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**Socialization Circles – Using Site-Based Teacher Leaders to Provide Meaningful
Socialization Support to New Staff in Urban Schools**

By

Daniel Glen Allen

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:

Professor Heinrich Mintrop, Chair

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Spring 2017

**Socialization Circles – Using Site-Based Teacher Leaders to Provide Meaningful
Socialization Support to New Staff in Urban Schools**

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By

Daniel Glen Allen

ABSTRACT

Socialization Circles – Using Site-Based Teacher Leaders to Provide Informal Instructional Support to New Staff in Urban Schools

By

Daniel Glen Allen

Doctor of Education

University of California, Berkeley

Heinrich Mintrop, Ph.D., Chair

Overall, the evidence consistently paints a bleak picture of the socializing experiences new teachers typically face when entering into urban schools, resulting in higher levels of turnover and lower levels of professional efficacy for teachers new to their urban school settings. The study seeks to improve the socialization experience of new teachers at a large urban high school in Southern California, where norms of isolation, lack of trust, and problematic induction experiences prevail. Consequently, the school has struggled to retain new staff and lift the academic performance of students. The study utilizes a design development methodology that draws on teacher socialization research to inform the design of an intervention that can ameliorate the contextual challenges new teachers are facing at the school. Specifically, the intervention seeks to broker relationships of trust, develop conversational norms focused on instructional practice, and encourage more frequent informal interactions amongst new and experienced teachers. To accomplish this, the intervention engages new and experienced teachers together in bi-weekly instructional support sessions over the course of the first semester of school that use a consultancy model to focus conversations on classroom-based problems of practice. Experienced teachers also participate in a series of reorientation sessions designed to familiarize experienced teachers with the conceptual definitions of supportive professional cultures and high quality informal interactions, and to support participants as they attempt to engage new staff in more informal interactions. While these intervention efforts fell short in some respect, they also registered measurable impact in important ways, including the willingness of new teachers to seek out additional help and engage in conversations about specific challenges they are facing in the classroom.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION & PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

Introduction

Teacher quality has been identified as the most important school-based factor associated with student learning outcomes (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Therefore if we can get quality teachers into our most challenging schools, improved student learning will ultimately follow (Kowal et. al., 2009). This simple formula belies a more complicated reality: the working conditions and professional culture of many urban schools create a social context that diminishes new teachers' sense of efficacy, constrains opportunities for professional learning, and drives away talented teachers (Johnson et. al., 2004, Ingersoll, 2001). My study seeks to reverse these negative outcomes through an intervention designed specifically to increase the capacity of a group of experienced teachers in a large urban school to build supportive relationships of trust with new staff, transfer instructional expertise through conversations focused on problems of practice in the classroom, and encourage ongoing, informal interactions between experienced and new staff.

After introducing the organizational context and describing the current problematic practices that constrain teacher leaders from building relationships and discussing instructional practice with new teachers, I will outline the theoretical elements that serve as the foundation of my intervention design. Those theoretical elements posit that building the capacity of site-based teacher leaders to provide positive socialization experiences for new staff will result in an improved social context for newcomers that can translate into more opportunities to increase the quality of newcomers' instructional practice and increase their sense of organizational attachment.

Organizational Context

San Guillermo Unified School District is a large public school district in Southern California, serving a predominately Hispanic student population. Over 60% of students are formally designated as English Learners and over 90% live in poverty. In the 2015-16 school year, 91% of San Guillermo Unified schools performed at the "low" or "very low" level, as measured by California's new Accountability Model and School Dashboard. The district is surrounded by more affluent communities, thus garnering San Guillermo the reputation as a "tough" place to work. To be fair, San Guillermo Unified has shown consistent academic growth over the past several years, including above average attendance and graduation rates. Yet while the district has actively sought to celebrate and leverage the assets of the community, such as having one of the highest numbers of students who qualify for California's Seal of Biliteracy, it continually strives to dispel the notion that its schools are undesirable places for students to learn and teachers to work. Indeed, students arrive at school already significantly behind academically, with only 21% percent of incoming kindergartners demonstrating readiness for early literacy in English. This, in turn, brings additional scrutiny and added layers of accountability as teachers are under heavy pressure to perform immediately.

The very real academic and developmental challenges facing San Guillermo students are exacerbated by a contentious labor contract and compliance oriented administrative practices. Teachers across the district are granted only one professional day prior to the beginning of classes to prepare their classrooms and curriculum for the upcoming school year. Formal opportunities for collaboration are limited to two hours a month, and professional development has been tightly constrained due to a multi-year shortage of substitute teachers. Contract negotiations between district and association leadership – for both certificated and classified employees – have formally resulted in “impasse” during the past two negotiation cycles. At the administrative level, principals and their administrative teams anecdotally bemoan the logistical and procedural compliance orientation they feel from both the district office and the collective bargaining agreement. The “compliance-first” aspect of the professional culture of the district then permeates into relationships between site administrators and teachers.

For many teachers new to the district, therefore, San Guillermo schools can indeed be challenging. The high concentration of English Learners and students living in poverty presents a challenge for new teachers, who receive only a cursory orientation to the learning needs of San Guillermo students prior to the start of school. With little time for collaboration and professional learning, new teachers are forced to rely on the good will of colleagues to help them navigate the organizational realities of the school site, to say nothing of the challenge of ensuring all kids are learning. San Guillermo teachers’ initial experiences in the organization thus confirm what Cherubini (2009) has described as “a process of enduring” that evokes images of survival and being “pushed overboard” (p.92).

New teachers typically come to the district with a preliminary teaching credential, and voluntarily opt into the district’s Induction and Professional Learning (IPL) program as a way to “clear” their credential. The IPL pairs a retired educator “service provider” with each new teacher, who then meet periodically to guide new staff through a series of learning modules that meet California’s requirements to qualify for a clear teaching credential. The formal induction support of the IPL thus relies on the expertise and support of experienced teachers who are external to the context of the local school site. Outside of the periodic engagements offered through IPL, new teachers are left to make sense of the professional expectations as best they can, relying on informal interactions with more experienced teachers in order to navigate the contextual realities of the school site and gain insight into challenges they face in the classroom.

The problematic behaviors facing San Guillermo Unified teachers in general are particularly acute at San Guillermo Plains High School, which is the school site where I carry out my study. San Guillermo Plains is a comprehensive high school, the second oldest in the city, serving nearly 2300 students, over 97% of whom identify as Hispanic. The school has been a consistent academic underperformer, and is now in its second round as a School Improvement Grant (SIG) recipient, a designation reserved for the lowest performing 5% of schools in the state of California. During that same time period, the school saw major tension between certificated staff and administration, culminating in a formal complaint to the Civil Rights Office. Unsurprisingly, turnover has been endemic amongst the 112 staff members employed at San Guillermo Plains. In 2015-16, the school had an 11.6% turnover rate, which was the highest level of turnover amongst San Guillermo Unified schools, and the current principal is the 5th principal to lead the school in the past 10 years.

Needs Assessment

While the high turnover rates amongst teachers and administrators at San Guillermo Plains High School suggested that newcomers might be experiencing difficulty upon entry to the school, I engaged both teacher leaders and administrators in focus group conversations to better understand the specific challenges facing new staff at the school. When asked to outline the typical experience for a new teacher at the school, members of the administration team described new staff being overwhelmed by the magnitude of the logistical challenge of starting the year. With only one day prior to school start to organize themselves and their classrooms, new staff started the year at a scramble. Formal efforts to support new teachers at the site took the form of occasional new teacher meetings. Those sessions, administrators reported, focused almost exclusively on logistical matters necessary for day-to-day survival in the classroom. Within a month or two, once new staff had acquired adequate knowledge to survive, these support sessions would stop. Members of the administrative team were frank in their appraisal of the site-based support offered to new staff: it was inadequate at best, and it rarely addressed matters of instructional practice. The team expressed a strong desire to improve the level of support for new staff, and were eager to engage their teacher leaders in a discussion about the needs of newcomers to the site.

The sentiment amongst teacher leaders in the focus group was similar. They expressed both a general recognition that the socialization experience for new teachers at San Guillermo Plains could prove challenging. Several of them shared anecdotal stories from their own experience as newcomers at San Guillermo Plains. While there was a general empathy for the challenges facing new staff, teacher leaders were especially vocal about the lack of time to do much to address the challenge. The mention of lack of time prompted a broader set of concerns regarding the overall load that any San Guillermo Plains teacher had to carry. When probed deeper regarding specific actions that might be helpful to new staff, such as going in to observe and give supportive feedback to a colleague, or initiating conversations about struggles in the classroom, experienced teachers expressed discomfort. Several experienced teachers admitted that they didn't know newer staff members well enough to initiate these kinds of interactions, and even in those cases where they did, they were not in the practice of sustaining conversations with colleagues that were focused on colleagues' instructional practices. In other words, it was not part of the professional culture of the school for teachers – especially those who did not know each other well – to talk specifically about what was happening in the classroom. The teachers reiterated that they lacked the time to have many opportunities to practice or engage in such instructionally-focused conversations.

Problem of Practice

Veteran teachers in San Guillermo schools report general reluctance engaging in collaborative interactions, informal or otherwise, that might be interpreted as impinging on the instructional autonomy of colleagues. This includes a hesitancy to observe colleagues and provide direct feedback about instruction. When asked directly about the nature of their formal and informal collaboration time, teachers on the instructional leadership teams at two different San Guillermo schools described interactions that centered primarily on logistical matters and avoided substantive discussions of instructional practice. This problematic behavior is endemic in schools, as Little (1990) noted nearly 30

years ago, asserting that “teacher autonomy rests on freedom from scrutiny and the largely unexamined right to exercise personal preference (p. 513).” While experienced teachers in San Guillermo schools report a willingness to share expertise and advice when specifically asked by new colleagues to do so, they are careful to negotiate the boundary between advice giving and instructional critique and coaching. This tendency for veteran staff to offer help only when asked might seem to be a minor obstacle, yet in many San Guillermo schools, it is a substantial impediment to teacher learning. This creates what Johnson (2004) refers to as a veteran oriented professional culture, where the concerns and needs of experienced teachers dominate. Johnson and her team concluded that in a veteran oriented professional culture, new teachers feel uncomfortable asking for the help they need and the knowledge their colleagues already possess. Although new teachers “yearn for professional colleagues who can help them acclimate to their school’s unique culture (p. 139),” they find themselves working in isolation and hesitant to impose on veteran teachers’ time and attention.

The second challenge, and closely related to the first, is that teacher leaders seem unsure of how to appropriately focus conversations on substantive matters of instruction in both formal and informal contexts. Indeed, in San Guillermo schools, “collaboration” is an omnibus term that refers to virtually any conversation that happens during formally appointed times for teachers to meet together. Principals throughout the district report how such “collaborative” conversations take a wide variety of forms at their schools, often steering clear of specific problems of instructional practice in the classroom. Thus in many San Guillermo schools, time to collaborate is often not directly associated with the specifics of instructional practice. Much of the empirical literature is complicit in this conceptualization of professional collaboration, focusing on the correlation between time appointed for collaboration and teachers’ perceptions about the professional culture of the school. Indeed, research work in the field of organizational theory has acknowledged that regular interaction and conversation in a community of practice is not synonymous with meaningful adaptation and improvement (Edmondson, 2002; Wenger, 1998). This challenge is reflected in Horn & Little’s (2010) efforts to use discourse analysis to reveal the challenge teachers face in turning conversations towards questions of instructional practice. Indeed, they find that “not all strong professional communities exhibit an orientation to practice that is conducive to change or concerned with improvement” (p. 935).

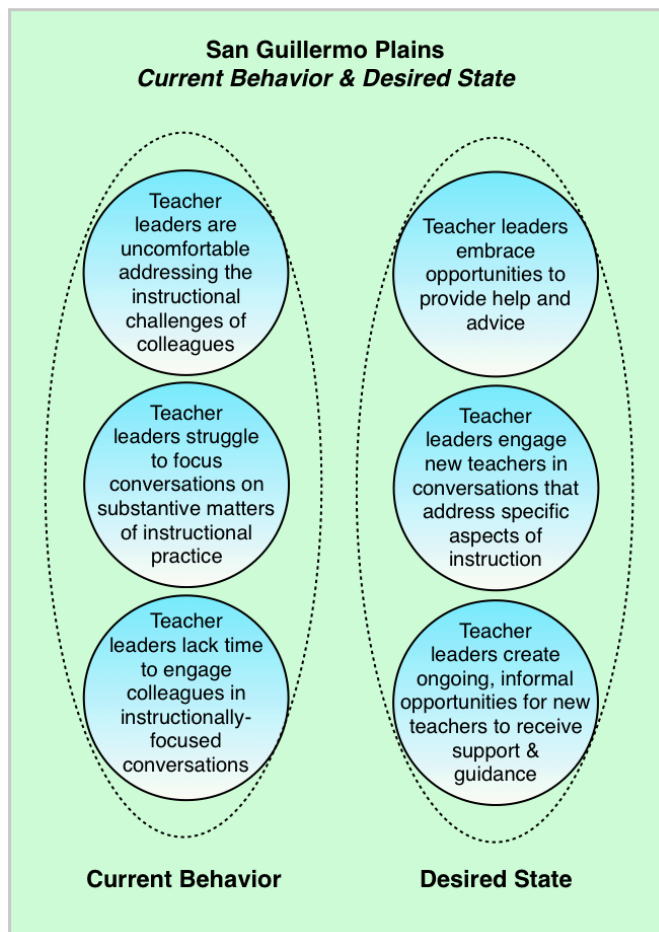
Even in cases where experienced teachers do indicate a genuine willingness to help, and have some skill in coaching and developing the instructional practice of colleagues, they commonly cite the challenge of not being provided adequate time to offer meaningful support.

Desired Behavior and Design Challenge

My design study seeks to improve the socialization experience of new teachers by brokering relationships of trust, developing conversational norms focused on instructional practice, and encouraging more frequent informal interactions amongst new and experienced teachers. Rather than leaving new staff to seek advice on their own, my intervention will build the capacity of teacher leaders to deliberately build relationships and create informal opportunities for interaction (Hopkins & Spillane, 2014). A major aspect of that increased capacity is an awareness of how conversations can be used to

orient new staff to address matters of instructional practice using the expertise of teacher leaders who are already embedded in the professional context of the school site (Horn & Little, 2010). Figure 1.1 below illustrates the shifts in teacher leader orientation and practices from current problematic behaviors to the desired state.

Figure 1.2 – San Guillermo Unified - Current Behavior & Desired State



CHAPTER TWO

THEORY OF ACTION & PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE BASE

Theory of Action

Argyris (1977) first introduced the concept of a *theory of action* to define the ways in which people presume or intend to act in the world. City et al. (2009) take the theory of action concept and apply it to the arena of school improvement. In their framework, they define a theory of action in three important ways. First, a theory of action is a “statement of a causal relationship between what I do...and what constitutes a good result in the classroom” (p. 41). Second, a theory of action must be “empirically falsifiable” – you must be able to test the causal and correlation assumptions of the theory based on evidence. Third and finally, a theory of action is “open-ended” – it encourages ongoing revision that allows for greater specification of the relationship between action and outcome. In sum, a theory of action invites an ongoing process of making explicit and concrete the relationship between understandings of the problem, change strategies and actions, and desired outcomes. As Mintrop (2016) succinctly describes it, a theory of action is “a prediction of how to address a problem of practice” (p. 43). While having clarity about the underlying causes is critical, a theory of action goes further to suggest that theory alone is not adequate. There must be action taken to address the problem.

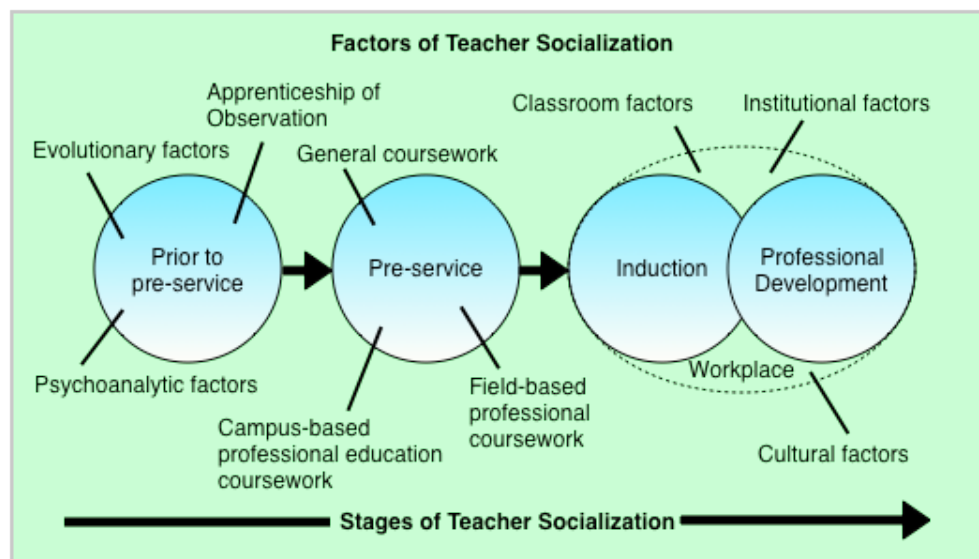
Having previously identified my primary problem of practice, I can now call on the knowledge base to deepen my contextualized understanding of the underlying causes of the problem and my understanding of the change process, and then craft a theory of action whose intent is to draw a plausible relationship between my desired outcomes and the design of my intervention.

Conceptualization of Teacher Socialization

Over 50 years ago, Merton (1957) provided his classic definition of socialization as “the process by which people selectively acquire the values and attitudes, the interests, skills, and knowledge – in short the culture – current in groups to which they are, or seek to become, a member” (p. 106). While Merton’s original definition fails to recognize that people are not simply empty vessels upon which socializing agents act (Lacey, 1977), it is still helpful in conceptualizing the socialization experience as one in which newcomers are interacting with and adapting to elements of their new environment.

In school settings, there is a common pattern of conceptualizing socialization as occurring within relatively discrete stages. In their literature review, Zeichner and Gore (1989) place factors that influence teacher socialization into three large categories: influences prior to formal teacher education, preservice teacher education, and workplace socialization. In her review of prevailing teacher socialization practices, Feiman-Neimser (2001) similarly categorizes teacher socializing influences by the concrete stages of pre-service learning, induction, and ongoing professional development. Figure 2.1 on the next page provides a visual model of both the stage progression and socialization factors that are theorized to comprise the socialization experience of teachers.

Figure 2.1 – Factors & Stages of Teacher Socialization



Zeichner & Gore (1989) point out that much of the research into teacher socialization focused on individual stories, leading to a general “lack of attention to institutional and culture contexts within which socialization occurs.” In other words, we often focus on the characteristics of the individual teachers being socialized, instead of focusing on the characteristics of the organization or institution into which the newcomers are being socialized. The authors contend that these institutional characteristics of schools “are the most potent determinants of (new teachers) perspectives toward teaching” (p.22). Ingersoll (2001) points to this same conceptual deficit more than a decade later, noting that a preference for analyzing individual factors had overshadowed a deeper understanding of the “organizational conditions” that might be driving new teachers’ sense of organizational attachment. To that end, I outline some of the organizational conditions at San Guillermo Plains High School that may be contributing to the problematic behaviors discussed previously. I then outline the drivers that conceptually explain the change processes that inform my intervention design.

Understanding the Problem – Organizational Culture & Conditions

Veteran-oriented School Culture

When analyzing the norms, values, and ways of getting work done in an organization, theorists often refer to the concept of organizational culture. Schein’s (2010) definition is perhaps the most widely cited, asserting that the culture of any group or organization can be defined as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by the group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (p. 18). Johnson et. al. (2004) use Schein’s definition as a point of departure, going further to specifically define professional culture in schools as “the blend of values, norms, and modes of professional practice that develops among teachers.” With this definition in mind, the authors outline

three general types of professional cultures that predominate in schools: veteran-oriented, novice-oriented, and integrated cultures. My needs assessment provides preliminary evidence to suggest that San Guillermo Plains most closely resembles a veteran-oriented school culture, where “veteran teachers operate independently and go about their work with little attention to the professional needs of the novice teachers in their midst” (p. 144). As is typical in a veteran-oriented school culture, new teachers at San Guillermo Plains assume full teaching loads, and are often assigned some of the most challenging classes on campus. In the context of limited time, new teachers at San Guillermo Plains receive little structured collegial support, another hallmark of a veteran-oriented school culture.

Lack of Relational Trust

Bryk and Schneider (2004) identify trust within social relationships in schools as a “critical resource” for designing and sustaining strong learning communities for students. If schools truly are an “intrinsically social enterprise,” as Bryk and Schneider assert, then the degree of relational trust amongst stakeholders, and especially amongst teachers, is of particular importance. The authors note a particular need for new teachers entering urban school settings to have a more favorable socialization experience:

In short, to better prepare new teachers for urban schools, the workplace environment of these schools must be fundamentally different...Senior teachers must accept responsibility for developing new colleagues, seeing this not as an extra burden but rather as a central part of their role in the collective life of a school-based professional community (p. 136).

At San Guillermo Plains High School, experienced teachers note a general desire and willingness to be helpful to new teachers at the school. Often, however, those same teachers relate a high level of discomfort engaging in communication and interactions that transform willingness into social relationships with colleagues that build trust. My intervention needs mechanisms, therefore, to bring teacher leaders and new staff together in a way that can foster those social relationships.

Teacher Socialization in Urban Schools

Urban schools serve a high proportion of students of color whose families and communities have faced historical, political and economic marginalization (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Oakes and colleagues (2009) contend that urban schools have generally been left “resource-poor and decaying” (p. 18). These conditions of marginalization result in urban school systems where students are more likely to be living in poverty, where per pupil funding lags behind suburban and rural schools, and where classroom instruction is considered as low-level and unchallenging (Anyon, 1997).

Unsurprisingly, scholars have pointed to the poor working conditions and unsupportive social context of urban schools as two primary factors that lead to teacher dissatisfaction and turnover. Johnson and colleagues (2012) found that teachers reporting a negative work context expressed higher levels of dissatisfaction and planned to stay a shorter time in their respective schools. Specifically, the authors found that the social conditions of the school, as defined by the school’s culture and relationships with colleagues and the principal, are amongst the most influential elements of the work context

in predicting teacher's job satisfaction. Weiss (1999) similarly reported that new teachers' perception of the social organization of the school was most directly responsible for the teacher's morale and sense of commitment to the profession.

Overall, the evidence consistently paints a bleak picture of the socializing experiences new teachers typically face when entering into an urban school setting. Achinstein and colleagues (2004) report that, unlike what occurs in suburban contexts, new teachers in urban schools experience fewer opportunities for professional development, less time for collaboration with colleagues, and more prescriptive formulas for teaching and learning. They characterize these inferior socialization experiences as constituting a "separate and unequal" track that leads to the reproduction of inequities already inherent in the school system. Thus, new teachers' collective sense that their first years of teaching are an exercise in survival is exacerbated by the poor working conditions and unsupportive social context typically found in urban schools.

Lack of Instructional Capacity

Feimann-Nemser (2001) points out that new teachers have two primary jobs – "they have to teach and they have to learn how to teach" (p. 1026). There is broad sense that new teachers' need a tremendous amount of on-the-job training and learning in order to develop the instructional capacity to be successful in the classroom (Hopkins & Spillane, 2014). Johnson et. al. (2004) note that new teachers in urban schools tend to receive less curricular guidance and support, as well as less access to mentor supports at the school site. This tends to be the case at San Guillermo Plains High School, where staff only has one hour every other week for collaboration, and where the development of new teachers' instructional practices takes a back seat to logistical planning and departmental priorities. Last year, in recognition of the tremendous challenges facing new teachers in the classroom, administrators began hosting a monthly check-in for new staff. Despite best intentions, administrators report that the support struggled to move beyond logistical matters and ultimately fell short of its intention to help new staff reflect on their instruction and learn new strategies for the classroom. Even for those experienced teachers who enter San Guillermo Plains with previous classroom experience, there is little time or attention given to the need to design and adapt curriculum and instruction in ways that are responsive to the unique needs of the students and school community.

Norms of Privacy

The challenge facing new staff at San Guillermo Plains High School to have adequate access to the expertise and insight of more experienced faculty is a pervasive challenge in schools. Little (1990) points out that collaboration is "generally peripheral to the main work of the organization (p.520)" inasmuch as classroom teaching does not engender genuine interdependency amongst teachers. Little explores a number of compelling reasons that explain why teachers may be reluctant, if not altogether opposed, to collaboration with colleagues. Amongst these potential concerns are the threat of disrupting prevailing norms of autonomy and egalitarianism, exacerbating latent micropolitical tensions in the school, and exposing fundamental differences in the values and beliefs held by staff. Achinstein (2002) concurs with these concerns, positing generally that "fostering a culture of collaboration within a teacher professional community may spark conflict" (p. 425). She identifies a continuum of micropolitical

processes that represents the variation in how different communities of teachers respond to conflict. Rosenholtz (1989) also points out that teachers' willingness to offer help "depends to no small extent on the perceived consequences of that aid" (p. 42). In terms of the potential for collaboration to uncover strong variation in the values and beliefs of staff, Westheimer (1999) suggests that the question of "what beliefs should be shared is a thorny question almost always avoided" (p. 97). It should come as little surprise, therefore, that Talbert & McLaughlin (2007) came to the conclusion that "the extent to which teachers collaborate and experience professional growth varies dramatically from site to site" (p. 128). Thus the risks to collaboration are so potentially strong and pervasive that more experienced teachers will even refrain from advocating for specific instructional practices amongst their new colleagues.

Limitations to Induction

Over the past 30 years, teacher induction programs have increasingly been seen as a strategy to reverse teacher attrition and boost teacher efficacy and effectiveness. The most common element of induction comes in the form of mentoring (Flores, 2006). Indeed, mentoring and induction are terms that are sometimes used interchangeably when referring to the support that is typically provided to newcomers. Interestingly, in their analysis of the effects of induction on retention of new teachers, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that simply having been assigned a supportive mentor resulted in roughly the same turnover rate as for those teachers who had no formal induction at all. Contrarily, those teachers experiencing induction programs that paired mentoring with opportunities for site collaboration with colleagues report a significantly lower attrition rate. Unfortunately, San Guillermo Unified's current induction practices fall short on both accounts – mentor teachers are not practicing teachers at the new teachers' site, nor does the induction program provide opportunities for site-collaboration. Rather, mentors are typically retired teachers who are centrally assigned a caseload of new teachers.

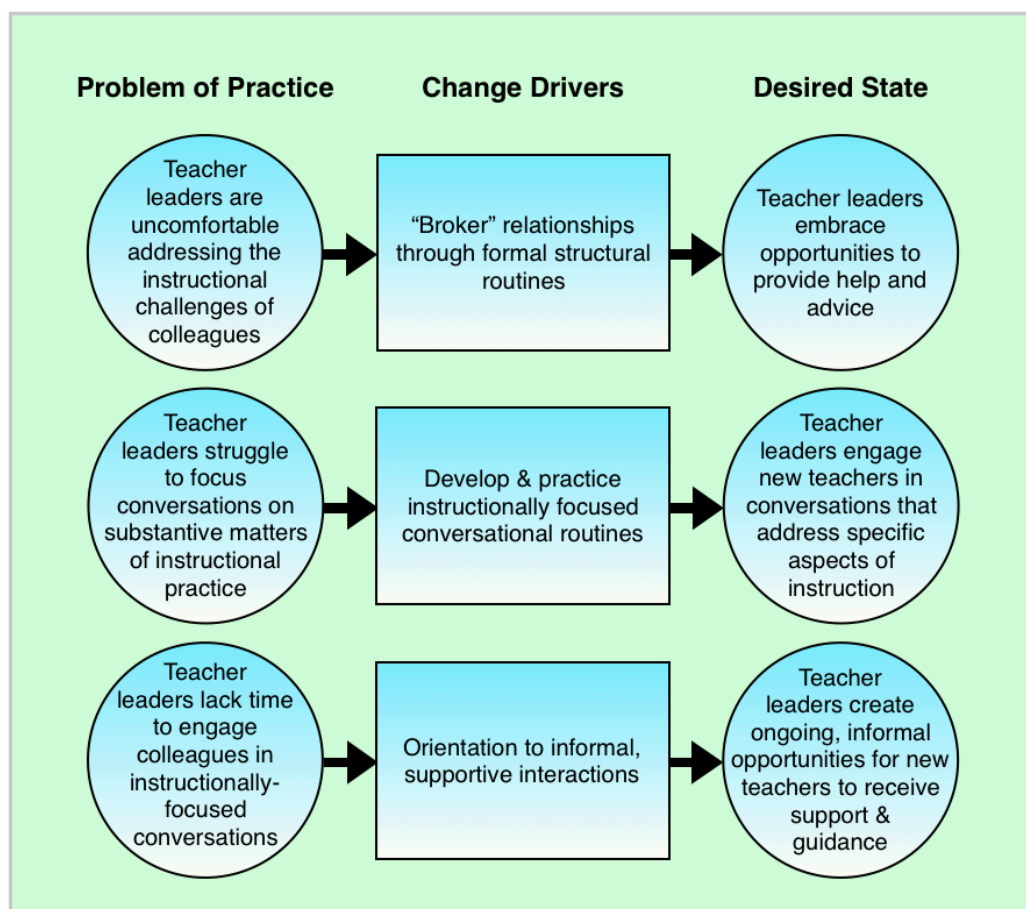
Understanding the Change Process – Change Drivers

While the organizational theory and teacher socialization research literature both identify teacher leaders as a compelling source of support for new teachers in urban school settings, it is critical to push further to identify the specific learning that needs to occur in order to increase skill and change behavior in ways that will improve the socialization experience of new staff. Indeed, Mintrop (2016) reminds us that the "relationship between the causes of problems and the dynamics of the change that will lessen the power of these causes is rarely straightforward" (p. 116). He goes further to remind us that adult learners, educators included, do not simply change their practice because they are commanded to do so. Rather, we have to engage adult learners by acknowledging the unique skills and assets they already possess, and then craft learning experiences that positively leverage those assets and values.

Thus, reorienting San Guillermo Plains teacher leaders to the learning needs of new teachers goes much further than a top-down policy or introduction of a new initiative. Specifically, I identify three key change drivers that will bring about the professional learning that can bridge the gap between current and desired behaviors. Generally speaking, the change drivers I outline focus on moving San Guillermo Plains High School

away from a veteran-oriented culture towards a more integrated one, where “new teachers communicate and cooperate with each other and with their more experienced colleagues in the service of improving schoolwide instruction” (Susan Moore Johnson, 2004, p.163). Specifically, the change drivers are designed to create opportunities for site-collaboration between experienced and new teachers that develop relational trust, break down prevailing norms of privacy, and encourage the sharing the instructional strategies in both formal and informal spaces. Figure 2.2 below provides an overview of each aspect of the problem of practice, and the corresponding change driver that will lead to the desired outcomes.

Figure 2.2 – Change Drivers



Driver #1 – Brokering Relationships

My first change driver is to broker relationships, on a volunteer basis, between experienced teachers and staff members who are new to the school. The “revolving door” and “sink or swim” socialization are conceptual terms associated with teacher socialization in the workplace that reflect the widespread notion that the induction experience of teachers in urban schools is typically a lonely one. My study seeks to create supportive spaces for professional inquiry and dialogue at the school site that both better foster professional learning and support relationships that can lead to ongoing, informal support.

Indeed, Feiman-Neisar (2001) highlights the importance of relationships with more experienced staff as an essential element of their socialization experience:

Novices need opportunities to talk with others about their teaching, to analyze their students' work, to examine problems, and to consider alternative explanations and actions. If novices learn to talk about specific practices in specific terms, if they learn to ask for clarification, share uncertainties, and request help, they will be developing skills and dispositions that are critical in the ongoing improvement of teaching" (p. 1030).

Organizational socialization research supports the assertion that brokering relationships with experienced insiders can boost newcomers' sense of efficacy and organizational attachment (Cable & Parsons, 2001; Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). This deliberate connecting of newcomers with experienced staff is referred to by Van Maanen and Schein (1977) as serial socialization, and is cited as a common element of many school induction programs (Flores, 2006; Strong, 2009). Kapadia (2007) is careful to note that simple 1-1 mentoring ignores the collective, social nature of learning and typically employs coaches who are not embedded in the local professional culture of the school site (Kapadia, Coca, & Easton, 2007). Indeed, one of the primary critiques Zeichner and Gore (1989) point out in their description of the typical socialization experience of a teacher is that they "have focused almost exclusively on the *individual* characteristics, conceptions, skills, and dispositions that students bring to teacher education programs and have ignored the *collective* aspects of socialization into teaching" (p. 12).

Another important aspect of brokering relationships among staff is the use of formal structures and routines for interaction. Hopkins & Spillane (2014) found that formal structures within the school site provided a key venue for beginning teachers to have "frequent and consistent access" to more experienced team members and instructional leaders (p.331). Relying on both social network and interview analysis with teachers in two Midwestern school districts, the authors conclude that schools should actively "broker" relationships between new teachers and site-based personnel such as teacher leaders and instructional coaches who can support new teachers' opportunities for learning in informal spaces as well. Thus formal organizational structures and routines shape the advice-seeking behaviors of new staff. Owing to the inherent risk involved in asking for help from colleagues (Little, 1990), my intervention can serve as an "ask for help" on behalf of new teachers, who themselves may be reluctant to initiate the conversation.

Finally, it is important that participation in these brokered relationships occur on a volunteer basis. Indeed, Bryk and Schneider (2004) assert that volunteer association is likely to enhance the development of relational trust, while Hargreaves (1991) warned against the contrived nature of compulsory collaboration, noting that voluntary participation is associated with more genuine collaboration and collegiality amongst colleagues. I will therefore make an appeal to the professional values of experienced teachers, who I will recruit on a volunteer basis, to act on their sense of professional duty and participate willingly in the intervention. This appeal is rooted in both self-concept and self-determination motivational theories, which speak to teachers' desire to do meaningful work and their need to connect to other human beings. Amabile & Kramer (2011), for

example, identify relational motivation as the intrinsic need professionals have to collaborate and interact with colleagues in a congenial manner. When Mintrop (2004) asked teachers to articulate the primary sources of motivation in their profession, teachers identified “interacting with children, feeling needed, making a difference in somebody’s life, and being stimulated by the nonroutine nature of the work” as the primary motivational factors (p.43). Stone, Deci, & Ryan (2008) remind us that in a self-determination framework, humans are intrinsically motivated to grow and achieve and engage in work when its value is understood. In the context of San Guillermo Plains High School, I will therefore make a voluntary appeal to the professional and human need of experienced teachers to develop relationships with their new colleagues.

Driver #2 – Specific Instructional Advice-Giving

My second change driver is to build the capacity of teacher leaders to effectively diagnose the instructional capacities of new teachers, and to provide targeted, actionable feedback in a manner that reduces defensiveness. I will do this through the use of instructional consultancy protocols designed to focus conversations on specific problems of instructional practice within the classroom. McDonald, Mohr, Dichter, and McDonald (2007) point to protocols as useful tools for making teacher instructional practice transparent for others to understand and consider. More specifically, the authors suggest that using protocols that focus on a specific problem of practice lend themselves well to eliciting the perspectives and advices of colleagues. Kruse & Louis (1993) note that a central feature of urban schools with a mature professional community is the use of collaborative practices that encourage teachers to jointly analyze student work and instructional practices. Horn & Little (2010) concur that formally-constructed workplace groups are most likely to facilitate professional learning when (and perhaps only when) “they develop a capacity for talk that centers on dilemmas and problems of practice” (p.183).

The instructional consultancy protocol I am using is taken from the National School Reform Faculty (NSRF), which has promoted the use of structured collaboration protocols as part of their Critical Friends Group training and school reform program. Specifically, the protocol is designed to help participants practice conversation routines that focus explicitly on elements of their instructional practice. As Curry (2008) noted in her analysis of the efficacy of Critical Friends Groups, the use of the instructional consultancy enabled participants to “engage in focused conversations about practice that ran counter to traditional occupational norms of teaching, like privacy, noninterference, conservatism, and congeniality” (p. 764). As the author further explains, the use of the structured consultancy made it possible for participants to safely ask difficult questions and provide explicit instructional advice. Dunne, Nave, & Lewis (2000) also found some evidence that the conversational practices and routines learned and practiced in the protocol spread into other venues and interactions.

Driver #3 – Creating Informal, Supportive Interactions in the Context of Limited Time

My third change driver will be to engage participating teacher leaders in learning about the importance of informal interactions for the development of instructional practice and organizational attachment in new staff, and as a strategy to mitigate time constraints for professional learning. A hallmark of a strong integrated professional culture is ongoing,

informal collaborative conversations focused on instructional practice (Hopkins & Spillane, 2014; Johnson et. al., 2004). This reflects Hargreaves' (1991) view that authentic collaboration is voluntary, spontaneous, and relatively unpredictable. By definition, one cannot design spontaneous interactions on behalf of others. Rather, I will encourage "naturally occurring" conversations (Horn & Little, 2010) by engaging participating teacher leaders in a community of practice that will study the impact of informal interactions and explore how to increase the quantity of said interactions. As Lieberman & Friedrich (2009) point out, teacher leaders learn best when they can explore ongoing problems of practice as a community of practitioners. In this case, the problem of practice is the paucity of informal interactions that lend themselves to advice-seeking on the part of staff new to the school. It is in this context of a community of practice that the authors further suggest reading and discussing relevant research literature as a potent strategy for addressing problematic practices.

The research base of interest that we will read and discuss together highlights the importance of high quality, supportive interactions as a means to not only facilitate opportunities for professional learning, but help us feel better and more emotionally connected to the workplace. Stephens, Heaphy, and Dutton (2016) share four basic assumptions about these connections in the workplace. They argue that 1) humans are intrinsically social and need to feel that they belong, 2) human connections are dynamic and alter how we are feeling and thinking, 3) the work of organizations is inherently social, and human connections are a key element to how work is experienced and 4) the quality of connections vary and reflect relative organizational health. It is upon this theoretical foundation that the authors find that humans experience a heightened sense of positive energy and mutuality when they engage in high quality connective interactions. Jordan (2000) similarly draws on concepts of relational theory in therapeutic contexts to argue that in order for participants to overcome feelings of isolation and negativity, they "must actually experience a sense of relational efficacy" (p. 1005). Boyatzis, Smith, & Blaize (2006) point out that when organizational leaders intentionally approach coaching interactions with a sense of empathy and care, they effectively lower the biological stress response of both participants in the interaction, while Ragins and Verbos (2007) find that positive relational interactions lead to "positive psychological capital outcomes of hope, self-confidence, optimism and resiliency" (p. 96).

Intervention Design

Main Activities

My intervention consists of three primary intervention stages: launch, support sessions, and integration.

To launch the intervention, I recruit a small cohort of experienced teachers at the school who demonstrate an initial willingness to interact with new staff. This nascent interest need not be a full commitment to participate in a time-consuming, formal mentorship program, but rather can stem from a simple professional commitment to being supportive of newcomer colleagues. To accomplish this, my recruitment strategy is opportunistic, identifying and inviting potential participants in a variety of ways. I engage the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) at San Guillermo Plains, an already existing team whose membership is formally defined by language in the collective-bargaining agreement,

and make a direct appeal to the professional values of teachers on the team to encourage their participation in the intervention activities. I also ask members of the ILT to identify colleagues they believe might be interested in participating, and then make individual follow-up invitations to those teachers recommended by the ILT. In addition, I make an open invitation to staff across the school site to attend a welcome and year-kickoff meeting for new teachers where I share the vision for a series of optional support sessions on behalf of new teachers. Finally, I distribute invitations to all of the experienced teachers in the school to participate in the support sessions. The idea is to make the recruitment activities feel supportive and celebratory – both to the experienced teachers who will choose to participate and for the cohort of new teachers whose socialization experience I am purposefully trying to improve. Table 2.1 below outlines the informal launch strategies designed to recruit veteran leaders to participate in the intervention activities.

Table 2.1 – Launch Recruitment Strategies

Team/Group	Recruitment Strategy
Instructional Leadership Team	Attend summer sessions to build relationships with team members. Make a direct invitation to ILT members to participate, and enlist their help in identifying other potential participants.
Instructional Coaching Team	Attend summer sessions to build relationships with team members. Make a direct invitation to school-based instructional coaches to participate, and enlist their help in identifying other potential participants.
New Teachers	Attend new teacher welcome day prior to school start to build relationships with team members. Make a direct invitation to new teachers to participate in intervention activities.
Entire Staff	Make a direct invitation to entire staff to attend a welcome lunch for first and second year teachers (at the school site) during the first week of school.

The launch activities are designed to build a community of experienced teachers who are interested in learning more about the professional needs of new teachers, and to kick off the intervention in a positive manner.

Support Sessions

The launch is followed up by a series of learning sessions that I have organized into two categories – instructional support sessions and reorientation sessions. The primary objectives of the instructional support sessions are to broker relationships of trust between new teachers and experienced teachers, to practice conversational routines that orient discussion to classroom instruction, and that provide new teachers with actionable feedback that could be used in the classroom. These bi-weekly, instructionally-focused sessions are designed to build familiarity and facility with conversational routines where participants present problems of practice they are facing in the classroom, and then brainstorm and discuss potential action steps to address the instructional challenges. We

use a consultancy model that takes participants through a series of timed discussions, moving from the sharing of a classroom based problem of practice, to the asking of clarifying questions by the group, followed by a diagnostic brainstorming discussion around the particular instructional challenge the teacher is facing. The team gives its recommendations and then the presenting teacher has the opportunity to share his or her reactions to the feedback and articulate plans to integrate the advice they have received into their practice. Table 2.2 below provides an overview of the instructional consultancy model.

Table 2.2 – Instructional Consultancy

Consultancy Step	Description
Step 1 - Problem of Practice (3 minutes)	A teacher presents an instructional challenge he or she is facing in the classroom
Step 2 - Clarifying Questions (5 minutes)	Group members ask clarifying questions of the presenting teacher to deepen their familiarity with the instructional context and to identify strategies that the teacher may have experimented with in the past
Step 3 - Diagnostic Brainstorming (10 minutes)	Group members engage in a discuss to try to pinpoint the contributing factors to the problem of practice, and brainstorm potential solutions for addressing the problem
Step 4 - Next Level of Work (3 minutes)	Members of the group do a “whip around” with each person sharing what they believe to be the highest leverage action step the presenting teacher should take
Step 5 - Reflection & Plan (3 minutes)	The presenting teacher reflects on what resonated in the discussion and shares his or her plans to address the problem of practice in the classroom

*revised from National School Reform Faculty (2004). Consultancy Protocol. http://www.nsrharmony.org/system/files/protocols/consultancy_0.pdf

The consultancy protocol is designed to encourage conversational routines that allow teachers to focus discussions on substantive matters of instructional practice. Furthermore, it creates a professional environment where new teachers are supported as a group and have the opportunity to deepen their familiarity with the instructional contexts and challenges of their colleagues.

Additionally, and especially in the earlier sessions, we will include space for more logistical topics that might be on the minds of new teachers. These topics will be driven by the questions and requests of new teacher participants, and are likely to include conversations about grading systems, schedules, access to instructional resources, etc. Table 2.3 on the next page outlines the agenda for each of the instructional conversation sessions.

Table 2.3 – Instructional Conversation Agenda

Instructional Conversation Agenda (35 minutes)
Welcome (3 minutes): Check-in question Logistical tune-up (5 minutes): What systems/procedures do you have questions about that we can review and discuss as a team? Instructional consultancy (25 minutes): Sharing & discussion of a classroom-based problem of practice Wrap up (2 minutes):

In addition to the instructional practice conversations held with new and experienced staff together, I engage teacher leaders in two additional “reorientation” sessions with experienced teachers. These sessions are designed to familiarize experienced teachers with the conceptual definitions of supportive professional cultures and high quality informal interactions, and to support participants as they attempt to engage new staff in more informal interactions. Table 2.4 below provides an outline of the agenda for each of the two reorientation sessions.

Table 2.4 – Reorientation Session Agendas

Reorientation Session #1	Reorientation Session #2
Welcome (3 minutes): Check-in question. Reflection & Share Out (10 minutes): Reflect on your first teaching job? What was the experience like? How did you receive professional support? What were some of the challenges you faced? Reading & Discussion (25 minutes): Johnson, S. (2004) <i>Finders and Keepers: Helping New Teachers Survive and Thrive in Our Schools</i>. Chapter 7 - Professional Culture and the Promise of Colleagues. Small group quote share - large group discussion - Wrap up (12 minutes): 1 takeaway from session (whip around). 1 implication for your work as a teacher leader at the school (whip around).	Welcome (3 minutes): Check-in question. Reflection & Share Out (10 minutes): Describe what you think the new teacher experience is like currently in the school? How do you know? What are the strengths and challenges of the socialization experience at the school site? Reading & Discussion (25 minutes): Rains, B. & Verbos, A. (2007). Positive Relationships in Action: Relational Mentoring and Mentoring Schemas in the Workplace. In <i>Exploring Positive Relationships at Work: Building a Theoretical and Research Foundation</i>. Small group quote share - large group discussion - Wrap up (12 minutes): 1 takeaway from session (whip around). 1 implication for your work as a teacher leader at the school (whip around).

Integration

The integration portion of the intervention is designed to move the conversational routines from our optional support sessions into ongoing conversations that happen at the school. This portion of the intervention consists of highlighting successes, sharing

experiences and successful routines, and finding other venues to celebrate the good work being done by experienced teachers in support of new teacher learning. Specifically, we will report on progress to the ILT, and make attempts to integrate the conversation routines into the broader collaboration spaces of the school. As was the case with the launch, these integration efforts are opportunistic, looking for existing spaces where the practices of the intervention could benefit professional learning of staff. Table 2.5 below outlines the overall intervention design with approximate timelines for each stage and learning session.

Table 2.5 – Intervention Overview

Intervention Element	Timeline
Launch Activities	August to Early September - prior to school start and beginning weeks of school
Instructional Conversation Session #1	Early September
Reorientation Session #1	Late September
Instructional Conversation Session #2	Early October
Instructional Conversation Session #3	Late October
Reorientation Session #2	Early November
Instructional Conversation Session #4	Late November
Instructional Conversation Session #5	Early December
Integration Activities	ongoing

Conditions for Success

The success of my intervention relies upon a number of organizational conditions that may not be present in all contexts and settings. Broadly stated, those who control resource decisions in the organization must acknowledge that supporting new teachers is a challenge worth prioritizing, and align resources with the desired improvements (Allison & Kaye, 2005; Proctor, 2004). In the case of my intervention, said acknowledgment would have to come in the form of support from the administration team at San Guillermo Plains High School. This support goes beyond a general willingness to allow the intervention to happen to actively working together to marshal a cadre of willing teacher leaders that are open, if not eager, to learn more about supporting new teachers in the organization (Lieberman & Friedrich, 2009; Little, 1995). Additionally, both district office and San Guillermo Plains administrators would have to work together to support the structural elements that are essential to the success of the intervention, namely the time and funding for teacher leaders to participate in the outlined learning sessions (Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1993).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Methodology

My intervention design seeks to create a positive socialization experience for new teachers at San Guillermo Plains High School by brokering relationships of trust, developing conversational norms focused on instructional practice, and encouraging more frequent informal interactions amongst new and experienced teachers. Such a complex problem of practice embedded in a specific organizational context lends itself to an investigation using a design research methodology. Indeed, as Mintrop (2016) directly points out, design research is an appropriate methodological approach to address “complex problems of practice for which there are few definite or confirmed solutions, guidelines, known remedies, or how-to-guides” (p. 57). Plomp (2007) similarly concludes that “for complex practical problems and for research questions calling for the design and development of an intervention, design research is the appropriate research approach” (p. 32). I desire to move beyond my practitioner intuition to employ a systematic and rigorous process of data collection and analysis that will provide a more objective assessment of the impact of my intervention that, over time and multiple iterations, will generate sound design principles.

While my primary methodological approach is guided by concepts of design development, it also draws strongly on elements of action research due to the fact that I am acting both as a researcher and participant. Indeed, one of the primary characteristics of action research is rooted in the idea that researchers do not simply observe phenomenon but take action to bring about change and improvement (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). Such is certainly the case in this study, as I am acting as both a leader within the San Guillermo Unified School District whose day to day commission is to improve learning outcomes for students, as well as a researcher who is deeply interested in analyzing and understanding the potential efficacy of intervention designs. Thus action research engages participants in two concurrent cycles – one focused on diagnosing problems, planning and then taking action to address problems, while the other cycle engages the researcher in a reflective process that calls for inquiry into both how the work is being done and the assumptions and beliefs that fuel the desire to tackle the problem (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Creswell, 2002). These concurrent loops reflect what Argyris (1977) described as double-loop learning, wherein participants both engage in the work while simultaneously inquiring into the motives, assumptions, and theories that underlie the selection and execution of the work to be done. Furthermore, action research provides additional tools for considering both the role and bias of the researcher as a participant in the action being taken. In these ways, action research serves as a complementary methodology to design research that will be appropriate, and indeed necessary, in my research design.

Basic Elements of Research Data

Using a design research methodology allows me to answer two important questions simultaneously. First, I am testing the degree to which my intervention is having impact on participants and their relationships with new teachers. To measure this, I use a standardized protocol to collect data prior to my intervention to establish a baseline for

current practice and performance. I then collect data following the completion of the intervention activities to measure the degree to which participants moved towards the desired state of practice.

Second, I collect data throughout the implementation of the intervention, referred to as process data, to answer the second question of how the activities and experiences associated with the intervention may have plausibly impacted outcomes. While I cannot make a concrete causal argument as to the precise mechanisms of the intervention that may have brought about any measured change, my process data allows me the opportunity to explore participants' perceptions, reactions, and requests for adaptation as the intervention unfolds.

Impact Data

My theory of action posits that the socialization conditions and experiences for new teachers can improve when schools actively broker relationships between experienced teachers and new staff, when experienced teachers focus conversations with new teachers on matters of instructional practice, and when conversations move from formal to informal spaces. Table 3.1 below outlines the four domains of practice that I hope to impact through my intervention.

Table 3.1 – Baseline & Outcome Levels Rubric

	(1) Least Effective	(2) Moderately Effective	(3) Most Effective
Orientation to Professional Learning Needs of New Teachers	Teacher leaders are reticent/relevant to share information and expertise, and only do so when invited directly by new staff	Teacher leaders share information and expertise when invited to do so by new staff	Teacher leaders engage new staff by providing information and expertise around problems of practice in the classroom
Quantity of Informal Interactions	Teacher leaders rarely interact with new staff, limited primarily to formal spaces for collaboration	Teacher leaders occasionally interact with new staff, both in formal spaces for collaboration and informally	Teacher leaders regularly talk with new staff both in formal and informal spaces.
Awareness of Conversation Patterns that Impact Practice	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that lead away from discussions about new staff problems of practice	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that encourage new staff to share problems of practice.	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that encourage new staff to share specific problems of practice and that invite follow-up and ongoing attention.
Quality of Follow-up and Ongoing Support	Teacher leaders do not follow-up on previous conversations, nor express interest in the ongoing challenges facing new teachers	Teacher leaders follow-up on previous conversations	Teacher leaders follow-up on previous conversations with questions about specific practices and encourage further discussion and experimentation

At both the beginning and conclusion of the intervention, I use a Close-Ended Interview protocol to elicit ratings from teacher leaders along the four domains of interest, followed by an Open-Ended Interview protocol (Patton, 1990) to gather descriptive explanations regarding each rating. Using the same question prompts can minimize interviewer effects, while the open-ended format allows respondents the opportunity to elaborate on their responses (Patton, 1990). In order to assess each teacher leader's effectiveness as a new teacher socializer, I have divided the questions in the protocol into the four impact domain areas, which can be seen in Table 3.2 starting below. The interview protocol uses the same set of questions with each participant to systematically gather data both pre and post intervention and measure how practices and attitudes may have shifted over time. My sequence of questions consists primarily of descriptive and structural questions (Spradley, 1979) aimed at gathering a robust set of data that I use as rationale for determining effectiveness levels.

Table 3.2 – Standardized Pre/Post Interview Protocol – Organized by Domain

Domain 1: Orientation to Learning Needs of New Teachers	Rating Scale	Probing Questions
1. To what extent do you feel responsible for the success of new staff at your school?	1=Not at all 2=Limited extent 3=Not sure 4=Some extent 5=Great extent	- Please explain to me your rating. - What factors or experiences make you feel that way?
2. To what extent have you been involved in the support and development of new staff at your school?	1=Not at all 2=Limited extent 3=Not sure 4=Some extent 5=Great extent	-Please explain to me your rating. - In what ways have you been involved supporting new staff? - How did you get involved supporting new staff?
3. To what extent do you feel comfortable talking with new staff about their instructional practice?	1=Not at all 2=Limited extent 3=Not sure 4=Some extent 5=Great extent	-Please explain to me your rating. - What factors or experiences make you feel that way?
Domain 2: Quantity of Informal Interactions	Rating Scale	Probing Questions
4. With what frequency do new staff members initiate informal conversations with you about challenges in their classrooms?	1=Never 2=Less than monthly 3=Monthly 4=Weekly 5=Daily	-Please explain to me your rating. -In what circumstances do new staff seek you out for advice? - What do new staff members typically ask you about?
5. With what frequency do you initiate informal conversations with new staff about their instructional practice?	1=Never 2=Less than monthly 3=Monthly 4=Weekly	-Please explain to me your rating. -In what circumstances do you typically initiate informal conversations

	5=Daily	about instructional practice?
Domain 3: Awareness of Discussion Patterns that Impact Practice	Rating Scale	Probing Questions
6. To what extent do you provide specific pedagogical advice or insight based on the instructional challenges you discuss with new staff?	1=Not at all 2=Limited extent 3=Not sure 4=Some extent 5=Great extent	-Please explain to me your rating. -Why do you think you feel that way?
7. To what extent do you ask new staff specific questions about instructional challenges in their classroom?	1=Not at all 2=Limited extent 3=Not sure 4=Some extent 5=Great extent	-Please explain to me your rating. - What types of questions do you ask? - Why do you focus on those types of questions?
8. To what extent do you believe new staff feel comfortable sharing their authentic instructional challenges with you as an experienced teacher at the school?	1=Not at all 2=Limited extent 3=Not sure 4=Some extent 5=Great extent	-Please explain to me your rating. - Can you give any examples of when you've supported a new teacher around an instructional challenge in the classroom?
Domain 4: Quality of Follow Up & Ongoing Support	Rating Scale	Probing Questions
9. To what extent do you follow up with new staff about challenges and new strategies you have previously discussed together?	1=Not at all 2=Limited extent 3=Not sure 4=Some extent 5=Great extent	-Please explain to me your rating. - Can you give any examples of advice that you've followed up about?
10. To what extent do you feel experienced staff provide ongoing support to newer teachers at the school?	1=Not at all 2=Limited extent 3=Not sure 4=Some extent 5=Great extent	-Please explain to me your rating. - What factors or experiences influence your response?
Intervention Follow-up (post interview only)		
11. What elements of the socialization circles intervention did you feel were least beneficial to your learning?		
12. What elements of the socialization circles intervention did you feel were most beneficial to your learning?		
13. How has your thinking changed, if at all, about your relationship with new staff at your school as a result of the socialization circles intervention?		
14. How could the socialization circles intervention be improved in the future?		

I also conduct a short survey with the novice teachers at the beginning and end of the intervention in an effort to explore whether their informal interactions with experienced teacher leaders during the course of the intervention influenced the development of their instructional practice. While my primary interest is to measure changes in experienced teacher practices, I am using the new teacher survey to help identify specific examples of how and why the new teachers felt supported, if they indeed report having received support. The survey of self-reported perceptions also allows me to get a sense of the

degree of commitment the new teachers in the study have towards teaching as a career, and the degree to which they feel personally connected to the work at the school site. Table 3.3 below provides the overview of the new teacher survey that I will administer.

Table 3.3 – New Teacher Survey

Question	Rating Scale
1. I feel comfortable turning to more experienced teachers in the school when I need to resolve problems.	1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neutral 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree
2. I can be honest with experienced teachers at the school about the challenges I am facing in my classroom.	1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neutral 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree
3. There are experienced teachers at the school who are interested in my professional success.	1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neutral 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree
4. There are experienced teachers at the school who are invested in my professional success.	1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neutral 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree
5. The advice I receive from experienced teachers at the school has helped me improve my own classroom practice.	1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neutral 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree
6. Experienced teachers at my school inspire me to want to be a better teacher.	1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neutral 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree
7. I feel like I have found a place for myself with the faculty and staff in the building in which I teach.	1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neutral 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree
8. What types of support have you received from teachers in the school that have proven most helpful in developing your instructional practice? Be as specific as possible.	N/A (Open response)
9. Describe your present level of commitment to teaching at Valley HS. Select the one line that most closely describes your current commitment: - I will soon be looking for a teaching opportunity at a different school. - I may eventually look for a teaching opportunity at a different school. - I plan to teach at Valley HS but would consider other	N/A (Multiple-choice)

options if they were available.	
- I am committed to teaching at Valley HS	
- I am absolutely committed to teaching at Valley HS	

*Multiple questions revised from Mager, G. (1986). New York State Mentor Teacher-Internship Program Statewide Evaluation

Process Data

Both design research and action research are as interested in understanding the mechanisms that might plausibly produce outcomes as they are in measuring the outcomes themselves. In order to capture data that lends itself to an analysis of the activities that participants have found useful or helpful (or as the case may be, unhelpful) in improving their capacity to support new teachers, I employ a variety of qualitative data collection methods. First, at the end of each learning session, participants complete an exit slip that asks them to reflect on their ongoing experiences. This allows me to capture, in participants' own words, how they are experiencing the intervention activities. This feedback also serves as an opportunity for participants to comment on how the experience might be improved. I expect and anticipate that certain elements of the intervention change as participants comment and critique the shared experience and we collectively learn about ways our theory of action might need adjustment. Table 3.4 below provides examples of exit slip questions that participants complete following each intervention session.

Table 3.4 – Exit Slip Reflection Questions

Exit Slip Reflection Questions
Reorientation Sessions: What resonated with you in the discussion of the professional learning needs of new teachers? Were there elements of the discussion that you disagreed with or would challenge if we had more time for discussion? What types of support, moving forward, do you think would be beneficial to the new teachers in the school? What types of support, moving forward, would you personally feel comfortable initiating to support new teachers in the school?
Instructional Conversation Sessions: What did you find most helpful about our learning session today? What element of our learning session today could be improved? What changes, if any, have you seen in your instructional practice as a result of our learning sessions? How do you feel about using video to analyze your classroom instruction? Has that feeling changed for better or worse as a result of our learning sessions?

The second way I systematically collect process data is through the use of field notes to capture discussions that occur during our intervention activities. I use a simple graphic organizer aligned to my theory of action that helps me organize my thoughts and observations during the course of the learning sessions. Specifically, the tool allows me to organize both my descriptive jottings and analytical reactions along the four domains of learning that my intervention is designed to impact. See the Observation and Note taking Tool in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1 – Observation & Note Taking Tool

Observation & Note Taking Tool		
Location:		
Time:		
Participants:		
Setting & Context:		
What I see	What I think	What I wonder
Domain #1 - Orientation to Professional Learning Needs of New Teachers – <i>Look fors</i> – participation in optional intervention activities, statements of new learning or anticipation for improved support providing		
Domain #2 - Quantity of Informal Interactions <i>Look fors</i> – interactions between new/veteran teachers, spontaneous moments of advice seeking/advice giving, planning for future collaborations/interactions, volunteering for future participation.		
Domain #3 - Awareness of Discussion Patterns that Impact Practice <i>Look fors</i> – new staff sharing specific problems of practice with colleagues, analytical feedback and advice giving from veteran teachers to new teachers using learned protocols.		
Domain #4 - Quality of Follow Up & Ongoing Support <i>Look fors</i> - follow-up conversations with questions about specific instructional adaptations, new teachers sharing adaptations they've made to their practice.		

Selection of Participants

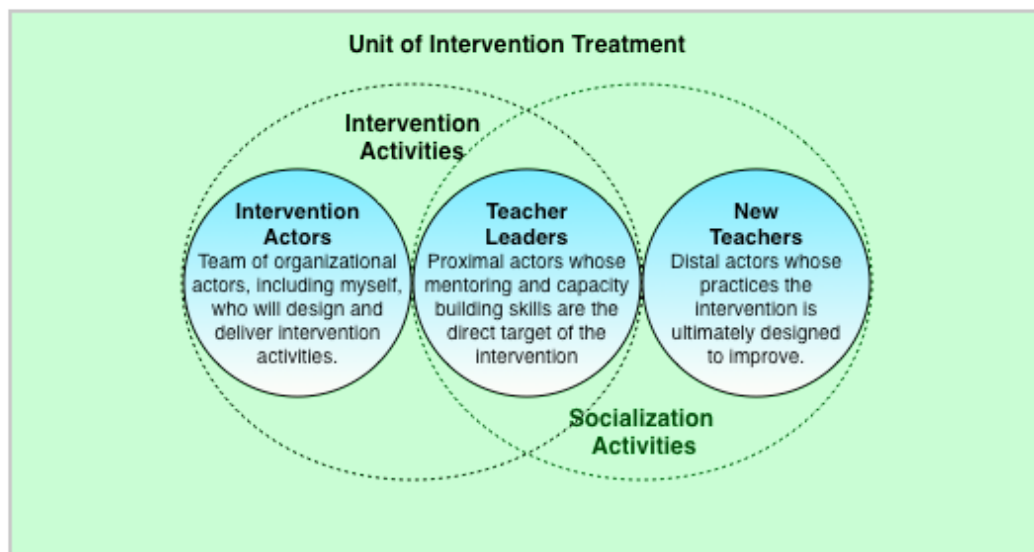
The primary criteria for selecting a site to test my intervention are the percentage of teacher turnover and level of student academic performance as measured by state and district mandated tests. Two of the six comprehensive high schools in San Guillermo emerge as compelling potential test sites based on the primary criteria. By engaging administration teams at the two sites in separate focus group conversations, I uncover some of the particular challenges facing new staff in the schools. Those conversations

further determine that San Guillermo Plains High School meets the secondary criteria of whether the school has a principal and teacher leaders willing to participate in a study. While choosing a school with a willing principal and teacher leaders will arguably exercise an influence on the success of the intervention, it is appropriate in that school leaders often engage in school reform initiatives as a matter of choice. These choices represent what Maxwell terms as *purposive sampling*, wherein participants are selected “deliberately to provide information that is particularly relevant to your questions and goals, and that can’t be gotten as well from other choices” (p.97).

Unit of Treatment

The unit of treatment for my intervention is experienced leaders at San Guillermo Plains high school who are recruited to support the socialization of new teachers within the school and the consequent relationships they develop with new staff members. While it is ultimately the new teachers whose practices I desire to impact, it is the learning and development of the teacher leaders, and their ability and willingness to strengthen relationships of trust with new staff, that I am directly targeting with my intervention design. Figure 3.2 below provides a visual diagram of the relationship between the unit of intervention and the socialization activities that I hope to impact through the intervention.

Figure 3.2 – Unit of Intervention Treatment



Data Analysis

The observation tool I have already described reserves space for ongoing analysis and reflection. This allows me to engage in a first round of coding using a set of descriptive codes derived from my theory of action at the same time that I prepare interview transcripts and observation field notes – all while engaging in the intervention itself. Using Dedoose analytical software to organize my materials, I engage in an ongoing analysis to code and analyze my data to identify patterns and themes that connect to the design and implementation of the intervention, including principles that might guide further iterations of the theory of action.

As I analyze my data through the coding process, I develop additional codes and clarify relationships between codes. I then circle back through my data, applying some of the codes that emerged as a result of my ongoing analysis. This non-linear analytical process resembles the coding process described by Miles and Huberman (2014) in their sourcebook on qualitative data analysis. They suggest that codes can be applied “at different times during analysis: some get created and used at the start, and others follow – typically the descriptive ones first and the inferential ones later” (p.58). My coding and analysis process follows a similar pattern, as I add more inferential codes to my list as I progress through the data. This reflects Creswell’s (2003) description of analysis as a recursive process of “moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data” (p. 190).

My design research calls for the extra analytical step of making evidence based judgments using a standardized tool (Mintrop, 2016). A tight process for data collection, coding, and analysis assists in making as low inference judgments as possible using a standardized rubric that looks at a number of performance domains. This quantifying of qualitative data using a standardized metric allows me to make comparisons between baseline and outcome data, helping to determine both the potential efficacy of the intervention and begin to discuss design elements that may lead to desired improvements. I use the Baseline and Outcomes Level Rubric, introduced earlier in Table 6, as the basis for both my measurement of baseline performance and impact at the end of the intervention.

Reliability

To ameliorate threats to reliability in my study, I deliberately plan my original design with careful documentation of any consequent adjustments that are made as my intervention unfolds. Indeed, reliability in any research study is determined by well-designed data collection instruments and methods that could be utilized in similar contexts and result in similar outcomes (Creswell, 2003). My study, therefore, lends itself to reliability as design interventions are pre-determined and instruments and methods for data collection and metrics for impact measurement are standardized. This can be seen in the rubric designed to assess baseline conditions prior to the implementation of the intervention, followed by an analysis of impact using the same rubric and criteria. Furthermore, the collection of process data is itself guided by theory and thus more tightly focused. I achieve this tight alignment by making observations using a notetaker aligned to the rubric domains, as well as collecting exit slip data from participants that aligns to the learning objectives of the intervention.

Contrarily, reliability is threatened in design research inasmuch as it often occurs in contexts where complex social relationships and unfolding and perhaps unanticipated challenges create the need for flexibility, adaptation, and creativity in intervention design and implementation (Mintrop, 2016). This is certainly the case in complex educational settings such as the one where my intervention occurs. To address these complex relationships, I purposefully chunk intervention activities in a manner that allows for a clear pairing of data collection and analysis efforts with each carefully planned element of the intervention. In the case of the structured interviews and surveys I employ in the study, it would be possible for future researchers to precisely replicate my data collection efforts using the interview and survey instruments I have developed. The flexible and adaptive nature of data collection methods in my study often associated with action research, such

as reflective journalizing and participant reflection, are perhaps more challenging to replicate. Yet even so, it would be possible for future researchers to tightly apply the same data collection methods with the understanding that new organizational contexts and intervention participants will yield some variation in timelines. As a participant observer, however, it is critical that I include those methods that will make my actions and decisions transparent in order to provide future researchers with a cognitive map for navigating critical junctures as the intervention unfolds (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Mintrop, 2016). I achieve this through ongoing reflective journaling following each study session, creating a space where I can document my thinking as the intervention unfolds, making my thinking and assumptions as explicit as possible.

Validity, Credibility

My design study must attend to issues of internal validity, construct validity, and external validity (Mintrop, 2016). The standard for internal validity in my study requires that I provide a plausible argument linking the process data with the outcomes delineated in the impact data. This plausible connection is provided by my theory of action, which outlines how attitudes and behaviors are predicted to change based on the learning that occurs during intervention activities. While my theory of action is designed to help me predict and identify the precise mechanisms of the intervention that are responsible for any changed outcomes, it is impossible to completely control for other potential influencing variables. Thus my standard for internal validity is plausibility – not causality.

Construct validity in a design study reflects the degree to which the measures and metrics of the design authentically represent the beliefs and practices of participants in real life. My design attempts to address construct validity in a variety of ways. First, I have carefully crafted my structured interview protocol to reflect the theoretical concepts outlined in my theory of action, namely the four domains of effectiveness that I hope to impact through my intervention. Those domains then map onto the standardized rubric I have developed to make a reasoned assessment of each participant's effectiveness as a supporter of new teachers. Second, I have combined my baseline and impact metrics with process data, including the collection of participant reflections following learning sessions and the use of an observation tool with "look for" statements aligned to the rubric, as a means to triangulate evidence to support any conclusions drawn from the data.

Finally, external validity in the context of design development research refers to how well the results of the study reflect changes in real life. In my study, as is the case more generally in design development and action research, external validity of the data with respect to the environment in which the study takes place is high. Indeed, design research is fundamentally an attempt to solve real problems in a practical manner (Plomp, 2007). I have attempted to address an authentic problem of practice facing an educational institution with a viable theory of action drawn from the knowledge base on the very real challenge of socializing teachers who are new to the organization (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012). My purpose in doing so has been to use my data analysis and intervention design to illuminate design principles that could prove helpful for practitioners hoping to address similar problems of practice.

Transferability

I cannot assume generally the transferability of the design principles derived from my design study to other contexts. The field of education is replete with examples of well-intentioned policymakers and administrators whose overly broad application of design principles taken from relatively small studies created little or even negative impact despite tremendous investment (Slavin, 2005). On a much more modest scale, my study has the potential to provide insight into the problem of socializing new teachers into a new organization, highlight relevant empirical evidence related to the problem, and identify design principles embedded in my intervention that have the potential to drive improvement in similar contexts.

Rigor, Threats to Rigor, Bias

Perhaps the greatest potential source of bias relates to my position as an Executive Director within the organization, a position of significant positional authority. While I do not have direct supervisory responsibility for participants in the intervention activities, my role as a member of the executive team within the organization complicates my approach to data collection, including conducting interviews and observing meetings and informal interactions. Plomp (2007) suggests that the primary research dilemma associated with design research is controlling for the fact that the “researcher is designer and often also evaluator and implementer” (p. 30). That is similarly the case with action research, where the benefits of insider knowledge and direct participation in research activities also represent the strongest threats to rigor (Mintrop, 2016). Given my leadership role in the organization, I would identify myself as a participant observer who is taking action while simultaneously studying the impact of those actions (Glesne, 2010). Indeed, I have co-designed and co-facilitated the intervention workshop sessions with members of staff and administration at San Guillermo Plains High School, as well as in partnership with members of our new teacher support department. To control for strong potential bias, I have attempted to employ systematic documentation, triangulation of data, strong reasoning, and empirical testing. This includes the formative evaluation that occurs to measure baseline and outcome data using my standardized metrics.

In addition to the threat for bias as a participant observer, there is a strong potential for advocacy bias in assuming improved outcomes as a result of my design. Indeed, the entire premise of conducting design research in education is to improve organizational practices and learning outcomes. The advocacy bias is potentially exacerbated by my identity as an education leader who already tends to assume that my decisions and actions lead to organizational improvement. Together, these factors represent strong incentives for reporting positive outcomes in my findings. As Coghlan and Brannick (2005) assert, ongoing reflection compels the researcher to make public any “privately held taken-for-granted assumptions” (p. 36) that inevitably shape and influence each step of the process of data collection and analysis. It is therefore essential that the processes for data collection and analysis be as transparent and systematic as possible to provide as objective an analysis as possible. To address these biases, I have used both reflective journaling and checking in with a critical friend to help ensure that I am not conflating data with my own assumptions and biases. In addition to my self-critical journal entries, I have engaged in ongoing conversations with an administrator at the school site who has a history of working with new teachers to help check my observations and ongoing data analysis. I

have also attempted to control for this bias through the rigorous application of a standardized metric that can be used to make more objective comparisons prior to and following the design implementation.

Conclusion

Education practitioners and researchers alike have grappled with the challenge of supporting teachers as they transition into new school contexts. This challenge is especially pronounced in urban schools, where teachers typically encounter a less supportive social context and more challenging working conditions. Teachers new to San Guillermo Unified similarly face the challenge of adapting to a new professional context where the support of new teachers is not seen as a priority. To survive, new teachers must rely on their ability to seek out the expertise of veteran staff, with varying degrees of success. My study seeks to improve the transfer of tacit expert knowledge by deliberately brokering relationships between experienced and new teachers at San Guillermo Plains High School and foster more robust, informal conversations that lend themselves to discussion of instructional practice in the classrooms. By increasing the quantity and quality of teacher leader/new staff interactions, I hope to create a social context and professional environment that is seen as more supportive by new staff members.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of my design study was to address a number of problem behaviors associated with the socialization of new teachers in an urban school setting by designing an intervention that brokers relationships of trust, develops conversational norms focused on instructional practice, and encourages more frequent informal interactions amongst new and experienced teachers. This intervention, designed in partnership with site administrators and teaching staff, draws on a theory of action that incorporates design principles supported by research in the areas of organizational socialization, teacher leadership, and relational empathy. I used both pre and post structured interview protocols and surveys to measure the impact of the intervention. I also employed a number of data gathering and analysis techniques to capture process data that would give me insight into the mechanisms of the intervention that might plausibly be the source of any measured impact. To explore the findings of my design study, I will proceed from the baseline data and analysis, to the process data collected during the intervention, to a comparative look at pre and post intervention data.

Baseline Data

I worked throughout the summer to build relationships with teaching staff at the school in order to increase the possibility of finding experienced teachers who would be willing to participate in the intervention on a voluntary basis. My initial point of contact was through the school administrative team at San Guillermo High School. While the team expressed eagerness to provide more robust support for their new teachers, they were also somewhat skeptical, having made attempts in previous years to sponsor voluntary support sessions that generally had been distilled down into logistical question and answer sessions. They reported that historically such sessions proved helpful for new teachers who clearly needed the logistical support in the first weeks of schools, but within a few months attendance had fallen off completely. The administrative team encouraged my participation in summer gatherings of the school's Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) in order to familiarize teacher leaders with the intention of the intervention. Through a combination of school visits and conversations with the administrative team and members of the instructional leadership team, I gradually shifted my recruitment attention to two literacy coaches at the school, and a small network of experienced teachers that came as a recommendation from the coaching team. These were not, as perhaps I initially had hoped, some of the most veteran teachers on the San Guillermo staff. Rather, they tended to be early to mid-career, with 5-8 years of teaching experience at the school. This fact is illuminating, as it reinforces the sense that amongst the most veteran teachers at the school, any sense of professional duty to support new teachers seems weak. Participants were also, importantly, curious about digging into the question of new teacher support and were willing to at least give the support sessions a try. In the end, I had seven experienced San Guillermo teachers who were willing to commit to participate in the intervention, two of which were primarily employed as instructional coaches. Table 4.1 on the next page presents a demographic overview of teacher leader participants.

Table 4.1 - Demographic Overview of Teacher Leaders

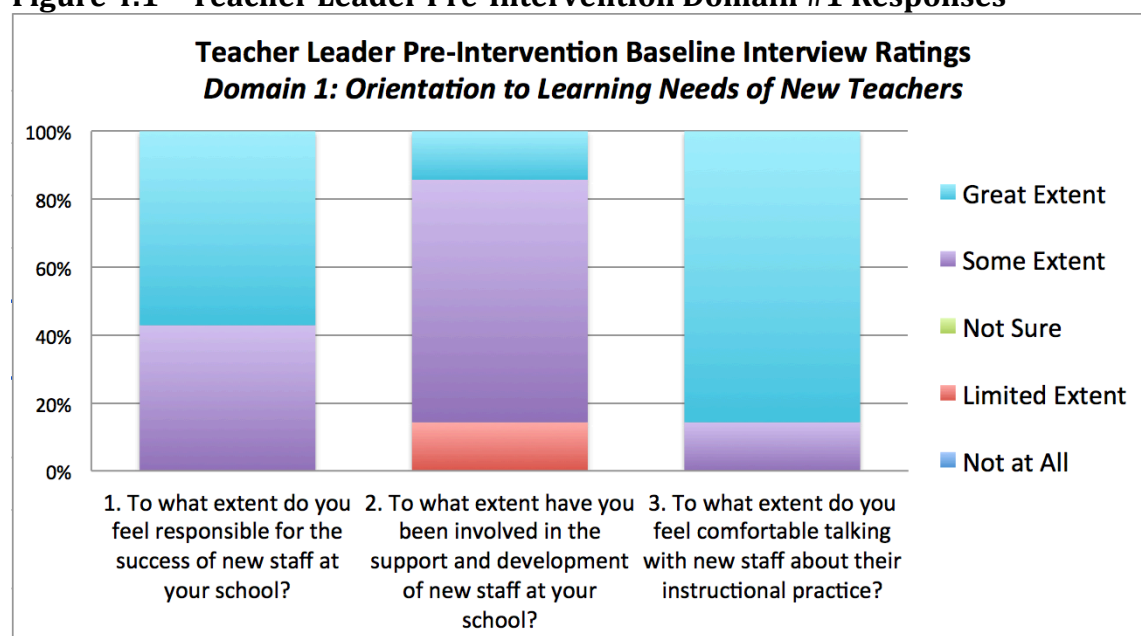
Gender	Discipline	Years at San Guillermo HS	Total Years in the classroom
Female #1 (CC)	English	3	33
Male #1 (MM)	Math	6	6
Female #2 (NT)	English	2	15
Male #2 (AB)	Social Studies	6	7
Male #3 (IL)	Math	5	6
Female #3 (BS)	Mild/Mod Special Ed	2	8
Female #4 (TC)	Math	5	5

I conducted a standardized interview with the seven veteran teachers who participated in the intervention. These interviews consisted of questions divided amongst four domains and a common rating scale that were used with all participants. The four domains were designed to facilitate a baseline assessment of current attitudes and practices at the school. I address my baseline findings within each domain separately, including a rationale for the baseline rating that I assigned for each of the four domains being measured.

Domain #1 – Orientation to Professional Learning Needs of New Teachers

Of the four domains, responses to questions in Domain One related to how teacher leaders perceived their responsibilities towards the professional learning needs of new colleagues were the most consistently positive. In retrospect, this should not have been surprising, since self-selection into the intervention itself should be considered a clear sign of motivation. Thus participating teachers overwhelmingly expressed both a belief that they carried a responsibility to help new staff be successful at the school as well as that they felt comfortable talking with their new peers about matters of instructional practice. Interestingly, however, these same teachers were much less involved in actually doing the work of supporting new colleagues to the school site. Thus the positive intentions of teacher leaders did not necessarily manifest themselves as support activities for and with new staff members. Teacher leader responses to questions in domain one are graphically displayed in Figure 4.1 on the next page.

Figure 4.1 – Teacher Leader Pre-Intervention Domain #1 Responses



It is clear that the experienced teachers who volunteered to participate in the intervention already had a strong collective sense of professional responsibility to support new colleagues at the school, despite the lack of time to actually provide support. When asked to elaborate on this response, teachers seemed to connect their sense of professional duty to new teachers to their own past experiences as new teachers. One teacher recounted that as a new teacher, she felt that “a lot of times it can be very isolating and you just kind of hope that someone helps.” Another teacher put it more bluntly. “I remember how hard it was like that very first year, I cried, and cried, and cried.” Such recollections of difficult experiences as new teachers featured prominently in the experienced teachers’ desire to support new colleagues.

There was also a clearly positive response to the question of whether the experienced teachers felt comfortable talking to new colleagues about matters of instructional practice. The nearly universal explanation of this sense of comfort was a simple equation of having more experience, which consequently revealed a clear hierarchy of instructional authority at the school. Experienced teachers cited their “good amount of experience” or their position “as somebody with more experience than a lot of the new staff members, I feel really comfortable about it,” as explanations for their feeling that it was acceptable to discuss matters of instructional practice with newer colleagues.

While the experienced teachers might declare a sense of professional duty and a certain level of comfort supporting new staff, in practice, those same teachers described having had either limited or only some involvement in past efforts to support and develop new staff members. Often, experienced teachers cited the lack of time as the primary culprit for their paucity of involvement. Yet some of the explanatory comments revealed additional sources of challenge. One teacher expressed general discomfort with direct interactions, responding that reaching out to colleagues was not necessarily part of her personality. Another teacher hinted at the challenge of making his tacit knowledge explicit to colleagues, describing how there are “many things that we don’t think of, that we’re just

used to on a day to day basis, we just know how to do, and it's just foreign to someone." Several of the teachers suggested that it just didn't seem like a priority. One teacher summed up the sentiment as "the need is there and we weren't filling it."

Overall, I concluded that the baseline practices of participants within Domain One could be best described as Moderately Effective. Table 4.2 below highlights the appropriate descriptor from my Baseline and Outcomes Levels Rubric.

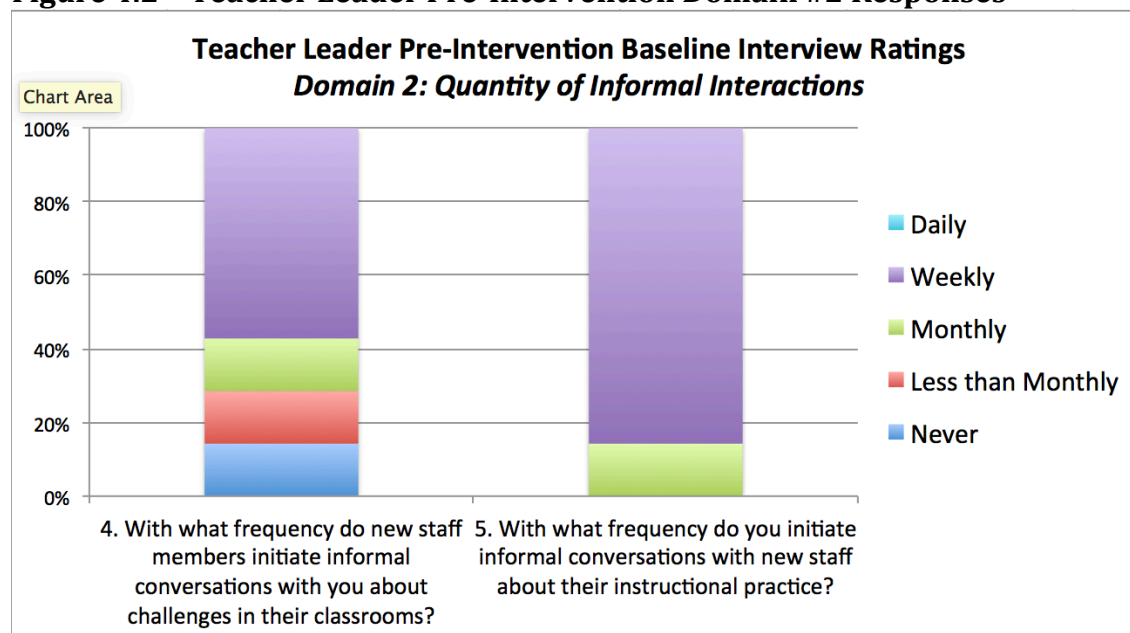
Table 4.2 – Domain #1 Rating

	(1) Least Effective	(2) Moderately Effective	(3) Most Effective
Orientation to Professional Learning Needs of New Teachers	Teacher leaders are reticent/reluctant to share information and expertise, and only do so when invited directly by new staff	Teacher leaders share information and expertise when invited to do so by new staff	Teacher leaders engage new staff by providing information and expertise around problems of practice in the classroom

Domain #2 – Quantity of Informal Interactions

When asked about the frequency of informal interactions with new staff to the school, the predominant response was that interactions occur weekly. Upon closer review, it seems that there was much more variety in the frequency with which new teachers initiate informal interactions, ranging from never to weekly. None of the teachers reported interacting with new colleagues on a daily basis. Teacher leader responses to questions in domain two are graphically displayed in Figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.2 – Teacher Leader Pre-Intervention Domain #2 Responses



While the majority of experienced teachers in the intervention reported initiating informal interactions on a weekly or monthly basis with new colleagues, there is a sense that new teachers were much more variable in their level of comfort initiating such interactions. Indeed, some of the teacher leaders reported that new teachers rarely, if ever, initiated informal interactions. Yet even in cases where new teachers were hesitant to initiate the exchange, experienced teachers reported that those same new teachers were typically eager to engage in discussions about their classroom practices. As one teacher described it, “They [new teachers] never come to me, but when I come to them and just open up, like ‘hey, how’s it going, anything on your mind, any challenges? Then they’re willing to share...” This sense of opportunistic exchanges was expressed by several of the experienced teachers. Another teacher reported that new teachers rarely came seeking them out. Rather, the experienced teacher might be “wandering around campus, or just in the teachers’ lounge” when they overhear a comment or conversation that they have some input to share that might be helpful. A third respondent concurred, noting that he didn’t have any new colleagues who would come to his classroom to ask questions or seek out support, but that sometimes he would have informal discussions in a shared lunch space.

Respondents were thus clear that they were not necessarily going out of their way to create opportunities for interactions. Often, informal interactions occurred with greater regularity with new colleagues with whom experienced staff had a structured or formal relationship. A department chair participating in the intervention noted email requests and verbal exchanges that resulted from his formal department chair responsibilities. Another participant referred to her responsibility as a liaison for the Accelerated Reader program, that brought her into more regular contact with a team of English teachers.

In summary, I determined that the baseline practices of participants within Domain Two could be best described as Moderately Effective. Table 4.3 below highlights the appropriate descriptor from my Baseline and Outcomes Levels Rubric.

Table 4.3 – Domain #2 Rating

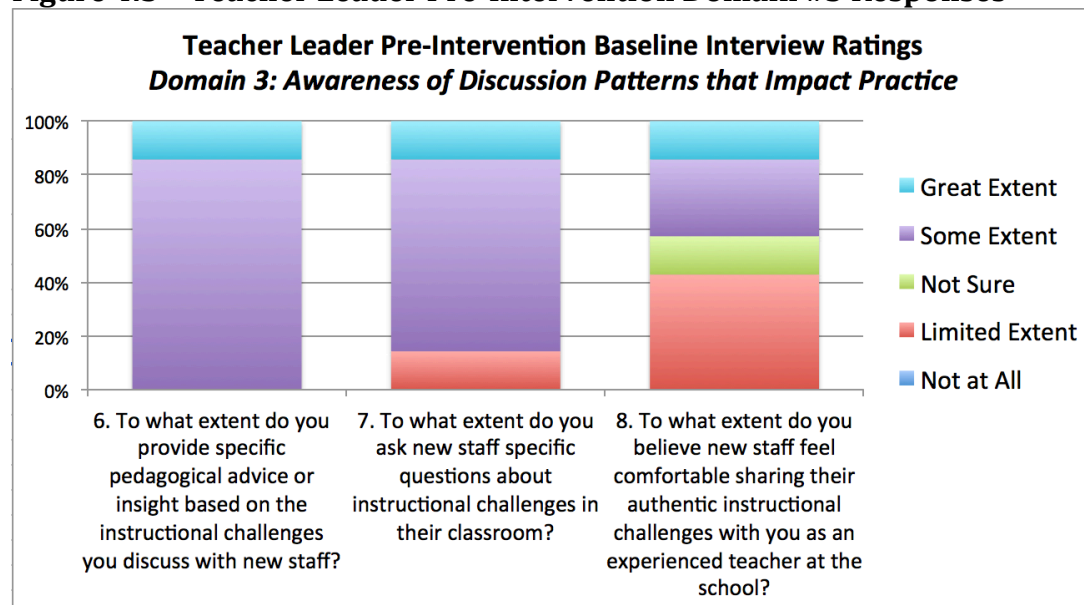
	(1) Least Effective	(2) Moderately Effective	(3) Most Effective
Quantity of Informal Interactions	Teacher leaders rarely interact with new staff, limited primarily to formal spaces for collaboration	Teacher leaders occasionally interact with new staff, both in formal spaces for collaboration and informally	Teacher leaders regularly talk with new staff both in formal and informal spaces.

Domain #3 – Awareness of Discussion Patterns that Impact Practice

When pushed to reflect on how instructionally focused interactions with new staff tended to be, teacher leaders reported that conversations sometimes lent themselves to the offering of specific pedagogical advice. A slightly greater reluctance on the part of teacher leaders to push for specifics when discussing instructional challenges was noted. Perhaps most noteworthy was the teacher leaders’ collective sense that new staff was not comfortable sharing authentic problems of instructional practice. Teacher leader

responses to questions in domain three are graphically displayed in Figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3 – Teacher Leader Pre-Intervention Domain #3 Responses



Experienced teachers delineated a similar structure to most informal interactions with new staff. They described conversations that began on a general basis, with openers like “how are things going.” If the new staff member seemed intent on pushing for advice or help, they would indicate their intention in a natural but deliberate fashion – basically signaling to the experienced teacher that they wanted some help. As one teacher explained, “I think usually the opener is how are things going with your classes, and from there any type of response will take me in a direction...it’s usually an unclear response then I might follow up with asking if there are any particular classes that are providing challenges.” Several experienced teachers explained that their response of “to some extent” reflected the fact that many informal conversations did not land on matters of instructional practice. As another teacher explained, “we talk about all kinds of things.” When the opportunity presented itself, teachers didn’t report a strong tendency to shy away from asking questions, but neither did they feel strongly about the need to provide specific advice. Rather, they suggested that many conversations, if not the majority of conversations, simply weren’t that focused on instruction.

The majority of teacher leaders interviewed reported that new staff in the school seemed uncomfortable sharing classroom based problems of practice with colleagues. Indeed, nearly 50% of respondents cited a belief that new staff were not comfortable sharing their authentic problems with others. One teacher leader described how the need to “appear competent” put pressure on new staff to keep problems to themselves. This response reinforces teacher leaders’ earlier observation that new teachers, on average, only initiated informal conversations on a monthly basis.

The perceived strong hesitation amongst new teachers in divulging authentic challenges they are facing in the classroom, together with the middling practice of getting specific with questions and advice when discussing matters of instructional practice, led

me to a Least Effective rating for Domain Three. Table 4.4 below highlights the appropriate descriptor from my Baseline and Outcomes Levels Rubric.

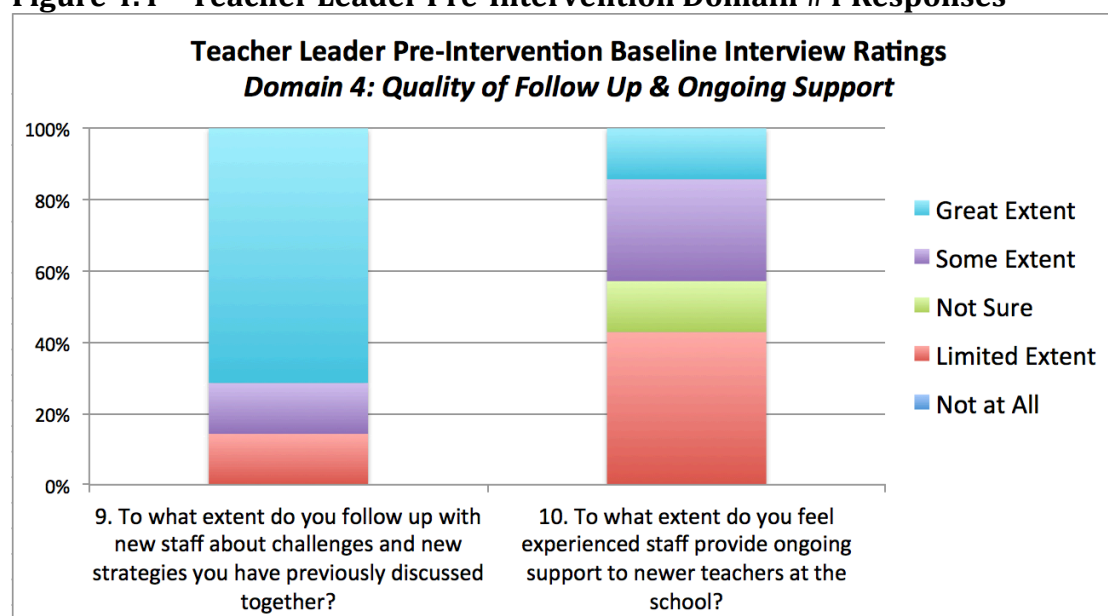
Table 4.4 – Domain #3 Rating

	(1) Least Effective	(2) Moderately Effective	(3) Most Effective
Awareness of Conversation Patterns that Impact Practice	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that lead away from discussions about new staff problems of practice	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that encourage new staff to share problems of practice.	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that encourage new staff to share specific problems of practice and that invite follow-up and ongoing attention.

Domain #4 – Quality of Follow-Up and Ongoing Support

Teacher leaders appeared most ambivalent in their responses to questions within domain four, expressing a notable difference between their personal engagement with new teachers and the collective willingness of all experienced teachers at the school to provide similar support. A full 75% of participants said that once an informal interaction had been initiated, they would personally follow up to check-in on how things were going with the new teacher. Contrarily, approximately half of the participants described the willingness of other experienced colleagues to engage in similar supportive interactions as limited. Teacher leader responses to questions in domain four are graphically displayed in Figure 4.4 below.

Figure 4.4 – Teacher Leader Pre-Intervention Domain #4 Responses



Experienced teachers overwhelmingly expressed a strong follow through with new staff once the offering of advice and support had occurred. While respondents noted a desire to be even more consistent about their follow-up, overall they seemed satisfied with the level of attention they had paid to those who had come seeking support.

More troubling was a majority consensus that experienced teachers as a whole were not providing nearly as much support to new teachers as might be desired. One teacher responded bluntly, suggesting that he had “definitely heard from some newer teachers that they felt like they didn’t...like they never get support.” Another teacher suggested that it support must be happening to some extent, but then quickly qualified his answer with “I hope.” Some participants were more elusive in their responses to this question. One respondent provided only a short, generalized response, suggesting that everyone does as much as time permits. Another participant was more direct in his deflection. “You’ve got to go talk to them about it.”

Overall, respondents were mixed in their responses to questions within Domain Four. While teachers reported general diligence in following up with new colleagues who had previously engaged in advice-seeking behavior, they also reported that general support for new teachers amongst experienced staff collectively was limited. This led me to the conclusion that baseline performance on Domain Four was Moderately Effective. Table 4.5 below highlights the appropriate descriptor from my Baseline and Outcomes Levels Rubric.

Table 4.5 – Domain #4 Rating

	(1) Least Effective	(2) Moderately Effective	(3) Most Effective
Quality of Follow-up and Ongoing Support	Teacher leaders do not follow-up on previous conversations, nor express interest in the ongoing challenges facing new teachers	Teacher leaders follow-up on previous conversations	Teacher leaders follow-up on previous conversations with questions about specific practices and encourage further discussion and experimentation

Launching the Intervention

From the very first interaction with new teachers at San Guillermo, it became apparent that before even attempting to address the professional learning needs of new staff we had a lot of work to do just to meet the immediate avalanche of logistical struggles facing the teachers in their first year at the school. During a short introductory meeting with new teachers on their first – and only – professional development day prior to the beginning of school, I was bombarded with substantial logistical challenges. None of the teachers had working emails – and consequently all staff communications about the opening of school had been completely lost to the new teachers. There were problems with login credentials to review class rosters and schedule assignments. One of the teachers innocently asked if there was any curriculum or books available for use with her classes. Another teacher had no keys to get into her room.

While the intention of the introductory meeting prior to the opening of school had simply been to invite new teachers to our kickoff lunch later during the week, the session

quickly turned into a more substantial question and answer period. I had asked some of the teacher leaders who had volunteered to participate in the intervention to join us for this meeting, and they too were quickly engulfed with questions from new staff. My original plan of a 15-minute intro and invite expanded into a 45 minute support session that was not part of the original intervention plan – with both the teacher leaders and myself leaving, having volunteered to follow up on a number of logistical requests from new staff members.

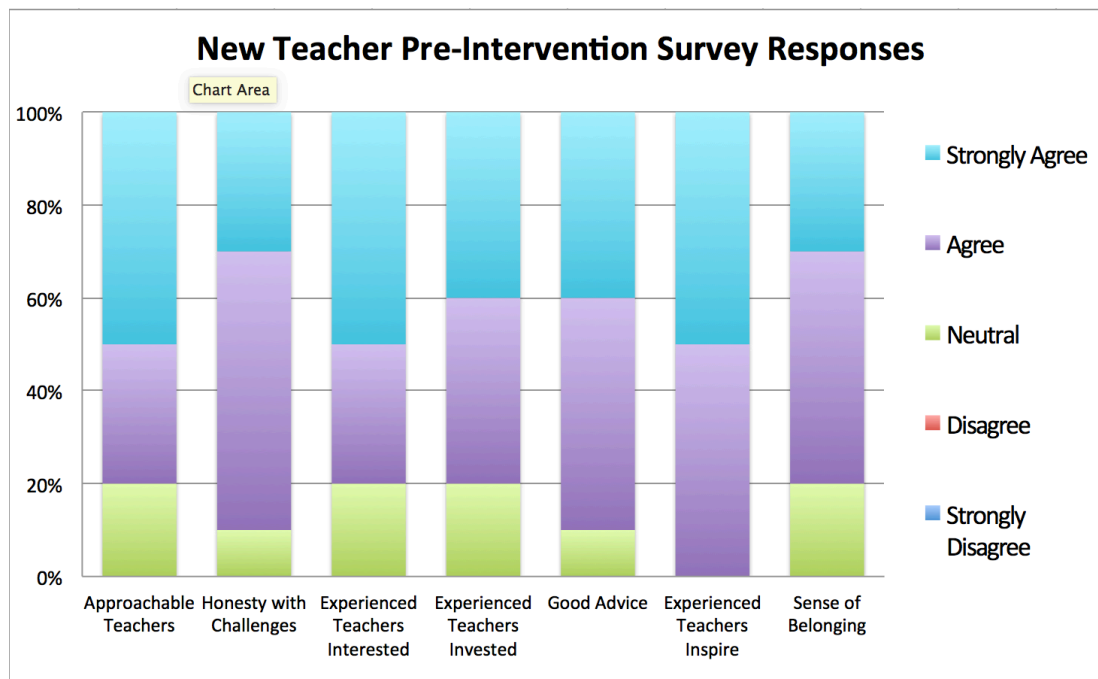
For the 2016-17 school year, San Guillermo High School had a total of 22 teachers who were either in their first or second year of teaching at the school. We decided to include the first lunch meeting as part of our launch efforts, focusing on introductions and relationship building. All 22 of the teachers were invited to our initial kickoff meeting, which was held at lunch on the last day of the first week of school. Of the 22 invitees, 11 came to the initial kick-off meeting. The time was spent introducing ourselves and our professional backgrounds, sharing our summer vacation highlights, and discussing some of our hopes and fears for the upcoming school year. We took time to outline the purpose of the lunch sessions and introduce the instructional consultancy protocol we would be using, in hopes that having access to a predictable space where they could get professional support would enhance their interest and motivation in participating. Finally, we concluded the meeting by asking those staff in their first two years at the school to complete the baseline survey.

Eleven teachers in either their first or second year teaching at the school took the survey about their perceptions and experiences as new staff members. Table 4.6 on the next page provides an overview of the survey questions and provides a descriptive code for reading the survey data in graphical format. Figure 4.5 that follows on the next page displays participant responses to the survey questions, showing the percentage of participants who responded at each level of the scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Table 4.6 – New Teacher Pre-Intervention Survey Questions

Complete Survey Question	Descriptor
1. I feel comfortable turning to more experienced teachers in the school when I need to resolve problems	Approachable Teachers
2. I can be honest with experienced teachers at the school about the challenges I am facing in my classroom.	Honesty with Challenges
3. There are experienced teachers at the school who are interested in my professional success.	Experienced Teachers Interested
4. There are experienced teachers at the school who are invested in my professional success.	Experienced Teachers Invested
5. The advice I receive from experienced teachers at the school has helped me improve my own classroom practice.	Good Advice
6. Experienced teachers at my school inspire me to want to be a better teacher.	Experienced Teachers Inspire
7. I feel like I have found a place for myself with the faculty and staff in the building in which I teach.	Sense of Belonging

Figure 4.5 – New Teacher Pre-Intervention Survey Responses



For the most part, participants responded favorably to the questions they were asked. None of the respondents reported a professional environment where they felt a strong notion that experienced teachers were not supportive. It is important to note that for the teachers in their first year at San Guillermo Plains, this survey came after just one full week of employment at the school. It would be difficult, at best, for them to have a clear sense of the professional working environment.

Participants responded most favorably to the idea that they felt inspired by the experienced teachers working around them. However, the two questions that garnered the relatively lowest positive response were those that asked new teachers to the school whether they felt they could be honest about their classroom challenges with the experienced teachers around them, and whether the new teachers felt they had found a place amongst the existing faculty.

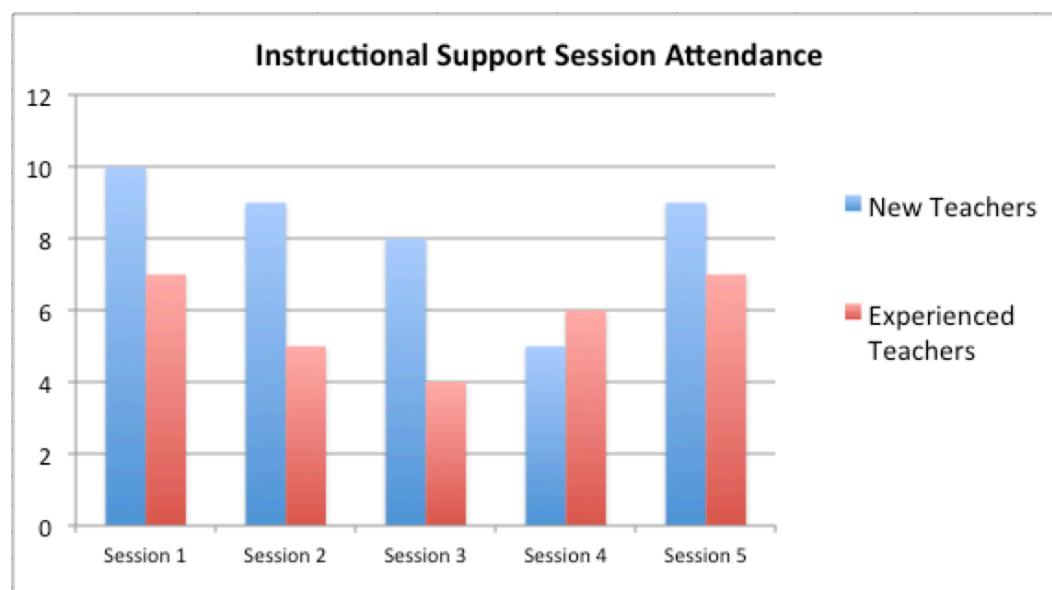
Process Data

The intervention consisted of five voluntary instructional support sessions with new and experienced teachers together, and two reorientation sessions over the course of four months. Regardless of the session type, each agenda was driven by learning outcomes. Each session concluded with an exit slip as a strategy to collect participant feedback on their experience with the intervention and to get insight into how well we met our session objectives. Responses were anonymous in an effort to encourage authentic and honest feedback.

Instructional Support Sessions

Our support sessions for staff new to the school were held roughly every other week at lunch on a voluntary basis. Attendance at these instructional support sessions varied from session to session. Figure 4.6 below outlines attendance at the formal support sessions throughout the intervention.

Figure 4.6 – Instructional Support Sessions Attendance



Of the eleven new teachers who took the initial survey during the kick-off meeting in August, all eleven attended at least two of the support sessions. Four of the new teachers attended at least four sessions, and one new teacher attended all five. Attendance slipped week after week, with a low of five new teachers attending session four. Attendance rose back again to near its highest level for the final session.

The primary objectives of the instructional support sessions remained constant, and reflect the change drivers outlined in my theory of action. For each session, the desired outcomes were 1) to broker relationships of trust between new teachers and experienced teachers, 2) to practice conversational routines that oriented discussion to classroom instruction, and to provide new teachers with actionable feedback that could be used in their classroom to address problems of instructional practice. Each session lasted roughly 30 minutes. After a brief, five-minute check-in question (i.e. highlight of the week, weekend plans, etc.) we launched into the instructional consultancy protocol and discussion. Table 4.7 below presents a summary of the problems of practice put forth by presenting teachers at each of the instructional support sessions.

Table 4.7 – Problems of Practice in New Teacher Support Sessions

Support Session Number	Problem(s) of Practice shared by presenting teacher(s)	
1	Things seem to be going well for my students, but one of my students simply struggles to engage. He is consistently off task, doesn't complete any work, and just seems checked out. I've tried talking to him, calling home, etc. but nothing seems to work. (First year math teacher)	
2	There is such a variation of skill within my men's choir, that I really struggle to address everyone's needs. I have a few talented singers in the group, and I leverage them a lot in the class, but sometimes I feel like I can't meet the needs of my most struggling singers and my most talented singers at the same time. Some of my singers can barely speak English, and sometimes I get frustrated with how to adequately support everyone (Second year choir teacher)	
3	One of my classes is consistently difficult to keep focused and engaged. We meet right after lunch, and I have to spend half of the class trying to get them to get back in an academic mindset. I've tried lots of things - we do a warm up question, and I've talked to them a few times about how they need to refocus when they get to class. They just don't seem to care that much. (First year social studies teacher)	
4	AP Biology course where we are covering a lot of content, building a lot of skills, lots of reading & writing - I feel like my students know the content, but they are getting crushed by the test questions, and it's becoming a source of discouragement for students. (5th year science teacher, 2nd year @ San Guillermo HS)	I have a lot of students who come to class and are not disruptive, but they don't really do anything. They just sit there and seem consistently unengaged. Some times its hard to notice that they aren't making progress because there are just so many of them. (First year English teacher)
5	With the introduction of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), I've been trying to make a shift towards a focus on the deeper & broader scientific principles that guide scientific inquiry - but am really struggling to find time for the "basic content" - the lower level stuff that we seemingly still need to engage in the conversation, but don't necessarily want to focus on for instruction (2nd year science teacher)	I'm really struggling with classroom management in most of my classes. I'm really excited for the break so I can reorganize myself and start off stronger when we get back. (First year math teacher)

The problems of practice brought forward addressed a range of concerns in the classroom. Initially, the instructional challenges had a distinctive focus on elements of classroom management. One teacher wanted insight into how to engage a student who consistently struggled to participate in class, while another teacher wanted help with behavior in her classroom more generally. To these issues, the diagnostic brainstorming suggested both discrete management strategies, as well as more systemic adjustments to the classroom environment. For example, for the disengaged student, the group gave specific advice, such as moving the student into close proximity with more extroverted students who would be naturally willing to provide support, or trying to build a stronger personal relationship and getting to know the interests and life experiences of the student. To the broader question of classroom management, the group suggested the teacher think about the physical layout of the classroom, and how daily learning is structured to ensure more clarity of routines and expectations. As the intervention unfolded, the problems of practice took on a more clearly instructional nature. A new biology teacher bemoaned the inability to craft learning experiences that resulted in deeper conceptual understanding amongst students. To this problem, the group suggested experimenting with blended learning structures, moving more basic concepts and skills into digital learning spaces, while focusing the teacher on enhancing academic discourse in small groups. Another line of advice explored using follow-up and probing questions in teacher-student interactions to push students to verbally articulate their thinking more clearly. In another session, an AP teacher shared her concern that her pacing wasn't adequately preparing students for the rigor of the AP examination. Specifically, students seemed to struggle with test items, even though they seemed to have an adequate factual and conceptual understanding. To this problem, the group suggested adding more regular opportunities to practice and analyze actual AP test items. Sometimes, a comment would pull the group discussion out of the instructional space. For example, to the another teachers' problem, the question came as to why 10th grade students would be permitted to enroll in an AP level course. This question opened the group to speculate more broadly on how placement decisions are made by school administration. "Yeah, it doesn't really make sense why we would have 10th grade students in an AP biology class."

During the first two consultancy sessions, every single teacher leader participating in the session either asked a clarifying question or provided some diagnostic insight during the discussion section of the protocol. I also observed that comments from new staff were more limited during our early sessions, with only 3-5 of the new staff members providing commentary during the protocol. Other observations I made were more inferential in nature. This was the case, for example, when I interpreted a number of clarifying questions during our initial sessions as practical suggestions as opposed to questions designed to better understand the context of the problem being described by the new staff member.

For each support session, participants completed two exit slip questions focused on what worked well in the session, and what might be done to improve the experience. Table 4.8 on the next page outlines sample exit slip responses at the conclusion of each of the support sessions.

Table 4.8 – Sample Exit Slip Responses – Instructional Support Sessions

Session Number	What element(s) of the session today worked for you?	What element(s) of the session could be improved?
1	“I really like the process and how it works” “Method of sharing and helping” “Great norms” “Good to hear different ideas from others who do not think like me”	“I wish we could do more than one per session” “Smaller groups” “Smaller groups”
2	“Group forum for sharing struggles & receiving support” “Strategies are useful for my subject even if it’s not my subject” “Good time discussing common issues” “I enjoy getting to hear people’s challenges and thoughts for how to address those”	“Break into at least 2 groups” “Perhaps ask people to submit in advance to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate” “Shorten the discussion during the lunch period” “More time to walk to class & use restroom”
What specific instructional feedback was helpful that you are considering applying in your classroom?		
3	“Have students tally and self-monitor progress when trying to improve a behavior.” “Starting each week with a 20 min. prize to be received on Monday for positive behavior.” “Helping kids self-monitor! Work towards self regulation.” “I loved the idea of having the students self-monitor a specific behavior.” “More positive reinforcement. This could help manage my class better and allow for more participation.”	
4	Protocol discussion went long and we were not able to collect an exit slip	
5	“Timing students to get materials out.” “Importance of hearing the NEED before making an assumption about a students motives” “It got me thinking about the students I have if they are in a similar situation.” “I should talk to the students and create a plan to set up individual goals.”	

Almost universally, those who participated expressed enthusiasm for the opportunity to dig into instructional problems of practice as a group. Comments such as “it’s good to hear different & great ideas from others who do not think like me,” or “great norms,” or “good forum for sharing struggles and receiving support.” A number of participants commented on how the issues raised in the problems of practice were often transferable across classrooms and subjects, noting appreciation for the opportunity to discuss “common issues” or to hear about strategies that “are useful for my subject even if it’s not my subject.”

Of course we also explicitly requested feedback about what could be improved about the shared learning experience. Clearly, the most common request early in the

intervention was to break into smaller groups to allow more participants the opportunity to share their specific problem of practice and receive feedback. For our first three sessions, for example, we conducted the instructional consultancy protocol as one large group, numbering around twenty participants. Our exit slips made requests like “I wish we could do more than one (problem of practice) per session,” and “break into smaller groups.” As the sessions unfolded, we took that feedback to heart and began breaking into smaller groups, albeit keeping the size substantial enough to include a mix of new and experienced teachers within each circle.

As can be seen in Table 4.8 on the previous page, halfway through the instructional support sessions, we determined to change the exit slip question. We wanted to elicit more specific feedback regarding the elements of the intervention sessions that were proving helpful. As a design team, we adapted the questions to focus more on the specific instructional elements of the conversation that participants’ found helpful and wanted to implement in their classrooms. Interestingly, while several of the problems of practice from the later sessions focused more directly on encouraging higher levels of rigorous thinking and academic discourse, the major takeaways listed by new teachers still seemed to take on a classroom management focus. For example, a 2nd year teacher at San Guillermo Plains with five total years of classroom experience brought a problem of practice focused on the conceptual shifts embedded in the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The teacher takeaways from the discussion were focused on individual goal setting with students and reducing the transition time it takes to pass out papers.

Another development of the intervention that came relatively early in the process was a request from the experienced teachers to facilitate the instructional consultancies themselves. While the original design of the intervention sought to develop the capacity and will of the experienced teachers to take increasing ownership of the instructional support of the new teachers, by the third session, I was no longer facilitating the support sessions myself.

Around the same time that the teachers requested to run the consultancy protocols themselves, they also informed me that they intended to use the instructional consultancy protocol in a number of school-wide contexts, including peer instructional improvement sessions that some of the participating teacher leaders were leading during an all-school non-duty day (e.g. a professional development day where teachers report to work but students are not in attendance).

Reorientation Support Sessions

Our re-orientation sessions brought together the teacher leaders who had volunteered to participate in the intervention to do some shared reading and discussion about the unique professional needs of teachers new to the school and the potential role that experienced teachers at the school could play in supporting those teachers. These sessions were not planned at regular intervals, but occurred when time could be arranged for the teachers to meet together for a longer period of time. For both of the re-orientation sessions, all seven of the teacher leaders participating in the intervention attended.

The learning objectives for the first reorientation were for participants to 1) to explain the difference between novice-oriented, veteran-oriented, and integrated professional school cultures, and 2) identify something they could do that would help move San Guillermo Plains closer to an integrated culture. To realize this, experienced teachers

began with a reflection on their own experiences as a new teacher. Each participant shared his or her reflection on what was hard about those early days on the job, and where they were able to turn for support. Then we engaged in a common reading of chapter seven from Susan Moore Johnson's (2004) book *Finders and Keepers*, focused on the characteristics of different types of professional cultures operating within schools. Each participant was consequently asked to identify a quote from the reading that resonated with them on a personal level, and then articulate their own analysis of the predominate characteristics of the professional culture at San Guillermo Plains High School.

I also collected exit slips at the conclusion of each re-orientation session. In the first re-orientation session, teacher leaders were asked to share their thoughts on the implications Johnson's writing, both for the work of the school in general and their personal professional responsibilities. Table 4.9 below contains sample exit slip responses from the first reorientation session.

Table 4.9 – Sample Exit Slip Responses – Reorientation Session #1

What are the implications from our session for your practice as a teacher leader?	What are the implications from our session for San Guillermo Plains HS
"There are different mindsets on campus, so I can play a small part in the circle I interact with" "Increase my efforts to be present for and provide suggestions for novice teachers." "Go back to compassion, relationships, and healing"	"We will need to be intentional to foster growth at a quicker pace. The end result will be in student performance." "We need to find a way to break through the entitled culture here at (San Guillermo Plains) to create a collaborative culture." "Move away from scarcity and fear-based mindsets."

In regards to implications for the school, there was a clear sense that work needed to be done to interrupt the strongly veteran-oriented culture that permeated much of the school. Specifically, participants expressed a need to "break through the entitled culture" – a reference to the practice of giving the most desirable classrooms assignments and locations to the most veteran staff members. A teacher leader bemoaned the sense of scarcity that drove experienced teachers to hoard materials and administrative favors. Another teacher suggested we "harness the energy of novice culture by implementing support consultations within department meeting," another nod to the intention of integrating the intervention into the broader professional culture and practice of the school. Upon personal reflection, participants expressed an increased desire to "be present and supportive of novice teachers," and to exercise "compassion" for new staff members that are likely experiencing difficulty in their new environments and assignments.

The learning objectives for the second reorientation were for participants to 1) follow-up on commitments made during our first reorientation session, 2) describe the impact positive informal interactions play in boosting staff feelings of efficacy, and 3) share

intentions to create opportunities for more informal interactions with new staff. We began our second session with a follow up to our previous re-orientation session, asking participants to reflect on any concrete changes that had come about during the subsequent weeks. Virtually all of the teacher leaders reported an increased effort on their part to initiate informal interactions with new staff at the school. One teacher reported being “more vocal within my sphere of influence” while another expressed her efforts to “keep trying and not give up” when it comes to efforts to shift conversations to matters of instructional practice. While the group generally expressed enthusiasm for their efforts over the past several weeks to more authentically engage their professional colleagues, there was a variability in their reflections that included a more noted tone of frustration in response to some interactions that had not gone as well as hoped. One of the teacher leaders in the intervention group lamented that peer interactions always seemed to boil down to a sense of “what’s in it for me.” Another member of the group shared her struggles with a new teacher who had an attitude of already knowing it all and who, according to the teacher leader, “does not value feedback and suggestions.”

We then engaged in a shared reading of Belle Rose Ragins and Amy Verbos’ (2007) piece *Positive Relationships in Action: Relational Mentoring and Mentoring Schema in the Workplace*. The piece provides an overview of how positive interactions in the workplace with experienced staff create feelings of professional efficacy and promote organizational attachment. The reading took a bit longer than originally planned, forcing me to adjust the protocol in order to release teachers before the beginning of the next class. Therefore, we moved directly into the exit slip activity following the reading. Participants were asked to share how their reaction to the reading and any implications for their ongoing work supporting new teachers. Table 4.10 below provides sample responses from participants’ exit slips.

Table 4.10 – Sample Exit Slip Responses – Reorientation Session #2

What are your major takeaways from our reading, and how does it impact your work moving forward to support new teachers?
“My mentorship relationship (where I was the protege) was formed because I initiated it. I’ve returned to my commitment to nurture empathy for the other adults at our school. I’ve needed empathy from them as my schedule has been impacted and I had to reschedule things” “I have been more vocal with my sphere of influence about fostering growth in a way that feels positive regardless of what you think about the current level of the instruction.” “I’ve reached out to more teachers that are not necessarily new (1-2-3 years) but have already gotten very comfortable with feeling experienced.”

Experienced teacher’s responses at the conclusion of the second reorientation session suggested some acknowledgment that an individual teacher cannot necessarily transform a professional culture by him or herself, but that each positive interaction has the potential to make a difference. Two of the teachers mentioned an awareness of his or her “sphere of influence” and the need to do what was possible within that sphere to foster

positive interactions. It is also important to note that not all of the teachers were enthusiastic about continuing to reach out. One teacher revealed a negative interaction with a new teacher that seemed to be eating at her sense of value in continuing to attempt to interaction, stating that she found herself interacting “with one new teacher who seems to know it all and does not value feedback and suggestions.”

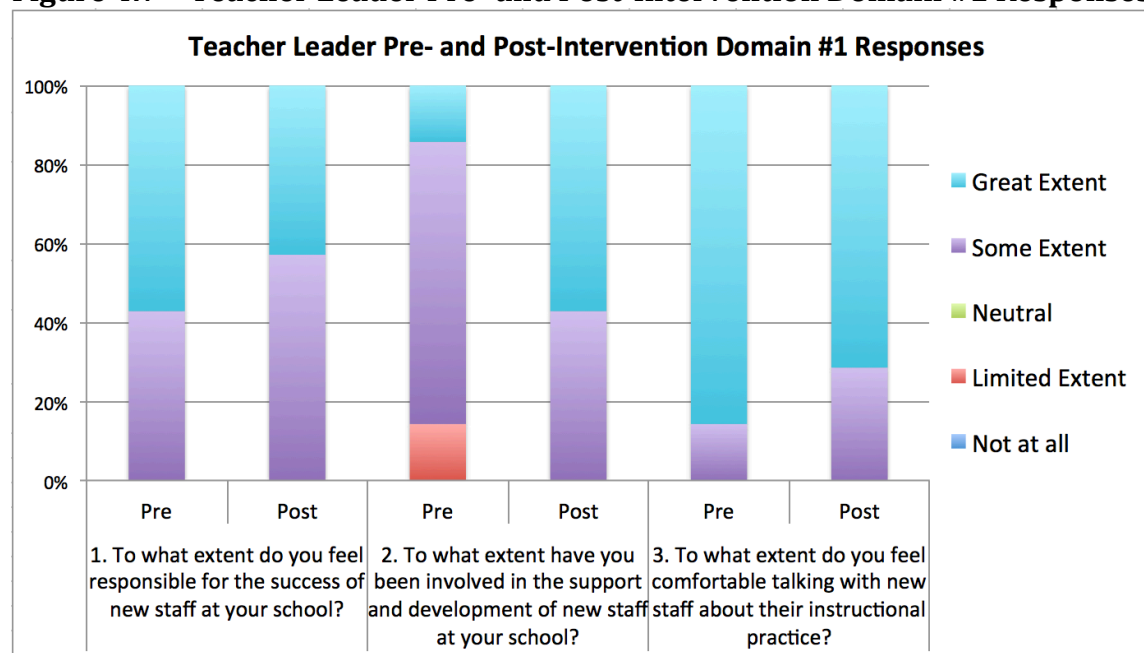
Impact Data

I conducted an interview the week following the completion of the intervention with each of the seven veteran teachers who volunteered to participate. Again, I used the same structured interview protocol questions, with the purpose of establishing a post-intervention assessment using my standardized rubric. I will present the post-intervention responses alongside the pre-intervention responses for each of the four domains under consideration to allow for an analysis of potential intervention impact.

Domain #1 – Orientation to Professional Learning Needs of New Teachers

For two of the three questions in the first domain, participants reported a slight decrease in their sense of responsibility and comfort addressing the professional learning needs of their new colleagues. While responses in both cases remained overwhelmingly positive (meaning a response of “to some extent” or “to great extent”), several participants shifted from reporting a sense of great responsibility and comfort to only somewhat so. Interestingly, the clearest shift amongst the three questions could be found in the second question asking teacher leaders to reflect on their degree of involvement supporting new teachers. Over 50% of respondents responded that they were involved to a great extent following the intervention, whereas prior to the intervention only one of the teacher leaders had reported a similar level of involvement in the past. Teacher leader responses to questions in domain one are graphically displayed in Figure 4.7 below.

Figure 4.7 – Teacher Leader Pre- and Post-Intervention Domain #1 Responses



In a practical sense, participants reported a clear increase in the degree to which they were involved with the support and socialization of new teachers in the school. This would seem somewhat self-evident, as the teachers volunteered to participate in the intervention, and consequently, spent more time and energy developing relationships and engaging in conversations about instruction with new staff. Several participants directly commented on this in their post-intervention interview, noting that the intervention itself facilitated an increase in the time they dedicated to meeting the professional needs of their new colleagues. One participant was effusive in his reflection on his participation in the intervention, “I think it’s a great start compared to other years, definitely shines very brightly.” Another teacher explained the difference from previous years in a more detailed manner. “In the beginning when we talked about how we supported teachers last year, although, we came together as a group in the beginning, it just, kind of, fell apart, because we didn’t have set agendas or a routine really. And this year, it has been going real great and I think people come back and share with – you know, share honestly what’s going on in their classrooms...it’s a lot better this year.”

Arguably, the practice of experienced teachers moved from the “Moderately Effective” level prior to the intervention into the “Most Effective” level in the post-assessment. This is largely on account of the increase in quantity and consistency of actual conversations with new staff. It is important to note, however, that this finding within Domain One should not be interpreted as an increase of informal interactions outside of the formal sessions that were part of the intervention design. Indeed, teachers tended to refer to the formal sessions when making comparisons to past practices. I will discuss those findings in association with Domain #2. Table 4.11 below highlights the appropriate Domain One descriptors from my Baseline and Outcomes Levels Rubric.

Table 4.11 – Domain #1 Pre and Post Intervention Rating

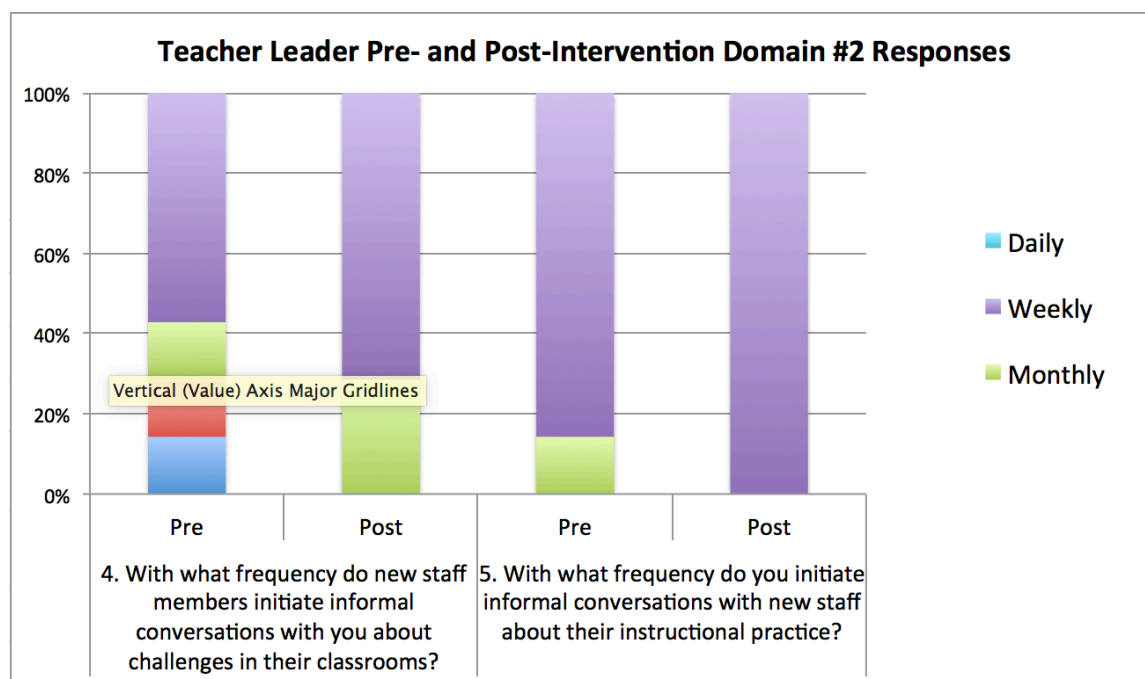
		(1) Least Effective	(2) Moderately Effective	(3) Most Effective
Orientation to Professional Learning Needs of New Teachers	Pre-Intervention	Teacher leaders are reticent/relevant to share information and expertise, and only do so when invited directly by new staff	Teacher leaders share information and expertise when invited to do so by new staff	Teacher leaders engage new staff by providing information and expertise around problems of practice in the classroom
	Post-intervention	Teacher leaders are reticent/relevant to share information and expertise, and only do so when invited directly by new staff	Teacher leaders share information and expertise when invited to do so by new staff	Teacher leaders engage new staff by providing information and expertise around problems of practice in the classroom

Domain #2 – Quantity of Informal Interactions

As was the case for all of the teacher leaders prior to the intervention, none of the participants responded that they were involved in daily informal interactions with their new colleagues at the conclusion of our activities. However, we do see a subtle shift in the

data, where almost all of the teacher leaders reported at least weekly informal interactions (outside of our scheduled intervention activities), whereas prior to the intervention, a number of participants reported interactions that occurred monthly or even less frequently. It is of note that we see the most movement in the teacher leaders' report on the frequency with which new teachers initiated conversations. In some cases, teacher leaders reported a shift from virtually no new teacher initiated conversation to those interactions happening on a weekly basis. Teacher leader responses to questions in Domain Two are graphically displayed in Figure 4.8 below.

Figure 4.8 – Teacher Leader Pre- and Post-Intervention Domain #2 Responses



The key word to qualify for a “Most Effective” rating is “regularly,” and while the data suggests a shift towards informal interactions occurring slightly more often, it does not rise, in my judgment, to the level of “Most Effective.” When asked to elaborate, teachers noted similar patterns in the spaces and times when informal interactions would occur, typically during lunch or other unplanned encounters. Several even stated that informal interactions had basically been the “same as previous years.” With that said, many of the participants clarified with statements about increased intent on their part to engage informally with their new peers. One teacher referenced a goal during the intervention to reach out to someone daily. Another teacher said she was trying to actively seek out teachers from the formal sessions to see how they were doing. In the end, 100% of participants reported initiating informal interactions on a weekly basis by the completion of the intervention. There was an even more pronounced shift in the number of informal interactions being initiated by the new teachers themselves. Some of the teachers noted that new teachers from the formal lunch sessions had come into their classrooms with questions. Table 4.12 on the next page highlights the appropriate Domain Two descriptors from the Baseline and Outcomes Levels Rubric.

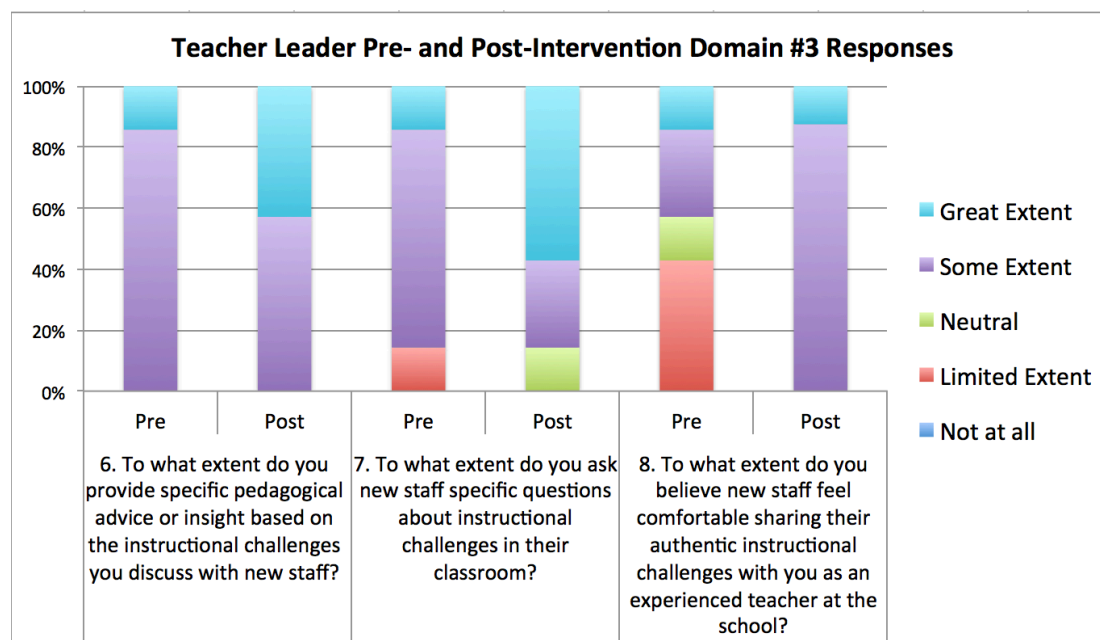
Table 4.12 – Domain #2 Pre and Post Intervention Rating

		(1) Least Effective	(2) Moderately Effective	(3) Most Effective
Quantity of Informal Interactions	Pre-Intervention	Teacher leaders rarely interact with new staff, limited primarily to formal spaces for collaboration	Teacher leaders occasionally interact with new staff, both in formal spaces for collaboration and informally	Teacher leaders regularly talk with new staff both in formal and informal spaces.
	Post-intervention	Teacher leaders rarely interact with new staff, limited primarily to formal spaces for collaboration	Teacher leaders occasionally interact with new staff, both in formal spaces for collaboration and informally	Teacher leaders regularly talk with new staff both in formal and informal spaces.

Domain #3 – Awareness of Discussion Patterns that Impact Practice

For all three questions in Domain Three, teacher leaders reported improvements in their perception of the instructional nature of their conversations with new teachers. Teacher leaders noted an increase in the degree of specificity in both the questions they ask about what's happening in new teachers' classrooms, as well as in the advice that they provide to address challenges. Perhaps the greatest movement was in teacher leaders' report of the level of comfort demonstrated by new teachers in engaging more experienced teachers in honest conversations about struggles in the classroom. Teacher leader responses to questions in domain three are graphically displayed in Figure 4.9 below.

Figure 4.9 – Teacher Leaders Pre and Post-Intervention Domain #3 Responses



This domain, focused on the degree to which conversations with new staff were instructionally focused and authentic to actual challenges in the classroom, arguably saw the largest positive shifts from pre to post intervention. While experienced teacher still reported a lot of conversations with new staff that continued to focus on logistical matters, such as how to use access specific technology tools or how to log grades, they also spoke positively about the role the formal sessions, and specifically the instructional consultancy, had in helping to create a space where they could be at greater ease asking pointed questions and providing specific feedback. One teacher described how even in those circumstances when a new teacher is fearful of exposing his or her genuine challenges, she felt confident she had acquired some strategies to “draw them out” by the end of the conversation.

Similarly, there was a positive shift in the sense that new teachers welcomed the opportunity to engage in authentic conversations about their instructional practices. One teacher explained how this was shifting when asked about the level of comfort new teachers felt sharing authentic problems of practice with colleagues. “I would say it’s getting better because it’s becoming, for the new teachers, it’s becoming more of a norm, especially through the lunch-ins that we’ve had. It’s normal to talk about a challenge and get advice.” Another teacher had a similar observation about the willingness to talk about challenges in the classroom. “I think you also experienced that here, when we have our lunch meeting, people are really open about really hard issue that not – do not necessarily have, you know, the – an absolute answer to and when we tried that same format, the consultancy format with other teachers in another PD, in a voluntary PD day, a lot of the veteran teachers really liked it too. Table 4.13 below provides both my baseline and impact ratings for Domain Three.

Table 4.13 – Domain #3 Pre and Post Intervention Rating

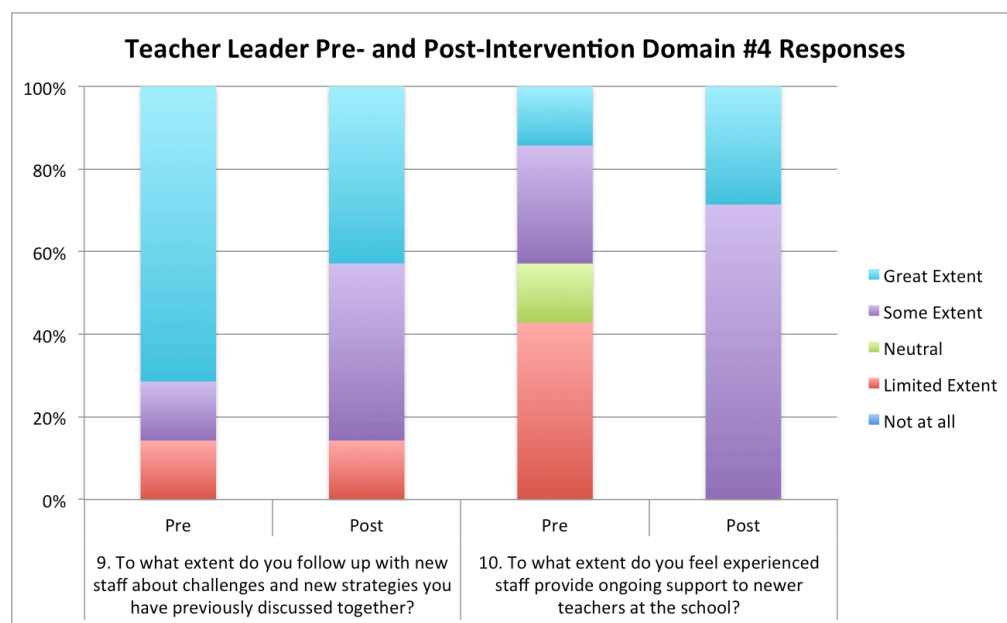
		(1) Least Effective	(2) Moderately Effective	(3) Most Effective
Awareness of Conversation Patterns that Impact Practice	Pre-Intervention	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that lead away from discussions about new staff problems of practice	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that encourage new staff to share problems of practice.	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that encourage new staff to share specific problems of practice and that invite follow-up and ongoing attention.
	Post-intervention	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that lead away from discussions about new staff problems of practice	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that encourage new staff to share problems of practice.	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that encourage new staff to share specific problems of practice and that invite follow-up and ongoing attention.

Domain #4 – Quality of Follow-Up and Ongoing Support

We see mixed results in domain four, with teacher leaders generally reporting a slip

in the degree to which they follow up on conversations they have with new teachers about struggles in the classroom, while noting a much more pronounced improvement in the overall degree to which new teachers are receiving support. This reduction in follow-up could possibly be due to the fact that the veteran teachers consider the support sessions as a space to follow up directly on challenges discussed previously. Indeed, whereas prior to the intervention, nearly half of the teacher leaders reported a limited degree of support for new teachers at the school, following the intervention 100% of the participants reported at least some ongoing support for new teachers. Teacher leader responses to questions in domain four are graphically displayed in Figure 4.10 below.

Figure 4.10 – Teacher Leaders Pre- and Post-Intervention Domain #4 Responses



Part of the slippage in the degree of follow-up from experienced teachers might possibly be due to an increased awareness of the importance of such follow-up. One teacher admitted candidly that it was “something that I could be improving, not necessarily doing the follow-up very well.” Another teacher had a similar response, “It’s not as much as I’d like to. I’d like to be better at following up on things and checking back in.”

Whereas nearly 50% of participants had suggested that experienced teachers were providing limited support to new staff prior to the intervention, all participants, by intervention’s end, suggested that new staff were being supported at least to some degree. Although within that statement there was still some acknowledgement that support was potentially coming from a concentrated few. “Some of them do it to some extent. Some of them to great extent. The majority not at all, or to limited extent.” This statement uncovers a more intractable problem of how to shift the practice of those who were not willing to voluntarily participate in the intervention. Despite some improvement in the overall level of support provided to new teachers, the state of practice following the intervention can still be best described as “Moderately Effective.” Table 4.14 on the next page provides both my baseline and impact ratings for Domain Four.

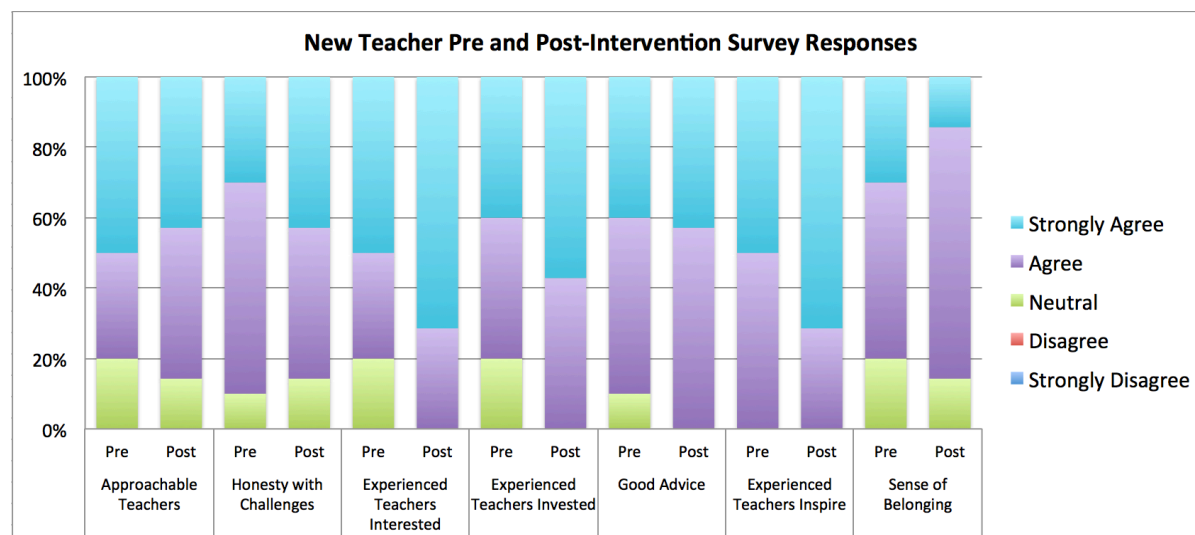
Table 4.14 – Domain #4 Pre- and Post-Ratings

		(1) Least Effective	(2) Moderately Effective	(3) Most Effective
Quality of Follow-up and Ongoing Support	Pre-Intervention	Teacher leaders do not follow-up on previous conversations, nor express interest in the ongoing challenges facing new teachers	Teacher leaders follow-up on previous conversations	Teacher leaders follow-up on previous conversations with questions about specific practices and encourage further discussion and experimentation
	Post-intervention	Teacher leaders do not follow-up on previous conversations, nor express interest in the ongoing challenges facing new teachers	Teacher leaders follow-up on previous conversations	Teacher leaders follow-up on previous conversations with questions about specific practices and encourage further discussion and experimentation

New Teacher Pre and Post Survey

At the conclusion of the intervention, I administered the same survey questions to new teachers at the school that they had answered prior to the launch of the intervention nearly four months prior. I also included a section for them to comment on any specific interaction of element of support they had experienced during the time period of the intervention that proved especially helpful. Figure 4.11 below displays participant responses to both the pre- and post-survey questions, showing the percentage of participants who responded at each level of the scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Figure 4.11 – New Teacher Pre- and Post-Survey Responses



We notice some interesting trends when comparing pre-survey with post-survey responses. If we look at the percentage of participants who responded favorably to each item, and by favorably we include both “strongly agree” and “agree” responses, we notice that favorable responses went up between 10% and 20% for all questions except for question #2. Another way to put this is to say that respondents generally moved away from neutral to favorable responses. When looking carefully at question #2, which asked about whether respondents feel they can be honest with experienced teachers about their classroom challenges, we notice that while respondents were collectively slightly less favorable following the intervention, nearly 20% of respondents moved from “neutral” or “agree” to “strongly agree.” This might suggest that the intervention had a somewhat polarizing impact on participants. The questions that moved the most in the favorable direction were question #3 and question #4, both of which ask respondents to reflect on the degree to which their more experienced colleagues seemed interested and invested in their professional success as new teachers to the school.

Impact Summary

The purpose of my design study was to improve the socialization experience of teachers new to San Guillermo Plains High School. To accomplish this, I developed a theory of action, tightly informed by the empirical knowledge base, that outlined the specific change drivers that could conceptually address problematic behaviors at the site. That theory of action highlighted the practices of experienced teachers as a source for addressing the professional needs of teachers new to the site. Tables 4.15 and 4.16 on the next page provide an overview of the impact of the intervention I designed and implemented at San Guillermo Plains High School.

Table 4.15 – Pre-Intervention State of Socialization Practices

	(1) Least Effective	(2) Moderately Effective	(3) Most Effective
Orientation to Professional Learning Needs of New Teachers	Teacher leaders are reticent/relevant to share information and expertise, and only do so when invited directly by new staff	Teacher leaders share information and expertise when invited to do so by new staff	Teacher leaders engage new staff by providing information and expertise around problems of practice in the classroom
Quantity of Informal Interactions	Teacher leaders rarely interact with new staff, limited primarily to formal spaces for collaboration	Teacher leaders occasionally interact with new staff, both in formal spaces for collaboration and informally	Teacher leaders regularly talk with new staff both in formal and informal spaces.
Awareness of Conversation Patterns that Impact Practice	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that lead away from discussions about new staff problems of practice	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that encourage new staff to share problems of practice.	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that encourage new staff to share specific problems of practice and that invite follow-up and ongoing attention.
Quality of Follow-up and Ongoing Support	Teacher leaders do not follow-up on previous conversations, nor express interest in the ongoing challenges facing new teachers	Teacher leaders follow-up on previous conversations	Teacher leaders follow-up on previous conversations with questions about specific practices and encourage further discussion and experimentation

Table 4.16 – Post-Intervention State of Socialization Practices

	(1) Least Effective	(2) Moderately Effective	(3) Most Effective
Orientation to Professional Learning Needs of New Teachers	Teacher leaders are reticent/relevant to share information and expertise, and only do so when invited directly by new staff	Teacher leaders share information and expertise when invited to do so by new staff	Teacher leaders engage new staff by providing information and expertise around problems of practice in the classroom
Quantity of Informal Interactions	Teacher leaders rarely interact with new staff, limited primarily to formal spaces for collaboration	Teacher leaders occasionally interact with new staff, both in formal spaces for collaboration and informally	Teacher leaders regularly talk with new staff both in formal and informal spaces.
Awareness of Conversation Patterns that Impact Practice	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that lead away from discussions about new staff problems of practice	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that encourage new staff to share problems of practice.	Teacher leaders use conversational routines that encourage new staff to share specific problems of practice and that invite follow-up and ongoing attention.
Quality of Follow-up and Ongoing Support	Teacher leaders do not follow-up on previous conversations, nor express interest in the ongoing challenges facing new teachers	Teacher leaders follow-up on previous conversations	Teacher leaders follow-up on previous conversations with questions about specific practices and encourage further discussion and experimentation

It is clear that the intervention fell short of moving the practices and behaviors of experienced teachers to the most effective state. In the domains of “Orientation to Professional Learning Needs of New Teachers” and “Awareness of Conversation Patterns that Impact Practice,” the behaviors of experienced teachers arguably improved. In the other two domains, there appeared to be no measurable positive movement.

Connecting Process and Impact

The instructional support sessions of the intervention were designed to provide experienced teachers with a clear structure for interacting with new staff, in hopes of brokering relationships that would lead to more regular, instructionally focused, conversations. During our first instructional support session, there was a moment when it was not clear whether a new teacher would be willing to share a genuine problem with the group. Similarly, when it came time for the diagnostic brainstorming, much of the conversation was sustained by a small subset of experienced teachers. In other words, there seemed to be a general apprehension to publically share challenges and provide diagnostic feedback. Yet the process data suggests that teachers eventually embraced the opportunity to engage in conversations about their instructional practices with their colleagues. By the completion of our second and third sessions, more than half of the exit slips explicitly requested smaller groupings to allow more participants the opportunity to share and receive feedback about the problems of practice being experienced in the classroom. Greater numbers of participants around the table contributed to the diagnostic brainstorming as the sessions continued. By the final session, even experienced teachers were volunteering to share their own classroom challenges, consequently taking their turn to listen to the feedback of their colleagues, including those with much less experience on the job. Some of this shift could be attributed to the design of the protocol during the instructional support sessions, which introduces a set of vocabulary and discussion patterns that create opportunities to talk specifically about challenges in the classroom and the strategies that could potentially ameliorate those issues. Several participants in the process data specifically referred to the structured conversation as helpful in giving them the space to talk to their colleagues in such an instructionally-focused manner. Participants also indicated how helpful it was that they had access to the insight and thinking of their more experienced colleagues at the school. As noted in the impact data, the two domains that arguably registered some impact were those that were focused on building the capacity and willingness to discuss classroom based problems of practice, and an increase in the willingness of new staff to approach experienced staff in informal conversations to discuss their classroom challenges.

Thus, it seems that the learning that participants called out as useful was shared or social in nature. In other words, participants needed to learn together how to appropriately broach sensitive topics of performance challenges in the classroom. Some of this is potentially related to the need to establish trust amongst participants. For example, during the diagnostic brainstorming portion of the discussion, participants often used the time during initial sessions to validate the challenges the new teacher was articulating. Comments like, “I remember when I was new and I had a student just like yours...” or “What you described is something we all struggle with here at San Guillermo Plains” reflected the need to put the presenter at ease and communicate a sense of shared understanding and struggle. Interestingly, as the sessions continued, less time was focused

on validation and more time seemed focused on diagnostic feedback. The fact the more and more participants were eager to share their problems of practice clearly indicate the increasing trust as participants learned to discuss practice together.

Yet the learning potentially goes beyond establishing the trust to interact in meaningful ways, to developing the skill to do so. This is evident in observations about the problems of practice teachers brought to the group. Initially, new teachers provided shorter explanations of their challenges, referring, for example, to the challenge of a particular student, or the general challenge of a particular class. In the first two sessions, the presenter had extra time during the explanation part of the protocol, leaving the rest of the group to take more time with clarifying questions. As the sessions progressed, however, new teachers seemed to attempt to predict the clarifying questions that might come and include those imagined responses in their initial explanation. In other words, the teachers seemed to not only grow increasingly eager to share their problems, but increasingly skilled at describing those problems.

It also seems clear that participants took note of the broader range of possible solutions to their classroom challenges. On multiple occasions, teachers expressed appreciation for the opportunity to hear from those who thought differently about a challenge and could provide interesting or insightful ways to address the issue. When our exit slip questions shifted to more specific feedback about the practices participants identified as potentially useful, participants sometimes used clarifying phrases like “I hadn’t considered...” or “I really liked...” These phrases hinted at the introduction of novel approaches to improving classroom practice that participants would not necessarily have derived on their own.

Whereas the instructional support sessions seemed to help participants develop stronger trust and new skills to discuss matters of instructional practice with colleagues, the efficacy of the reorientation sessions, to the extent there was any, seems connected to a more motivational element based on a process of reflection and goal-setting. In their exit slip reflections, participants used phrases like “go back to...” and “return to...”, signaling a desire to recommit to practices of collegiality and professionalism that seemed to have been neglected or crowded out by other priorities over time. Rather than explicitly teach a new skill, the shared readings provided a framework for recognizing the value of authentic collaboration and positive interactions. They did not necessarily teach how to effectively engage in such practices, but rather communicated just how vital such connections were to both individual staff members and the organization in general. When experienced teachers gathered for our second reorientation session and reflected on any changes to their practices since last convening, participants again referred to increased effort with phrases like “I’ve reached out...” or “I’ve been more vocal.”

Experienced teachers reported general enthusiasm for the reorientation sessions, and several participants expressed a desire to have access to these types of sessions on a more regular basis. In conversation, experienced teachers expressed a sense of connection to conceptual elements that helped explain phenomenon that they have personally experienced. For example, when asked to elaborate on a concept or quote from the Susan Moore Johnson reading about veteran-oriented and novice-oriented school cultures, every single participant immediately connected the passage they highlighted with their experience as a staff member at San Guillermo Plains. This connection seemed to engender a sense of catharsis. In conversation, participants expressed relief to see in writing a

description of some of the challenges that they had been observing and articulating over time.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Design-based research seeks to improve the effectiveness of schools by equipping researcher leaders with both a framework for making sense of the complex learning that is required in order to improve outcomes for marginalized students, as well as with the tools for designing interventions that measurably improve those outcomes over time. The desired outcome, therefore, is not only to improve targeted outcomes, but also to discover and delineate design principles that could, given both the appropriate context and application, realize similar improvements in different settings. I outline those design principles derived from my study, followed by a discussion of the limitations within my theory of action, intervention design, and study design.

Design Principles

I look to those domains where improvement was realized to push for deeper understanding of the link between the activities of the intervention and improved practices. The first such improvement can be identified in Domain One, which measured change in the degree to which experienced teachers were oriented to the professional needs of new staff at the site. My intervention design relied heavily on the voluntary participation of experienced teachers at San Guillermo Plains High School. It should have been clear prior to the launch of the intervention that the selection of volunteers would introduce a selection bias towards participants who were already oriented towards the professional needs of their new colleagues. Indeed, the data bears out that the intervention did not impact participants underlying desire or commitment to staff new to the school. Despite this limitation, it is also clear that the intervention provided experienced staff with a structure that would allow them to act upon their professional commitments. In their pre-intervention interviews, participants hinted at a sense of unfulfilled duty when asked about the degree to which they were involved with the support of newer staff. While the desire to support was there, it wasn't always clear how they might appropriately engage with new staff. Similarly, at the conclusion of the intervention, several participants were exuberant in their assessment of the support they had provided during the semester. In other words, it was professionally satisfying to have deliberately contributed to the learning of newer colleagues. This sense of appreciation for the opportunity to address problems of practice collaboratively bears itself out in the process data as well, as both experienced teachers and new teachers alike explicitly mention the feedback from colleagues about problems of practice in the classroom to be the most helpful element of the support sessions. Table 5.1 on the next page provides a summary of this first design principle.

Table 5.1 – Design Principle #1

Design Principle #1 - Validate Professional Values with Aligned Opportunities
Experienced teachers are motivated by the opportunity to act on the professional values they hold, including the opportunity to provide support to new colleagues.

While we may typically associate learning with individual actors, an analysis of the data from my intervention reinforces the social nature of learning. This second design principle suggests that if the desired outcome is a social environment where teachers discuss substantial problems of practice they are facing in the classroom with their colleagues, they need ample opportunity to build the trust and skill necessary to sustain such conversations. Not only does this explain some of the perceived limitations of the current induction practices within San Guillermo Unified which pair retired “service providers” with new teachers, but it reinforces the need to design group experiences specially aimed at building the capacity of new and experienced teachers to take advantage of limited collaboration time when they are together. Table 5.2 below provides a summary of this second design principle.

Table 5.2 – Design Principle #2

Design Principle #2 - Staff Need Opportunities to Learn to Learn Together
It takes trust and skill to genuinely discuss classroom-based problems of practice, and building that trust and skill takes practice.

The other area where the intervention plausibly registered impact was in Domain Three that addressed the willingness of new teachers to share authentic problems of practice from the classroom. Perhaps no data point shifted as dramatically from pre to post intervention as experienced teachers’ perception that new staff were comfortable sharing their classroom challenges. This shift also appears, albeit more subtly, in the survey data collected from the new teachers themselves. Across the board, new teachers reported that at the conclusion of the intervention, experienced teachers were slightly more approachable, interested and invested in their development as new teachers, and able to provide useable feedback and advice. In the end, the data analysis suggested that any increase in informal interactions came not from experienced teachers initiating more conversations, but from new teachers feeling more confident approaching experienced teachers who were participating with them in the formal instructional support sessions. Table 5.3 on the next page provides a summary of this third design principle.

Table 5.3 – Design Principle #3

Design Principle #3 - Formal Brokering of Relationships Can Have Informal Payoffs
New teachers seek out more informal support from experienced colleagues when they have had opportunities to build relationships and trust in formal spaces.

Limitations of the Theory of Action

In retrospect, it became clear that the launch portion of my intervention design was not directly informed by my theory of action. The theory of action does not address the complex factors that influence a teacher's willingness or reluctance to participate in a set of activities designed and carried out largely by a participant external to the immediate school community. I relied on a convenience sample of willing teachers at the school site. I opted to include the narrative of the launch activities to deepen the contextual details surrounding the intervention, but ultimately realized that the recruitment activities were not conceptually supported beyond my own intuition and experience as an education administrator who has worked the past decade in schools. While recruiting willing participants is not necessarily an undesirable way of introducing new initiatives or practices at a school site, from a research perspective, it misses the opportunity to explore the underlying forces that influence adoption or rejection of initiatives at a school site by teachers. Furthermore, there may be school contexts where it would not be possible to successfully recruit a team of willing experienced teachers. More troubling still, one might assume that it is precisely in those schools where voluntary participation is not likely or possible where the socialization support for new staff is most needed. My theory of action does not speak to these recruitment challenges.

Another limitation of my theory of action was the omission of the conceptual mechanism that would translate the learning from the reorientation sessions with experienced teachers into more abundant informal interactions. In the intervention design, my assumption was that the experience of engaging in a shared reading and discussion of concepts related to the successful socialization support of new teachers would prompt experienced teachers to initiate more interactions outside of the formal activities of the intervention. In some respects, the reading of the texts and the corresponding reflection did result in an increase of stated motivation for initiating additional interactions. Participants certainly expressed a desire for more such learning experiences. While the analysis of my data revealed this possibility, it was not explicitly noted in my theory of action. More important still was the fact that the intervention failed to register any notable impact in this regard, as experienced teachers did not ultimately report initiating more interactions themselves, despite their stated intentions.

Limitations of the Intervention

To some degree, the intervention design registered some success in brokering relationships between new and experienced teachers. Similarly, the intervention introduced conversational routines that engaged participants in discussing substantial

matters of instructional practice in the classroom. Yet there are several elements of the intervention that clearly fell short of registering the desired learning impact.

First, the intervention, in general, does not always directly address the structural constraints being placed on teachers at the school. Indeed, the intervention is designed to address structural deficits at the school, such as lack of access to instructionally focused professional development, or lack of time to collaborate with colleagues. One might imagine a variety of interventions designed specifically to address such structural challenges, such as attempts to create time in teachers' schedules for co-planning or the addition of planning days to the summer calendar for relationship building and instructional planning. While the primary purpose of the study was to improve the socialization experience of new teachers, a secondary, albeit implicit, purpose was to design an intervention that could improve the socialization experience of new teachers without significant structural modifications or financial investments. Certainly, school leaders must consistently foster improvement without access to significant resources of time and finances, and my intervention is designed to operate within the less than desirable structural constraints facing many schools, and San Guillermo Plains High School in particular.

Second, rates of participation were not high. The fact that I recruited both new and experienced teachers on a voluntary basis has been previously discussed as a limitation of the theory of action. While I am not arguing that obligatory participation would lead to stronger outcomes, I do believe that the intervention design could have more directly and aggressively sought out voluntary participation of both new and experienced teachers. I believe that personalized follow-ups with staff at the beginning of the intervention could have increased the number of new teachers who benefitted from the instructional support sessions, and consequently, helped broker even more supportive relationships between new and experienced teachers.

Third, I would design the reorientation sessions as a much more robust element of the intervention. The experienced teachers in the intervention expressed a clear connection between our discussions in these sessions and their analysis of the professional culture of the school. This, in turn, led to moments of insight on the part of experienced teachers who were able to translate new learning into intentions to take action. The structure of these sessions lent themselves to an authentic cycle of inquiry, wherein experienced teachers committed to taking specific actions prior to our next session. At the launch of the subsequent session, participants discussed what they had attempted differently and what they had learned as a result. This cycle of learning, taking action, and then reflecting on what was learned only occurred once in my design. My theory of action already suggests that such a cycle would need to occur multiple times in order to register the desired impact. Not only would I increase the number of reorientation sessions in future iterations of the intervention design, but I would introduce role playing activities into each reorientation session to give experienced teachers the opportunity to practice the conversations and actions that they intend to take.

Suggestions for Further Iterations

First, I would shorten the duration of the instructional support sessions in an attempt to garner broader participation. In general, I was disappointed with the number of both experienced and new teachers to the school who chose to participate in the

intervention. In some respects, I think that the opportunity to collaborate was presented as a semester-long commitment. It may be that teachers did not know enough about the purpose and potential payoff of such an investment of their time. Or, they may have been aware of the payoff and simply felt it was not worth such a significant time commitment. In either case, an analysis of the process data suggests that there may not have been a measurable difference in impact between three and five instructional support sessions. In other words, to the extent that there were positive gains in outcomes, it seems many of those gains may have been present by the third session. Had the intervention been shared as a shorter commitment that could be repeated more often with different groups, it may have had a more potent collective effect on the professional culture and social environment of the school.

Second, I would replace the reorientation sessions with experienced teachers to a similar structure conducted directly with new staff members. The reorientation sessions were positive experiences by all measurable accounts, but this emotional lift did not result in any change in behavior. While it is tempting to double-down on the reorientation sessions by introducing a more carefully structured process for reflecting and reporting on improvement efforts, I no longer believe it would be as effective as intervening directly with the new teachers as a group. Specifically, I would choose a series of texts that explores the advice-seeking behaviors of new staff members, encouraging them directly to seek out more informal opportunities for feedback and professional advice. I would also more closely balance the number of instructional support sessions with experienced teachers and these redesigned “advice-seeking orientation” sessions with new teachers, with the belief that only having two reorientation sessions limited was not sufficient enough to register any measurable change in behavior.

Limitations to the Study

In addition to limitations to the theory of action and the intervention design, there were elements of the study itself that, in retrospect, may have limited the quality of my data collection and analysis.

First, I struggled at times to reconcile the iterative nature of my design-based intervention with the need for consistency in data collection and analysis. This is especially the case with regards to the pre and post intervention semi-structured interviews. One of the hallmarks of design development research is the ability to iterate and adjust the intervention design based on an analysis of the data as the intervention unfolds. In some cases, I made adjustments to the intervention activities as a result of an analysis of process data as it was collected. Similarly, I recognized potential gaps in my theory of action as the intervention activities continued. It became increasingly clear to me that there was not a tight enough alignment between the structure of my interview questions and the change drivers outlined in my theory of action. Yet I felt that making adjustments to my interview questions and structure after launching the intervention would potentially undermine my ability to make direct comparisons regarding my baseline and impact data. In the end, I added some additional questions to the post-intervention interview protocol to explore some of the conceptual issues that I felt needed more direct discussion, but it did not adequately solve the potential disconnect between some of the interview questions and the elements of the design that they were meant to illuminate.

Second, I would have liked a more robust methodology for tracking and revealing

the informal conversation patterns of intervention participants. As it was, I relied on two interview questions that were general in nature regarding the quantity of informal interactions. The categories I used to measure the quantity of informal interactions, such as “daily,” “weekly,” or “monthly,” were not sensitive enough to tell the complete story of how the quantity of interactions might be changing. Experienced teachers struggled to assign a category when asked, and often they expressed some discomfort in distilling their interactions into such broad categories. None of the experienced teachers, for example, reported having “daily” informal interactions with new staff, but several of them suggested that such interactions happened more than “weekly.” In those cases, it seems participants defaulted to the lowest accurate description. In other words, anything between “weekly” and “daily” was simply reported as “weekly.” Nor did my interview questions capture any precise data about whom these interactions were with. From a methodological standpoint, there are more robust methods for capturing this type of detailed social interaction, including the use of participant logs and social network analysis.

Third, my methods for collecting process data could have been more robust. Specifically, my strategy of collecting exit slip data was not aligned tightly enough with the learning objectives for each session of learning together. For example, my exit slip questions for the first two instructional support sessions were too generic in nature, asking participants simply to reflect on what worked in the session and what could be improved. While this yielded helpful feedback and data, it was not specific enough to illuminate any changes in perception or learning that had occurred as a result of the shared learning experience.

My Role as Leader/Researcher

It is critical to return to the fact that I came to San Guillermo Plains High School as a vested actor in the system with positional authority at the district level. Undoubtedly, this fact helped me gain entrée to the school with the administrative team. While I believe the expressed sentiment that the school had legitimately struggled to provide meaningful site-based support to new staff in previous years, whether or not the leadership team and staff members felt the intervention warranted their participation is a more uncertain conclusion. Once I had been welcomed by administration at the site, I quickly developed what I would consider to be a relationship of trust with the instructional coach whose formal role at the school included the instructional support of staff. She expressed on several occasions her feeling that my personal involvement with classroom teachers as a district administrator was a welcome change from the norm. There were clear moments, however, when this instructional coach used our relationship to leverage other initiatives she was hoping to support. For example, she was voluntarily participating with a group of teachers attempting to develop a system for supporting teachers attempting to receive National Board Certification, and on one occasion she asked me to deliver introductory materials about the program directly to the superintendent. As a National Board Certified teacher myself, I was wholly supportive of these efforts regardless of my involvement with the intervention, but nevertheless I was aware of the fact that I represented a direct line to higher levels of leadership and resource decisions with the district.

I also leveraged this relationship with the instructional coach to elicit critical feedback about the intervention itself. Following each support session, the instructional coach and I, usually accompanied by two of the experienced teachers who happened to

have their preparation period immediately following lunch, would take a few minutes to reflect on the learning session. Together, we would review participant feedback and plan for adjustments for upcoming sessions. In this sense, I had a small co-design team directly involved with the intervention that helped to ground me in the context of the school.

I also bring a strong effectiveness bias that I have had to constantly check as I have both carried out the intervention and analyzed the collected data. For example, it was very hard for me to come to the conclusion that the reorientation sessions did not register a positive change in behavior amongst participants. Part of this difficulty is due to the fact that engaging others in reading shared texts, discussing those texts together, and then reflecting on what we have learned, are key elements of my leadership practice beyond my intervention. Indeed, part of the reason I included the sessions in my intervention design is related to a belief that such learning experiences can positively influence behavior. As noted in my process data, these shared learning experiences often elicit an emotional lift for participants, and I tend to associate that improved sense of purpose and awareness with changes in behavior. In the context of my intervention, the data does not support such a conclusion.

Conclusion

The socialization experience of teachers new to a school site can often be tremendously challenging, especially in the context of under-resourced urban schools. When compared to schools serving more affluent communities, urban schools serving higher populations of students of color tend to be professional environments that offer less social support and fewer opportunities for professional learning. As a result, turnover is often higher and levels of reported professional attachment to the school are often diminished.

Whereas many elements of the socialization experience of new staff members are often left to chance, my study has highlighted the potential that deliberate socialization designs may have towards more positively socializing and embedding newcomers in the professional environment of the school. Specifically, I highlight how a school can attempt to deliberately broker relationships, develop conversation norms focused on instructional practice, and encourage more frequent informal interactions amongst new and experienced teachers. While these intervention efforts fell short in some respects, they also registered measurable impact in important ways, including the willingness of new teachers to seek out additional help and engage in conversations about specific challenges they are facing in the classroom.

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