recommend having the conference in the teacher's room, or, if it is your office, then probably the administrator sits by the teacher or sits around a table with the teacher. Unless it is a direct control conversation (Glickman) in which you have to set a distinct hierarchical tone with teacher, do not sit behind your desk. Assume best intentions and assume that if the teacher knew to do anything else, s/he would do it. Refrain from making judgments; instead seek reasons behind problems or stated explanations. Probe, but do not prejudge. Use coaching

questions. Indeed, if you are practicing having a different type of conversation for the first time, then be transparent and share that with the teacher.

For example, *I am practicing having a different kind of conversation with you about the observation, one that relies on the evidence I collected and analyzed and one in which you decide what your next steps are. I have ideas, of course, but what I am most interested in is your decisions about what you want to do next as a result of analyzing the evidence from the observation. As always, I only observed a slice of your teaching practice, so, if there are particular classroom circumstances with students or lesson, please tell me as we proceed.*

General rule of thumb: Teacher should do most of the talking. Acknowledge ideas, even if you do not totally agree. Typically, do not start conversations with WHY questions. Think time or silence is OK as it allows time for collecting thoughts and thinking about what happened. Use paraphrasing to encourage teacher talk.

- **Language**. In general, avoid "you" statements. Convert to "we" or "I" statements. Use open-ended questions that produce explanations and ideas, not short answers. See advice on question stems that can help to clarify, paraphrase or probe.

- **Body Language**: The process should be viewed in general as a **conversation between professionals.** Be aware of the ways you position yourself as the administrator. Again, for the "hard" conversations, you have to think carefully about what you want to communicate and that may require a different stance, format (directive-control) or positioning (behind your desk).

- **Procedural Advance Organizer** (AO): Explain the purpose and the parts of the post conference and ask for concurrence. You want to be open, but purposeful. Think carefully about the <u>objective of the conversation</u>. You are creating a mini-lesson plan for conducting the conference. Be open, as you are in a classroom, to the student input and changing direction, but don't just drift from one question to another, getting surface responses. Note: *This seems like a lot of planning at first, but as you gain experience, the planning lessens and parts of this become more automatic.*

- Use **teaching and learning language** – naming practices specifically as much as possible. That helps the teacher build structures and you develop a common language for teaching and learning in your school.

- **Remember to put equity at the forefront of the conversation and push the teacher to think about equitable access and even if the observation was not specifically about this.** How does the evidence demonstrate equitable or inequitable practice? How can you direct every part of the conversation toward equity? Glickman Coaching Stances**

You need to consider the teacher with whom you are conferring. Most teachers fall into the direct informational or collaborative approach.

Conversation Approach	Conversation Opening Question Stems
Direct Control (Glickman) Very clear data and presentation of what to do. Highly instructional and direct. This type of conversation is to deliver a message. This is not used in most conversations, but is necessary at times.	• *Based on the analysis of the data, there are some clear patterns in the classroom that require immediate attention if we are to support you to teach this year. In terms of classroom management, I want you to try _____* • *Based on the analysis of the evidence, I am concerned about _____, and I need to sit with you and plan a lesson so that we can perhaps assist you more in _____.* • *I observed that 15 of 20 students were off task each time I did the at task data collection in the 45 minute period. Therefore, I want to work with you on engagement strategies and checking or understanding.*
Directive Informational (Glickman) Instructional (Bloom) When choosing an instructional approach, Bloom says it is a good idea to get permission. It is often useful for new teachers, who often do not have a way to think through the options. This is often an effective approach with novice teachers or veteran teachers who need particular attention	To start any conversation of this type, use some version of this start: *"I observed _____. I would like to give you some options for what I think might be helpful. Is that all right?"* • *Three students on the left back and two students on right rear were talking or off task the entire period. These are three options I can think of to try: (1)____ (2)____ (3) _____ Do you have another option you think might work better* • *I observed that you primarily used hand-raising to call on students. You asked __ questions; typically in those questions you did not use think time, and you called on ___ students. One way I think we agreed to in our professional learning was to use equity sticks. In this particular lesson, when could you have used those?* • *What are some other ways you know to call on students so we have more equitable access to the classroom discourse?*

Collaborative (Glickman)
Aka Facilitative (Bloom)
Cognitive Coaching (Garmstrom et al.)
 	
Teacher who is knowledgeable about practice and for whom the evidence will be supportive.
	The purpose of this CONVERSATION is to get the teacher to talk about practice.
	
	• *"I observed that _____*
	  occurred. Can we talk about that or does something else in the data stand out as important to talk about?
	
	• *The data indicate that _____. Do they correspond to your perception of _____?*
	
	• *What was happening when _____?*
	
	• *I'm curious about this part of the observation (state factual evidence). What were you thinking about when you _____?*
	
	• *I noticed these two things about student responses: _____ and*
	  _____ What can you tell me about those students and their learning?
	
	• *I noticed that you spent most of your time with ____ and _____. I am wondering about that choice…was it purposeful or did it just happen?*

Nondirective (Glickman) Collaborative (Bloom) Cognitive coaching Works at all times toward teacher's self-plan for improvement and relies on teacher input to have conference.	The most important part of this type of conversation is not in the opening question, but in the paraphrasing and mediational questioning that occurs in the conversation to help the teacher develop a self-plan for improvement, relying almost totally on the teacher as lead. This is usually done with sophisticated, strong and often veteran teachers who know teaching practice and language. This relies on listening empathetically and effectively and requires an observer/evaluator who has acquired strength in tools of constructivist listening.

FACILITATIONAL OR INSTRUCTIONAL QUESTIONS
See Coaching for Equity Paraphrasing at end of this document.
Blended coaching requires a dance between three positions to take as a coach:
Consultative, Collaborative and Transformational using two types of coaching questions:
instructional and facilitative.
You will need to make a decision about whether the conference needs to be instructional
(probably Glickman direct control or direct informational) or facilitative (collaborative or

nondirective). In all cases, we do hope that the teachers can come to their own ideas and decisions about changing practice – mainly by the use of facilitative coaching moves of **paraphrasing, clarifying, and mediational questions + summarizing statements**. In general, new teachers need more instruction, but even then, get them to talk about practice. Even when they ask (or nearly plead), be very careful about lots of advice and direction. Remember that, even when something in the classroom has made you upset –most of the time, the teacher is alone in the classroom and has to solve his/her own problems. Thus, it is important, if possible, that the teacher solve his or her own problems by thinking through them with you. If this requires more instruction on your part because the teacher does not really know what to do, <u>get permission to be instructional.</u> As much as possible navigate the conversation back to facilitating the thinking of the teacher.

Instructional to Facilitative Coaching

Bloom, G., Castagna, C.L., Moir, E., & Warren, B. (2005). *Blended coaching: Skills and strategies to support principal development.* Thousand Oaks, CA.: Corwin Press

Although the book is useful for those coaching principals, the coaching philosophy applies to coaching any adult.

The image is a mobius strip chosen to exemplify the ways that effective conversations rely on the coach's ability to move easily among the approaches to support the person who is coached. At times, like Glickman, the principal has to be more instructional and less facilitative (or using cognitive coaching). The goal is always to ensure the coachee starts to think for herself or himself about how to transform his or her practice.

PROJECT I[4] COACHING FOR EQUITY

USING PARAPHRASING IN MULTIPLE WAYS

Adapted from Lipton, Wellman & Humbard, 2003 and Principal Leadership Institute, UC Berkeley

CRITERIA FOR STRONG PARAPHRASING

Captures the essence of the message from coachee

Reflects the essence in voice tone and gestures

Names the speaker's content, emotions, and frames a logical level for addressing the content

Reflects the speaker's thinking back to the speaker for further consideration

Is shorter, but uses some of the language of the original statement

Seeks understanding, clarity and alignment

TYPES OF PARAPHRASING		
ACKNOWLEDGING & CLARIFYING	**SUMMARIZING & ORGANIZING**	**SHIFTING LEVEL OF ABSTRACTION**
By restating the essence of a statement, the coach paraphrases in order to identify and calibrate content and emotions.	By summarizing and organizing, the coach's paraphrases the coachee's responses to reshape thinking and separate jumbled issues.	By shifting the level of abstraction "up", the coach illuminates other ideas and supports the coachee to think at a deeper level. When shifting "down", the coach supports coachee to be more precise.
COACHING QUESTION STEMS		
- So, you're feeling _____. - You seem to noticing that _____. - In other words, you are saying that ____. - Hmm, you're suggesting that _____.	- There seem to be two issues here: _____ and ____ - On the one hand, it seems you are saying that _____. On the other hand, there might be _____ to think about. - For you then, several themes are emerging: _____, _____ and _____ - It seems you are considering this sequence or hierarchy: _____ _	So, a(n) _____ for you might be _____. *Shifting up* *Shifting down* category example belief non-example assumption strategy goal choice intention action option

APPENDIX M: PAR CYCLE ONE CODEBOOK

CATEGORY	CODE	Memos	MCLE5	CLE - Math	CLE - Science	Total	Total Category	New Code
Data Driven	calling on	1	8	1	2	12		
Data Driven	data	2	11	5	5	23		
Data Driven	data accuracy		8	4	1	13		
Data Driven	data analysis	3	15	5	7	30		
Data Driven	feedback	3	3		3	9		
Data Driven	NCEES tool	3	3		3	9		
Data Driven	observation tool	11	5		3	19	115	
Leadership	Consistency and cohesion			2	1	3		
Leadership	Instructional	3				3	6	
Learning Experience	Conversations: collaboration	3	3	1	7	14		
Learning Experience	Conversations: teacher post	1	14	1	5	21		
Learning Experience	Experience	3	2	1	1	7		
Learning Experience	practice			1		1		
Learning Experience	prior knowledge		1	1		2		
Learning Experience	process	4				4		
Learning Experience	reflection	2	4	8	3	17		
Learning Experience	Strategy/Skill: basics		3			3		
Learning Experience	Strategy/Skill: shared		7	7	6	20		
Learning Experience	student accountability		4	4	1	9		
Learning Experience	student participation	1	2		1	4		
Learning Experience	teacher resistance to change	1		1	1	3		
Learning Experience	Video: self-critical		2	3	3	8	113	
Misc.	Focus	4	4		2	10	10	
Observation Process	academic discourse	1				1		
Observation Process	action steps: teachers	2	9	2	1	14		
Observation Process	post-conference/observation	7	6	1	1	15		
Observation Process	post-observation: location		2			2		
Observation Process	post-observation: timing		7		2	9		
Observation Process	questions: Clarying	2				2		
Observation Process	questions: Probing		8		2	10		
Observation Process	Video	2	6	4	4	16	69	
Team building	Collaboration	2			4	6		
Team building	Collaboration: Guarded sharing			3	3	6		
Team building	Common goal		4			4		
Team building	confidence	2				2		
Team building	doubt: stressor	1	3			4		
Team building	trust		1			1	23	
time	time	1	1	1	1	4	4	

APPENDIX N: PAR PRE-CYCLE AND CYCLE ONE COMBINED CODEBOOK

THEME	CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	CODE	Memos	MCLE5	CLE - Math	MCLE2	CLE - Science	Total Code	Total Category	Total Theme
Awareness	Awareness		confidence	10			7		17		
Awareness	Awareness		doubt: stressor	1	3		7		11		
Awareness	Awareness		Strategy/Skill: basics		3		4		7		
Awareness	Awareness		team	4					4		
Awareness	Awareness		vulnerability	2					2	41	
Cultivating Better Skills	Reflective Practices		Experience	11	2	1	5	1	20		
Cultivating Better Skills	Reflective Practices		process	8			1		9		
Cultivating Better Skills	Reflective Practices		reflection	5	4	8	12	3	32	61	
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Data Usage	data	2	11	5		5	23		
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Data Usage	data accuracy		8	4		1	13		
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Data Usage	data analysis	3	15	5		7	30		
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Data Usage	Video	2	6	4		4	16		
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Observation Protocol	calling on	1	8	1		2	12		
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Observation Protocol	collecting data	2			15		17		
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Observation Protocol	Focus	4	4			2	10		
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Observation Protocol	NCEES tool	3	3			3	9		
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Observation Protocol	observation tool	11	5			3	19		
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Post-Obs. Strategies	action steps: teachers	2	9	2		1	14		
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Post-Obs. Strategies	Conversations: teacher post	1	14	1		5	21		
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Post-Obs. Strategies	feedback	7	3		8	3	21		
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Post-Obs. Strategies	post-conference/observation	14	6	1	6	1	28		
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Post-Obs. Strategies	post-observation: timing		7			2	9		
Cultivating Better Skills	Skills Focused	Post-Obs. Strategies	questions: Probing		8			2	10	252	313
Collective efficacy	Shared expectations		Common goal	5	4		3		12		
Collective efficacy	Shared expectations		student accountability		4	4		1	9		
Collective efficacy	Shared expectations		trust	7	1				8	29	
Collective efficacy	Team building skills		Collaboration	11			9	4	24		
Collective efficacy	Team building skills		Collaboration: Guarded sharing			3		3	6		
Collective efficacy	Team building skills		Conversations: collaboration	14	3	1	7	7	32		
Collective efficacy	Team building skills		prior knowledge	4	1	1	2		8		
Collective efficacy	Team building skills		Strategy/Skill: shared		7	7		6	20	90	119

APPENDIX O: POST-OBSERVATION GUIDE

Starter Questions in Post-Observation Conferences

1. What do you think about your data? What do you notice?

2. Based on this data, do you think each student learned the information? What worked? What can we do differently?

Suggested Solutions based on the data:

- Including Cold Call or a variety of other student participation actions

    o Using Call Out Sparingly

- Mix it up with equity strategy

    o Popsicle Sticks

    o Tallest person presents in group

    o Shortest person presents in group

    o Present based on Birthday

- Think - Pair - Share - Oldie but Goodie!

APPENDIX P: CALL SURVEY RESULTS AND COMPARISON DATA

The CALL Survey categories are as follows:
- Focus on Leadership for Learning
- Promote Effective Teaching Practices and Services to Support ALL Students
- Build Professional Capacity for Teaching and Supporting ALL Students
- Relational Trust

This figure shows comparison data from a national database, the CALL average among the cohort of educators' survey results, and the localized school group data. The data comparison is from the initial CALL survey baseline before the study began and school data towards the end of the PAR study.

Legend: Comparison to CALL Average by Standard Deviation (SD) ?					
2+ SD below Avg	1-2 SD below Avg	0-1 SD below Avg	0-1 SD above Avg	1-2 SD above Avg	2+ SD above Avg

	Focus on Leadership f...		Promote Effective Tea...			Build Professional Cap...			Relational Trust
AVERAGE	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1
CALL	3.89	3.88	3.35	3.45	3.65	3.8	3.4	3.7	3.91
Group	3.98	3.8	3.3	3.72	3.8	3.92	3.47	3.77	3.97

	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1
High Sc... Sep 2019 — 61 responses	3.8	3.7	3.08	3.71	3.63	3.74	3.19	3.58	3.8
High Sc... May 2022 — 69 responses	4.14	3.89	3.5	3.72	3.95	4.07	3.71	3.94	4.11

- This figure is a compares the specific section on Promote Effective Teaching Practices and Services to Support ALL Students. This sections data was used in the CLE with the CPR group and teacher participants.

Legend: Comparison to CALL Average by Standard Deviation (SD) ?					
2+ SD below Avg	1-2 SD below Avg	0-1 SD below Avg	0-1 SD above Avg	1-2 SD above Avg	2+ SD above Avg

Back to Overview	Promote Effective Teaching Practices and Services to Support ALL Students			
AVERAGE	2.1 Engaging in Classroom Observations & Formative Feedback Practices	2.2 Focusing on Student Learning Needs in the Classroom	2.3 Developing Strategies for Instruction	DOMAIN AVERAGE
CALL	3.35	3.45	3.65	3.48
Group	3.3	3.72	3.8	3.61
SCHOOL				
High Sc... Sep 2019 — 61 responses	3.08	3.71	3.63	3.47
High Sc... May 2022 — 69 responses	3.5	3.72	3.95	3.72

APPENDIX Q: MCLE 6 AND 7 AGENDAS

CPR Group Agenda
Eastern High School
Date: 8/19/2022
7:45 - 9:15 AM
Strength Through Unity
Agenda

Time EDT	Activity
5 min	**Welcome & Overview**
5 min	**Dynamic Mindfulness**
20 min	**Personal Narrative** In the linked document, take some time to read through the passages, find one that resonates with you this today and maybe a current state of mindset or presence in your life or career.
30 min	**Activity:** **Personal Narrative: Activity** Leadership Journey Line: Protocol **During this past year, what leadership experiences have shaped your identity as an educator and administrator?** **During this past year, what leadership experience(s) shaped your learning and thinking as an instructional leader?**
10 min	Reflective Memo Activity
5 min	**Debrief**: Next Steps *Timeline*

Focus of Practice Overview

FOCUS OF PRACTICE	PURPOSE STATEMENT
Is to build and sustain a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team by supporting the growth and development of assistant principals as instructional leaders.	The purpose of this study is to build a cohesive and consistent instructional leadership team that is sustainable through the growth and development of assistant principals as instructional leaders.

RESEARCH QUESTION
How does a high school leadership team build and sustain cohesive and consistent instructional leadership?

Sub Questions
To what extent do the assistant principals collaborate to build cohesive skills? How do high school leaders consistently work independently and collectively as a team to sustain instructional leadership? How does supporting the growth and development of assistant principals build my capacity as an educational leader?

Personal Narrative

[Being Vulnerable](#)

Journey Line Protocol

LEARNING EXCHANGE PROTOCOL: JOURNEY LINE OF WRITING

We in the EdD program value the wholeness of each person and recognize that knowing your journey(s) and your stories makes it more possible to do the work ethically and with integrity.

Note: All protocols have multiple origins. The strength of a protocol is in the ability of facilitators or planners to adjust/revise for use in your context. https://nsrfharmony.org/protocols/ is a good source of multiple protocols for school, district, community and organizational use.

A **journey line** uses experience(s) as a moving force for change (Dewey, 1938) in the sense that the individual and collective experience(s) as remembered by participants constitute a story. In

turn the journey line themes provide generative knowledge about a subject. They can be used to construct the "story of self" on the path from childhood (earliest memories) to the present. The journey lines, when shared, become the "story of us" and can become a "story of collective knowledge or action" about a particular topic. Some examples of journey lines include:

- Journey line of COURAGE
- Journey line of CHANGE
- Journey line of TEACHING
- Journey line of TEAMING
- Journey line of COACHING
- Journey line of LEADERSHIP
- Journey line of READING
- Journey line of EVALUATION
- Journey line of RESEARCH

THE EXCERPT FROM Parker Palmer reminds us of why we need to reconstruct our journeys.

Palmer, Parker. (2004). *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward An Undivided Life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass (pp. 6-9)

Dividedness is a personal pathology, but it soon becomes a problem for other people. It is a problem for students whose teachers "phone it in" while taking cover behind their podiums and their power. It is a problem for patients whose doctors practice medical indifference, hiding behind a self-protective scientific façade. It is a problem for employees whose supervisors have personnel handbooks where their hearts should be. It is a problem for citizens whose political leaders speak with "forked tongues."

As teenagers and young adults, we learned that self-knowledge counts for little on the road to workplace success. What counts is the "objective" knowledge that empowers us to manipulate the world. Ethics, taught in this context, becomes one or more arm's-length study of great thinkers and their thoughts, one more exercise in data collection that fails to inform our hearts.

I value ethical standards, of course. But in a culture like ours – which devalues or dismisses the reality and power of the inner life – ethics too often becomes an external code of conduct, an objective set of rules we are told to follow, a moral exoskeleton we put on hoping to prop ourselves up. The problem with exoskeletons is simple: we can slip them off as easily as we can don them.
I also value integrity. But that word means much more than adherence to a moral code: it means "the state of quality of being entire, complete, and unbroken," as in integer or integral.

When we understand integrity for what it is, we stop obsessing over codes of conduct and embark on the more demanding journey toward being whole. Then we learn the truth of John Middleton Murry's remark, " For the good [person] to realize that it is better to be whole then to be good it is to enter on a straight and narrow path to which his [or her] previous rectitude was flowery

The introduction for each journey line and the reflection questions may change, but the process is the same.

1. Introduce the concept of Journey Line as an individual and collective story and set of experiences.

2. CHOOSE A SET OF questions or prompts for the journey line topic that stimulate participant thinking.
3. Share 2 examples of the particular journey line you use based on your experiences (on a journey line you have constructed before the workshop).
4. Ask participants to write or draw on journey line for 6-8 minutes.
5. Share in duos or trios and you may want to share as group.
6. Collect important attributes and themes of journey lines. Share themes from duos or trios.
7. Optional: Collect and analyze stories from journey lines as practice for community story mapping. (Separate guide for that is available.

Journey Line: WRITING

Your experience of writing has been a part of your life for a long time – from the first time you wrote your letters and then wrote your name. Some of you learned to speak, read, and write in a different language and have had to learn English. So many different forms and reasons for writing from making lists to journaling to emails to thank you notes to more formal writing of reports and now the dissertation have been or are now a part of your writing.

In the doctoral program, we concentrate, of course, on analytical writing. However, we want to consider what writing experiences have shaped who you are as a writer right now.

Question Prompts: What writing experiences have shaped your identity as a writer and your experience in learning to write and writing for different purposes?

For your lifetime, chart 5-6 points of writing (some positive…others probably not so positive). Some experiences may be of "high importance"; others of medium "importance", but still important in your journey. **Then be prepared to choose one about which to tell a story to a small group**. See an example on the next page. If you have the draw feature on your computer, you can do what I did. If not you can copy and write on this and take a photo to share.

(Since all of your written documents to us will be in Times New Roman, font 12, modeling that here in this story.
YOU DO NOT HAVE TO WRITE a STORY, but NEED TO BE READY TO TELL A STORY/

High
importance

Medium
importance

0-10…..10-15…..15-20…..20-25…..25-30…..30-35…..35-40…..40+
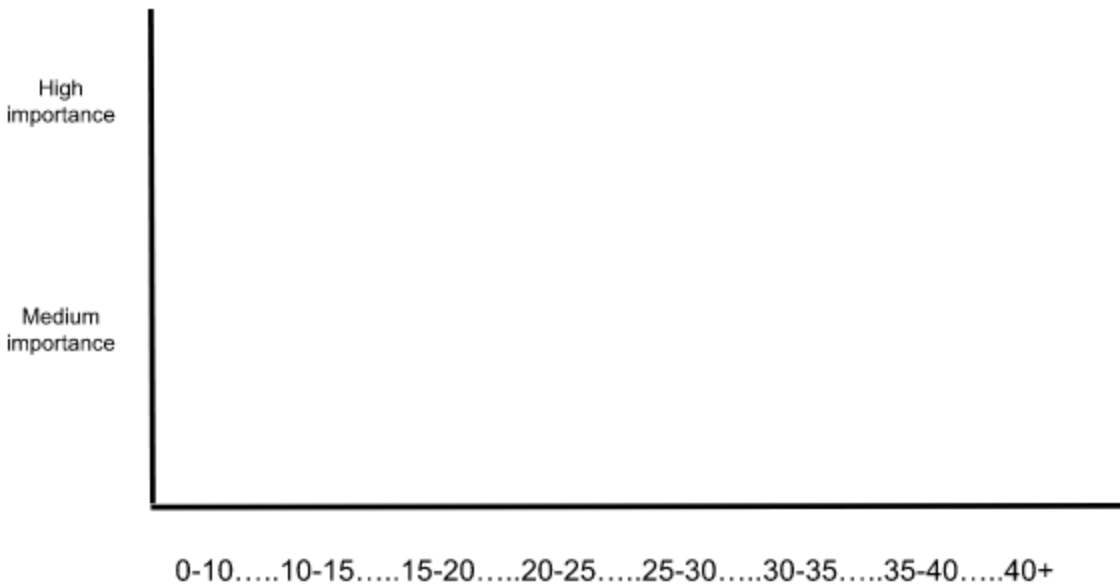
CPR Assignment
Leadership Journey Line

Please time yourself and only take 6-8 minutes to think and create your learning journey map. This is not something to stress over or try to get every detail. Your journey line should tell the story of your written narrative. Note the "experience" that causes an impact could be a positive or negative experience.

Question Prompts:
During this past year, what leadership experiences have shaped your identity as an educator and administrator?
During this past year, what leadership experience(s) shaped your learning and thinking as an instructional leader?

CPR Group Agenda
Eastern High School
Date: 10/16/2022
7:45 - 9:15 AM
Strength Through Unity
Agenda

Time EDT	Activity
5 min	**Welcome & Overview**
5 min	**Dynamic Mindfulness**
30 min	**Activity:** Data Review: Let's review and share the second round of data and discuss what we found individually and collectively. Let's share what questions we discussed with the teachers in our post-observation conferences. What strategies did you provide to them? Why? How was the information received?
10 min	Reflective Memo Activity
5 min	**Debrief**: Next Steps *Timeline*

Focus of Practice Overview

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RESEARCH QUESTION	

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APPENDIX R: TEACHER CLE 2 AGENDA

Teacher Community Learning Exchange 2 Agenda
Eastern High School
Date: 9/28/2022
2:45 - 4:00 PM
Strength Through Unity
Agenda

Time EDT	Activity
5 min	**Welcome & Overview**
5 min	**Dynamic Mindfulness**
20 min	**Personal Narrative** Change: Read the passages below: Choose one that resonates with you in your current work at the school? Use the Jamboard to record your thoughts on a sticky note.
40 min	**Open Discussion:** Our Conversation and Reflection Data from the CALL Survey Data and the study Observations and Reflections
5 min	**Debrief**: Next Steps *Timeline*

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Personal Narrative

Change is an important element in our lives and work. Change is constant. Change is difficult. Change is both affective and cognitive. Dr. Martin Luther King said, "Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle."

You're not stuck.
You're just committed to certain patterns of behavior because they helped you in the past.
Now those behaviors have become more harmful than helpful.
The reason why you can't move forward is because you keep applying an old formula to a new level in your life.
Change the formula to get a different result.
~ Emily Maroutian

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time.

We are the ones we've been waiting for.
We are the change that we seek."
~Barak Obama

Inertia, when first encountered, appears to be an immovable force.
We are creatures who like comfort, patterns, and repetition…
Yet change is life's only constant.
~Laurie Beth Jones

Personal Narrative – JamBoard

APPENDIX S: FULL CODEBOOK

THEME	CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	CODE	Subcodes	MCLE7	CLE 9/28/22	MCLE6	Memos PC2	Memos	MCLE5	CLE – Math	MCLE2	CLE – Science	PAR 2 Count	Total Code	Total ALL PAR Cycles
Awareness	Awareness		confidence		3	2	25	8	10			7		38	17	55
Awareness	Awareness		doubt: stressor			1	6	1	1	3		7		8	11	19
Awareness	Awareness		Strategy/Skill: basics		4	15	3	1		3		4		23	7	30
Awareness	Awareness		team			1	15	4	4					20	4	24
Awareness	Awareness		vulnerability				18		2					18	2	20
Cultivating Better Skills	Reflective Practices		Experience			8	20	4	11	2	1	5	1	32	20	52
Cultivating Better Skills	Reflective Practices		process			15	3	6	8			1		24	9	33
Cultivating Better Skills	Reflective Practices		reflection		6	10	13	3	5	4	8	12	3	32	32	64
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Data Usage	data		20	16	10	10	2	11	5		5	56	23	79
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Data Usage	data accuracy							8	4		1	0	13	13
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Data Usage	data analysis						3	15	5		7	0	30	30
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Data Usage	Video						2	6	4		4	0	16	16
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Observation Protocol	calling on		20	31	7	4	1	8	1		2	62	12	74
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Observation Protocol	collecting data			10			2			15		10	17	27
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Observation Protocol	Focus		5	6	2	2	4	4			2	15	10	25
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Observation Protocol	NCEES tool			2	2	1	3	3			3	5	9	14
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Observation Protocol	observation tool		2	10	18	11	11	5			3	41	19	60
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Post-Obs. Strategies	action steps: teachers		4	1	1	2	9	2		1	6	14	20
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Post-Obs. Strategies	Conversations: teacher post		11	8	18	8	1	14	1		5	45	21	66
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Post-Obs. Strategies	feedback		3	6	10	8	7	3		8	3	27	21	48
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Post-Obs. Strategies	post-conference/observation		3	10	5		14	6	1	6	1	18	28	46
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Post-Obs. Strategies	post-observation: timing							7			2	0	9	9
Cultivating Better Skills	Focused Skills	Post-Obs. Strategies	questions: Probing		9		12	1		8			2	22	10	32
Collective efficacy	Shared expectations		Common goal		4	6	2	4	5	4		3		16	12	28
Collective efficacy	Shared expectations		student accountability		5	6	4	1		4	4		1	16	9	25
Collective efficacy	Shared expectations		trust		2		3		7	1				5	8	13
Collective efficacy	Team building skills		Collaboration		6	5	10		11			9	4	21	24	45
Collective efficacy	Team building skills		Collaboration: Teacher sharing					2			3		3	2	6	8
Collective efficacy	Team building skills		Conversations: collaboration		11		18	2	14	3	1	7	7	31	32	63
Collective efficacy	Team building skills		prior knowledge		1		3		4	1	1	2		4	8	12
Collective efficacy	Team building skills		Strategy/Skill: shared		6	15	7	2		7	7		6	30	20	50