

# LAYING THE FOUNDATION

## DEVELOPING COLLEGIALITY TO ENCOURAGE INSTRUCTIONAL GROWTH

### ABSTRACT

By focusing on professional learning at my school (HS3), the administrative team and I hoped to see a shift from a congenial to a collegial culture around instructional practice (Barth, 2006). The staff of HS3 engaged in intentionally designed professional learning experiences around Standards Based Instruction practices. To track changes in teacher practice and beliefs, I conducted surveys, interviews, and observations. At the end of this 5 month study, data analysis indicated that efforts in developing collegial culture does affect classroom instructional practice in several ways, such as shared instructional vocabulary and increased metacognition in teachers. The potential of expanding this work excites me as my school will be tripling in size to merge with two other small schools, and as my role shifts from classroom teacher to math and science instructional coach.

### CONTEXT

Health Sciences Human Services High School in Highline School District has 22 Teachers and 410 Students.

### RELEVANCE

Upon end of year reflection, the principal and I were determined to focus our whole staff meetings near year around standards-based instruction to encourage more reflective learning among staff and teachers.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In light of our new standards-based initiative (SBI) and the desire to support all teachers and students, my research focused around the following questions:

How might intentional use of norms, meaningful teacher-driven agendas, and reflective facilitation:

- **(RQ #1)** Encourage a culture of collegial professional learning in our staff, and specifically across content areas?
- **(RQ #2)** Affect teaching practices within the classroom?

### METHODS

#### • Pre- & Post Surveys of Whole Staff

Describe peer interactions within content teams

Describe peer interactions outside of content teams

Describe how/if professional learning is supported during whole staff meetings

#### • Observation

Administrative team walk-throughs gathering qualitative data around teacher implementation of SBI Strategies

#### • Interviews of 3 teachers from varying content teams

Describe professional growth throughout semester 1

Describe factors that have supported that growth

#### • Focus Group of 3 teachers on Standards Based Instructional Team

Describe interactions with teachers

Discuss implementation and effectiveness of whole staff professional learning

## FINDINGS

1. Intentional planning of staff meetings fosters collegiality.
2. Teacher-perceived capacity for collegiality is tied to shared content teams
3. Shared learning experiences among staff impact classroom practice
4. Potential for teacher growth is linked to teachers' identities as learners & owners of the work

## REFLECTION & NEXT STEPS

As my role changes next year to full-time Math and Science Instructional Coach at HS3, I want to keep in mind:

- To encourage collegial culture and develop instructional practices, teachers need time to **LEARN, COLLABORATE, & PRACTICE**
- Collegial practices outside of content areas must be explicitly called out and celebrated to encourage ownership by staff
- My new role can, and will, engage teachers in movement on the following spectrum of learning: Non-user, implementer, or generative learning. I wonder: how can I encourage generative learners in my school?

## LIMITATIONS

At the beginning of the study, district leadership made the decisions to shut down the three small schools on my campus to create one comprehensive high school at the end of this school year. Thus, scheduled meetings and the culture of the school shifted as we mourned the loss of our current community and worked to build our new, larger, community.

## REFERENCES

Barth, R. S. (2006). Improving relationships within the schoolhouse. *Educational Leadership* 63(6), 8-13.

Megan Randow  
206.369.6292  
meganrandow@gmail.com  
NBCT Mathematics  
Highline Public School