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The Impact of Instructional Rounds on Teacher Learning

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Walden University
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Abstract

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by

Katie Canon Brown

MA, Seattle Pacific University, 2009

BA, Western Washington University, 2000

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

A suburban school district in northwest Washington State has invested in a teacher-led, school-based model of instructional rounds to improve collaborative relationships among teachers and further teacher understanding of an instructional framework, but there is little formal evidence that instructional rounds is meeting its goals. The purpose of this study was to determine if instructional rounds is impacting teacher learning. The conceptual framework that grounded this study was Wenger's construct of communities of practice, a social theory of learning. The key research questions were focused on how participation in instructional rounds impacts teacher collaboration and learning of the instructional framework. To address the research questions, a qualitative evaluative case study was conducted. Data were used collected by using individual, face-to-face interviews with 6 different teachers and reviewing program document. Teachers selected for interviews had participated in instructional rounds during the past 3 consecutive years, participated as an observer and as a host, and at least 2 participants had experience as a facilitator. Transcribed interviews and documents were coded, followed by a search for patterns and themes throughout the data. Results showed improvement in personal and professional relationships among teachers as well as improvement of teacher learning. Results also showed that the quality of teacher learning was dependent upon contextual factors. The findings of the study were used to develop a program evaluation report for the school district. This report helped school district administrators, principals and teachers determine whether to stop, start, expand, or refine the instructional rounds model in their schools. This professional learning model has the potential to change the way teachers learn to positively impact student improvement.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

There is broad consensus that when professional teacher learning experiences are supported by an environment of collaboration and accountability with others, teachers are more likely to change and improve their instructional practices (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008; Wayne, Yoon, Zhu, Cronen, & Garet, 2008). Instructional rounds is a professional learning strategy that is gaining popularity in schools across the country and internationally because of its collaborative approach focused on educators working together to improve instruction (DeLuca, Klinger, Pyper, & Woods, 2015). The instructional rounds approach involves groups of educators identifying a problem of practice, observing several classrooms, analyzing patterns of instruction through a structured debrief, and then identifying next steps (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009).

The instructional rounds process is a modification of the medical rounds model used in hospitals and medical schools to develop the knowledge and practice of physicians and make the process of diagnosis and treatment open to discussion and examination (City et al., 2009; Roegman & Riehl, 2012). In education, instructional rounds similarly engages participants in a collaborative inquiry process that results in discussion and examination of instruction. The approach has been found to help build a common language and understanding of effective teaching and learning (DeLuca et al., 2015; Williamson & Hodder, 2015), support critical reflection (Goodwin, Del Prete, Reagan, & Roegman, 2015), and accelerate school and district improvement efforts

(Anderson, Steffen, Wiese, & King, 2014; Teitel, 2013). Instructional rounds has also been shown to increase teachers' sense of trust and safety with their colleagues and have a positive impact on school culture (Ellis, Gower, Frederick, & Childs, 2015; Mansfield & Thompson, 2017; Teitel, 2013).

Research may support instructional rounds as a promising professional learning model, but the idea has evolved into practices that use different formats and approaches to fit different instructional contexts and school improvement efforts (Bowe & Gore, 2017; Del Prete, 2013; Philpott & Oates, 2015a). These adaptations have been the subject of little theoretical analysis or empirical studies (Roegman, Hatch, Hill, & Kniewel, 2015). City et al. (2009), the original authors of the instructional rounds model, suggested it is both necessary and desirable for schools to adapt the model to local contexts, but these variations may or may not be effective. The most recent literature concurs that exploratory research is needed that offers a deeper understanding of the instructional rounds process, how schools are using the model, and how it is impacting teacher practice (Bowe & Gore, 2017; Goodwin et al., 2015; Mansfield & Thompson, 2017). Philpott and Oates (2015a) questioned how much instructional rounds could be adapted without adversely affecting the outcomes, and they specifically called for additional research on what teachers say and do during instructional rounds to provide evidence of effectiveness. Hatch, Hill, and Roegman (2016) and Mansfield and Thompson (2017) argued for studies that focus on the collaborative nature of instructional rounds and how the process changes the professional culture in schools.

In the pursuit of providing high quality professional learning experiences for teachers, a suburban school district in northwest Washington State has invested considerable time and professional development funds to implement a teacher-led, school-based model of instructional rounds. The school district has adopted a new instructional framework that describes what high quality teaching and learning looks like and is used for teacher evaluations. The goal of instructional rounds, in the context of this district, is to help teachers improve their understanding of the instructional framework and develop a common language of instruction that is shared by everyone. This goal is rooted in a theory of action that a structured, job-embedded, collaborative approach to adult learning will make this school improvement effort possible (Marzano, 2009).

Instructional rounds was first implemented in only one middle school and has now been expanded to 12 schools in the district over the course of 5 years. Implementation has occurred slowly over time because participation in instructional rounds was voluntary for schools and teachers in the district. It was not a "new initiative" or a mandate; rather, it was an optional strategy that schools could choose to support teacher learning. The instructional rounds approach requires collaboration, trust, and a high individual investment in learning (Troen & Boles, 2014). Administrators in the district believed the process was more likely to work if interest in the model grew organically, was teacher-led, and focused on creating a culture of collaboration (principal, personal communication, November 13, 2011; assistant superintendent, personal communication, September 10, 2012). Many teachers in the district had never observed other classrooms before and were new to using an instructional framework to talk about

teaching and learning. Administrators and teachers did not want instructional rounds to be perceived as evaluative, rather as an experience to bring teachers closer together to talk about teaching and learning in a safe, structured manner. Once a culture of collaboration was established in a school, the instructional rounds process could be used as a key strategy to support deeper professional learning of the instructional framework and other school-based problems of practice.

The teachers who first volunteered to implement instructional rounds at their middle school already had a strong collaborative culture. Many teachers in this school were willing and eager to observe each other's classrooms. By the second year of implementing instructional rounds, nearly all the teachers were participating in the process. At this time, principals and teachers from across the district who were interested in the model came to this middle school to participate in the instructional rounds process and learn about the approach. Experiencing instructional rounds first-hand helped schools determine if they wanted to implement it with their staff. Within 5 years, 12 different schools were implementing instructional rounds at varying degrees with funding from the district.

Even though instructional rounds has become a popular professional learning strategy in this school district, there is little evidence that it is meeting its goals. The only form of evaluation that has been conducted to measure the impact of instructional rounds was a teacher perception survey that was sent out at the end of every school year via SurveyMonkey® to collect feedback from teachers about the process. The survey was mainly quantitative in nature using questions with a Likert-type scale, along with an

open-ended question for comments or feedback. The most recent survey from the spring of 2017 showed that 99% of teachers who participated in instructional rounds agreed or strongly agreed that the process was a positive professional learning experience, and 93% felt closer to their colleagues because of participating. Approximately 85% of teachers reported that instructional rounds had improved their fluency with the instructional framework and 91% reported they had applied something they learned in instructional rounds to their own classroom. The open-ended question included comments such as, "I was able to get ideas from my colleagues and immediately apply them to my classroom," and "I think it connects us together as a staff better." Teachers also stated, "It has improved our collaboration as teachers," and "Instructional rounds gave us a chance to reflect on the instructional framework in action in the classroom."

The results from the survey clearly show that teachers have a high level of interest in Instructional rounds and believe it is positively impacting their school and their instruction. Little is known, however, about exactly how or why teachers are making these claims. Each school has been implementing instructional rounds for different lengths of time, with different staff members, and using slightly different approaches. District administrators and school principals want to explore the evidence behind these survey results to determine what is working and why. This evidence will help administrators determine whether to stop, start, or adjust the process at their schools.

Rationale

Instructional rounds continues to grow in this school district, and most teachers who participate report satisfaction with the process, but there is little formal evidence that

instructional rounds is meeting its goals of improving teacher collaboration and understanding of the instructional framework. It is important that these goals are evaluated because the district's theory of action for implementing instructional rounds is to initially focus on building collegial relationships and a culture of collaboration in schools to create the conditions needed to influence instructional practice in the classroom and ultimately improve student learning. Principals in this district are also using different approaches to implementing instructional rounds with their teachers, and some schools have not attempted the process at all. Administrators in various roles across this district are now asking questions and seeking answers.

After reading the instructional rounds survey results from teachers in the spring of 2017, district administrators were asking: How are teachers using the instructional framework during instructional rounds? Has participation in instructional rounds actually impacted instruction? Is instructional rounds helping us develop a common language for teaching and learning? Does the instructional rounds process evolve in schools in a somewhat predictable way? What is the impact on school culture? (assistant superintendent, personal communication, June 15, 2017). Principals in schools that are implementing instructional rounds are asking: Are teachers getting better at using the framework to talk about what they see in the classroom? Is instructional rounds helping us move toward school-wide practices? Now that we have teachers asking to collaborate more, how can we use the structure of instructional rounds to help teachers go deeper? How are other schools using instructional rounds? (principal, personal communication, June 16, 2017; principal, personal communication, June 17, 2017). Additionally,

principals who have not yet implemented the instructional rounds model are asking: What are the benefits to doing instructional rounds? What have teachers learned? How has instructional rounds impacted the culture at different schools? What can I expect in the first year? Is it worth it to have teachers out of the classroom with subs? (principal, personal communication, June 16, 2017).

A significant gap in practice has emerged in this district as instructional rounds continues to be implemented in varying degrees with little evidence of impact beyond hallway conversations and limited responses on an annual teacher perception survey. School principals and teachers need to know if instructional rounds is meeting its intended goals to help them make informed decisions for their schools. District administrators need to know if instructional rounds is worth the investment and whether the professional model should be continued, expanded, or eliminated. This local problem can be addressed through an evaluative case study of the instructional rounds model and the teachers who engage in it to determine if there is evidence of impact. The purpose of this investigation was to determine if the process of instructional rounds is meeting the goals of improving collaborative relationships among teachers over time and developing teacher learning of an instructional framework.

Definition of Terms

The following special terms were used in this project study.

Collaborative relationships: Teachers working together to improve student learning through collective engagement and cooperation (Hunzicker, 2017; Troen & Boles, 2014). Collaborative relationships are developed through the act of collaboration

or voluntarily working in partnership to share ideas and resources, make decisions, and achieve mutual goals (Del Prete, 2013; Evans, 2012).

Communities of practice: Groups of people who engage in a process of learning together about an interest or problem (Wenger, 1998). Three interrelated components are required in order to be a community of practice: the domain, the community, and the practice (Wenger, 1998).

Facilitator: A teacher who leads the instructional rounds process at their school and facilitates the observations and conversations with their colleagues (Del Prete, 2013).

Host: A teacher who participates in instructional rounds by opening up their classroom for observation (Teitel, 2013).

Instructional framework: A common language and vision of what quality teaching and learning look like that is shared by members of a school or district (Bowe & Gore, 2017).

Instructional rounds: A structured process for educators to work together to improve instruction (City, 2011). The process involves identifying a problem of practice, observing, debriefing, and focusing on the next level of work (City et al., 2009).

Observer: A teacher who participates in the instructional rounds process by visiting and observing several classrooms followed by debriefing and reflection (Teitel, 2013).

Significance of the Study

Over the past 5 years, teachers have been taking time out of their classrooms with students to participate in the professional learning model of instructional rounds. The

model in this local school district is designed to improve instruction through building collaborative relationships among teachers and using a common instructional framework to talk about teaching and learning. This district needs to know if instructional rounds is meeting its intended goals to help administrators, principals, and teachers make informed decisions for their schools. School district administrators need to know whether to continue to invest time and funding toward instructional rounds and how to communicate about its impact with principals who are interested in implementing the approach. Principals need to know whether to start, stop, or expand this model of professional learning with their staff. Teachers need to know if participation in instructional rounds is having an impact on their practice and their school culture as a whole beyond their own personal feelings about the model.

This study will contribute to filling a significant gap in practice by providing an in-depth look at an instructional rounds model and the teachers who engage in it. The literature on instructional rounds clearly point to the need for increased understanding of all aspects of this professional learning model, especially in schools and districts where variations are implemented (City et al., 2009). The most current literature is calling for studies to interrogate the process and address issues such as: How is instructional rounds being used? Who is learning what? What variations are effective? What are teachers saying and doing? (Bowe & Gore, 2017; Mansfield & Thompson, 2017; Philpott & Oates, 2015b).

The specific variation of instructional rounds implemented in this school district will make an original contribution to the field of education, and more specifically to the

literature on professional learning, by exploring how instructional rounds is being used as a strategy to implement an instructional framework and help teachers develop a common language for teaching and learning. This will also be one of the few studies that looks at how the key features of the instructional rounds model could be viewed through the lens of Wenger's (1998) social learning theory of communities of practice. Using this conceptual framework can provide insights into how collegial relationships among teachers and collaborative learning evolve over time in schools that implement instructional rounds over several years.

The findings of this study will contribute to positive social change by offering qualitative evidence of a professional development model that is rooted in best practices for teacher learning (Marzano, 2009). Research is clear that teacher professional learning is one of the most effective tools to improve teacher quality and student learning, yet millions of dollars are spent on professional development programs that do not meet teachers' needs (Blank, 2013; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Mansfield & Thompson, 2017.) Instructional rounds is a professional learning model that has the potential to change the way teachers learn to positively impact student improvement.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the collection evidence on the effectiveness of an instructional rounds model in a suburban school district to determine if the goals were being met. The goals of instructional rounds are to improve collaborative relationships among teachers and improve teacher learning of the instructional framework. District administrators believe that focusing on these goals will

improve the collaborative culture in schools and influence instructional practice in the classroom and ultimately student learning. Stake (1995) argues that the best research questions often emerge and evolve during an evaluative case study, but the following questions were intended to guide this study:

RQ1: How does participation in instructional rounds impact collaborative relationships among teachers?

RQ2: How does participation in instructional rounds impact teacher learning of the instructional framework?

Review of the Literature

The following literature review covers the conceptual framework of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) that grounds the study as well as an overview of the broader problem associated with teacher professional learning in education. The conceptual framework and the review of literature will also draw connections to the local problem and the practice of instructional rounds.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that grounds this evaluative case study of an instructional rounds model is Wenger's (1998) construct of *communities of practice*, a social theory of learning. Communities of practice are formed by groups of people who engage in a process of learning together about an interest or problem (Wenger, 1998). A community of practice is not referring to the actual "group," rather it is the social process of negotiating knowledge and competence with others over time through shared attempts to build meaning (Farnsworth, Kleanthous, & Wenger, 2016). As Wenger (1998) stated,

"Learning is, first and foremost, the ability to negotiate new meanings" (p. 226). The communities of practice framework centers on the principle that learning, or the ability to negotiate new meaning, is configured socially and occurs naturally through social participation (Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

Wenger's (1998) communities of practice model includes three interrelated components: the domain, the community, and the practice. The *domain* refers to the shared purpose, interest, problem, or reason the group is learning together. The *community* refers to the group, or the actual members who engage in learning about the domain. The *practice* refers to a community's collective ways of doing things. Over time, members of a community of practice develop shared resources and experiences, which sustain mutual engagement and accountability (Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011; Wenger, 1998). It is the combination of these three components that constitutes a community of practice.

Wenger (1998) also contended that engagement in a community of practice takes place through the interaction of *participation* and *reification*. Participation involves both acting in the community and interacting with others. Reification involves producing products around which the negotiation of meaning is organized (Smith, Hayes, & Shea, 2017; Wenger, 1998). These products, or artifacts, may include tools, words, symbols, documents, conceptual maps, articulated strategies, or stories (Wenger, 1998). Participation and reification are complementary processes and each has the ability to make up for the limitations of the other. For example, participation is essential to repair the potential misalignments in reification, and reification is essential to repair potential

misalignments inherent in participation (Wenger, 1998). As a result, communities of practice often reinforce and renew themselves as they generate and negotiate knowledge and meaning (Smith et al., 2017).

Over time, communities of practice become increasingly invested in the complementary process of participation and reification. Wenger (1998) argued that members of a dedicated group will begin to identify with the actions of their colleagues, and ultimately the meaning-making process is an experience of identity formation. As people participate in a community of practice over time, they gain a sense of who they are while constructing new knowledge. This is integral to social learning theory, as building a personal or professional identity includes navigating between the meanings of our personal experience with the experiences of members in the community (Farnsworth et al., 2016). Placing the focus of learning on social engagement has vast implications for the field of education, especially for designing learning opportunities for students and teachers (McArdle & Coutts, 2010; Selkrig & Keamy, 2015).

Several studies have utilized various elements of Wenger's (1998) framework to explore the topic of professional learning for teachers and the process of instructional rounds. Roegman et al. (2015) referenced the social learning framework to look at how the instructional rounds process contributed to shared understandings and the development of relationships among administrators who work in different areas of a school district. Emphasizing the communities of practice component of practice in another study, Hatch et al. (2016) looked at the potential of instructional rounds to help administrators develop a shared repertoire of tools and develop a common language

around instruction. These researchers called for school leaders to construct learning experiences that create social networks, such as instructional rounds, to connect people to the practice of teaching and learning (Hatch et al., 2016).

Recently, Smith et al. (2017) investigated online blended learning experiences in higher education and asserted that Wenger's (1998) framework helped to illuminate how individuals learn within social contexts. Cuddapah and Clayton (2011) used the communities of practice framework to analyze how a professional development cohort can act as a resource for new teachers. McArdle and Coutts (2010) referred to the communities of practice framework to explore aspects of reflection and collaborative engagement in professional learning experiences with teachers. Using communities of practice as the conceptual lens, Little (2003) conducted case study research that explored teacher interactions and dynamics to determine how teaching practices come to be known, shared, and changed through participation in out-of-classroom interactions. Despite the fact that these collaborative groups were committed to improving practice, the specifics of teacher talk both enabled and constrained their efforts (Little, 2003). Little (2003) argued that how language is used is fundamental to a community of practice and called for additional research that further investigates teacher interaction in formal and informal workplace exchanges to better understand the power of professional community for individual teacher development (Little, 2003).

Wenger's (1998) communities of practice framework has provided a useful conceptual lens for educational researchers seeking to better understand how people learn and how to organize learning experiences. Smith et al. (2017) pointed out that the

majority of studies concentrate on only a few select elements of the framework, and additional studies are needed that provide a more complex understanding of how communities of practice are applied to educational contexts. There are few (if any) studies that specifically explore how the key components and principles of a community of practice might align with the key components of instructional rounds. Looking at the practice of instructional rounds through the lens of a community of practice can help address the research questions in this case study, and shed light on how the instructional rounds process develops collaborative relationships among teachers and how it influences learning of an instructional framework. The connections between the communities of practice framework and the instructional rounds model will now be discussed.

The instructional rounds approach involves groups of educators identifying a problem of practice, observing several classrooms, analyzing patterns of instruction through a structured debrief, and then identifying next steps (City et al., 2009). The purpose of instructional rounds is to develop and sustain a professional, collaborative culture that systematically analyzes, inquires, and improves teaching and learning (DeLuca et al., 2015). As Wenger (1998) stated, a community of practice is not the group itself, it's the active process of negotiating meaning and competence with others over time. Instructional rounds is also not defined by its members but rather the cycle of inquiry that occurs as groups of teachers work together to identify a problem, engage in peer classroom observations, and collaboratively debrief, reflect, and identify the steps they will take to address the problem (City et al., 2009). When teachers participate in instructional rounds, they are participating in a collaborative, cyclical, and social process.

The three interrelated components that define a community of practice (the domain, the community and the practice) can also be applied to the structure of instructional rounds. The domain in a community of practice is the shared purpose or interest of the group (Wenger, 1998). The domain of instructional rounds is the instructional core, the interaction between teacher, student, and content that creates the basis for learning (City et al., 2009). In this case study, an instructional framework was also used to help teachers stay focused on this domain. The community in a community of practice refers to the people who engage in learning about the domain (Wenger, 1998). Applied to instructional rounds, the community may refer to the teachers who engage in the instructional rounds process. The practice in a community of practice refers to the development of a shared repertoire or collective ways of doing things that sustain engagement and learning (Wenger, 1998). The practice of instructional rounds are the shared experiences, stories, documents, norms, discussion protocols, and forms used for observation and reflection (Hatch et al., 2016). A community of practice exists for its members to negotiate meaning and competence with one another (Farnsworth et al., 2016). This also underlies the theory of action of instructional rounds (Marzano, 2009).

Finally, Wenger's (1998) theory of the essential roles of participation and reification in a community of practice can also be connected with the process of instructional rounds. Engagement in a community of practice involves both active participation and connection with others as well as contributing to the production of artifacts (Wenger, 1998). This complimentary process supports the negotiation of meaning in the community, and over time, contributes to the shared identity of the group

(Smith et al., 2017). The duality of participation and reification could also be considered a fundamental requirement for the success of instructional rounds. It is not enough for teachers to just show up for instructional rounds, they must actively participate through observation, discussion, reflection, problem-solving, and collaboration with their colleagues (Del Prete, 2013). The instructional rounds process includes a specific protocol for classroom observations and a structured debrief for reflecting on observations and identifying the next level of work (City et al., 2009). This reflection process involves teachers in reification as they collectively analyze and interpret their observation notes and produce a debrief document that is shared with their peers and oftentimes the entire school staff. This document could serve as evidence of the negotiation of meaning that occurs in instructional rounds through participation and reification.

Instructional rounds is gaining popularity in schools across the country and internationally because of its collaborative approach focused on educators working together to improve instruction (DeLuca et al., 2015; Marzano, 2009). Similar to a community of practice, instructional rounds has the potential to create social networks among educators who continuously engage with one other to improve teaching and learning. This is a promising professional learning approach given that teacher professional learning has traditionally relied on formal, sit-and-get workshops with limited opportunities for job-embedded learning (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009, p. 46). These one-size-fits-all professional development activities have been viewed as unsuccessful and removed from the reality of the classroom (Mansfield &

Thompson, 2017). There is now agreement that professional learning should have immediate relevance for the daily work of teachers and be supported by an environment of collaboration and accountability with others (Blank, 2013). The following discussion presents an overview of the literature on what is known about quality professional learning for teachers as well as the current research on instructional rounds as a potential strategy to align with best professional practice.

Review of the Broader Problem

Instructional rounds is a school improvement strategy focused on engaging educators in a professional learning experience that improves teaching and learning through structured observations and conversations (City, 2011). The topics covered in this literature review include a broader look at the characteristics of high-quality teacher professional learning as well as the current literature on how instructional rounds is being used in education, variations of the model, the effectiveness of instructional rounds, and where gaps in research remain.

I conducted this literature review by searching scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles through the Walden library databases of EBSCO Host and Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). I also used the Google Scholar online database to locate specific articles referenced in the literature. Searches pertaining to instructional rounds were limited to current peer reviewed articles from 2010-2017, while searches on the broader topic of teacher professional learning and the theoretical framework of communities of practice were expanded to a search from 1990-2017. I used the following keywords in the search for literature: *instructional rounds, teacher rounds, teacher*

professional learning, professional learning, teacher observations, teacher collaboration, communities of practice, professional learning communities, teaching quality, teacher quality, learning rounds, collaborative professional development, teacher preparation, learning walks, teacher agency, teacher effectiveness, school improvement, congenial teacher relationships, instructional framework, teacher dialogue, lesson study, learning walks, classroom visits, collective learning, social networks, instructional leadership, and *teacher leadership.*

Professional development in education. Teachers are experiencing increasing amounts of professional development, but this learning isn't necessarily translating into changes in instructional practice or improvement in student learning (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). The literature points to several factors that explain this outcome. Planning for and delivering meaningful professional learning that meets the individual and collective needs of teachers is a complex endeavor (Avalos, 2010). Teacher professional learning also takes place in various educational contexts, school cultures, and policy environments that can positively or negatively influence the quality of learning (Guskey, 2009). The structure of professional development, such as courses and workshops, can also be disconnected from the everyday work of teachers and ineffective in supporting instructional change (Mansfield & Thompson, 2017). Despite the complexity of researching the effectiveness of professional learning, the scholarly literature has reached consensus on the key characteristics of professional learning that generate positive outcomes for teachers and students.

The design, implementation, and facilitation of professional learning has a substantial effect on teacher learning and student educational improvement. Professional learning experiences that produce positive results focus on increasing teacher's content knowledge, or what they teach (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001), as well as pedagogy, or how to teach based on the ways students learn a particular subject area (Hunzicker, 2012). Almost all of the recent literature on professional learning also call for activities that are sustained over time (Learning First, 2014). Professional learning experiences that are longer in duration provide an opportunity for in-depth discussion and allow teachers to experiment with new practices in the classroom, reflect, and obtain feedback (Garet et al., 2001). Although longer duration of learning is vitally important, Guskey (2009) argued that simply adding more time does not invariably improve learning. Rather, effective professional learning time "must be well organized, carefully structured, clearly focused, and purposefully directed" (Guskey, 2009, p. 230).

Effective professional learning initiatives also include opportunities for active learning such as reviewing student work, leading discussions with colleagues, modeling instructional strategies, observing in classrooms, developing common assessments, and participating in professional learning communities (Blank, 2013; Borko, 2004; DuFour et al., 2008). Teachers should be active participants in designing and implementing professional development experiences to increase by-in and to better understand how and why the teaching strategies they are learning have an impact on student achievement (Antoniou, Kyriakides, & Creemers, 2015). Teachers prefer learning opportunities that give them a voice in the direction and pace of their learning (Hunzicker, 2012).

Another key feature of high quality professional learning is collaboration, or collective participation by teachers (Marzano, 2009). When teachers learn with other teachers from the same school, grade level, or department, they are more likely to discuss relevant theories and problems and integrate what they learn with other aspects of their job (Blank, 2013; Coburn, Russell, Kaufman, & Stein, 2012; Garet et al., 2001). Cameron, Mulholland, and Branson (2013) found that professional learning activities were valuable when teachers worked together with colleagues, shared ideas, and observed lessons. Collaborative learning has also been found to increase teacher self-efficacy, motivation, trust, and commitment to a shared goal with colleagues (DuFour et al., 2008; Learning First, 2014; Morel, 2014). Collaboration that is job-embedded, or integrated into the daily work of teachers, can lead to an increase in shared accountability, collective problem solving, and collegial trust (Cameron et al., 2013; Hunzicker, 2012; Wayne et al., 2008).

Instructional rounds. The professional learning strategy of instructional rounds is gaining momentum in the United States and abroad because it engages educators in learning experiences that reflect the characteristics of high quality professional development described in the research (Philpott & Oates, 2015b). Instructional rounds is structured for educators to work together through a process of observation and reflection to improve teaching and learning in their daily practice with students (City, 2011).

The field of education was first introduced to instructional rounds with the Harvard Education Press publication by City et al. (2009) titled *Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning.* Based on the

medical rounds model used by medical schools and physicians in hospitals, instructional rounds was originally designed as a way to provide evidence-based feedback on a predetermined school or district improvement goal, referred to as a problem of practice (City et al., 2009). This instructional rounds model did not initially engage teachers directly as participants. Rather, the process was designed for networks of building and district administrators to look closely at teaching and learning in their classrooms so they could work together systematically to improve it (Goodwin et al., 2015).

From 2009 to the present, instructional rounds has been modified from its original purpose as educators began to experiment with and adjust the process within their schools (Teitel, 2013). As Teitel (2013) notes, emerging school-based practices have potential benefits as well as pitfalls. Many times, variations tend to default back to existing school norms, practices, and culture rather than disrupt, change, and improve teaching and learning (Philpott & Oates, 2015a; Teitel, 2013). As school-based rounds gained popularity, additional books were published by the Harvard team to support strong facilitation of the model (Fowler-Finn, 2013) and provide case studies to help schools understand how and why rounds might be used to accelerate school improvement efforts (Roberts, 2013).

Working with school-based colleagues, Del Prete (2013) developed a rounds process explicitly for preservice and in-service teachers called *teacher rounds*. Teacher rounds are instituted to promote the understanding of teaching and learning through a process of observation and reflection (as in the original instructional rounds model), but the difference lies in its focus on classroom-based learning shaped by and for teachers

(Del Prete, 2013). A teacher round is led by a teacher in their own classroom, whereas the instructional rounds focus is more on broad characteristics of practice in a school (Goodwin et al., 2015). Acknowledging the groundbreaking work of City et al. (2009) and adaptations by Del Prete (2013), Troen and Boles (2014) presented yet another text titled *The Power of Teacher Rounds* to guide facilitators through a step-by-step process of instructional rounds implementation. Troen and Boles (2014) emphasized the importance of instructional rounds as a culture-building practice. Instructional rounds can help teachers move from feelings of individual responsibility and isolation to collective responsibility for teaching and learning, outcomes that are consistently found in communities of practice (Troen & Boles, 2014; Wenger, 1998).

The instructional rounds model has been perceived as a promising innovation in teacher professional learning (Marzano, 2009), yet it has been the subject of little theoretical analysis or empirical study until relatively recently (Roegman et al., 2015). Within the past 5 years, researchers have investigated the role of instructional rounds in the development of social networks among administrators, linking the process to the characteristics of Wenger's (1998) framework of communities of practice (Hatch et al., 2016; Roegman et al., 2015). Hatch et al. (2016) found that the collaborative nature of rounds contributed to the development of relationships among administrators and that social networks were themselves a resource that administrators could use to promote a focus on instruction in their schools. Allen, Roegman and Hatch (2016) and Hatch and Roegman (2012) studied features of discourse among superintendents who were engaged in Rounds and found that the skills of Rounds facilitators were essential to ensure quality

discussions based on evidence after an observation. Additional studies are needed which analyze how the Rounds process operates and how discussions can be enhanced to promote learning (Allen, Roegman, & Hatch, 2016; David, Rachel, & Thomas, 2016).

Several studies have also investigated the use of instructional rounds with preservice teachers in teacher education programs in the United States and Australia. Williamson and Hodder (2015) studied the impact of rounds with preservice teachers in an urban residency program in San Francisco. The findings suggested that rounds could be useful in helping teacher candidates develop deeper understandings of the schools in which they will work and the students they will be teaching, as long as the instructional rounds process is carefully planned and facilitated (Williamson & Hodder, 2015). Instructional rounds was also studied in several preservice teaching programs in Australia, which showed an improvement in preservice teachers' ability to discuss observations of teaching and learning using descriptive observation and suspending judgement (McLean Davies et al., 2015). Selkrig and Keamy (2015) specifically explored how discussion protocols impacted preservice teachers' conversations. Protocol-based conversations had a positive impact when discussions focused on a clear purpose and were held in an environment of respect and collegiality (Selkrig & Keamy, 2015). Rinke and Stebick (2013) emphasized the importance of ongoing reflection and feedback as factors that led to meaningful teacher growth.

In Ontario, Canada, instructional rounds was utilized to implement professional learning aimed at building the knowledge and skills of teachers and administrators in assessment for learning practices (DeLuca et al., 2015). Participants identified several

benefits and challenges related to the instructional rounds process. Observing teaching

and learning in the classroom setting was viewed positively, yet the knowledge and skills

acquired during instructional rounds did not spread beyond the teachers directly involved.

Instructional rounds provided opportunities for teacher leadership, yet the majority of

teachers emphasized the importance of administrative by-in and support (DeLuca et al.,

2015). The study also found that principals felt assessment for learning practices were

becoming widespread due to the implementation of instructional rounds, but demands on

time and resources was a challenge for sustainability (DeLuca et al., 2015).

  The literature on instructional rounds also reveals that the model has the potential

to create the collaborative conditions in schools needed for effective teacher learning

(Ellis et al., 2015; Nazareno, 2013). A core principle of instructional rounds is the view

that teachers learn through about a problem of practice through social interaction (Teitel,

2013). Instructional rounds is a strategy for creating these conditions, for developing the

professional culture needed for collaboration, collective commitment, and shared

accountability (Ellis et al., 2015). Stickney (2015) affirmed that instructional rounds may

not be effective if it is implemented as a top-down approach to school reform that relies

on compliance. Rather, the power in the model derives from teachers actively engaging in

collaboration and developing the norms that create a culture of collective improvement

(Meyer-Looze, 2015; Stickney, 2015). Fostering this collegiality may also depend largely

on school leadership and the steps taken when first initiating the Instructional Rounds

model and establishing the norms of peer observation and reflection (Brengard, 2016;

Evans, 2012; Mansfield & Thompson, 2017).

Adaptations of instructional rounds. Two variations of instructional rounds have been established in Scotland and Australia based on the original practice developed by City et al. (2009) in the United States. In Scotland, learning rounds is now a widespread practice for collaborative professional learning, endorsed by the Scottish government (Philpott & Oates, 2015a). Learning rounds follows the same four step process of identifying a problem of practice, observing, debriefing, and focusing on the next level of work. Philpott and Oates (2015) argued that it is unclear how much Learning Rounds differs from the original model of instructional rounds, and in what ways those changes have impacted teacher learning. A literature review and qualitative studies conducted by Philpott and Oates (2015) suggested that the impact of learning rounds differs depending on the context. These authors called for additional research on the various models of Instructional Rounds to determine how much the practice can be altered without adversely affecting the outcomes. The most recent study argued for additional research inside of instructional rounds to determine what teachers actually say and do during the process (Philpott & Oates, 2017).

Another adaptation of the instructional rounds model, named quality teaching rounds, came out of The New South Wales Department of Education in Australia following the development of the government's quality teaching model of pedagogy (Gore, 2014). Bowe and Gore (2017) described quality teaching rounds as a combination of professional learning communities (PLCs) and instructional rounds, but also added the use of an instructional framework. This combination was designed to combine meaningful collaboration, community, and context among teachers, with a clear focus on

what quality teaching looks like and sounds like (Bowe & Gore, 2017). Bowe and Gore (2017) asserted that instructional frameworks have limited meaningful or relevancy for teachers unless they are utilized in authentic ways, and called for empirical research into quality teaching rounds and similar models to investigate the impact.

Gaps in research. The current literature on Instructional Rounds points to several gaps and areas of concern that need to be addressed in future studies. First and foremost, schools and classrooms are "complex social ecologies" that are constantly changing (Ellis et al., 2015, p. 51). New policies, new district initiatives, and new school priorities create conditions that require new angles for research in various contexts. Instructional Rounds has shown to be a promising way to sustain new instructional approaches in schools, but there are also potential pitfalls that need to be investigated (Marzano, 2011; Teitel, 2013).

One potential limitation in any community of practice, but especially in Instructional Rounds, is the tendency for collaborative dialogue to remain polite and stay in the "land of nice" (Teitel, 2013, p. 35). For Instructional Rounds to be effective in creating positive change in instructional practice, teachers must be able to discuss and analyze classroom observations in a nonjudgmental, descriptive manner, but also challenge the status quo and focus on the next level of work (Ellis et al., 2015; Teitel, 2013). Evans (2012) noted that many schools have a culture of *congeniality* as opposed to *collegiality*. Congeniality is about getting along well with others and supporting a caring climate, but collegiality requires a focus on improvement through difficult conversations about professional practice, a key foundation to Instructional Rounds. Studies are needed that provide insights into how teachers challenge ideas, question their own practice, make

suggestions for improvement, and develop collegial relationships (Ellis et al., 2015; Little, 2003). Additional research is needed on what teachers actually do and say in Instructional Rounds to determine its impact (Lee, 2015; Philpott & Oates, 2015b; Roberston, 2015).

Another potential pitfall found in the research on Instructional Rounds is the failure of the model to go beyond immediate adjustments in individual teacher practice to broader schoolwide and districtwide improvement (Teitel, 2013). Factors such as the role of administrators and teacher leaders in the Instructional Rounds process, clarity of purpose, use of protocols, and the grouping of teachers who participate in Instructional Rounds all contribute to enhancing or limiting school improvement efforts (Hallinger, 2005; Marzano, 2011). Bowe and Gore (2017) called for additional research on the use of instructional frameworks in Instructional Rounds to determine if this added structure promotes the development of a common language of instruction collectively throughout a school system. Margolis, Durbin, and Doring (2017) argued that the impact of student presence on teacher learning in Instructional Rounds was a missing link in the literature and a topic needing immediate attention. Overall, determining what school-based models make the most sense for different contexts is a clear gap in literature and an opportunity for further exploration (Teitel, 2009; Teitel, 2013).

Implications

The purpose of this evaluative case study is to take an in-depth look at an Instructional Rounds model and the teachers who engage in it to determine if its goals are being met. This evaluation will assist school district administrators and building

principals in making decisions about whether to stop, start, or expand the professional learning model. Based on the findings of the data collection and analysis, a possible direction for a project would be a presentation of the study and its findings to the school district department of teaching and learning administration team. The department of teaching and learning includes the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and directors. This would be an appropriate audience as they are responsible for budgetary decisions concerning professional learning in the school district, which includes all of the funding currently being used to implement Instructional Rounds. The assistant superintendent was also a catalyst for the creation of this study as he was personally requesting information on the impact of Rounds in the various schools in the district.

If this presentation was selected as the project, a potential deliverable would be a PowerPoint presentation and written document that outlines the study, data collection methods, analysis, interpretation and findings. The materials would also include possible recommendations based on the findings and suggested areas for continued research. Prior to developing a project proposal, I would also consider contacting members of the department of teaching and learning and asking for feedback on the project idea. Due to the length of time that has passed between the initial research study design and completed analysis, the school district administrators may have additional suggestions on what type of information would be most useful to them to make decisions about the future of Instructional Rounds.

Summary

Section one described the research base and conceptual framework that supports Instructional Rounds as a promising professional learning model, but also highlights gaps in the literature that call for further exploratory studies (Bowe & Gore, 2017; City, et al., 2009). The local problem centers on one school district where Instructional Rounds continues to grow, but there is little formal evidence that Instructional Rounds is meeting its goals of improving teacher collaboration and understanding of an instructional framework. The literature review investigated the broader issue of high quality professional learning as well as the specific approaches to Instructional Rounds in the United States and abroad. Finally, Wenger's (1998) social learning theory of communities of practice was explored as a conceptual lens to view the Instructional Rounds model.

The remaining sections will provide the methodology used for this research study and actions that will be taken based on the findings of the research. Section Two will describe the research design, participant selection, data collection and analysis, and results of the study. Section Three will describe the final project, such as an artifact or deliverable that will be created based on the findings of the research. Section four will provide an overall reflection of the research study including a discussion of the project strengths and limitations as well as directions for future research.

Section 2: The Methodology

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

To address the research questions, I used an evaluative case study approach. A case study is a qualitative research design that provides a detailed examination of a *case,* a single setting, subject, event, entity, program, or unit of analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) argued that the goal of case study research is to study a particular case in depth to maximize what can be learned through inquiry and interpretation. Yin (2003) asserted that case studies are used to understand a complex social phenomenon and ultimately contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the phenomenon. A case study was an appropriate research design for this study because it is focused on providing an in-depth description and analysis of a specific program (an instructional rounds model) in one setting (a school district). This case study of instructional rounds was also evaluative to determine if the instructional rounds approach is working. Evaluative case studies involve not only description and explanation, but also judgement (Merriam, 2009; Spaulding, 2014).

The goal of qualitative research is to understand how people interpret their experiences (Merriam, 2009). Researchers are interested in *how* something is created and given meaning, and understanding the processes that led to the construction of meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This is in contrast to quantitative research, which seeks to measure and analyze causal relationships between variables, not processes (Merriam, 2009). The key characteristics that define qualitative research include a focus on meaning and understanding rather than an outcome or product, an in-depth data collection and

analysis process conducted by the researcher, and providing rich description to convey what was learned about the phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) added that qualitative research is largely an interpretive set of activities that may use several methodological practices depending on the purpose of the study.

The research questions in this evaluative case study investigated the impact of instructional rounds on collaborative relationships and teacher understanding of an instructional framework in one school district. A qualitative approach was necessary for this study because I was looking at how teachers interpreted their experiences participating in instructional rounds and what meaning they attributed to these experiences (Merriam, 2009). An *evaluative* case study was selected as the qualitative research design because the purpose for the study was to not simply to give an in-depth description and analysis of the Rounds process in this district, but to determine if its goals were being met (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010; Spaulding, 2014). Merriam (2009) argued that evaluative case study research "collects data or evidence on the worth or value of a program, process or technique" (p. 4). Ultimately, administrators, principals, and teachers in this school district wanted to know if instructional rounds was working. This required the study to include description, explanation and judgement.

There are several other qualitative research designs that offer in-depth descriptions of phenomena, but they would be less effective for this study. An ethnography is the study of groups of people to better understand larger issues, but cultural themes are used as the primary lens to describe, analyze, and interpret the

group's behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time (Creswell, 2012). A case

study can be a type of ethnography, although case studies focus more on describing the

activities of the group instead of their shared displays of behavior (Creswell, 2012). For

this case study of instructional rounds I was looking less at the cultural norms of the

group and more at the impact of the process.

I also considered a narrative research design when designing this study. Narrative

research describes the lives of individuals and offers first-person accounts of an

experience (Merriam, 2009). A narrative typically focuses on studying a single person

and tells their story (Creswell, 2012). Although focusing on a single teacher's experience

with instructional rounds would provide a unique perspective and specific insights, the

experience of one teacher would not be able to help educators in the school district

understand the impact of the professional learning model as a whole.

A final consideration was a phenomenological research design for exploring the

lived experiences of participants (Merriam, 2009). Whereas a narrative study is focused

on a how a single individual experiences a phenomenon, a phenomenological study's

focus is on what several individuals have in common. This type of research is based on

the assumption that there is an "essence" or a central meaning that is commonly

understood by participants because they experienced the same phenomenon (Merriam,

2009, p. 25). In this study of instructional rounds I was seeking to understand the

experiences and perceptions of participants; however, phenomenological research has a

strong philosophical component to it that was not needed for this study (Bogdan &

Biklen, 2007). Phenomenological research typically identifies a human experience such

as anger, grief, love, or friendship as the essence of study (Merriam, 2009). A case study

was a more effective choice because teachers had different experiences with the

instructional rounds process depending on their school, grade level, and number of years

they had participated. In this study I was seeking to evaluate an instructional rounds

model using multiple methods of data collection with teachers who had different

experiences.

The evaluative approach for this case study was a summative, outcomes-based

approach to determine if instructional rounds was meeting its goals of improving

collaborative relationships among teachers and improving teacher understanding of an

instructional framework (Spaulding, 2014). An outcomes-based approach was the best

choice for this evaluative case study because the school district had implemented

instructional rounds for several years, and district leaders were interested in outcomes

associated with the program's effectiveness. With this study I investigated changes in

teachers' knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, and practices as a result of participating in

the instructional rounds process. Qualitative data gathered through interviews and

documentary reviews were designed to elicit responses that summarized outcomes and

experiences (Lodico et al., 2010). Although the data collected from this study could be

considered formative in the sense that the results may be used by school district staff to

continue to implement instructional rounds and improve it, the primary purpose of this

case study was to investigate the current outcomes of the professional learning model

(Spaulding, 2014).

Participants

Qualitative studies identify participants using purposeful sampling, intentionally selecting participants that meet a set of criteria aligned with the research questions (Merriam, 2009). In case study research, Stake (1995) argued that researchers must select participants who best understand the particular case and can contribute knowledge, understanding, and meaning. Case studies are not used for generalization or to better understand other cases. The priority for selecting participants in case study research is to maximize what can be learned about the specific case (Stake, 1995).

Participant Selection

Six teachers were selected to participate in this evaluative case study on instructional rounds. The criteria for selecting participants included several factors. First and foremost, selected participants were classroom teachers who had participated in instructional rounds at their school within the last year. This helped to ensure that their experiences and perceptions were accurate rather than trying to draw on memories from the past. Furthermore, participants had participated in instructional rounds at their school for the past 3 consecutive years or more. The purpose of this case study investigation was to determine if the process of instructional rounds was meeting the goals of improving collaborative relationships among teachers over time and developing teacher learning of an instructional framework. Teachers with limited experience of the instructional rounds process would have most likely demonstrated limited understanding.

In addition, teachers selected for this study had participated in instructional rounds both as an observer and as a host. This means that they had experienced observing

multiple classrooms and engaging in the debriefing and reflection process with a group, as well as having experienced hosting the instructional rounds group in their own classroom for an observation (Teitel, 2013). Due to the fact that several schools were at different stages of implementation of instructional rounds, it was important that teachers in this study had the perspective of a host and an observer to provide an accurate description of the impact of the model.

Moreover, at least two teachers in the final sample of participants needed to have experience as an instructional rounds facilitator during the past 3 years. Instructional rounds in this district was teacher led. One or two teachers acted as the facilitators, or guides, of the process for each session. Facilitators were responsible for creating the instructional rounds schedule, communicating with participants, and guiding the group through the identification of a problem of practice, observing, debriefing, and reflecting on the next level of work (Del Prete, 2013). The facilitators remained constant throughout an entire year at each school, which means they also participated in most of the instructional rounds sessions. Teachers who acted as facilitators have witnessed more hours participating in instructional rounds and observing their colleagues than any other teacher in their building. Facilitators also posed a greater risk of bias, however, because they played a large role in implementing the model at their schools, and they could have been reluctant to share negative experiences because they were responsible for facilitating the process. During the interviews, it was important to pay attention to how facilitators shared their experiences and to probe for deeper responses (Creswell, 2012).

Finally, participants represented different schools, grade levels, and content areas throughout the district. In this school district at the time of the study, five out of thirteen elementary schools implemented instructional rounds, as did three out of four middle schools and two out of three high schools. Selecting participants from the elementary, middle, and high school grade levels, as well as different schools within these grade levels, allowed multiple teacher perspectives from across the district to be represented in the data collection.

Considering the criteria for participant selection, six teachers were selected for this study representing three different grade levels (two from elementary, two from middle, and two from high school). This number was sufficient for this case study because it allowed for all three grade levels to be represented by more than one teacher. Creswell (2012) suggested that balance and variety are important in qualitative studies, and researchers should seek multiple realities. In case study research specifically, selecting participants who will offer researchers the best opportunities to learn is of the upmost priority (Stake, 1995). I conducted a semistructured interview with all six participants to balance a small sample size with a deeper level of inquiry (Creswell, 2012).

To gain access to participants, I conducted a process of communication from the district to the school level. To start, I contacted the deputy superintendent of the school district to ask permission to contact the school principals and teachers. The deputy superintendent was the most appropriate contact because he was the district administrator for the department of teaching and learning and responsible for the funding and

implementation of instructional rounds. I notified the deputy superintendent via e-mail about the purpose of the study, why the district was chosen, what was going to be accomplished during the study, how much time would be spent with teachers, how the results would be used, and what the district would gain from the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2012).

The deputy superintendent contacted all of the principals who then implemented instructional rounds in their schools to ask permission for teachers to participate in the study. Three out of five elementary principals gave permission, two out of three middle school principals, and one out of two high school principals. After receiving permission from the deputy superintendent, I contacted principals at these six schools via e-mail. I informed the principals of the purpose of the study, how teachers would be contacted to volunteer to participate, how much time would be spent with teachers, how confidentiality would be upheld, and how the results of the study would be used (Creswell, 2012). I also asked the principals to provide names of the teachers who at the time facilitated instructional rounds in their school, as well as a list of teachers who met the purposeful sampling criteria. I requested permission to contact the facilitators and the teachers for future communication about the study. I forwarded a copy of the e-mail to principals to the deputy superintendent.

Once a list of teachers who met the selection criteria had been received from each principal and permission to contact them had been granted, I created a final list that represented which teachers would receive an e-mail invitation to participate in the study. The e-mail list was narrowed down to 14 teachers: six teachers from the elementary level

who represented three different schools, four teachers from the middle level who represented two different schools, and four teachers from the high school level who represented one school. There were two high schools that participated in instructional rounds in this district, but permission was not granted by one of them. Four teachers on the e-mail invitation list had experience as a facilitator.

I composed an e-mail invitation to the selected potential participants that provided information about the purpose of the study, specific time commitments, and details on participant rights, confidentiality, and informed consent (Creswell, 2012). I sent a copy of the message for approval to the deputy superintendent and principals prior to communicating with teachers to ensure full transparency. This contributed to establishing a trusting working relationship with the district leaders (Merriam, 2009). Upon approval, I sent the e-mail invitation out to potential participants.

I started to receive e-mail responses from teachers within an hour after it was sent. Teachers were very enthusiastic about wanting to participate in the study and share their experience with instructional rounds. Teachers were told that they would be contacted within 1 week to inform them if they had been selected or not. As teachers responded to the e-mail with interest in volunteering for the study, I generated a list of potential participants. The list included the teacher's name, school, grade level, if they had been a facilitator, and how many years they had participated in instructional rounds. After 1 week, 12 out of the 14 teachers had responded to the e-mail invitation, and 10 teachers had volunteered to be a participant in the study. Out of these 10 teachers, four taught at

an elementary school, three taught at a middle school, and three taught at a high school. Seven out of the 10 teachers who volunteered had been instructional rounds facilitators.

I selected six teachers total to participate in the study. To determine which six to select, I first selected three teachers who had been facilitators, one from the elementary level, one from the middle level, and one from the high school level. The facilitators who had been involved with instructional rounds the longest were chosen because they had the most experience with the model for this specific case study (see Stake, 1995). Next, I separated the remaining names into grade level categories in order to select three additional teachers. I chose the teachers who had participated in instructional rounds the longest. Table 1 shows the final sample, which included two teachers representing elementary, two from middle school, and two from the high school level. Three out of six teachers had been facilitators, and all of the participants taught different grade levels within their schools and/or different content areas. Table 1 also shows the pseudonym that was used throughout the study for each teacher to ensure confidentiality.

Table 1

Participant Sample for Interviews

Sample	Pseudonym	Grade Level	Years participating	Facilitator
Participant 1	Teacher A	Elementary	4	Yes
Participant 2	Teacher B	Elementary	3	No
Participant 3	Teacher C	Middle	4	No
Participant 4	Teacher D	Middle	4	Yes
Participant 5	Teacher E	High	4	Yes
Participant 6	Teacher F	High	3	No

Researcher-Participant Relationship

It is important for the researcher and participants to develop a trusting working

relationship (Merriam, 2009). Researchers have to understand how their personality,

status, and rapport might affect relationships with participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

I was a former teacher in this school district, and I played a significant role in developing

the instructional rounds model. I did not want participants to be reluctant to share

negative experiences with me because they knew I was heavily invested in its

implementation. To address this problem, I conveyed a trusting professional tone in all

communication with participants (Creswell, 2012). A trusting tone was established by

providing clear, consistent, and timely communication.

First, I made sure participants understood the purpose of the study, my role as the

researcher, and that I am no longer working in the school district. Participants were

informed that I do not have any role in the development or implementation of

instructional rounds presently or in the future. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state that

participants are more likely to share their honest perceptions and experiences when they

know the researcher is not personally impacted by the outcome of the study. In addition, I

developed a trusting relationship with participants by creating an interview protocol that

was used consistently in all interviews (see Appendix B). The interview protocol

included an introduction to the study, a description of the interview, what would be done

with the information, and ensuring the participant understood how confidentiality of their

identity and information would be protected (Creswell, 2012). The protocol also told

participants exactly what to expect during and after the interview took place. I

approached the interview in a natural, conversational tone, and built rapport with the

participants before getting started on the interview questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Protection of Participant Rights

Another component of clear communication with participants, and the school

district as a whole, was to present measures that would be taken for the protection of

participant rights. These protections would include ensuring confidentiality, informed

consent and protection from harm (Creswell, 2012). First, I obtained approval to conduct

the study from the Walden Institutional Review Board (approval # 03-27-18-0531119)

and the school district. Permission was then granted by the deputy superintendent and

school principals to contact teachers who would be potential participants. Once the six

teachers were selected to participate in the study, they were sent a consent form via e-

mail prior to participating in the interview. Creswell (2012) argued that consent forms are

used to assure the protection of participants during the study. The consent form explained

that participating in the study was voluntary, that specific names of participants and

schools would be kept confidential, and that participants would have access to reviewing

interview transcripts and offering feedback on the researcher's interpretations. The

consent form also made sure participants knew they could withdraw from the study at any

time without repercussions (Creswell, 2012).

In addition to the consent form, several additional measures were taken in this

study to ensure confidentiality of participants. First, the names of schools and participants

were not used in any documentation of the study. Instead of names, numbers and letters

were used to identify the source (Creswell, 2012). For example, schools were identified

as "School 1, or School 2," and teachers will be identified as "Teacher A, Teacher B,"

etc. Second, all communication with the school district contained these pseudonyms in

the place of school and teacher names. I personally collected and analyzed all of the data

in this study and ensured protection of the information by keeping all records secure in a

locked file cabinet and on a password protected computer.

<div align="center">**Data Collection**</div>

Data collection in qualitative research involves several interrelated factors.

Participants must be identified, permissions must be obtained to access the participants,

the type of information to be collected must be determined, instruments for collecting and

recording the information must be identified or designed, and finally the processes for

generating, gathering and recording the information must be administered ethically

(Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). The most common sources of data used in evaluative

case study research include a combination of: documentation, archival records,

interviews, observations, and physical artifacts (Spaulding, 2014; Yin, 2003). Case study

research should involve multiple methods of data collection in order to support

triangulation, or data that corroborates evidence from other sources (Creswell, 2012). The

data that was collected for this evaluative case study of instructional rounds included

interviews as well as documentary information related to the program.

Interviews

Yin (2003) argued that interviews are one of the most important sources of data

collection in case study research. Interviews gather descriptive data from several different

perspectives, and the information is collected in the participants own words which allows

the researcher to develop insights on how they interpret their experiences (Bogdan &

Biklen, 2007; Yin, 2003). For this evaluative case study of instructional rounds, six

different semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers. A semi-structured

interview is an interview format characterized by a mix of more and less structured

questions that can be used flexibly (Merriam, 2009). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) stated

that good interviews produce "rich data filled with words that reveal the respondent's

perspectives" (p. 104). Semi-structured interviews allow for relatively open-ended

questions that keep the conversation fluid, but also keep a consistent line of inquiry

focused on the topic (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The length of the interviews for this study

were kept to approximately 30 minutes to ensure a focus on the research questions and to

limit the length of the final transcripts. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) stated that a one-hour

interview can turn into 20 to 40 pages of transcript data. It was important for participants

to feel at ease to talk freely about their point of view, but the research goals needed to be

at the center (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003).

The interview protocol was produced in advance (see Appendix B) that included a

list of questions and potential probes that guided the interview process (Merriam, 2009;

Spaulding, 2014). The protocol started with more open-ended questions so there were

many options for responding and participants could share their experiences in a way that

felt natural to them (Creswell, 2012). Specific questions that aligned with the goals of the

study were also be prepared so I could probe deeper when needed and make sure the

conversation was exploring the research questions. Merriam (2009) stated that interviews

are often used to find out information that can't be observed. It was essential that quality

questions were created ahead of time that would yield the information the study needs and were also written in a way that was easy for participants to understand (Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Stake, 1995).

Document Reviews

In addition to conducting interviews, another form of data collection was documentary information. Documents are a valuable source of information in qualitative studies, and Yin (2003) argued that documents are relevant to every case study topic and can assist the researcher in understanding the central phenomenon. Documents are often written in the language and words of the participants which is useful in understanding and interpreting different perspectives (Creswell, 2012). Stake (1995) suggested that if a researcher in a case study cannot observe an activity directly, studying documents can often be a suitable substitute. Case study research provides interpretations based on several different sources of information. Documents can be used to corroborate and augment the evidence collected from interviews (Yin, 2003).

The documents that were reviewed for this evaluative case study were documents used during the instructional rounds debrief and teacher reflection documents at the time of the study. In each instructional rounds session, the facilitator led the group through a process of reflecting on classroom observations through the lens of a problem of practice and then identifying the next level of work (City et al., 2009). The district's instructional framework was also used to guide these debrief discussions. As teachers shared their observations, reflections, and learning, this information was typically captured on a Word document which was viewed by the group. In some schools, this debrief document was

sent out to the entire school staff following an instructional rounds session. In some schools, teachers were also asked to provide a personal reflection on the process and feedback on how the experience impacted their learning. These reflections were often kept by the teacher facilitator. The district provided schools with examples and templates for the debrief and reflection documents, but many schools had adapted the resources to best fit their context.

Accessing the debrief and teacher reflection documents took place after the purposeful sample of teacher participants was selected. Once participants were chosen, documents were collected and reviewed from the same schools where the teachers work. Selecting documents from the same schools where the participants engaged in instructional rounds assisted with the triangulation of data and interpretations collected during the interviews (Yin, 2003). Permission to access documents was granted during the initial communication with the deputy superintendent and school principals about participating in the study. Each teacher who participated in the study was asked to provide an example of a debrief document from their school. Three teachers brought an example with them to the interview, and three teachers sent an example via e-mail. The participants who had been instructional rounds facilitators were also asked to provide an example of a teacher reflection document if one was available for review. In total, the participants for this study provided six different documents representing the elementary, middle and high school level.

Document analysis was an important component to this study to better understand the conceptual framework of a community of practice in relation to instructional rounds.

Documents are a form of reification, or the artifacts that convey the groups negotiation of meaning in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). Documents that teachers create before, during and after the instructional rounds process provided information about the groups practice, or collective ways of doing things (Wenger, 1998).

Observations are another form of data collection common in case study research. I chose not to include observations in this case study of instructional rounds because of the time constraints and the threat of the presence of the researcher affecting the authentic engagement of participants during the instructional rounds process (Creswell, 2012). Teachers in this school district knew that I was personally involved in developing and supporting its implementation. My presence could have affected participants who were new to the instructional rounds process, or who had not worked with me directly. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) note that usually in studies relying on interviews instead of observations, the participants don't know the researcher ahead of time, so effort needs to be put into building trusting relationships. In this case study, the participants who were selected for the interviews had all worked with me during an instructional rounds session at some point over the past six years in the school district and we had established a trusting rapport. Because I already had years of experience observing instructional rounds in different contexts, interviews with teachers who knew the instructional rounds model well was a better data collection tool to gather descriptive insights and perspectives to answer the research questions. In addition, I interviewed six different teachers which supported triangulation of the data from multiple sources (Creswell, 2012).

Data Collection Procedures

In order to collect the data for this study, an interview protocol and a document review protocol were created before seeking permission to access the participants and documents. Examples of these protocols can be found in Appendix B and Appendix C. Once permissions were granted from the deputy superintendent and principals, participants were contacted via e-mail and a process was followed to implement purposeful sampling. Once the final sample of participants were selected, they were contacted via e-mail to set up a time and place for the interview. A consent form was attached to the e-mail for the participants to review. Participants then signed the consent form at the start of the face-to-face interview (Creswell, 2012).

During the interview, participants were asked the questions that were prepared ahead of time and the conversation was audio recorded. Audio recording allowed the interviews to be transcribed and ensured an accurate record of the participant's responses for analysis (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). It is important to note that Stake (1995) argued that audio recording interviews and typing up full transcripts are not necessary in a case study because the researcher does not need to capture the exact words. What is most important is capturing the exact meaning of the responses (Stake, 1995). Rather than audio recording, Stake (1995) recommended that the researcher produce a written facsimile or report within a few hours of the interview and give the participants an opportunity to review the interpretations for accuracy (Stake, 1995). As a doctoral student who is new to case study research, I took the approach of audio recording and transcribing interviews to ensure that I had the most accurate database for analysis. I also

used member checking and asked participants to review the transcripts and any interpretations drawn from them for accuracy (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 1995).

Additional systems for keeping track of information came in the form of a research log. This tracking system included information about when and where various data collection methods took place such as interviews, document reviews, or other personal interactions. The date of interaction, what took place, and reflective notes were included (Stake, 1995). Throughout the data collection process, emerging themes, patterns and understandings were also noted. In a case study, Yin (2003) stated the researcher should be looking for "converging lines of inquiry" in the data (p. 98). The goal of this evaluative case study was to investigate the impact of instructional rounds on collaborative relationships among teachers and teacher learning of the instructional framework. The data collection process for this study involved collecting multiple perspectives from teachers on these topics through interviews and reviewing documents that provided additional insights and descriptive data.

Role of the Researcher

One issue that needs to be addressed in this study is the role of the researcher. Even though I am not employed in this school district currently, I was a teacher in this district for 14 years and was personally involved with the development of the instructional rounds model. I was a teacher facilitator at the first middle school that volunteered to implement instructional rounds. I also modeled the process with principals and teachers when they came to our middle school to observe instructional rounds and

then supported teachers from across the district as they became facilitators at their

schools.

My involvement with instructional rounds from its inception could have created

bias on the part of the researcher and participants who are interviewed. On the other

hand, my involvement also provided me with some contextual insights into understanding

the responses of the participants during the interviews. I was able to ask clarifying

questions during the interviews based on my understanding of the history of instructional

rounds at each school. Educators in my school district also know that I have a deep level

of understanding about instructional rounds. When I spoke with the deputy

superintendent, principals and teachers about this study, they were very enthusiastic

about the qualitative nature of the approach and looked forward to the study results.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state that, "The worth of a study is the degree to which

it generates theory, description, or understanding" (p. 38). As the researcher in this case

study, my goal was to add knowledge and understanding about the impact of instructional

rounds on teacher learning. In order to accomplish this goal, I tried to avoid bias during

data collection and analysis despite my personal experience with instructional rounds in

this district. I avoided bias by being reflective and conscious of each interaction that I had

with school district staff, especially during the interviews with teachers. I made sure to

follow the interview protocol and use open-ended questions, so I did not lead participants

toward any particular response (Creswell, 2012). After I audio recorded and transcribed

the interviews, I also had participants check that the transcription and any interpretations

drawn from the interviews were accurate. This strategy of member checking helped to

reduce researcher bias as the participants could confirm that the correct meaning was drawn from the interview (Creswell, 2012).

Data Analysis

In qualitative research studies, data analysis is an inductive and recursive process where the researcher simultaneously analyzes the data while collecting it (Creswell, 2012). For a case study, Stake (1995) argued that analysis involves taking impressions of the data apart by reading and rereading information and deeply thinking about interpretations. While analyzing, a researcher may go back to data sources for more information (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). As stated previously, the main sources of data collection for this case study of instructional rounds were transcribed interviews and program document reviews.

The interview transcription process involved audio recording each interview followed by typing the conversation into text within three days after the interview was over (Creswell, 2012). Although transcription software programs are available, I transcribed all of the interviews for this case study. Creswell (2012) stated that it may take about four hours to transcribe a one-hour conversation, so sufficient time was allocated to type the interview transcriptions. The study involved approximately six, 30 to 40-minute interviews. Each interview took approximately three hours to transcribe. While transcribing the interviews, specific formatting guidelines were followed such as detailed headers that contain information about the interview, 2-inch margins, and leaving extra space between the interviewer's comments and the interviewee's comments. The transcriptions included typing the exact words that were said, as well as other actions that

occurred during the interview such as pauses, emphasis or laughter which give important insights into the tone or meaning of the words that were said (Creswell, 2012).

The document reviews did not require transcription, but a protocol was followed to analyze the information in the documents (see Appendix C). The goal of data analysis is to answer the research questions, so it was important to look for consistent themes that ran across the documents (Merriam, 2009). An initial list of themes was created ahead of time that aligned with the research questions. As documents were reviewed, I looked for information pertaining to relationships with colleagues, reference to the instructional framework, and reflections or changes in a teacher's practice or thinking. I also took notes about any additional themes that emerged during the data analysis (Stake, 1995).

Once the interview transcripts and document reviews were prepared and complete, the first step of data analysis was reading through the information several times to develop a general sense of the data, any key ideas that emerged, how the information might be organized, and to consider if more data collection was needed (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). Further analysis then included a process of coding or searching for consistent patterns or broad themes that helped make sense of the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2012). As patterns emerged, the text was labeled with words or phrases to describe the impressions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Broad themes and patterns were also written down in my researcher's log. As each interview transcription and document was analyzed, consistent words, phrases and themes were added to the notes until clear patterns emerged. The goal of data analysis is to answer the research questions, so it was important to look for consistent themes that ran across more than one interview or one

document (Merriam, 2009). Case study analysis should bring all data sources together in an intensive, holistic and richly descriptive process that assures accuracy and credibility (Merriam, 2009).

Qualitative research must show that the researcher's interpretations and conclusions make sense (Merriam, 2009). There must be evidence of data collection and analysis methods that produce accuracy and credibility, often referred to as authenticity and trustworthiness in qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). When conducting this case study on instructional rounds, accuracy and credibility was achieved using member checking, triangulation and researcher self reflection (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995).

Member checking is the process of checking the accuracy of the findings from the data analysis with the participants (Merriam, 2009). Participants were asked if the interview transcripts were complete and accurate, and if the interpretations were fair and representative of their intended meaning (Creswell, 2012). Participants were also asked if there was any additional information that they wanted to add to the transcript to clarify meaning or to add more ideas. None of the six participants wanted to add information.

Triangulation involves using multiple sources and methods to verify and corroborate evidence and interpretations in a study (Stake, 1995). Triangulation may occur in several ways: corroborating evidence from several different individuals, collecting different types of data, or using different data collection methods (Creswell, 2012). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) argued that due to the variety of ways to achieve triangulation in a study, researchers must be specific in naming the exact ways verifying

facts are achieved. In this case study of instructional rounds, I collected information in more than one way, using interviews and documents. I also collected information from six different teachers, who represent different perspectives, about the instructional rounds process and their experiences. Drawing on multiple sources and viewpoints through triangulation helped to develop interpretations that were accurate and credible (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995).

Researchers in qualitative studies must be self reflective (Yin, 2003). Qualitative research is interpretive in nature and personal bias is inherent in interpretation (Creswell, 2012). It is difficult for researchers to not bring their own perspectives into the study. To limit personal bias, I ensured the participants that I would not be personally impacted by the results of the study and told them I was seeking out honest perspectives. During the interviews, I also maintained self awareness of how often I spoke and when I asked questions. I would intentionally pause after a participant finished answering a question, so I did not ask a follow-up question too soon and alter the direction of the teacher's train of thought. Oftentimes, this allowed the participant to continue to elaborate on their idea without the influence of another question or my personal thinking about their response (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003).

It is also important to have a procedure in place to deal with discrepant cases in the data collection and analysis process. Stake (1995) argued that the most important themes in a case study will become clear as they reappear over and over again in the field notes, interviews, observations and documents. The six interviews and document reviews did not provide any discrepant cases for this study. If a discrepant case has been

discovered, the data would have been analyzed again for corroborating evidence

(Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995).

Limitations

There are several limitations to an evaluative case study on instructional rounds.

First, the evaluation will not be generalizable to other settings (Spaulding, 2014; Stake,

1995). This case study will provide an in-depth look at an Instructional Rounds model

that was adapted to fit the unique context of this school district and its goals. An

evaluative case study will reveal information about the process and outcome at this

specific site but will not be used to produce generalizations about the instructional rounds

process in other locations (Stake, 1995). Another limitation is a lack of control over how

the school district administrators use the case study evaluation results to make decisions

about the future of instructional rounds in the district (Lodico, et al., 2010). I was able to

maintain professional, trusting relationships with the school district administrators even

though I no longer work in the district. This ensured that the project study presentation

would be well received, and the findings could be used to make necessary changes to the

program.

Data Analysis Results

Data was collected by conducting six semi-structured interviews with teachers

and reviewing six documents used during instructional rounds at various schools.

Interviews were transcribed, examined by teachers for accuracy, and then analyzed for

themes and patterns. Using a combination of interviews, member checking, and

document reviews provided for triangulation of data to ensure quality and accuracy of interpretations to answer the research questions.

The research questions guiding this case study on the impact of instructional rounds on teacher learning were as follows:

RQ1: How does participation in instructional rounds impact collaborative relationships among teachers?

RQ2: How does participation in instructional rounds impact teacher learning of the instructional framework?

Several themes and patterns emerged from the data analysis that addresses each research question, as well as outcomes that relate to the larger body of literature on instructional rounds and teacher professional learning. The following section will present the themes that derived from the data, additional findings, and summarize the data's relationship to the current literature and the conceptual framework of communities of practice that guides this study. Themes that emerged from the interviews will be discussed first, followed by the findings from the document reviews that relate to the presented themes.

RQ1 Findings: Impact on Collaborative Relationships

A clear pattern that emerged from all six interviews with teachers was that participating in instructional rounds positively impacts collaborative relationships among teachers personally and professionally.

Theme 1: Instructional rounds strengthens personal relationships. Teachers expressed that their respect for their colleagues grew as a result of participating in

instructional rounds, and they felt closer to their colleagues personally after each session. Teachers described these feelings of respect, and how it was developed during the instructional rounds process in different ways.

> Rounds just made me excited to get to know my colleagues. I think it really strengthened relationships because you are able to have these honest conversations, listen to each other, and have more compassion and understanding. It really breaks down barriers. (Teacher E)

Teacher B never had the chance to observe other teachers in her building before the opportunity to participate in instructional rounds came up:

> Being in each other's rooms and seeing people's personalities in another way was nice. I felt more respect for them personally, like seeing them in a different light because I only talked informally with people, but I've never seen them teach. Afterwards, we were more apt to talk to each other. (Teacher B)

Teacher D added, "I think hearing people talk about their own problems of practice builds cohesion and a feeling of comradery. When I hear people wrestling with their own stuff, I think that can often lead to feelings of respect."

Teachers felt that relationships were strengthened with their colleagues because instructional rounds created an environment of trust, vulnerability, cohesion, and positive rapport. Teacher C stated that instructional rounds is "an instant trust builder." When asked to elaborate, Teacher C added:

> It immediately built a base for collaboration in a way that nothing else will. You have to watch people teach to build trust. It made me feel much more able to

share with my colleagues what was really going on in my classroom and being more open with them.

Teacher F discussed the impact of the overall process of instructional rounds and emphasized that, "teachers rarely get to sit around a table, look at each other, and share some of our vulnerabilities. So, having this space, just for teachers to talk about teaching, was really refreshing." Teacher D articulated the difference between personal and professional relationships by saying:

> You don't necessarily feel like, oh, this person I just shared Round with . . . now I know you so much better and I'm going to go have lunch with you. But to have that instructional time where you're wrestling with practice with each other, it gives that academic community feel of respect. (Teacher D)

Discussing the difference between personal and professional respect and comradery emerged as another key theme.

Theme 2: Instructional rounds strengthens professional relationships. All six of the teacher participants reflected on the positive impact instructional rounds had on their professional relationships with their colleagues and their school culture as a whole. Teacher E stated, "It really improved our colleague culture particularly. That openness to dialogue about teaching, that openness to conversations that challenge each other. It's like a grass roots method of building a culture." Teacher F agreed:

> I think everyone in my building would agree that we had a closed-door culture before instructional rounds. So, just this idea that we would see each other teach?

That was huge. I remember feeling like the culture piece was the biggest impact

of Rounds at our school.

Teacher C also elaborated on the impact of instructional rounds on the culture of

learning in the school as a whole:

I think it made the staff more cohesive. And having those relationships built

through rounds, and that collaborative culture that we are in each other's

classrooms and no one has anything to hide, then it made the other whole group

learning times throughout the year more powerful too. (Teacher C)

Participants also emphasized that these feelings of cohesion, respect, trust and

community were possible because instructional rounds was set up as a voluntary

professional learning opportunity. Teacher E stated, "I think making it voluntary was one

of the most critical components. Because it made it teacher driven. It wasn't a mandated

thing." Teacher D noted, "You need to feel safe first. So, if that safety isn't there, or if

people don't want to be there, it would just make things worse." Teacher F said, "For us,

it was really important that it was voluntary. That it wasn't another thing that was being

forced on teachers. And I think that's why we had almost all of our teachers participate."

Despite the fact that instructional rounds was voluntary, in four out of the six buildings,

participants claimed that almost all of their teachers volunteered to participate at some

point in the past two years. They attributed this to the positive personal and professional

relationships that were developed as a result of participating in the instructional rounds

process.

RQ2 Findings: Impact on Teacher Learning of Instructional Framework

Instructional rounds was initially developed and implemented in this school district to support teacher learning of an instructional framework that was used for teacher evaluation. The instructional framework was used to describe what was seen and heard during the instructional rounds observations to give teachers an opportunity to practice using the language of the framework and become more familiar and fluent with the structure, vocabulary, and descriptions of quality teaching and learning. Two consistent patterns that emerged from analyzing the interview transcriptions was that instructional rounds gave teachers a sense of clarity and common language with the instructional framework, yet the quality and depth of their learning varied. The impact on teacher learning seemed to be determined by several contextual factors.

Theme 1: Teachers gained clarity and common language. One consistent pattern that emerged from the interviews was that teachers' understanding of the instructional framework improved as a result of participating in instructional rounds as a professional learning activity. Teacher B stated, "I think it definitely made me more comfortable with it. It made me think more about what the different parts of the framework mean." Teacher E said, "You can't just *tell* me about the framework. But if I get to *experience* using the framework, that's when I really started to understand what it's about." Teacher F concurred, "You can't really get deep into the framework unless you are actually watching teaching, talking about what you're seeing and using the framework at the same time." Instructional rounds seemed to create the conditions

needed to use the instructional framework in the authentic context of teaching and learning.

The opportunity to use the language of the instructional framework to describe what was observed in a classroom provided clarity for teachers about what they were seeing and a common language to talk about it. Teacher C confidently stated:

For me, it helped me understand what kind of evidence might be used for different indicators within the framework. Someone would say, this is what I observed, which aspect of the framework is that? Would it be more this or more that? And you would have these great conversations about what it was really demonstrating. (Teacher C)

Teacher B discussed how observing other classrooms helped to broader their view of what the indicators of the instructional framework could look like:

You can get stuck on the fact that this is the right way to do it, or this is the only way to do it. So, going in and seeing other people helped show me there are a lot of ways to get at the same outcome. (Teacher B)

Teacher F added, "The indicators on the framework would come to life when you get to see it in person. Like student talk, or how are people using learning objectives? It was real life examples instead of hypothetical situations." There was agreement among teachers that instructional rounds supported their learning of the instructional framework overall, gave them a better understanding of the different components, and let them see what those components might look like in practice. The depth, quality, and duration of their learning varied from school to school and teacher to teacher.

Theme 2: Quality of teacher learning dependent on contextual factors.

Several factors emerged from the interviews that promoted or inhibited teacher learning of the instructional framework. Consistent topics included the personality and skills of the facilitator, the dynamics of the participants, and the structure of the debrief.

Personality and skills of facilitator. The teacher(s) who were selected to facilitate and lead instructional rounds in each school proved to be a key factor in teacher learning of the instructional framework. The teacher's personality, their relationships with colleagues in the school, and their skills at facilitating a learning conversation with the framework had an impact. Teacher D pointed out:

If you have a facilitator who is more casual in their approach, it will have a more casual feel during rounds. If someone is facilitating for the first time, they will go through every single bullet on the PowerPoint, which the participants may or may not need. (Teacher D)

Teacher C focused on trust:

The facilitator has to be someone that is trusted. A building-based leader that people feel like isn't attached to judgement, and there isn't a secret agenda being pushed. They can lead a professional, serious conversation, but not make it feel too formal or scary. (Teacher C)

The facilitation skills of teachers who were tasked with leading instructional rounds were mentioned throughout the interviews as having a critical impact on the overall flow of the experience as well as the effectiveness of the discussions. Teacher A provided an example:

They have to guide the visitors with self-reflection on what they saw, what they

heard, or their thinking to guide them to their next step without telling them what

that was. But that takes skill to do that. I don't think some facilitators were trained

in how to do that. (Teacher A)

Teacher D responded in a similar manner saying, "I realized, as a facilitator, you

really need to be able to take a firmer hand in steering people during the debrief. To keep

it descriptive and not judgmental. And that's hard to do sometimes." Several teachers

expressed concern that the most recent facilitators of instructional rounds in their schools

were not receiving any training on facilitation and this was negatively impacting

teachers' willingness and eagerness to participate.

In several schools, voluntary participation in instructional rounds had been

decreasing over the past two years. Teacher A attributed this to the lack of facilitator

training and experience. When asked why there have been fewer teachers participating,

Teacher A responded:

How do I say this graciously? I think the way it is being facilitated without the

teacher having actual training. When I did rounds this year, the important parts

were missing or weren't given as much attention as it should have, like the debrief

and using the framework. (Teacher A)

Although Teacher F agreed that training was important, they attributed the

decrease in participation to the relationships of the facilitators with their staff:

I feel like our administrator at the time underestimated the importance of

relationships that the initial facilitators had. Who they had been in the building

before taking on that role and the trust people had. And factoring that into why

rounds was working and why people were coming. (Teacher F)

In both of these schools where Teacher A and Teacher F work, the teachers who

recently took the facilitation role were new staff members to the building and had only

been teaching there for two years. Teacher F reflected on this dynamic:

They were both awesome people and committed teachers, but they didn't have the

relationships in our building. And then our enrollment dropped drastically, but the

administrator just said people weren't interested in rounds anymore. I think they

missed that the trust is so central. (Teacher F)

The teachers who were selected to lead instructional rounds as facilitators

impacted teacher learning as well as who else was in the room.

Dynamics of participants. In the first year of implementing instructional rounds,

every school arranged participating teachers into heterogenous groups. Teachers were

able to participate in the process with others who taught different grade levels and/or

content areas. This structure seemed to benefit the goals of building a collaborative

school culture, foster relationships, and help teachers practice using the instructional

framework through observation and reflection. Teacher C emphasized the benefits of

participating with teachers from different instructional contexts:

In the subject area that I teach, I had never had any other teacher come and

observe me before. It was really isolating. So, rounds was a really big deal for me.

It was really validating. If we had structured rounds by content area, I don't even

know how that would have included me. I learned so much by discussing with

other content teachers. (Teacher C)

Teacher F was a facilitator and also emphasized the importance of grouping:

The way we grouped people was really intentional and thoughtful. We spent a lot

of time talking, adjusting, and making it work, including the time of year, the type

of classes the groups were seeing, the personalities of the teachers we were

putting together, the ages of the teachers . . . it was like this table full of multi-

colored sticky notes. And it all mattered. (Teacher F)

In addition to the personal and professional dynamics of grouping teachers for

Instructional Rounds sessions, Teacher D added that who was in the room also dictated

how time was used:

It really depends on who is in the room. If I'm with three other teachers who have

done Rounds 10 times, then the prebrief introduction and norms can go quicker.

We can have more time for discussion. But if someone hasn't done it before, you

really have to build up those norms and the purpose of those norms. And newer

teachers will need more support with using the framework. It's all okay, just

different. (Teacher D)

Even though all schools began the instructional rounds process with

heterogeneous groups, several schools experimented with content-alike, or grade-alike

grouping in the third or fourth year of implementation which also impacted teacher

learning. All six of the teachers discussed how the instructional rounds model evolved

over time in their buildings to support teacher learning. During the first year or two, the

instructional rounds model was effective in helping teachers learn the layout of the instructional framework and pinpoint what they observed in classrooms to the indicators in the framework. Teachers improved their ability to use the framework to talk about teaching and learning.

By the third year of implementation, each school was discussing how to shift from learning about the framework as a whole to focusing in on specific dimensions or a teacher's chosen area of focus. Teacher A stated, "We started asking teachers more questions about their needs. Then at the end of last year, we heard from our staff that they wanted some rounds with like-content." Two schools in this study experimented with grouping teachers by content area, so the observers and the hosts taught the same subject matter and the debrief discussions were content focused.

Another school adapted the process based on grade level, so teachers observed and reflected on similar curriculum and specific student needs. This idea expanded with a group of kindergarten teachers to be a cross-district instructional rounds for early learning, where kindergarten teachers observed each other in different buildings not just in their own school. Teacher B reflected on their participation:

> The early learning rounds really helped my teaching because I was with teachers who all taught the same thing, we all taught kindergarten, and we could have a focus. Last year we looked at literacy centers, and this year we looked a lot at work time.

It was apparent through the interviews with teachers that each school utilized the structure of the instructional rounds process to mold and adapt the experience to meet the needs of their individual schools and teachers.

Structure of debrief. Another factor that impacted teacher learning of the instructional framework was how teachers were supported in using the framework during the debrief discussion. The debrief was used for the group to reflect on their observations and connect what they saw and heard to the instructional framework and their own teaching practice. When instructional rounds was initially developed in this school district, a specific structure and protocol was created for the debrief to ensure teachers were engaging with the instructional framework and that the group discussion remained descriptive and not judgmental. Sentence frames were used to provide this structure such as, "I noticed implementation of the dimension _____when_____. This impacted student learning by_____." All six schools represented in this study began their implementation of instructional rounds using sentence frames aligned with the instructional framework, and several adjusted their approach in following years.

During the interviews for this study, several teachers expressed the importance of using the sentence frames during the debrief discussion to provide an environment of safety for teachers. Teacher F stated, "I remember there was some skepticism at the start about how people were going to be talking about each other behind closed doors. I think the frames really helped people feel like, okay, this is structured and protected." Teacher E also said, "The sentence frames helped us approach our conversations through the lens of being able to observe without judgement and use the framework to describe what we

see." Teacher A added that the sentence frames not only helped create safety, but also reduce stress:

> All of those indicators in the framework were overwhelming for many people. And I think once we were able to get into each other's classrooms and then debrief using the sentence frames, we could really start seeing the framework. Some of that stress went down. (Teacher A)

The sentence frames also supported facilitators in keeping the debrief conversation non-judgmental. Teacher E elaborated on this point:

> When you observe someone teaching, you *do* notice things that aren't working. Like that opportunity was missed, or that kid is probably not doing what they are supposed to be doing. So, what do you do with those observations? Which are helpful to talk about and which aren't appropriate to bring to the conversation? I feel like the sentence frames, *framed* the conversation and helped teachers make those calls. This is what we're here for, these are the types of observations we are going to talk about. It doesn't mean those other observations aren't occurring in your mind, but that's not what we are here for. (Teacher E)

Several teachers expressed similar feelings about how the sentence frames helped keep the conversation focused on descriptive language using the instructional framework. Teacher C said, "The sentence frames kept me on track. It steered the debrief in the right direction and made sure all voices were heard." Teacher A emphasized, "I think the most important part of instructional rounds is the debrief. That is where we frame the conversation and guide visitors with self-reflection of what they saw." As the structure of

the sentence frames changed over time in schools, the impact on teacher learning of the

instructional framework also changed.

After the first year of implementing instructional rounds using a sentence frame

aligned with the instructional framework, Teacher A discussed that teachers in their

school wanted to have a more general approach to their reflections:

Our staff didn't want to use the instructional framework as part of the reflection

process any more. So, we changed the format to be more general. And we said,

today I saw/heard____, which makes me think/wonder____. And that was our

frame. (Teacher A)

Teacher D discussed how their focus for instructional rounds this past year was on

technology integration and the sentence frame was adjusted to fit this purpose:

We just wanted to reflect on how this would help our students. So, we used a

frame, something like, I noticed ____, and I'm excited to try____, or I think it

could help students by____. And then in parentheses we would try to code it to

the framework. (Teacher D)

Teacher E recalled that there was some resistance to using sentence frames with

the instructional framework during debrief discussions and wondered if that was evidence

that teachers actually didn't know the framework. Teacher E explained, "Teachers would

say we just want to talk freely. But was this because using the framework might have

been hard for them?" At this school, the sentence frame changed slightly to I

noticed____. This connects to____. The adjustment still maintained a connection to the

instructional framework but did not require teachers to use the vocabulary found in the framework such as "dimension," subdimension" or "indicator."

Finally, Teacher C noted an additional challenge of focusing solely on the language of the framework:

> I think there are some parts of the framework that are really hard to see in an observation. It has to be more of a conversation with the teacher. That's something I always wanted to try and figure out . . . to debrief with the actual classroom teachers and ask them those questions. (Teacher C)

Every teacher reflected on the necessity of using a sentence frame or structure for the debrief conversation but struggled with knowing the best way to make it a meaningful and purposeful experience for the teachers participating.

Document Review Findings

Six documents were reviewed during data analysis that represented five different schools including the elementary, middle and high school level. The documents were provided by the teacher participants during the interview or were emailed separately after the interview took place. Four of the documents were examples of an instructional rounds debrief document, showing how teachers captured their observations and reflections using a sentence frame or a similar structure. The two other documents were examples of how teacher facilitators communicated with their staff to gather volunteers and schedule observations.

In regard to the research questions, documents themselves cannot provide evidence of the impact on teacher relationships directly, but can be used to support

triangulation of the interview data and corroborate findings (Stake, 1995). The instructional rounds debrief documents did offer evidence about how teachers structured the debrief discussions and utilized the instructional framework to impact teacher learning.

The instructional rounds debrief documents demonstrated clear evidence that the instructional framework was being used during the debrief discussions. The sentence frames that were used to support teacher learning of the framework varied depending on the school. This fact aligns with how teachers spoke about the use of sentence frames during the interviews, and how the structure adjusted over time as teacher learning of the framework improved and teacher interest changed.

Several variations were used to structure the debrief conversation. The debrief document that focused more deeply on the language of the instructional framework used the sentence frame, "I noticed implementation of dimension_____, and specifically subdimension_____ when_____. This impacted student learning by_____." The debrief document that used the least amount of language from the instructional framework did not use a sentence frame at all. Instead, the facilitator typed what participants saw in each classroom and posted pictures that captured the reflection. During the interview, Teacher A said that their school decided to create a debrief document that was focused on pictures and less on words because they had more teachers in their school who would look through their reflection. Teacher A stated that even though the final debrief document didn't show evidence of a sentence frame, they did use the frame "Today I

saw/heard____, which made me think/wonder____" during their verbal discussion at the debrief.

Teachers expressed that the purpose of the debrief document played a large role in how it was structured. In one school, the debrief document was only shared with the teachers who personally participated as an observer or host in the instructional rounds session. In another school, the debrief document was always emailed out to the entire staff, regardless of participation. Teacher C stated the purpose of sending it out to all staff was because "it supported the culture building factor of instructional rounds. This is something we all do together, and it shows everyone how much we truly learn from each other." Teacher A expressed:

> We started just using pictures in our debrief we send out to staff because it was a reminder to all of us that there is something exceptional within each of our classroom settings, and we get to see it when we see each other. Pictures bring that to life for everyone. (Teacher A)

The debrief documents also show evidence that teachers did gain clarity and common language with the instructional framework. Several teacher reflections show the negotiation between which indicator on the framework best reflects what they saw in the classroom. One debrief document uses the sentence frames, "I noticed____, and "This connects to___" with the intention to support teachers in making connections between what they observed in the classroom to the nuances of the instructional framework. One teacher also posed a question as a reflection asking, "What is the balance between pacing and interaction when planning a lesson?"

The only discrepant case in the document reviews was with Teacher D. During the interview, Teacher D stated they implemented instructional rounds with a focus on technology integration and used multiple sentence frames to guide teachers reflection such as, "I noticed ____, and I'm excited to try____, or I think it could help students by____." The document Teacher D provided as an example only showed evidence of the sentence frame "We noticed____." Teachers who were participating in that instructional rounds session reflected on several topics that they noticed in classrooms but did not reflect beyond the observation on the impact it had on student learning. One example was, "We noticed students supporting each other in a problem solving strategy of their own choosing." Teacher D did mention in the interview that verbal discussions were more elaborate during the debrief than the written reflections. Teachers did align their observation to the specific indicator on the instructional framework in parentheses next to their reflective statement, which Teacher D acknowledged in the interview.

Overall, the documents reviews demonstrated that teachers who participated in instructional rounds were utilizing the instructional framework to guide their reflections. The documents also showed that different sentence frames were being used to facilitate debrief discussions which resulted in different types of discussions and different approaches to formatting the debrief document and using it to communicate with other staff members. This evidence aligns with how teachers described and talked about the documents during the interviews, providing alignment within the data collection instruments and findings.

Additional Findings

The purpose of this evaluative case study was to determine if the goals of instructional rounds in this school district were being met. The goals were to improve collaborative relationships among teachers and improve teacher learning of the instructional framework that was being used to define high quality teaching and learning expectations in the district. These goals are evident in the framing of the research questions. The data analysis process is an attempt at finding answers to the research questions, but oftentimes additional patterns and themes emerge that cannot be ignored because they occur repetitively from multiple sources (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995).

During the analysis process of the transcribed interviews for this study, several additional themes emerged that were not in direct response to the research questions, but teachers felt had a large impact on the overall effectiveness of instructional rounds in their schools and influenced its success. The following issues may have supported or inhibited the instructional rounds process from meeting its goals, and may have implications for the school district's future development of the model.

Role of administration. The research questions in this case study were not purposefully designed to evaluate the impact of administration on the instructional rounds process or teacher learning, however the topic of the role of administrators emerged in five out of the six interviews. There was overwhelming evidence that teachers did not want administrators leading instructional rounds, and in most cases, teachers felt the integrity of the model was dependent on it being teacher led with no administrator presence. Teacher D emphasized:

There are unshakable parts of rounds like being nonadministrative. Teachers are

observing teachers. I love having principals come and visit classrooms, but let's

set that up. That needs to be a different context. If administrators are going to be a

part of it, then let's not call it instructional rounds. (Teacher D)

As Teacher C was explaining the importance of the facilitator having trusting

relationships with colleagues, they elaborated by saying:

And, oh, my gosh, it can't be an administrator. I mean, honestly, it just can't.

Rounds works when people are able to get really open and honest. And

administrators just have evaluation tied to them and people aren't as open.

(Teacher C)

Teachers agreed that there are probably some administrators that could participate

in the process well, and there was a collective sense that teachers think administrators

should be at the table in an ideal professional and trusting environment. As Teacher F

articulated though, "administrators have to be there for the right reasons and bring the

right energy. And if they aren't able to, it's going to undermine the process." Teacher C

agreed that, "It's best to just not have that be a factor. It's too risky and inconsistent."

Teacher E expressed the importance of administrators recognizing the impact of

teacher leadership and not losing sight of how processes like instructional rounds can

serve the culture of a school with administration changes:

Administrators can't just assume that we did rounds for a few years, so we got it

forever. Students change, teachers change, and administrators change. We need to

keep rounds going in order to build and continue that common culture. And our

teacher leaders are the ones who can keep that going. (Teacher E)

Teacher A agreed that administrative support for the teacher facilitators was key

to the success of instructional rounds. Teacher A stated, "Our principal always supported

our decisions and gave us flexibility. Rounds finally gave us the opportunity to get

feedback from our peers."

The instructional rounds model in this school district was initially designed as

solely a teacher-led process without administrators participating. Teacher facilitators

from each school participated in bimonthly collaboration meetings where ideas and

resources were shared and discussed. Over time, a few schools began having

administrators participate when the teachers expressed the desire to include them. It is

possible that this inconsistency between schools caused misinformation about the design

of the model to spread. Teacher D shared this concern by stating, "When the model starts

going in different directions, does it make it more powerful, or does it diminish it?" This

was a common question that surfaced in the literature review. It seems to be a relevant

and pressing question for school districts to explore, as in this case study.

Training for teacher facilitators. The three teachers who had also been

facilitators of instructional rounds each expressed a strong need for continued training

and collaboration between other teacher facilitators from across the district. During the

interviews, each teacher facilitator spoke about the formal training and support that the

district had in place during the first two years of instructional rounds implementation and

were concerned that it didn't continue after that time. Teacher A commented on this point:

> I think it's really important that we continue to do training, so facilitators truly have the background of what rounds is, have time to read the literature about why we do it and how to do it, and time to talk with people about the protocol and procedures and why you do it in that way. (Teacher A)

Teacher A continued to say that if you are a new facilitator, it currently it feels like, "now you're going to facilitate, good luck. And I feel like that's why people aren't as excited about participating anymore." The personality and skill level of facilitators was already addressed previously under the theme of contextual factors impacting the success of instructional rounds, and this idea of training for facilitators could point to why the skill level of the facilitators was inconsistent.

Teacher D was one of those teachers who was asked to take over facilitation of instructional rounds but had not receive any formal training other than participating in the process for several years as an observer and host. Several of Teacher D's comments provide insight into how a facilitator is thinking about the instructional rounds process without ongoing training or collaboration with other facilitators: Teacher D stated, "All of a sudden I found myself in the position of leading rounds, but I've never even read the book! Kinda crazy." Teacher D's understanding of the purpose and protocols of instructional rounds were based on their experience as a participant:

> When I was a host I was like, okay, tell me what I need to do better. But I was told that rounds wasn't about giving feedback to the hosts because it was non-

evaluative, and the learning was for the observers. So, that's been my framework

for thinking about it. But, it would be cool if we could think more creatively about

giving feedback and getting host teachers involved. But can we? (Teacher D)

This line of thinking demonstrates the need Teacher D had for reflecting on how

instructional rounds was being implemented and wanting to discuss ways to improve the

process to better impact teacher learning.

Unclear next steps. One last finding that emerged from the interviews was

uncertainty teachers felt about the future of instructional rounds in their schools and their

district. There was a sense that instructional rounds was losing momentum, but only

because it wasn't being prioritized, not because the process lacked effectiveness.

Teachers expressed a desire to be innovative and think about how to continuously

improve the process as their schools and staff change. Teacher A provides an example of

how teachers are trying to think about the next steps for instructional rounds in their

school. Teacher A reflected on the idea of not having different teachers be observers and

hosts. Instead, the group of teachers would observe each other and then reflect together:

I think for us, we need to look at it differently. Our staff wants to observe in

content areas. So, why not have your 5th, 4th, and 3rd grade math teachers all

have subs like you would normally, and your facilitator would still help with the

reflection and debrief piece. But, everybody goes in and watches something with

the 5th grade teacher and then they all to watch the 4th grade teacher, and then the

3rd grade. When they debrief, they can all have a conversation with each other

about their math area of focus.

Several other teachers shared innovative ideas for what they would like to see as next steps with the instructional rounds model. Teacher C mentioned:

Many of us only get to observe like one time a year and host one time. That's not enough to really change practice at large scale, but it set us up to thinking creatively. That final year we talked about how to move to more of a lesson study, to play with the funding where you could observe in the morning and then work together in a PLC in the afternoon. There's so much potential there. (Teacher C)

Teacher B participated in the early learning model getting to observe classrooms across the district and was also thinking about next steps:

We were already talking about what we want to focus on next year. It would be nice to get feedback. To have someone say, this is great, but why did you do that? What was your thinking? That part is sort of missing. Getting that honest feedback about what people thought. That might be hard to structure, but we could try. (Teacher B)

Teacher E expressed the need to think about how to support the longevity of instructional rounds as a culture building practice for new teachers:

Our staff is constantly evolving. It is really important that we don't lose sight of the staff turn-over issue. And to keep rounds going to build that common culture. I worry that if you say instructional rounds at a staff meeting right now, new teachers would be like, the instructional what? (Teacher E)

Teacher F also expressed a strong desire to think about next steps by saying, "I would like to have an opportunity to try and figure out what's next for us? I feel like we

had momentum, and we could have figured out next steps, but it seems like we just let it go." Teachers were in agreement that intentional effort needs to be made to continuously improve the process to best fit the needs of individual schools, and teachers want to be involved in helping to design those next steps. Ongoing collaboration and training for facilitators was mentioned as a potential strategy to support teacher leaders in continuing the momentum of instructional rounds and helping the process successfully evolve.

Quality and Accuracy

In qualitative research, data collection and analysis methods must produce accurate and credible findings (Merriam, 2009). When the data analysis is accurate and precise, the researcher's interpretations and conclusions drawn from the data are trustworthy (Creswell, 2012). The procedures used to address accuracy in this case study included transcribing interviews in the exact words of the participants, member checking those transcriptions, and using multiple sources to support the triangulation of data and corroborate evidence and interpretations (Stake, 1995). Multiple sources included six different interviews from teachers representing different schools and grade levels as well as document reviews provided by the participants. Finally, I maintained a researcher log during the study to monitor communication between all school district personnel involved in the study (see Appendix D). The researcher log monitored when interviews were scheduled, transcribed, and member checked by participants for accuracy. Transcripts were not analyzed until member checking took place and participants affirmed that they were trustworthy.

Summary of Findings

A suburban school district in northwest Washington State invested considerable time and professional development funds to implement a teacher-led, school-based model of instructional rounds. The goals of instructional rounds were to improve collaborative relationships among teachers and improve teacher learning of a new instructional framework. School principals and teachers needed to know if instructional rounds was meeting its intended goals to make informed decisions for their schools. District administrators needed to know if instructional rounds was worth the investment as a school improvement strategy. Below is a summary of the key outcomes of the case study research questions supported with connections from the literature.

Participation in instructional rounds positively impacted collaborative relationships among teachers personally and professionally. In this school district, instructional rounds resulted in a positive, culture building effect, helping teachers feel more connected to each other as colleagues, reducing feelings of isolation, and increasing feelings of trust and respect. The literature on effective professional learning shows that collaborative learning has been found to increase teacher self efficacy, motivation, and trust (DuFour et al., 2008; Morel, 2014), but only if the professional learning time is carefully structured and purposeful (Guskey, 2009). Evidence from the interviews in this case study showed that the goal of improving collaborative relationships was met initially, but that intentional thought needs to be put into who is facilitating the instructional rounds process, how groups are structured, and how to continue to refine the model so relationships can strengthen, especially as new teachers join a staff.

Hatch et al. (2016) and Mansfield and Thompson (2017) asked for additional studies that focus on the collaborative nature of instructional rounds and how the process changes the professional culture in schools. This case study provides an in depth look at a group of teachers who engaged in an instructional rounds model where the goal of improving collaborative relationships was achieved. The instructional rounds model in this district created the conditions necessary for teachers to build authentic relationships and engage in collaborative learning. Teachers in this case study argued the success was a result of the process being teacher led, voluntary, and connected to their daily work of teaching and learning. These conditions are routinely supported in the literature on effective professional learning that impact teacher practice (Blank, 2013; Guskey, 2009; Hunzicker, 2012; Mansfield & Thompson, 2017).

Participation in instructional rounds also positively impacted teacher learning of the instructional framework. Teachers feel more comfortable using the language of the instructional framework and feel more aligned with each other when they talked about teaching and learning. The instructional rounds process provided an opportunity to "see" the instructional framework in the context of a classroom and supported the use of a common language to talk about those observations. Allen et al. (2016) and Roegman (2012) called for studies to look for how the instructional rounds process can be enhanced to promote quality discussions after classroom observations. This case study provides an analysis of one method to structure discussions using an instructional framework and sentence frames to guide intentional dialogue and promote learning. The findings from this case study also showed the quality of the discussions were influenced by the skills of

the teacher facilitators, which Roegman (2012) also found to be true among a group of administrators and superintendents.

Even though the initial goal of improving teacher learning of the instructional framework has been met in this school district, there is now a lack of clarity on how to deepen this learning and engage with the framework in new ways. Teitel (2013) warns that school based instructional rounds models tend to default back to existing school norms, practices and culture rather than disrupt, change and improve teaching and learning. The instructional rounds model in this school district has the potential to continue to be a promising innovation in teacher professional learning, but time and attention must be made to continuously improving the model to meet the changing needs of teachers and schools. Teachers in this school district expressed a desire to refine their school-based, teacher-led approach that incorporates more authentic feedback and focused learning. Variations to the original Instructional Rounds model, such as "Teacher Rounds" developed by Del Prete (2013) and enhanced by Troen and Boles (2014) could offer some solutions with its focus on classroom-based professional learning communities shaped by and for teachers.

Lastly, a core principle of instructional rounds is the view that teachers learn through social interaction and collective improvement (Stickney, 2015; Teitel, 2013). Findings from this case study show that fostering collegiality was achieved through an instructional rounds process which created the conditions needed for engagement and learning. Findings from this case study also show that collaborative learning can be disrupted with inadequate leadership. For instructional rounds to succeed, attention must

be paid to the variety of contextual factors that can influence its outcomes, such as: who is facilitating, the skills and training of the facilitator, how groups are arranged, norms and protocols for behavior, identifying a focus or problem of practice, structuring discussions, the role of administration and teacher leaders, and creating time and space for reflecting on improvement and next steps (Allen et al., 2016; Ellis, et al., 2015; Teitel, 2015). The social learning construct of communities of practice can help ground these findings in a conceptual framework.

Communities of Practice

A community of practice is a group of people who engage in learning together about an interest or problem through a social process of negotiating knowledge, competence and meaning (Wenger, 1998). The conceptual framework centers on the principle that learning is about grappling with new meaning through social participation with others (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002). The professional learning model of instructional rounds also centers on the idea that educators must take a collaborative approach to learning to improve instruction and see lasting change in schools (City et al., 2009; DeLuca et al., 2015; Marzano, 2009).

The findings from this case study on instructional rounds will be analyzed and discussed using the key components of the communities of practice construct. Wenger (1998) explains that a theory or conceptual framework "acts like a guide about what to pay attention to, what difficulties to expect, and how to approach problems" (p. 9). One component of the communities of practice framework that will guide this analysis are the structural elements: the domain, the community and the practice. A second component

that will be discussed is foundational to why communities of practice exist: to negotiate meaning through the process of participation and reification. The structural elements of a community of practice will be discussed first.

The domain. The domain refers to the shared purpose of the group, or the reason the group is learning together. The domain guides the questions of the group and helps to organize their knowledge (Wenger, 1998). The domain of instructional rounds is the "instructional core" – the interaction between teacher, student and content (City, et al., 2009). The school district's instructional framework for this case study defined the domain. For communities of practice to be successful, Wegner, McDermott and Snyder (2002) emphasize the importance of the participants connection to the domain. If the domain does not inspire its members, or lacks relevance or personal meaning, the community can falter and have limited impact. On the other hand, "communities of practice thrive where the goals and needs of an organization intersect with the passions and aspirations of participants" (Wenger et al., 2009, p. 32). It is in this shared domain where a collective sense of accountability resides and the potential to develop shared practice can begin.

A key finding from the analysis of the transcribed interviews in this case study showed that the initial by-in from teachers to engage with the instructional framework, or the domain of instructional rounds, was strong in the first few years of implementing the model. The instructional framework was new to the district, learning its content was relevant to teachers, and engaging with the framework through a teacher led, collaborative approach like instructional rounds was exciting and refreshing. High levels

of voluntary participation by teachers was evidence of high interest in the approach. After the first few years of implementation, however, participating in instructional rounds for the purpose of learning the instructional framework seemed to have waned. A common theme expressed by teacher participants was the concern that once they accomplished the goal of learning the framework, there was not clear guidance on next steps. Each school adapted the model based on what teachers and administrators in their school wanted it to look like.

Teachers in this case study want to continue to engage with their colleagues around the instructional core, the essential domain of their daily practice of teaching and learning, but the structure of instructional rounds must continue to evolve to inspire this purpose. Wenger et al. (2002) argued that the domain should act like a bridge and this "intersection of personal meaning and strategic relevance is a potent source of energy and value." The teachers in this case study discussed need the reflect on how to keep instructional rounds relevant in content and structure so it can continue to bridge the gap between knowing the instructional framework and actually using it to improve their practice.

The community. In communities of practice, the community is the group of people who interact and learn about the domain together. To constitute a community, members must have shared interest in the domain, yet bring individual perspectives to the interaction (Wenger, 1998). This creates the social learning system that builds relationships over time, develops a sense of belonging and mutual accountability, and generates new understanding (Wenger et al., 2002). Applied to instructional rounds, I

would argue there are two potential communities in this school district worth discussing. The first community refers to the teachers who engage in the instructional rounds process at each school. The second community refers to the teacher leaders who also act as facilitators.

Instructional rounds was developed in this school district in an attempt to build collaborative relationships among teachers and improve teacher understanding of an instructional framework. As Wenger (1998) argues, a community, in the construct of communities of practice, is not a group of people being assigned to learn about a domain. A top down approach is not effective because "the kind of personal investment that makes for a vibrant community is not something that can be invented or forced" (Wenger et al., 2002, p.36). Members can be encouraged to participate, but a true community is voluntary because people ultimately decide on their level of engagement based on their personal interest in the domain and their sense of belonging with the group.

The teachers who participated in this case study emphasized the importance of instructional rounds being voluntary and several felt it was the key factor in launching the model in the first year. Teacher E provided a glimpse into how the community in one school was created voluntarily:

The first year we had huge numbers of teachers who wanted to participate. It was awesome. And then it was neat because the second year, by word of mouth, people were starting to hear this was a really great process and we got this secondary wave of people saying, "I want to be part of this." It's like a grass roots method of building a culture. I think making it voluntary was really one of the

most critical components of it. Because it made it teacher driven. It wasn't a

mandated thing.

In every school represented in this case study, the number of teachers

volunteering to participate in instructional rounds grew for the first two years of

implementing the model. This demonstrates that teachers felt a personal investment in the

process and wanted to continue to engage with the community. After the third or fourth

year of implementation, however, the number of teachers volunteering to participate

started to decrease. Looking at the necessary components to a successful community of

practice, this could be attributed to a loss of personal interest in the domain (the

instructional framework), or the environment of the instructional rounds community may

have changed.

Wenger et al. (2002) notes that a successful community is able to establish a

trusting, open environment that offers "a place of exploration where it is safe to speak the

truth and ask hard questions" (p. 37). In this case study, the environment of instructional

rounds was structured with a teacher facilitator to guide the process in a nonjudgmental

manner. Sentence frames and protocols were used during the observations and debrief

discussions to create an environment of safety and inquiry. Interviews with teachers

showed that instructional rounds did provide a safe space for teachers to talk about

teaching and learning, but the personality and skills of the facilitator played a crucial role

in its success. Interpersonal relationships are critical for a community of practice. If

teachers did not feel personally connected to a facilitator, or if the facilitator did not

provide an experience that was rich in content and engaging for members, this could have dissuaded some teachers from engaging with the community.

Another element that could have impacted engagement in the instructional rounds community was continuity over time. Communities of practice must interact regularly in order to learn together, build relationships, and negotiate new knowledge and meaning (Wenger, 1998). Due to the number of teachers volunteering to participate in instructional rounds in a school, many teachers only had an opportunity to participate once or twice a year. If a community does not meet regularly, it is more difficult to develop the respectful and trusting relationships needed to build a sense of community (Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011; Wenger, 1998). Interacting regularly also supports members in developing a shared understanding of their domain and their approach to learning about it. This not only has implications for teachers who participated in instructional rounds at their schools, but also for teacher leaders who were acting as facilitators.

The second community in this case study is the group of teacher facilitators from across the school district. During the first two years of implementing instructional rounds, facilitators described an environment that seemed to emulate its own community of practice. Teacher facilitators were identified by their school administrators as people who were highly respected among their colleagues, demonstrated effective teaching practices, and were personally interested in taking a leadership role in their schools. Facilitators from across the district met together regularly to learn about the theories behind instructional rounds, share the successes and challenges they were experiencing, and help

each other solve problems. Teacher A provides an example of how the community of teacher facilitators supported their work:

> At the end of our first year, we really heard from our staff that they wanted some rounds based on like content. And that's tricky with a small school. Then at the facilitators meeting, I heard from other schools and what they were trying, and I had some thoughts on what we could try. It was really helpful to talk with other people who also facilitate rounds. Time to talk about protocols and procedures and why they do it the way they do.

Providing the time and space for teacher facilitators to develop their own community of practice allowed them to engage in the uniqueness of their work and develop shared understandings about instructional rounds, the instructional framework, and how to engage teachers in learning. As Wenger et al. (2002) states, "Members use each other as sounding boards, build on each other's ideas, and provide a filtering mechanism to deal with knowledge overload" (p. 34). Regular meetings for teacher facilitators, or the development of this community, did not continue in the school district after the third year of instructional rounds implementation. Teacher interviews in this case study suggest that the breakdown of this unique community of learners at the district level may have contributed to the variance in success of instructional rounds communities at the school level.

The practice. In a community of practice, the practice refers to the group's collective ways of doing things, or the specific knowledge and behaviors the community develops (Wenger, 1998). The practice can take the form of concrete objects such as

tools, resources, and documents, or abstract notions such as behaviors, perspectives, and ways of problem solving. Wenger et al. (2002) argues that effective practice is developed organically and "each community has a specific way of making its practice visible through the ways that it develops and shares knowledge" (p. 39). In other words, the practice is evidence that the community is working.

In this case study on Instructional Rounds, the practice involves tangible and intangible elements. Tangible objects include the instructional rounds debrief documents, discussion protocols and sentence frames, and teacher reflection forms used for observation and engagement with the instructional framework. The intangible practice includes teacher experiences, stories, behaviors, feelings and attitudes about the Instructional Rounds process. Wenger et al. (2002) succinctly notes, "a practice is a sort of mini-culture that binds the community together" (pg. 39). In this case study, teachers expressed that instructional rounds created a culture of mutual respect, trust and openness among teacher colleagues which allowed their practice to grow and evolve.

In some schools, the debrief documents that captured the instructional rounds practice were sent to the entire staff, to give everyone in the building a glimpse into the collective practices and ideas that were emerging. In other schools, the debrief documents were only sent to those who participated as an observer or host in instructional rounds that day. The practice was captured in the forms of reflective statements using sentence frames and the instructional framework, as well as pictures from the classroom that represented the learning that took place. The organization and distribution of the learning that took place during each instructional rounds session was determined by the teachers

who participated in each school. Wenger (1998) describes this combination of interacting with others in a community coupled with producing artifacts to help organize new learning as participation and reification in a community of practice construct.

      Participation and reification. Wenger (1998) argued that engagement in a community of practice takes place through the interaction of participation and reification or connecting with others and acting as a group. Members of a community must both actively participate as well as contribute to the production of products as they negotiate meaning with one another (Smith, et al., 2017; Wenger, 1998). This duality is a fundamental component of a community of practice. It is also a fundamental component of instructional rounds, as teachers engage in the process of observation, discussion, reflection and identifying next steps in collaboration with their colleagues (City et al., 2009). In this case study, teachers noted that the success of instructional rounds was largely determined by who was in the room. Wenger (1998) would contend that, "participation in social communities shapes our experience, and it also shapes those communities; the transformative potential goes both ways" (pg. 57). To truly cultivate a community of practice such as instructional rounds, attention must be paid to the authentic engagement of its members as well as how the learning is captured and expressed.

      Within the communities of practice construct, Wenger (1998) also warns against the dangers of reification. Although the effect of reification can produce meaningful evidence of learning, "it conveys a sense of useful illusion" (Wenger, 1998, p. 62). In the case of instructional rounds, simply reading the debrief documents can make it appear

that quality learning about the instructional framework was taking place during the instructional rounds discussions and the conversations were focused on what was seen and heard during observations in the classroom. The debrief document, however, is simply representative of the negotiation of meaning that took place within the entire instructional rounds experience. To truly understand the quality of learning that took place, one would need to have been in the room as an active participant. This points to why Wenger (1998) describes participation and reification as complementary processes, so they can make up for the limitations of the other. Interviewing teachers coupled with reviewing documents for this case study served a similar purpose to ensure accuracy and credibility of the findings.

The communities of practice framework has provided a useful conceptual lens for educational researchers seeking to better understand how teachers learn in professional settings (Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011; Little, 2003; Roegman et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2017), yet few studies specifically investigated how the framework aligned with the practice of instructional rounds. Looking at how the interrelated components of the domain, community, and practice in a community of practice are reflected in the instructional rounds approach is useful to better understanding why the model is effective at building collaborative relationships and facilitating teacher learning and how it could be improved. The complementary process of participation and reification also provide insights into why instructional rounds in some schools might be thriving, while others are struggling to maintain momentum.

Conclusion

This evaluative case study fills a significant gap in practice by providing an in-depth look at the outcomes of an instructional rounds model and rich descriptions about the model from teachers who engage in it. The literature pointed to the need for increased understanding of how variations of the model are being used, and local school district administrators took an active role in defining the purpose and rationale for the study to meet their needs. After completing the data collection and analysis, I met with the school district deputy superintendent and the director of teaching and learning who was responsible for instructional rounds in the district at the time of the study. The purpose of the meeting was to identify a project deliverable that would share the outcomes of the study and support the districts goals. The school district administrators requested a project that includes: 1) a concise evaluation report that answers the research questions, and 2) a face to face meeting that shares the results of the study and provides recommendations for the future. Based on the request from the school district administrators, the project study consists of an evaluation report and a concise one-page summary of the evaluation report.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The project for this evaluative case study of an instructional rounds model has several components to best address the school district needs. The project can be found in its entirety in Appendix A. First, I wrote an evaluation report that explains the purpose and goals of the study, research questions, methods used, and key outcomes (see Spaulding, 2014). The report also includes recommendations for the future of instructional rounds in the school district based on the findings of the study and connections to the literature. Second, I created a concise, one-page executive summary of the evaluation report that was handed out at a face-to-face meeting. I gave the deputy superintendent the full evaluation report but the deputy superintendent requested a one-page summary for other district administrators to read.

A primary goal of the evaluation report was to provide answers to the research questions and determine if the goals of instructional rounds in this school district had been met. A successful outcome of this project would be when school district administrators have the information they need to make informed decisions about whether to continue to fund instructional rounds as a professional learning model or how to refine the process in a way that will allow the district to continue to meet its school improvement goals.

Rationale

I selected an evaluation report as the most appropriate project genre because this study was an evaluative case study of an instructional rounds model in a school district.

The purpose of the study was to provide school district administrators with outcomes-based evidence of the impact of instructional rounds on teacher learning. These results would allow district leaders to make informed decisions about whether to stop, start, expand, or refine the professional learning model. An evaluation report is used specifically for this purpose. An evaluation report provides the client with the findings of the study to measure whether the program goals are being met and makes recommendations for refinement and success (Spaulding, 2014).

The key findings of this case study of instructional rounds that were presented in the data analysis section showed that the professional learning model strengthened personal and professional relationships among teachers and provided teachers with clarity and common language about the instructional framework. The data analysis also showed that the quality of teachers' learning was dependent upon several contextual factors such as the personality and skills of the facilitator, the dynamics of the participants, and the structure of the debriefing process. Teachers also expressed strong opinions about how to improve the instructional rounds process in the school district and factors that should be considered as the district makes decisions about future implementation of the model. An evaluation report provides the structure needed to present these findings to district leaders, provide recommendations, and allow district administrators to interpret the information within the context of their school systems, discuss the findings, and make decisions about future programming (see McNeil, 2011; see Spaulding, 2014).

Review of the Literature

The following section provides a scholarly review of the current literature related to program evaluation and the specific genre of an evaluation report that I selected for this project study. I use current research and theory to explain how an evaluation report is appropriate to address the problem locally and broadly. Finally, I provide a critical analysis of how current research supports and connects to the topic of Instructional Rounds as a model for professional learning and the use of program evaluation as a study design.

I conducted this literature review by searching scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles through the Walden library databases of EBSCO Host and the Google Scholar online database. I used the following key words in the search for literature: *program evaluation, evaluation reports, professional development evaluation, evaluation of educational programs, instructional rounds evaluation,* and *instructional rounds effectiveness.* In addition to searching these online databases, I also reviewed the references that were used in key research studies to look for the most recent peer-reviewed sources pertaining to the subjects of program evaluation and professional development that were published within the last 5 years. If I found an article worth pursuing, I used Google Scholar to look up the exact article and downloaded an original copy to read and study. Not all of the sources I cite in the following literature review were published within the last 5 years. This is due to the fact that several leading books and articles on program evaluation and case study research were published prior to the year 2010. Many of the conceptual frameworks guiding this study were also published in

the 1990s. If I used these references in my analysis, I tried to always support their claims along with the most current sources.

Program Evaluation

Program evaluations are used to assess program results, which means measuring the extent to which a program has fulfilled its purpose (McNeil, 2011; Spaulding, 2014). Program evaluations are used to understand how a program has made a difference in the lives of the participants based on the measured outcomes of participant's learning, and to make recommendations for refinement (Lodico et al., 2010; Patton, 2015). McNeil (2011) states that the main goal of program evaluation is to "improve the quality of a program by comparing the results with the intended program objectives" (p. 26). The results, findings, and outcomes that are derived from program evaluation research are commonly presented as an evaluation report that is given to relevant stakeholders for decision-making purposes (Spaulding, 2014).

An evaluation report is a written document that includes an introduction to the purpose of the evaluation, project goals, methods used for data collection, analysis of the data and findings, and recommendations or considerations based on the results (Lodico et al., 2010; Spaulding, 2014). An evaluation report can be formative and/or summative and may include both quantitative and qualitative data (Spaulding, 2014). A formative evaluation report is used to provide data to stakeholders as the program is taking place with the purpose of using the data to make immediate changes or improvements. A summative evaluation is used measure the outcomes of a program after its implementation, and to determine to what extent the program was successful (Lodico et

al., 2010). This evaluative case study of instructional rounds was a summative evaluation
because the primary purpose of the study was to investigate the current outcomes of the
professional learning model after 5 years of implementation. That said, the data collected
from this study could also be considered formative in the sense that the results may be
used by school district staff to continue to implement instructional rounds and improve it
(Spaulding, 2014).

Project Study Evaluation Report

An evaluation report is an appropriate deliverable for this project to address the
research problem locally and more broadly. The local problem for this school district is
that instructional rounds has been implemented as a professional learning model for 5
years, yet there is little formal evidence that it is meeting its goals of improving
collaborative relationships among teachers and developing teacher learning of an
instructional framework. The only form of evaluation that has been conducted to measure
the impact of instructional rounds was a teacher perception survey that was mainly
quantitative in nature using a Likert-type scale. The results of the survey showed that
teachers had a high level of interest in instructional rounds and believed it was positively
impacting their school and their instruction. Little was known, however, about exactly
how or why teachers were making these claims.

Over the past 5 years, 12 different schools have implemented instructional rounds
for different lengths of time and have used different approaches. School district
administrators, principals, and teachers need to know if instructional rounds is meeting its
intended goals to make informed decisions about the future of the professional learning

model in their schools. An evaluation report provides this information for stakeholders and help them make decisions about if and how instructional rounds might be implemented in the future to support school improvement efforts.

An evaluation report also appropriately addresses the broader problem facing the subject of instructional rounds found in the current literature. Research supports instructional rounds as a promising professional learning model because it engages teachers in a collaborative inquiry process that has been found to help build common language and understanding of effective teaching practices, support critical reflection, increase teachers' sense of trust with their colleagues, and accelerate school and district improvement efforts (City et al., 2009; Mansfield & Thompson, 2017; Teitel, 2013; Williamson & Hodder, 2015). Despite this body of research, instructional rounds has evolved in schools across the United States and abroad into practices that use formats and approaches that sway from the original instructional rounds model (City et al., 2009). These adaptations have been the subject of little empirical study or theoretical analysis (Roegman et al., 2015).

The most recent literature calls for continued research that offers a deeper understanding of how schools are using the instructional rounds model and how it is impacting teacher practice and school improvement efforts (Bowe & Gore, 2017; Reed & Eyolfson, 2015; Roberts, 2013). An evaluation report of this case study of instructional rounds provides a specific look at the outcomes of one adaptation of the model to help fill this gap in practice.

Professional Development

The content of the project, an evaluation report of an instructional rounds model, also contributes to the literature about best practices for teacher professional development. Research is clear that student achievement is directly related to teacher effectiveness (Marzano, 2009; Trevisan, 2004). In other words, growth in student achievement could be attributed to growth in teacher effectiveness (Cross, 2012; Trevisan, 2004). Research is also clear that when teachers participate in high quality professional learning experiences that are hands-on, relevant, and require collective participation with others, they are more likely to change and improve (Boylan, Coldwell, Maxwell, & Jordan, 2018; Cross, 2012).

The data collected in this case study through six semistructured interviews clearly showed that instructional rounds had a positive impact on the personal and professional relationships of teachers due to the collaborative nature of the model. Participants emphasized feelings of cohesion, respect, trust, and an overall strengthening of their school culture. This clear outcome provides additional evidence in the scholarly literature on the positive impact of the instructional rounds model on teacher relationships. In a recent publication on the impact of a cross-school instructional rounds model, Reed and Eyolfson (2015) emphasized the potential of instructional rounds to improve teacher self-efficacy and personal investment in their school community. They also noted that instructional coaches, or teacher leaders, played an active role in developing and refining the model for success (Reed & Eyolfson, 2015).

A similar theme around the role of teacher facilitators emerged during data analysis in this evaluative case study. The quality of teacher learning during instructional rounds was often dependent on contextual factors such as the personality and skills of the facilitator, the dynamics of who else was in the room, the structure of the debrief, and the role of teacher facilitators and administrators. Recent literature supports the notion that the level of engagement of teacher leaders in school improvement efforts can impact the quality of teacher experiences (Bradley-Levine, Ramano, & Reichart, 2017; DeLuca et al., 2015). Teacher-driven professional development can lead to an increase in collaboration and professional growth when administrators and district leaders embrace shared leadership and provide the training necessary for teachers to take leadership roles (Fowler-Finn, 2013; Sullivan & Westover; 2015).

Theoretical Framework

As I was conducting the literature review on program evaluation and evaluation reports, several studies pointed to the consideration of how professional learning logic models and frameworks could be used as tools to help inform research and practice concerning teacher professional learning (Astbury & Leeuw, 2010; Boylan et al., 2018; Lin & Wu, 2016). The most recent publication by Boylan et al. (2018) suggest that there are several logic models and analytical frameworks that can be used as tools to evaluate professional development systems. Several of the models were based on social learning theory, similar to the communities of practice theoretical framework that grounds this case study.

Boylan et al. (2018) discuss Guskey's (2002) linear model of teacher change that argues if a professional development experience creates change in teacher practice, then this can lead to a change in student learning outcomes and a change in teachers' beliefs. Additionally, Desimone's (2009) model is described by Boylan et al. (2018) as focused on the conditions of high quality professional learning that must be in place in order to begin to change teacher knowledge and skills. These include features such as active learning, continued learning over time, a focus on content, and collective participation with other teachers (Boylan et al., 2018). Clarke and Hallingsworth's (2002) model was also discussed as multiple, interconnected pathways that professional learning can take, rather than a linear model.

Similar to Wenger's (1998) construct of communities of practice, Clarke and Hallingsworth (2002) argue that learning takes place through a process of "enactment" and "reflection." Enactment requires teachers implementing their learning or trying new instructional practices. Reflection is described as the mental process teachers undergo that leads to changes in beliefs or practice (Boylan, et al., 2018). These interconnected processes allow a teacher's learning to be visible, so they can take ownership over their own learning. This description is similar to the complementary process of participation and reification in Wenger's (1998) community of practice framework, where participation involves actively engaging with the community of learners, and reification involves producing products that give tangible evidence of the group's work, or their negotiation of meaning. It is clear that using a social learning conceptual framework can

help researchers situate a professional learning model under investigation alongside a relevant construct.

Role of the Researcher

Finally, an evaluative report for this project will allow the stakeholders to act as participants in making meaning and determining how to use the information provided in the evaluation (Ross, 2010; Stake, 1995). In program evaluation research, Luo (2010) and Patton (2015) suggest that evaluators often play different roles during different phases of the program evaluation process. Despite the fact that an evaluation report describes the outcomes of a program and offers recommendations, Stake (1995) argues that it is not the researcher's responsibility to make a final summative value judgement about the program. Rather, the evaluation report should be written and presented in a manner that allows the stakeholders to interpret the results and consider the recommendations (Stake, 1995). Lou (2010) agrees that an evaluator can make recommendations about how to improve the program, but ultimately the decision-making is up to the stakeholders. The evaluation report provides the necessary information about the outcomes of the program and serves as a tool for dialogue (Grob, 2017; Volkov, 2011). The formatting, language used, and presentation style of the evaluation report can heavily impact its usability (Bourgeois & Naré, 2015). It is important that stakeholder's can easily engage with the evaluation report and interpret the information naturally (Stake, 1995).

In addition to writing an evaluation report for this project, I also presented the results of this case study in a face-to-face meeting with district administrators. A one-page executive summary of the study design, key findings, and recommendations was

created to guide the discussion. Conducting a meeting in person with the school district

administrators provided an optimal environment to present the study findings alongside

open dialogue with those in attendance (Grob, 2017; Volkov, 2011). Evaluation results

can often evoke an emotional response from stakeholders who are invested in the success

of the program (Bechar & Mero-Jaffe, 2013; Grob, 2017). Therefore, it was important for

me to present evaluative findings in a professional manner, summarize key findings in a

concise and compelling way, and be prepared to answer questions (Bourgeois & Naré,

2015; Grob, 2017). In this way, I was able to act like a facilitator of learning and was able

to accomplish the program evaluation goal of providing information to stakeholders, so

they can make informed decisions about the program.

Project Description

This project study includes a program evaluation report and a one-page executive

summary that was delivered to school district administrators in a face-to-face meeting in

September, 2018. The resources needed to complete these deliverables included the most

recent literature on program evaluations and evaluation reports to serve as examples for

content and structure. All of the needed resources were currently available via publication

databases, scholarly books, and Walden library support. The deputy superintendent of the

school district had been involved in the formation of this study from the beginning and

had requested that these deliverables be provided. The cooperation with the school

district deputy superintendent resulted in an environment with few barriers to complete

this project. We scheduled a meeting date and time, and the deputy superintendent

provided a meeting space and invited district personnel to attend. As the researcher, I

provided the evaluation report and executive summary. Approximately six district administrators were present at the meeting. I presented the evaluation executive summary, discussed the findings with the administrators, and answered questions.

Project Evaluation Plan

The project genre was an evaluation report, but it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the deliverables and the impact of the presentation on stakeholders. Following the meeting with school district administrators, I sent an e-mail to the deputy superintendent thanking the district for participating in the meeting and offering to respond to any follow up questions or resources. The overall goals of the evaluation were to provide school district administrators with the information they needed to determine if instructional rounds met its goals, and to provide research-based recommendations to help district leaders make decisions about implementing the professional learning model in the future. The deputy superintendent articulated that these goals had been met. The deputy superintendent also requested a copy of the full project study paper once fully approved by the Walden Institutional Review Board.

Project Implications

Research is clear that teacher professional learning is one of the most effective tools to improve teacher quality and student learning, yet millions of dollars are spent on professional development programs that do not meet teachers' needs (Blank, 2013; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Mansfield & Thompson, 2017.) Teachers learn best through active participation, collaborating with other teachers, reflecting, and looking closely at students and their work (Cameron et al., 2013; Darling-Hammond,

1998; Wayne et al., 2008). Instructional rounds is a professional learning model that has the potential show how this type of learning can be done in schools. Ultimately, instructional rounds has the potential to help teachers learn in order to positively impact student improvement.

The collaborative process of instructional rounds provides teachers the time, space, and structure to work together to improve instruction and their school culture overall (Fowler-Finn, 2013). Roberts (2013) argues that instructional rounds can be distinguished from other forms of professional learning or school improvement efforts because "it is intended to disrupt the typical patterns of interaction between adults in schools" (p. 10). This qualitative case study on a model of instructional rounds in one school district, and the evaluation report that is provided, will help educational researchers and practitioners better understand the impact of this professional development model. This evaluation report may just pave the way for another school or district to investigate the instructional rounds model and learn more about the characteristics of high quality professional learning that are meeting teachers' needs.

Locally, this project will promote social change for teachers and students in the cooperating school district. The teachers who volunteered to participate in this study expressed sincere gratitude for the opportunity to be interviewed and share their experiences and perspectives on instructional rounds. Teachers used phrases to describe instructional rounds such as "instrumental," "healthy," "a game-changer," and "refreshing." At the same time, teachers also expressed concerns that the model was fading in several schools, and they did not feel like there was an interest to continue to

refine and develop the model at the district level. This project will provide teachers with an avenue to have their perspectives shared. If district leaders decide to continue to fund instructional rounds as a school improvement strategy, school principals and teachers will have this evaluation report and summary to inform their work.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

Research is clear that teacher professional learning is one of the most effective tools to improve teacher quality and student learning, yet millions of dollars are spent on professional development programs that do not meet teachers' needs (Blank, 2013; Mansfield & Thompson, 2017). Instructional rounds has the potential to change this situation. The instructional rounds process has been identified as a promising professional learning model, but the most current literature is calling for studies to interrogate the process (Bowe & Gore, 2017; Philpott & Oates, 2015b). Schools and districts across the country and abroad have taken the original instructional rounds model (City et al., 2009) and adapted it to align with various school contexts and school improvement efforts (Teitel, 2013). The literature is asking for studies to address issues such as: How is instructional rounds being used? What variations are effective? Who is learning what? What are teachers doing and saying?

A strength of this project study is that it helps fill this significant gap in practice by providing an in-depth look at an instructional rounds model and the teachers who engage in it. The evaluation report provides descriptive evidence directly from teachers that represents an increased understanding of what teachers think about instructional rounds, their experiences participating in the process, and their perceptions of its impact on their learning. The evaluation report offers direct quotations from teachers that address the impact instructional rounds had on their personal and professional relationships, as

well as the impact using an instructional framework had on their learning and instructional practice.

If school district leaders want to learn how to create high quality professional learning experiences for their teachers that are rooted in best practices for teacher learning, this evaluation report offers a clear example of what may or may not work. Ultimately, the strength of this report is its contribute to the betterment of teacher learning. A goal of program evaluation overall is to be a change agent (Volkov, 2011). This evaluation report offers rich description of a professional learning model for readers and stakeholders to use as a catalyst for discussion, decision-making, and positive social change.

Despite the capacity of the evaluation report to promote change, a limitation of the report is that any action taken is ultimately left up to the stakeholders. The program evaluator simply reports the findings in a professional manner, but it is up to the client to use the information in the report for program improvement (Bourgeois & Naré, 2015). I am not an internal evaluator, and I am no longer employed with the school district or working on the development of the instructional rounds model. The program evaluation report will not improve or refine the instructional rounds process or impact teacher learning in any capacity. It will simply provide school district leaders with the information they need to make these changes if they choose to do so. A different approach to the project study may have afforded different opportunities.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

This program evaluation of an instructional rounds model in one school district was conducted using a case study design. The data collection methods included interviewing six teachers and conducting documentary reviews. Although this approach provided in-depth description of teacher experiences and perceptions, the sample size of six teachers is rather small. This inhibits the ability of the study to be generalized to other school districts. It is up to the reader of the case study and evaluation report to determine if the instructional rounds context, teacher experiences, and results can be applied to their specific setting (Stake, 1995).

An alternative approach could have been to use a mixed-methods design to address the problem and seek answers to the research questions. A mixed-methods design could have provided quantitative and qualitative results about teachers' experiences with instructional rounds (Lodico et al., 2010). Quantitative data could have taken the form of a survey of teacher perspectives from across the district and broadened the sample size. A mixed-methods design was not selected for this study because I am new to evaluation research and the literature warned of the challenges of managing the time and scope of conducting a mixed-methods design study (Creswell, 2009; Hesse-Biber, 2010). The qualitative case study design was also aimed at filling the gap in the literature around what teachers were actually saying and doing during instructional rounds. Data collection was focused on providing evidence using teacher voices.

An alternative definition of the problem overall in this school district may have been to not look at whether the instructional rounds model was working or meeting its

goals, but if teacher learning was actually impacting changes in teacher practice and student learning in the classroom once instructional rounds was over. The informal surveys that were implemented in the school district previously provided evidence that teachers were satisfied with the instructional rounds experience and felt it was positively impacting their relationships with their colleagues and their learning of the instructional framework. The problem for this case study was framed to provide evidence of these claims. An alternative problem could have been to use the evidence from the survey to claim instructional rounds was already meeting its goals, and then identify research questions about the impact in the classroom as a result of participating in the process.

This alternative solution would have been challenging to ground in the current research on instructional rounds because the literature was calling for studies to address *how* schools were using variations of the model and *how* teachers were engaging with the process (Mansfield & Thompson, 2017; Reed & Eyolfson, 2015). Research clearly shows that if the conditions for high quality professional learning are met, student learning improves (Marzano, 2009). How schools are creating these conditions for teacher learning, such as collective participation, mutual accountability, and hands-on experiences in classroom, is a pressing problem to solve. The research questions developed for this case study provided teachers the opportunity to articulate their experiences and capture evidence of how these conditions were achieved.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

Learning how to fully develop a research study grounded in theory and literature and committed to accurate and credible findings was an essential step to understanding

what it truly means to be a scholarly practitioner. Prior to conducting a full literature review, I was anxious about the quantity of research I was about to consume. I was unsure if I could organize the sources, monitor the important connections between the studies, and articulate my interpretations of the results and implications for my study. I soon realized that steeping myself in the research on professional learning overall, and on instructional rounds more specifically, was empowering.

Each and every study I read and analyzed provided a unique perspective and also provided a crucial link to the literature as a whole. I was surprised by how motivating those connections were. I found myself wanting to read more and more and to conduct additional searches using the databases. I scoured the references of key articles until I could recognize almost every source. I could recall a study's findings simply by author name, as well as how their study connected with my research questions. By the end of the literature review, I no longer felt unsure; rather, I felt on the verge of becoming an expert in the field of high quality professional learning for teachers.

Conducting an evaluative case study and producing an evaluation report also equipped me with the knowledge and skills to replicate this process in the future. There is a constant demand in education to measure the effectiveness of our programs, our curricula, and our instruction. I now have a solid understanding of how program evaluation is conducted, the different forms an internal and external evaluation can take, and how to structure an evaluative study that produces credible findings.

When I first started this study, I was a teacher who consistently advocated with administrators and district leaders for the professional learning needs of teachers. At the

completion of this study several years later, I am now an elementary school principal and accountable for the quality of learning I provide for my staff. Developing this research study, conducting qualitative interviews with teachers, analyzing transcripts for themes, and producing an evaluation report of the findings is a scholarly experience that will increase my ability to lead and to measure the impact of my work.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

This process has helped me develop a deeper appreciation for listening to teacher perspectives and valuing teachers as leaders. I will strive to utilize teacher leadership in my school and in my district to support our school improvement efforts and design professional learning experiences with teacher leadership in mind. My current school district has never implemented a model such as instructional rounds, so I am also armed with knowledge of best practices if the model becomes of interest locally.

Overall, I am prepared to tackle any educational problem as a result of my growth as a researcher. I am more capable of identifying scholarly literature, analyzing research designs and methods for credibility, and applying research to my daily work. In other words, I learned the importance of critical thinking and being a critical consumer and producer of research. I also learned that I can accomplish scholarly level writing and reflection through critical thinking and determination. This is important because the continuous improvement of our schools, achieved through quality teaching and learning, is a sophisticated endeavor. Having the skills to think about and solve complex problems is essential. I am confident that I have the ability to model critical thinking and lead for social change.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This project study has several implications for positive social change. First, it has already had a positive impact on the teachers who participated in this study. This project gave teachers an avenue to have their perspectives heard, and they know their experiences will be shared with the school district administrators who are making decisions about the future of instructional rounds. Second, the evaluation report will promote positive change by giving district leaders the information they need to improve the instructional rounds model if they decide to do so. Finally, this project study contributes positively to the larger discussion of effective professional learning for teachers. Even though this specific case study is not generalizable to other settings, the findings are representative of issues about professional learning that are universal.

The many characteristics that influence the effectiveness of professional development are highly complex and interconnected (Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 2009). Guskey (2003) outlines this idea well by stating, "[W]ithin the unique context of nearly every school, there are teachers who have found ways to help students learn well. Identifying the practices and strategies of those teachers and sharing them with their colleagues might provide a basis for highly effective professional learning within that context" (p. 750). In order to provide teachers with professional learning experiences that truly meet their needs and spark authentic engagement, clear descriptions of the contextual factors that can promote or inhibit teacher learning need to be identified, clearly described, and addressed by school and district leaders.

The teachers who participated in this project study of one instructional rounds model in one school district provided some direction on this front. Context matters and contextual factors impact outcomes (Guskey, 2009). Future research that investigates other variations of instructional rounds models being used in schools across the country, in different contexts, would benefit the scholarly literature. For example, additional studies could look closely at the impact of school principals' role in instructional rounds or the impact of on-going training for facilitators on teacher experiences. This project study filled a gap in practice by looking at the impact of teacher learning of an instructional framework during instructional rounds. Similar studies that look specifically at how instructional frameworks might be used to support teacher learning would be of interest broadly and provide comparative evidence for this project study.

Conclusion

All school improvement efforts are part of a continuous cycle of identifying needs, setting goals, measuring progress toward those goals, reflecting on the data collected, and making decisions about the next level of work. This process is at the heart of the instructional rounds model as well as the nature of this evaluative case study. One school district has implemented an instructional rounds model for several years, and now they have an evaluation report to determine not only if their goals were met, but in what ways. When teachers spoke about their experiences leading, observing, and hosting fellow colleagues for instructional rounds, the spirit of collaboration was palpable. It is my hope that school district leaders will choose to work alongside teachers to not only

continue to implement this professional learning model, but improve and refine it using

the recommendations provided.

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Appendix A: The Project

Evaluation Report: The Impact of Instructional Rounds on Teacher Learning

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October 2018

Introduction

A suburban school district in northwest Washington has invested in a teacher-led, school-based model of instructional rounds with the goals of improving collaborative relationships among teachers and improving teacher understanding of an instructional framework. The goals were rooted in a theory of action that a structured, job-embedded, collaborative approach to adult learning would make these school improvement efforts possible. Instructional Rounds was first implemented in only one middle school and has expanded to 12 schools in the district over the course of five years. Implementation occurred slowly over time because participation in instructional rounds was voluntary for schools and teachers in the district. The rationale was that the process was more likely to work if interest in the model grew organically, was teacher-led, and focused on creating a culture of collaboration from which active learning could take place.

Over the past five years, 12 schools at the elementary, middle, and high school level have implemented the instructional rounds model at varying degrees with funding from the district. Even though the process became a popular professional learning strategy, there was little formal evidence that it was meeting its goals. The only form of evaluation that was conducted at the district level to measure the impact of Instructional Rounds was a teacher perception survey that was sent out at the end of every school year via survey monkey to collect feedback from teachers about the process. The results from the survey showed that teachers had a high interest in instructional rounds and believed it positively impacted their relationships with their colleagues, their understanding of the

instructional framework, and had a positive impact on their instruction. Little was known, however, about exactly how or why teachers were making these claims.

Each school that has implemented instructional rounds in this district has been using the model for different lengths of time, with different teachers, and using slightly different approaches. In some schools, two teachers facilitate together. In other schools, different teachers facilitate each time. In some schools, teachers who share the same content area participate in instructional rounds together. In other schools, teachers are scheduled in mixed groups and observe various grade levels outside of their own teaching practice. In some schools, the debrief process is structured and produces reflective thinking about the instructional framework. In other schools, the debrief process is more open-ended and conversational. In some schools, principals join the instructional rounds session as a participant. In other schools, principals are not invited, or choose not to be involved, keeping the model strictly teacher-centered. In the last two years, instructional rounds has even evolved to include cross-school and cross-district sessions.

After five years of implementation, administrators, principals, and teachers in this school district are rightly asking: Did instructional rounds meet its goals? What changes are we seeing in our schools as a result? Is this professional learning model worth the continued investment? The leading authors of instructional rounds (City et al., 2009; Roberts, 2013; Teitel, 2013), and recent scholarly literature on the model (Bowe & Gore, 2017; Mansfield & Thompson, 2017; Philpott & Oates, 2015a) has identified the same gap in practice and is asking similar questions: How is instructional rounds being used?

Who is learning what? What variations are effective? What are teachers saying and doing?

Purpose of Evaluation Report

This evaluation report will outline the findings of an evaluative case study on the instructional rounds model described in the introduction. The goals of the evaluation report are to provide answers to the studies research questions and determine if the goals of instructional rounds in this school district have been met. A successful outcome of this report would be when school district administrators have the information they need to make informed decisions about whether to stop, continue, change, or refine their instructional rounds model to ensure it meets their school improvement goals.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to collect evidence on the effectiveness of the instructional rounds model to determine if the goals were being met, and in what ways:

RQ1: How does participation in instructional rounds impact collaborative relationships among teachers?

RQ2: How does participation in instructional rounds impact teacher learning of the instructional framework?

Methods

An evaluative case study approach was used to address the research questions. The goal of case study research is to study a particular case in depth to maximize what can be learned through inquiry and interpretation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Stake, 1995;

Yin, 2003). The methods used in this case study of instructional rounds focused on

providing an in-depth description and analysis of the model in order for stakeholders to

make informed judgements about the success of the program.

Participants

Six teachers were selected to participate in this case study on instructional rounds

that represented the elementary, middle and high school level. Participation was

voluntary. Criteria was established for selecting participants to ensure multiple

perspectives were gathered. Participants must have been classroom teachers who

participated in Instructional Rounds for three years or more. They also must have

participated both as an observer and as a host. Additionally, at least two teachers in the

sample needed to have experience as an Instructional Rounds facilitator. To ensure

confidentiality, Table A1 shows the pseudonym that was used throughout the study for

each teacher.

Table A2

Participant Sample for Interviews

Sample	Pseudonym	Grade Level	Years participating	Facilitator
Participant 1	Teacher A	Elementary	4	Yes
Participant 2	Teacher B	Elementary	3	No
Participant 3	Teacher C	Middle	4	No
Participant 4	Teacher D	Middle	4	Yes
Participant 5	Teacher E	High	4	Yes
Participant 6	Teacher F	High	3	No

Data Collection

The data collected for this evaluative case study of Instructional Rounds included interviews well as documentary information related to the program. Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with teacher participants. The interviews consisted of a few relatively open-ended questions that kept the conversation fluid, but also kept a consistent line of inquiry focused on the research questions. Interviews lasted from 40 to 60 minutes and were conducted off of school district grounds. Within five days, the interviews were transcribed in full text and sent to the teacher to review for accuracy.

In addition to interviews, documents relevant to the implementation of instructional rounds in different schools were also reviewed including debrief and teacher reflection documents. The school district's instructional framework was intended to be used to structure and guide the instructional rounds debrief. These debrief documents provided corroborative evidence alongside the interviews and showed how schools have adapted the resources to bet fit their goals and school context.

Analysis

During case study research, data analysis involves taking impressions of the data apart by reading and re-reading information, looking for consistent themes, and deeply thinking about interpretations (Bogden & Biklen, 2007; Stake, 1995). The goal of data analysis is to answer the research questions, so it was important to look for consistent themes and patterns that ran across more than one interview transcription or document. The data analysis process was complete when all of the data sources were brought together in a holistic manner and accuracy and credibility were established. Several

strategies including member checking, triangulation, rich description, and researcher self reflection were used to produce an authentic and credible analysis.

Findings

Several clear themes emerged from the data analysis that addresses each research question, as well as outcomes that relate to the larger body of literature on instructional rounds and teacher professional learning. The following section will present the findings of the study, including a table that summarizes participant responses to each research question.

Impact on Collaborative Relationships

RQ 1: How does participation in instructional rounds impact collaborative relationships among teachers?

Theme 1: Instructional rounds strengthens personal relationships. All six teachers expressed that they felt closer to their colleagues personally as a result of participating in instructional rounds and their respect for other teachers grew. Relationships were strengthened because instructional rounds created an environment of trust, vulnerability, cohesion, and positive rapport. Table A2 highlights the findings from participants responses to this first theme that emerged from Research Question 1.

Table A2

Sample Participant Responses to Research Question 1, Theme 1

Participant	Responses to strengthening collaborative relationships
Teacher A	"Rounds allowed for us to actually see the hard work we do every day with each other. It was a reminder to all of us that there is something exceptional within each of our classroom settings, and we get reminded that we work with pretty amazing people that do amazing things."
Teacher B	"Being in each other's rooms and seeing people's personalities in another way was nice. I felt more respect for them personally, like seeing them in a different light because I only talked informally with people, but I've never seen them teach. Afterwards, we were more apt to talk to each other."
Teacher C	"It immediately built a base for collaboration in a way that nothing else will. You have to watch people teach to build trust. It made me feel much more able to share with my colleagues what was really going on in my classroom and being more open with them."
Teacher D	"I think hearing people talk about their own problems of practice builds cohesion and a feeling of comradery. When I hear people wrestling with their own stuff, I think that can often lead to feelings of respect."
Teacher E	"I think making it voluntary was one of the most critical components. Because it made it teacher driven. It wasn't a mandated thing. And I think that's why we ended up having all of our teachers participate."
Teacher F	"I think Rounds was huge. And I think culturally, we met that goal. And you could feel that coming out in other areas of our building."

Theme 2: Instructional rounds strengthens professional relationships. Not only did teachers feel closer to one another personally but participating in instructional rounds positively impacted their professional working relationships and their school culture as a whole. Teachers expressed an upswing in the collaborative culture in their schools, and a visible increase in the quantity and quality of dialogue about teaching and

learning. Table A3 highlights the findings from participants responses to this second

theme that emerged from Research Question 1.

Table A3

Sample Participant Responses to Research Question 1, Theme 2

Participant	Responses to strengthening professional relationships
Teacher B	"Especially being a newer teacher, I really wanted to see what other people were doing in my school. I have this idea in my head, but I was really interested in getting out and seeing what someone else was doing and it would make me think differently."
Teacher C	"I think it made the staff more cohesive. And having those relationships built through rounds, and that collaborative culture that we are all in each other's classrooms and no one has anything to hide, then it made the other whole group learning times throughout the year more powerful too."
Teacher D	"Observing in each other's classrooms really builds the community of the school. Like you are part of something bigger than your own classroom."
Teacher E	"It really improved our colleague culture particularly. That openness to dialogue about teaching, that openness to conversations that challenge each other. It's like a grass roots method of building culture."
Teacher F	"Teachers rarely get to sit around a table, look at each other, and share some of our vulnerabilities. So, having this space, just for teachers to talk about teaching, was really refreshing."

Impact on Teacher Learning

RQ 2: How does participation in instructional rounds impact teacher learning of

the instructional framework?

Theme 1: Teachers gained clarity and common language. Teacher's

understanding of the instructional framework improved as a result of participating in

instructional rounds. The process created the conditions needed to use the framework in

the authentic context of teaching and learning. The opportunity to use the language of the

framework to describe what was observed in the classroom provided clarity for teachers

about what they were seeing and a common language to talk about it. Table A4 highlights

the findings from the first theme that emerged from Research Question 2 about teacher

learning specific to the instructional framework.

Table A4

Sample Participant Responses to Research Question 2, Theme #1

Participant	Responses to teacher learning of the instructional framework
Teacher A	"When we used the framework to help guide our self-reflection, we found we could really start seeing it. All of those dimensions were overwhelming. And I think once we were able to go into each other's classrooms and then debrief about what we saw based on the 5D, I think some of that stress went down."
Teacher B	"I think it definitely made me more comfortable with it. You get stuck on the fact that this is the right way to do it, or this is the only way to do it. So, going in and seeing other people helped show me there are a lot of ways to get at the same outcome."
Teacher C	"For me, it helped me understand what kind of evidence might be used for different indicators within the framework. Someone would say, this is what I observed, which aspect of the framework is that? Would it be more this or more that? And you would have these great conversations about what it was really demonstrating."
Teacher D	"When it was connected to other things I've learned, it made it more powerful rather than just being a stand-alone document. The framework is trying to take this abstract stuff and help people better understand it."
Teacher E	"You can't just *tell* me about the framework. But if I get to *experience* using the framework, that's when I really started to understand what it's about."
Teacher F	"The indicators on the framework would come to life when you get to see it in person. Like student talk, or how are people using learning objectives? It was real life examples instead of hypothetical situations."

Theme 2: Quality of teacher learning was dependent on contextual factors.

Even though teacher learning of the instructional framework improved overall, several factors emerged from the interviews that promoted or inhibited the quality of teacher learning.

First, the *personality and skill of the facilitator*, their relationships with colleagues in the school, and their ability to facilitate a learning conversation with the framework had an impact. Several teachers who experienced a reduction in the number of teachers who volunteered to participate in instructional rounds in the past few years at their school attributed this outcome to the limited skill and experience of the facilitator, not the Instructional Rounds process itself.

Second, the *dynamics of the participants*, or who was grouped together during the instructional rounds sessions had an impact. The grouping and dynamics of teachers impacted how the time was used, how observations were conducted, and what content was discussed. Over the past five years, several schools adapted the instructional rounds process to meet the changing needs and interests of teachers. Instructional rounds was conducted in heterogenous groups of teachers representing various grade levels, content areas, and teaching experience, while other sessions were intentionally grouped for a common problem of practice or grade level study. This flexibility to design instructional rounds to best meet the changing needs of teachers and schools was perceived as a positive aspect of the school districts model.

Third, the *structure of the debrief* and how participants were supported in using the instructional framework had an impact. Initially, a specific protocol and structure was

created for the debrief to ensure teachers were engaging with the framework and the

discussion remained descriptive and not judgmental. Sentence frames were used to

provide this structure. Over time, several schools adjusted their approach in an attempt to

respond to teachers increased understanding of the framework and make the process

meaningful and relevant. The document reviews also reflected these adjustments by

showing different types of sentence frames that were used and various structures for

engaging teachers in the reflection and debrief process. Table A5 highlights the findings

from the second theme that emerged from research question 2 about contextual factors

impacting the quality of instructional rounds.

Table A5

Sample Participant Responses to Research Question 2, Theme 2

Participant	Responses to impact of contextual factors
Teacher A	***Personality and skills of facilitator:*** "Facilitators have to guide the visitors with self-reflection on what they saw, what they heard, or their thinking to guide them to their next step without telling them what that was. But that takes skill to do that. I don't think some facilitators were trained in how to do that."
Teacher B	***Dynamics of participants:*** "The early learning rounds really helped my teaching because I was with teachers who all taught the same thing, we all taught Kindergarten, and we could have a focus. Last year we looked at literacy centers, and this year we looked a lot at work time."
Teacher C	***Structure of debrief:*** "The sentence frames kept me on track. It steered the debrief in the right direction and made sure all voices were heard."
Teacher D	***Dynamics of participants:*** "It really depends on who is in the room. If I'm with three other teachers who have done rounds 10 times, then the pre-brief introduction and norms can go quicker. We can have more time for discussion. But if someone hasn't done it before, you really have to build up those norms and the purpose of those norms. And newer teachers will need more support with using the framework. It's all okay, just different."
Teacher E	***Structure of debrief:*** "When you observe someone teaching, you *do* notice things that aren't working. Like that opportunity was missed, or that kid is probably not doing what they are supposed to be doing. So, what do you do with those observations? Which are helpful to talk about and which aren't appropriate to bring to the conversation? I feel like the sentence frames, *framed* the conversation and helped teachers make those calls. It doesn't mean those other observations aren't occurring in your mind, but that's not what we are here for."
Teacher F	***Personality and skills of facilitator:*** "I feel like our administrator at the time underestimated the importance of relationships that the initial facilitators had. Who they had been in the building before taking on that role and the trust people had. And factoring that into why rounds was working and why people were coming."

Additional Findings

During the data analysis process, several additional themes emerged that were not in direct response to the research questions, but teachers felt had a significant impact on the overall effectiveness of instructional rounds. These issues may have supported or inhibited the instructional rounds process from meetings its goals and may have implications for the school district's future development of the model.

Theme 1: The role of administration. There was overwhelming evidence that teachers did not want administrators leading instructional rounds, and in most cases, teachers felt the integrity of the model was dependent on it being teacher led with no administrator presence. Several teachers agreed that some administrators could participate in the process well, and there was a consensus that teachers think administrators *should* be at the table in an ideal professional and trusting environment.

Despite these beliefs, there was a collective sense that regardless of the relationship that administrators have with their teachers, it still changes the climate of the instructional rounds experience and causes it to feel more evaluative. Administrator presence may also create a lack of clarity across the district about the purpose of instructional rounds and the school districts beliefs about the skills and abilities of teacher facilitators. Teachers did agree that administrative support of the instructional rounds model was required for implementation, and their sponsorship of teacher collaboration was essential. Table A6 highlights the findings from the first additional theme that emerged about the role of administrators impacting the implementation and quality of instructional rounds.

Table A6

Sample Participant Responses to Additional Findings, Theme 1

Participant	Responses to role of administration
Teacher A	"Our principal always supported our decisions and gave us flexibility. rounds finally gave us the opportunity to get feedback from our peers."
Teacher C	"Rounds works when people are able to get really open and honest. And administrators just have evaluation tied to them and people aren't as open. It's best to just not have that be a factor. It's too risky and inconsistent."
Teacher D	"There are unshakable parts of rounds like being non-administrative. Teachers are observing teachers. I love having principals come and visit classrooms, but let's set that up. That needs to be a different context. If administrators are going to be part of it, then let's not call it instructional rounds."
Teacher E	"Administrators can't just assume that we did rounds for a few years, so we got it forever. Students change, teachers change, and administrators change. We need to keep rounds going in order to build and continue our common culture. And our teacher leaders are the ones who can keep that going."

Theme 2: Training for teacher facilitators. The three teachers who had also been facilitators of the instructional rounds process in their schools expressed a strong need for continued training and collaboration between other teacher facilitators across the district. Each teacher talked about the formal training and support the district had in place during the first two years of instructional rounds implementation and were concerned that it didn't continue. Teachers discussed evidence for this concern through their recent experiences as a participant in instructional rounds while other teachers had taken on the facilitator role. Table A7 highlights the findings from the second additional theme that

emerged about needed training for teacher facilitators to ensure the integrity of the

professional learning experience.

Table A7

Sample Participant Responses to Additional Findings, Theme 2

Participant	Responses to training for facilitators
Teacher A	"I think it's really important that we continue to do training, so facilitators truly have the background of what rounds is, have time to read the literature about why we do it and how to do it. Now it feels like if you are going to facilitate, good luck. And I feel like that's why people aren't as excited about participating anymore."
Teacher D	"All of a sudden I found myself in the position of leading rounds, but I've never even read the book! Kinda crazy."
Teacher F	"We spent a lot of time talking, adjusting, and making it work. Even the way we grouped people was really intentional and thoughtful, including the time of year, especially for new teachers, the type of classes groups were seeing, the personalities of the teachers we were putting together. It didn't seem like that continued."

Theme 3: Unclear next steps. One last finding that emerged was the uncertainly

teachers felt about the future of instructional rounds in their schools and in the district.

There was a sense that instructional rounds was losing momentum, but only because it

wasn't being prioritized, not because the process lacked effectiveness. Teachers

expressed a desire to be innovative and think about how to continuously improve the

process as their schools and staff change. Teachers want to be involved in helping to

design the next steps and believe that on-going collaboration and training for facilitators

could be a key strategy to help instructional rounds successfully evolve and help schools

meet their goals. Table A8 highlights the findings from the third additional theme that

emerged about unclear next steps for the instructional rounds model.

Table A8

Sample Participant Responses to Additional Findings, Theme 3

Participant	Responses to unclear next steps
Teacher A	"I think for us, we need to look at it differently. Our staff wants to observe in content areas. So, why not have 5th, 4th, and 3rd grade math teachers all have subs like you would normally, and your facilitator would still help with the reflection and debrief piece. But, everybody goes in and watches something with the 5th grade teacher, then they all watch the 4th grade teacher, and then the 3rd grade. When they debrief, they can all have a conversation with each other about their math area of focus."
Teacher B	"We were already talking about what we want to focus on next year. It would be nice to get feedback. To have someone say, this is great, but why did you do that? What was your thinking? That part is sort of missing. Getting that honest feedback about what people thought."
Teacher C	"Many of us get to observe like one time a year and host one time. That's not enough to really change practice at a large scale, but it sets us up to thinking creatively. There's so much potential there."
Teacher E	"Our staff is constantly evolving. It is really important that we don't lose sight of staff turn-over issues. And to keep rounds going to build that common culture. I feel like if you say instructional rounds at a staff meeting right now, new teachers would be like, the instructional what?"
Teacher F	"I would like to have an opportunity to try and figure out what's next for us? I feel like we had momentum, and we could have figured out next steps, but it seems like we just let it go. I think that was an administrative decision."

Connection to Literature

Participation in instructional rounds positively impacted collaborative

relationships among teachers personally and professionally. In this school district,

instructional rounds resulted in a positive, culture-building effect, helping teachers feel

more connected to each other as colleagues, reducing feelings of isolation, and increasing

feelings of trust and respect. The literature on effective professional learning shows that collaborative learning has been found to increase teacher self-efficacy, motivation, and trust (DuFour et al., 2008; Morel, 2014), but only if the professional learning time is carefully structured and purposeful (Guskey, 2009). Evidence from the interviews in this case study show that the goal of improving collaborative relationships was met initially, but that intentional thought needs to be put into who is facilitating the instructional rounds process, how groups are structured, and how to continue to refine the model so relationships can strengthen, especially as new teachers join a staff.

Hatch et al. (2016) and Mansfield and Thompson (2017) asked for additional studies that focus on the collaborative nature of instructional rounds and how the process changes the professional culture in schools. This case study provides an in depth look at a group of teachers who engaged in an instructional rounds model where the goal of improving collaborative relationships was achieved. The instructional rounds model in this district created the conditions necessary for teachers to build authentic relationships and engage in collaborative learning. Teachers in this case study argued the success was a result of the process being teacher led, voluntary, and connected to their daily work of teaching and learning. These conditions are routinely supported in the literature on effective professional learning that impact teacher practice (Blank, 2013; Guskey, 2009; Hunzicker, 2012; Mansfield & Thompson, 2017).

Participation in instructional rounds also positively impacted teacher learning of the instructional framework. Teachers felt more comfortable using the language of the instructional framework and felt more aligned with each other when they talk about

teaching and learning. The instructional rounds process provided an opportunity to "see" the instructional framework in the context of a classroom and supported the use of a common language to talk about those observations. Allen et al. (2016) and Roegman (2012) called for studies to look for how the instructional rounds process can be enhanced to promote quality discussions after classroom observations. This case study provides an analysis of one method to structure discussions using an instructional framework and sentence frames to guide intentional dialogue and promote learning. The findings from this case study also showed the quality of the discussions were influenced by the skills of the teacher facilitators, which Roegman (2012) also found to be true among a group of administrators and superintendents.

Even though the initial goal of improving teacher learning of the instructional framework has been met in this school district, there is now a lack of clarity on how to deepen this learning and engage with the framework in new ways. Teitel (2013) warns that school-based instructional rounds models tend to default back to existing school norms, practices and culture rather than disrupt, change and improve teaching and learning. The instructional rounds model in this school district has the potential to continue to be a promising innovation in teacher professional learning, but time and attention must be made to continuously improving the model to meet the changing needs of teachers and schools. Teachers in this school district expressed a desire to refine their school-based, teacher-led approach that incorporates more authentic feedback and focused learning. Variations to the original instructional rounds model, such as "Teacher Rounds" developed by Del Prete (2013) and enhanced by Troen and Boles (2014) could

offer some solutions with its focus on classroom-based professional learning communities shaped by and for teachers. Additional resources to support the leadership and facilitation of instructional rounds have also been provided by Fowler-Finn (2013) and Roberts (2013).

Lastly, a core principle of instructional rounds is the view that teachers learn through social interaction, collective improvement, and accountability with peers (Stickney, 2015; Teitel, 2013). Roberts (2013) claims, "The most powerful outcome for schools instituting rounds has been in teachers' ability to identify their own professional development needs on the basis of their own facilitation and consistent participation in rounds" (p. 156). Findings from this case study show that fostering this type of collegiality and teacher self-efficacy may have been hampered by unclear expectations for teacher facilitators and inconsistent boundaries for administrators.

For instructional rounds to succeed, attention must be paid to the variety of contextual factors that can get in the way of teacher learning such as: who is facilitating, the skills and training of the facilitator, how often instructional rounds are conducted, how groups are arranged, norms and protocols for behavior, identifying a focus or problem of practice, structuring discussions, the role of administration and teacher leaders, and creating time and space for reflecting on improvement and next steps (Allen et al., 2016; Ellis, et al., 2015; Teitel, 2015). The following section will provide recommendations on how instructional rounds might be improved or refined for this school district based on what was learned from the literature and the outcomes of the evaluative case study.

Recommendations

The purpose of an evaluation report is to provide the necessary information about the outcomes of a program and serve as a tool for stakeholders to dialogue and make informed decisions (Grob, 2017; Spaulding, 2014). To that end, two key recommendations are provided to support the improvement of the instructional rounds model based on the findings of the study, and to allow school district leaders to interpret the results and consider the local implications.

Recommendation 1: Clarify the theory of action for instructional rounds at this new point in time.

Instructional rounds was first implemented in one middle school approximately six years ago. Many of these teachers were willing and eager to observe each other's classrooms. By the second year of implementing instructional rounds, nearly all the teachers were participating in the process. As other principals and teachers from across the district visited this middle school to learn about the approach, implementation of the model gradually expanded to 12 schools over the course of 5 years. Many teachers had never observed other classrooms before, and most were new to using an instructional framework to talk about teaching and learning.

The voluntary, grass-roots approach to growing the instructional rounds process based on interest and teacher leadership was intentional and effective. The school district's theory of action was to focus on building a culture of collaboration and collegiality in schools to create the conditions needed to influence teacher learning of the instructional framework and ultimately improve instructional practice and student

learning. As the instructional rounds model continued to expand across the district, and appeared to be accomplishing these goals, additional time, money and personnel were provided to support the growing initiative.

The findings from this study provide evidence that the instructional rounds model did accomplish the initial goals it set out to achieve. Participation in instructional rounds had a positive impact on collaborative relationships among teachers personally and professionally. The process left a palpable impact on the collaborative culture in schools and increased feelings of rapport, cohesion, and trust. Teachers who participated in instructional rounds also showed improvement in their understanding of the instructional framework. Teachers were better able to describe the structure and vocabulary used in the framework and increased their ability to "see" the instructional framework in the context of a classroom with students. The observation, reflection and debrief process of instructional rounds supported the use of the framework to develop common language to talk about those observations.

The findings from this study also provide evidence that teachers are unclear about how instructional rounds will be used in their schools moving forward. Teachers are concerned that the model was effective at accomplishing its initial goals, but it is losing momentum because they have not been provided the time or space to think creatively about on-going improvement. A few innovations have taken root across the district, such as cross-district early learning rounds for Kindergarten teachers, and a process to support learning around technology integration, but teachers feel these are isolated adaptations that are not accessible to all teachers. There are also questions about whether these

instructional rounds models continue to meet the parameters of instructional rounds. In other words, how far from the original model could the school district go in order to continue to call it instructional rounds? Are teachers still leading? What's the role of administration? Is the instructional framework still being used effectively?

The first recommendation is for the school district to clarify the theory of action for instructional rounds at this new point in time. In many schools, a collaborative culture has been established that as paved the way for teachers to work together to improve their practice. Articulating a new theory of action will provide schools and teachers with clear goals to guide and measure their next level of work (Philpott & Oates, 2017). The school district could consider asking: What is our model of instructional rounds? What is it not? What are the desired outcomes? What are the desired options for implementation within schools and across schools to help us reach these outcomes?

In Robert's (2013) case study of an instructional rounds model, he refers to Paul Hager's work on workplace learning and advocates for a view of learning with instructional rounds that is "problematic." Roberts (2013) adds, "A problematic view of instructional rounds means that the process should constantly create new questions if people are learning anything" (p. 141). One of the ways educators can do this is by continuously defining relevant problems of practice and developing a theory of action for growth. The teachers who participated in this case study hoped they could have a seat at the table to think creatively about how to leverage instructional rounds to support school district goals and clarify next steps for their schools and staff.

Recommendation 2: Provide training and support for teacher facilitators

There is broad consensus that when teacher professional learning experiences are supported by an environment of collaboration and accountability with others, teachers are more likely to improve (Blank, 2013; DuFour et al., 2008; Wayne et al, 2008). The instructional rounds model is grounded in the research on best practices for adult learning with its collaborative approach focused on educators working together to improve instruction. The quality of teacher learning, however, is influenced by who is leading it. The personality and skills of the facilitator is crucial to the success of instructional rounds. This was evidenced in the instructional rounds literature (Borko, 2004; City et al., 2009; Fowler-Finn, 2013) and supported in teacher experiences from this case study.

Instructional rounds facilitators are responsible for establishing and maintaining and environment of safety and risk taking, guiding their peers in an affirming, yet structured manner. Facilitators are often responsible for creating observation schedules, grouping teachers for sessions, establishing norms, and reflecting on strengths and challenges with their administrators. Facilitators are teacher leaders who need to be able to listen, ask effective questions, use humor, limit distractions, encourage active participation from colleagues, and ultimately guide teachers to change their practice, not just talk about it. When implemented well, the repeated practice of instructional rounds creates a sense of collective efficacy among teachers as they work together to establish a clear idea about what high-quality teaching and learning should look like (Teitel, 2013; Troen & Boles, 2014).

If the teacher facilitator is a key factor that determines the effectiveness of the instructional rounds experience, then intentional planning for their success would be necessary. *The second recommendation is for the school district to provide training and support for teacher facilitators.* The school district could benefit from asking: Who should facilitate instructional rounds and why? What does quality facilitation look like? What characteristics and skills need to be developed in teacher facilitators and how will we develop them? How will we know if teacher facilitators are demonstrating these characteristics and skills?

Several teachers in this case study of instructional rounds described experiences in their schools where voluntary participation in the process decreased following a change in teacher facilitation. In some schools, teachers attributed the decrease in participation to the specific teacher facilitator that was selected, stating they had not established enough rapport with the staff to lead the inquiry process. It was a personal matter that demonstrated the importance of trust. In other schools, teachers felt the decrease in participation was the result of the ineffective skills of the facilitator to guide the debrief discussion in a way that allowed teachers to examine, discuss and challenge ideas in a meaningful way. When teachers feel that instructional rounds, or any professional learning experience, is not relevant and meaningful to their practice, they will not be motivated to continue to participate (Roberts, 2013; Wayne et al., 2008).

As each school utilizes the instructional rounds process to build a collaborative culture among their staff, the teachers who facilitate instructional rounds across the district should also be thought of as their own professional learning community, or

community of practice, in order to ensure the instructional rounds model can improve and grow (DuFour et al., 2008; Wenger, 1998). This may include on-going, cross-district collaborative meetings for teacher facilitators to learn together, reflect, self assess, build facilitation skills, and calibrate their understandings. Teitel (2013) argues that it is important that schools "don't just keep 'doing' rounds, but continually learn about it and improve it as a practice' (p. 28). If the school district provides training and support for teacher facilitators, the quality of the instructional rounds experience for teachers within schools should continuously improve.

Summary

The goals of this evaluation report were to 1) provide answers to the case study's research questions and determine if the goals of instructional rounds in this school district have been met, and 2) provide school district administrators with the information they need to make informed decisions about whether to stop, continue, change, or refine their instructional rounds model to ensure it meets their school improvement goals. This evaluation report also provided two key recommendations based on the findings of the study and supported by current literature to support sound decision-making. The following section provides the one-page executive summary of the evaluation report.

Evaluation Report: Executive Summary

The Impact of Instructional Rounds on Teacher Learning

Purpose of Study: Determine if instructional rounds was meeting its goals of 1) improving collaborative relationships among teachers, and 2) improving teacher understanding of the instructional framework.

Research Questions:
1. How does participation in instructional rounds impact collaborative relationships among teachers?
2. How does participation in instructional rounds impact teacher learning of the instructional framework?

Research Methods: Evaluative Case Study
o Participants: Six teachers representing elementary, middle and high school
o Data Collection: Interviews and document reviews
o Accuracy: Member checking, triangulation of data, thick description

Key Findings:
1. Instructional rounds strengthen personal relationships
2. Instructional rounds strengthen professional relationships
3. Teachers gained clarity and common language about the instructional framework
4. Quality of teacher learning was dependent on contextual factors (i.e., personality and skills of the facilitator, dynamics of the participants, structure of the debrief)

Additional Findings:
1. Teachers want the role of administrators to be clarified
2. Teachers expressed a strong need for training and collaboration for facilitators
3. Next steps for instructional rounds in the district is unclear to teachers

Recommendations for Consideration:
o Clarify the theory of action for instructional rounds at this new point in time.
  • What is the model of Instructional Rounds in our district? What is it not? What are the desired outcomes?
  • What are the options for implementation within schools and across schools to meet these outcomes?
o Provide training and support for teacher facilitators.
  • Who should facilitate and why? What does quality facilitation look like?
  • What characteristics and skills need to be developed in teacher facilitators and how will on-going training be provided?
  • How will we know if facilitators are demonstrating these characteristics and skills?

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Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Project: Case Study on the Impact of Instructional Rounds on Teacher Learning

Date: _____ Time: _____ Place: _____

Teacher Participant:
☐ Elementary 1   ☐ Elementary 2   ☐ Middle 1   ☐ Middle 2   ☐ High 1   ☐ High 2

Introduction Script *(read by researcher):* "Thank you for volunteering to tell me about your experiences with Instructional Rounds. The purpose of this study is to learn about how Instructional Rounds is impacting teacher learning. I am interviewing teachers from different elementary, middle and high schools as well as looking at documents such as Round debriefs and teacher reflections. The information from this interview is confidential and will not be seen by anyone except you and me. I will not use your real name or the name of your school in any documents or in the final written report. Instead, I will use a pseudonym for names such as "Teacher A" or "School 1." What questions do you have about confidentiality?"

"The interview should take approximately 30 minutes. I have questions prepared, but I want the interview to feel like a conversation. I may add some follow up questions depending on what you want to talk about. I will be taking some brief notes and audio recording our conversation. This will make sure I capture everything you say accurately. I will transcribe the interview later. You signed a consent form to record our conversation. Is this still ok with you? Great. Let's get started."

Turn on audio recording device and test it.

Interview Questions:

1. Please describe your participation in Instructional Rounds at your school.

2. In what ways has participating in Instructional Rounds impacted your relationships with your colleagues? (Probing: Tell me more. Can you say more about that?)

3. In what ways has participating in Instructional Rounds impacted your understanding of the 5D Instructional Framework? (Probing: Tell me more. Can you say more about that?)

4. How has Instructional Rounds impacted your school overall? (Probe: Can you give an example?)

5. What else would you like to tell me about Instructional Rounds?

Appendix C: Document Review Protocol

Project: Case Study on the Impact of Instructional Rounds on Teacher Learning

Date: _____   Time: _____   Place: _____

Title of Document: _____

Document Type: **Grade Level:**
☐ Instructional Rounds debrief document   ☐ Elementary
☐ Instructional Rounds teacher reflection document   ☐ Middle
                                                            ☐ High

Document Review/Coding:
When reviewing documents, the following categories will be used as a starting point to code the information and look for patterns. Categories will be noted in the margins of the document. Additional categories or themes may be created during data analysis.

The information in the document refers to...
☐ relationships with colleagues
☐ collaboration
☐ language of the instructional framework
☐ learning about the instructional framework
☐ a change in thinking
☐ a change in instructional practice

Notes:

Appendix D: Researcher Log

Project: Case Study on the Impact of Instructional Rounds on Teacher Learning

Date	Time	Location	What Occurred
3/10/18	9:00am	E-mail	Connect with Deputy Superintendent to seek permission to conduct study
3/18/18	2:00pm	E-mail	Permission granted to conduct study. Deputy Superintendent sends e-mail to principals to inform them of the study and seek permission.
3/21/18	1:30pm	E-mail	Receive letter of cooperation signed from Deputy Superintendent
3/26/18	10:00am	E-mail	Communication from Deputy Superintendent with permission to contact six different principals
3/27/18	8:00am	E-mail	Contacted principals for permission to contact teacher participants
4/2/18	5:00pm	E-mail	All principals have granted permission and provided list of potential participations based on purposeful sampling requirements
4/9/18	8:00am	E-mail	E-mail sent to all potential participants requesting volunteers
4/13/18	5:00pm	E-mail	List of participants acquired, purposeful sample selected
4/16/18	8:00am	E-mail	Participants notified of selection; invitation to schedule interview
4/17/18	7:00am	E-mail	Scheduled interview with High School 1
4/20/18	7:00am-7:40am	Coffee shop meeting room	Interview with High School 1
4/23/18	1:00-2:00pm	District office	Met with T.H., director of Teaching and Learning about project study.
4/23/18	3:30-4:20pm	Coffee shop meeting room	Interview with Elementary 1 Brought debrief document and documents used to collect feedback from staff
4/25/18	6:00am / 4:00pm	E-mail	Sent High School 1 transcribed interview for member checking / High 1 confirmed accuracy of transcript
4/26/18	8:00am	E-mail	Scheduled interview with Middle 1

4/28/18	2:00pm	E-mail	Sent Elementary 1 transcript for member checking
4/30/18	4:00-4:45pm	Coffee shop meeting room	Interview with Middle 1 Brought debrief document to interview
5/2/18	12:00pm	E-mail	Schedule interview with Middle 2
5/3/18	1:00pm	E-mail	Elementary 1 confirms accuracy of transcript
5/7/18	4:00-4:45pm	Coffee shop meeting room	Interview with Elementary 2
5/9/18	7:15-8:00am	Coffee shop meeting room	Interview with Middle 2 Brought debrief document to interview
5/12/18	9:00am	E-mail	Sent Middle 1 interview transcript for review
5/13/18	8:00am	E-mail	Sent Elementary 2 interview transcript for review
5/13/18	1:00pm	E-mail	Elementary 2 sends debrief document via e-mail
5/13/18	12:00pm	E-mail	Sent Middle 2 interview transcript for review
5/14/18	8:00am	E-mail	Middle 1 confirmed accuracy of transcript and sends debrief example via e-mail
5/15/18	2:00pm	E-mail	Middle 2 confirmed accuracy of transcript
5/19/18	10:30-11:20am	Coffee shop meeting room	Interview with High 2
5/21/18	8:00pm	E-mail	Sent High 2 transcript for review
5/23/18	3:00pm	E-mail	High 2 confirmed accuracy of transcript
5/25/18	12:00pm	E-mail	Elementary 2 confirmed accuracy of transcript
6/4/18	7:00am	N/A	Researcher begins data analysis