



TRANSCRIPT

Webinar:

Using Learning Huddles to Improve Teaching and Learning

LAURA BUCKNER

[Slide: Using Learning Huddles to Improve Teaching and Learning]

I am pleased to welcome you all to, again, our webinar on Using Learning Huddles to Improve Teaching and Learning.

[Slide: Goals for Today's Webinar]

We have goals for today's webinar. We're going to learn together about the theory and practice of teacher learning huddles and how they reflect an improvement science "Plan, Do, Study, Act" inquiry cycle. And we're going to hear from examples in Washoe County School District to understand some of the design features and the leverage points to facilitate learning about instruction. And finally, we're going to explore some ways to support teacher learning through inquiry in their context. So again, the examples today will have to do with writing curriculum, but this can really be applied to many different content areas.

[Slide: Agenda]

So, we have an agenda. This is what we'll cover in the next hour.

[Slide: About REL West]

So, just a bit about who we are organizing this webinar. So, the Regional Educational Laboratory West, or REL West, is one of 10 national education labs that are funded by the Institute for Education Sciences at the Department of Education. And our projects and partnerships are focused in California, Utah, Nevada, and Arizona, but of course our resources and webinars like this are available for anyone who is interested. And our mission is to translate research into practice among practitioners and policymakers, and really to support data-driven decisionmaking in education.

[Slide: Speakers]

So, I'm pleased to introduce our three excellent speakers that we have lined up for today. First of all, Kim Austin is a Senior Researcher and the K-6 Literacy Partnership lead for REL West with expertise in literacy, online learning, professional development, evaluation, and learning theory.

The next person that's joining us today is Darl Kiernan. She is the Early Literacy Learning Facilitator for Nevada's Northwest Regional Professional Development program, which provides professional learning opportunities with the goal of improving student performance, and she's been really involved with this project. So, welcome, Darl.

And finally, Sola Takahashi is a Senior Research Associate and Improvement Science Specialist here at REL West and she's involved in a number of projects that are working to integrate continuous improvement methods into our coaching and research. Welcome, Sola.

[Slide: Literacy Improvement Partnership]

So, thank you again everyone, for being with us today. And Kim, I will let you take it from here.

[Slide: Partnership Overview]

KIM AUSTIN

So, we are a partnership of four organizations, as Laura mentioned. Some of us are affiliated with Regional Educational Laboratory West at WestEd—Sola and I are. We are partnering with schools in Washoe County School District in Reno, Nevada, and we have some of those folks on the line as well. The Center for the Cooperative Classroom is also an important partner. They provide the curriculum that's the focus of this work, as well as professional learning expertise. And lastly, Nevada's Northwest Regional Professional Development Program is a partner in facilitating all the professional learning activities that we are all engaged in.

So, what, what are we doing? We in a nutshell, are an improvement partnership focused on writing instruction, K-6. And our work initially is in two elementary schools in Reno, Nevada, working with all of the teachers there, and the principals, and their onsite coaches as well as Washoe District coaches. And our aim is to, after we refine this approach to professional learning, to scale to more schools in Washoe. It's a five-year project and we just finished, really, our first year of implementation, first school year. And we're entering into Year 2.

[Slide: Partnership Goals]

Our goals are to ultimately improve student writing by leveraging an improvement approach to shift teacher practice. We are also learning together about how to support students as writers. All of us are learners. We're...and that's all wrapped in an effort to build district capacity to sustain and scale the work over time. So that's at a high level what we're doing.

[Slide: Defining the problem: Where is the gap?]

And where did we start? So, any improvement project starts with defining the problem. What's the gap between where we are currently and where we want to be? And the first gap that popped out at us was really around writing performance. And student achievement in SBAC was revealing that at least half the students weren't meeting proficiency. So that was a concern. In addition, there was no writing curriculum in place in, in the two schools we worked with and in the majority of schools in the county.

Third, there's a lack of ongoing professional development to support writing instruction. And lastly, through our partnership with the Collaborative Classroom, we learned that there's a

wide variation, which is quite typical in implementation across classrooms. So, the curriculum really look, looks very different from classroom to classroom, and we were curious about that. How we could reduce the variation across classrooms. That's where we started.

[Slide: North Star Goal]

And together with the Collaborative Classroom, and also with a, a number of research resources, we developed this North Star goal, which has four parts. Our aim is to develop a community of independent writers by supporting students to feel engaged and motivated to write, to collaborate well with partners, both in whole group lessons and in writing. To write consistently for 20 to 30 minutes per day. That's a research-based recommendation, daily time for writing. Obviously, that will vary according to grade level and whether you're at the beginning of the year or the end of the year.

And lastly, we, we have put a lot of effort into thinking about how to improve writing after writing conferences, which is another key component of, of the curriculum. And this, this represents our North Star goal, but we think that the process that we're sharing today could really apply to any content area and grade spans, for that matter.

[Slide: Research-Based Practices]

And as I mentioned, we use a number of research resources to inform our North Star goal. This is one from IES, and I think there's a link to that in the chat, which really details very, very specific recommendations for instruction in writing.

[Slide: How will we get there? Key Drivers for Improvement]

So, how will we get there? We have our goal, we have our partners, we have our site. How, how will we get from A to B? This is our working theory of the key drivers for improvement. We theorize that a common curriculum would help teachers literally be on the same page, talking about the same units, the same weeks of instruction, and the same lessons. And we thought that was important in, in terms of building on the, the PLC structures that were already there, that they're talking about common lessons and lesson structures.

We also believe that collaboration is important and this...with a particular focus on research-based practices. Inquiry cycles is something we'll dig into in a bit, but that's what really drives the improvement process, is the groups of teachers engaging in inquiry and collaboration. And lastly, support for leadership, which is critical; we won't go into detail about that today, but we recognize that all levels of a system are important in supporting teacher collaboration.

[Slide: Common Curriculum: Being a Writer]

A little bit about the curriculum. As I mentioned, our partner the Collaborative Classroom—they are formerly called the Developmental Study Center, so you might know them by that name—they have a curriculum with a very predictable lesson structure, which has been helpful to us in our inquiry with teachers. There's always a lesson, there's always writing time, and it

concludes with a share and reflecting time. They use a writing workshop approach, which probably many of you are familiar with. And their pedagogy integrates the social and the academic. So, that's just a, a taste of the, the content and context for these collaborative sessions that we're about to describe.

[Slide: Cycles of Learning Year 1]

So, here's what Year 1 looked like. We took our North Star goals and we said, okay, what if everyone in the school was focusing around a common topic? And a nice initial topic at the beginning of the year seemed to be establishing those social routines. So, in those first few huddles, we helped teachers just become familiar with the discussion protocol that we will describe before they did any data collection. In the winter, we focused on protecting time for independent writing. And that's where they started tracking: How long did the lesson take? How much time did students have to write each day? And then they would huddle around their data. And lastly, we focused on frequent and effective conferring, which is probably one of the more challenging topics, because it gets right to the heart of instruction. How are you supporting individual students in their writing?

[Slide: Inquiry Cycle]

So this is our inquiry cycle. This year, with some feedback from teachers, we decided to give teacher teams an opportunity to choose their topic. So, the inquiry cycle begins with choice of topic, and there's a discussion around, you know, what's the current situation in my classroom, and where do I have motivation to collect some data and try out some changes? Each team collects data around their topic to better understand the problem, identify gaps in their practice. So, maybe they're only getting to one student conference a day, and they'd like to get to two or three. And they start to generate the reasons why there are these gaps.

They also develop some change ideas after they look at their initial data, and move on to that green bubble, where they conduct a small test in their classroom. They try something out, something relatively simple. It could be as simple as, I'm going to set a timer for myself to make sure that the lesson part of my day doesn't creep into the writing part of my day. They collect some more data to see how that change idea went, and take a look at it again in their groups and discuss. What did you learn from your data? Did your change idea work? Are you going to go ahead and adopt it as a regular part of your practice? Or tweak it? Or try something else? And Sola's going to give another recap of this inquiry cycle in a moment, so you'll see it again.

[Slide: Why learning huddles?]

SOLA TAKAHASHI

Alright, this is Sola. I'm going to take it from here for a little bit, to talk about how learning huddles fit within the work of improvement science and networked improvement communities.

[Slide: Where do huddles come from?]

Huddles are becoming an increasingly common practice in the healthcare space. There are a lot of hospitals that have huddles going on on a regular basis, with staff members from various...in various roles, coming together to see how things are going, and supporting the next steps of the work that they're doing.

We have looked in particular to Cincinnati Children's Hospital, which is one of the premier healthcare organizations using quality improvement methods. And what we heard about particularly was their work with the Cincinnati Public Schools, they are partnering with the public schools there in order to target early grade literacy. And what we heard in their...in describing their work that was really appealing to us, were these four features.

One is that these huddles are relatively quick. So, these are not one- or two-hour meetings. They're really meant to be short touchpoints for, for the teachers and other staff who are working on an issue. Because they are quick, it is easier to have them happen on a more regular basis. And by virtue of being able to check in on a regular basis, you can really continue a conversation thread in a focal area, without having to catch everyone up all the time about what has been going on.

And so they are focused on a topic. And it's also important that everyone speaks. This is both for engagement, so that...because we want, you know, in, in order to achieve our aim at scale, we want everyone to participate. And then it is also to leverage the wisdom that everyone brings to the table, given where they sit in the organization, and what they are expert in and know about.

[Slide: The Improvement Framework]

And I want to zoom out a little bit here and put the huddles within the context of an improvement science effort. This is called the Model for Improvement, and it was developed by the Associates for Process Improvement. This is a...this is a framework to think about an improvement effort. And it starts with this question of, what specifically are we trying to accomplish? And this is often answered in an aim statement that specifies a timeline, and particular metrics that you're interested in tracking. And next it leads to, what changes might we make and why?

So, we're trying to get to this aim—what is it that we're going to do in our system? What interventions, what changes are we making in order to reach our aim? And why do we think those changes work? So, this is where the theory articulation becomes forefront. We want to be really clear about what we think the changes are that will make a difference for the aim that we're shooting for, so that we have opportunities to learn along the way about our theory, and to revise those theories and to revise our mental model sometimes, depending on what we're encountering when we do the work on the ground.

How will we know that a change is an improvement? And this is where the measurement system comes in.

So, we want more than just our gut feelings about how things went. We really want data to, to get a sense of how things are progressing. And once we answer these questions and we have some change ideas that we want to test...and that's where the "Plan Do Study Act" cycle comes into play, where we take a change idea and, and put it into practice. Probably in the beginning at a small scale, and quickly, so that we can learn quickly from how that change idea interacts with the system.

[Slide: Inquiry Cycle]

So, Kim discussed this inquiry cycle previously, and what I wanted to do was to make the connection between the cycle and the "Plan Do Study Act" cycle, and specifically where the huddles come into play. So, as a starting point, teachers are in their grade-level teams identifying an improvement focus, they're looking at data, identifying the gaps, discussing why they think this is happening, and leaving these meetings with some clear next steps of things they want to try in their practice.

They go and do the change in their practice. They conduct that, that small test and collect data. And then they come back to then study what they learned from this test of change. And this is, again, where the huddle comes into play. The teachers are back together again, and they revisit what they left the prior meeting with and then make some next...decisions about next steps, and, and that's the Act portion. Adopt, Adapt, or Abandon are some of the options here, and they lead into the next PDSA cycle.

I, I think what I, what I hear often is that, that teachers tend to Plan and Do, that this, this is commonly occurring, that...the Plan, Do part of it. But often this can look like Plan, Do, Plan, Do, and it's really the, the Study and Act thing, parts of the cycle that, that can make this feel new and different, to really be sure that we're coming back and revisiting our, our theories about what's going on, and assessing our change ideas, and, and seeing how that went.

[Slide: Building Confidence in Change Ideas]

And as I mentioned, and as Kim discussed as well, it's not just about one PDSA, they really do build on each other. And from one cycle to the next, what we're aiming for is to build confidence in the change ideas, and in the beginning this may be, "You know, I tried this out, and it seems like this is a modification I want to make. That it seemed to be working, but there are some tweaks I want to make to it. And so, we're going to make some changes and try it again."

And it's also over time, "Well, it seems to work in one classroom, is it going to work in another?" And it's through replication of the PDSAs and these change ideas in various contexts that we begin to build confidence in the change idea to modify it, refine it, and also to adapt it. Are there things that...adaptations that make this change idea work for certain contexts versus others? And so, this is a... the longer term of this work is really building confidence in, in a set of change ideas that we think are, are helpful for the aim that we are shooting for.

[Slide: What do our learning huddles look like?]

And with that I'm going to pass it back to Kim, to talk a little bit about what this has looked like in practice.

KIM AUSTIN

Thanks, Sola. Yeah. And I see there, folks are starting to get interested in the details. So this is the details. We're at the nuts and bolts. What, what do learning huddles look like? So our learning huddles—and this might differ from the hospital setting where they might be even shorter—are 30 minutes, and they follow discussion protocol in grade-level teams. They are guided by grade-level team members; they're really independent, independently facilitated. So, if you are in a room with multiple huddles going on, you'll look around and see every grade-level team engaged and self-facilitated.

Each is focused on a research-based topic, as I mentioned before. And they're really grounded in reflecting on instructional practice with evidence. So, one of the comments in the chat was, "This sounds, sounds like a PLC structure," and it very much, very well may be similar to what your PLCs look like; however, we've noticed that people define that PLC time differently depending on where you are and what your goals are. And lastly, there's a, a concerted focus on equitable talk. So, there, there are multiple opportunities for every person in the huddle to speak, and we think that's really important.

[Slide: Learning Huddle Structure and Design]

So, what does it look like step by step? This is a document that's an annotated learning huddle that you have access to, and I believe Laura has included a link to, so you can read the fine print. But, in a nutshell, every learning huddle begins with choosing roles, and those roles include: discussion facilitator, note taker, time keeper, and process observer. And sometimes they rotate, and sometimes they don't; it just depends on the team's preference. We also focus quite a bit on norms in the initial huddles. Now in Year 2, the, the teams are really feeling pretty well-normed. And that's a part that we actually took out for the Year 2 huddles.

We learned from Cincinnati, there's this really nice starting point, which is the one-word check-in. How are you feeling about your group's topic? So, how are you feeling about collaboration in your classroom, and partner work, and how that's looking? And teachers say one word, which is sometimes difficult at first, but that way every voice is heard right off the bat. The next part of the huddle protocol is a round robin. So, every single person has their data in front of them. And we'll show you some examples of what that looks like in just a minute. And they will describe their data, so the Data Wise folks, this will feel familiar. Start with description and observation, and move to interpretation and finally identifying some gaps that they might want to close in their next action period.

The fourth part of the protocol is more open-ended. We didn't want it to feel completely lock-step and structured all the way through. So, that discussion number four really is, pick one

data set or one challenge, or one issue, and let's really unpack it together. And that's always an exciting part to watch, because ideas are just flying. And lastly, every huddle concludes with the note taker noting down, what are our next steps? Either what did we learn from this action period, or what do we want to try next based on what we learned in this, this action period?

[Slide: Data Collection: Lesson Time Trackers]

I'll turn it over to Darl to share a few examples.

DARL KIERNAN

Okay. So, here you see a sample of what data collection looked like. Teachers in this...this represents a four-week cycle of data collection around lesson writing time. And the goal here was to provide 20 minutes of writing time every day. So, you can see the teachers recorded total lesson time. The Being a Writer lessons typically have three parts: getting ready to write, writing time for students, and an opportunity to share and reflect. Teachers recorded yes or no, whether or not they were able to get to each portion of the lesson. And then you can see the time that the students actually spent writing. And some teachers also had an opportunity to collect a few notes about the total lesson, which you see in the last column.

[Slide: Data Collection: Conferring Trackers]

This slide shows data collection. Teachers also collected data about conferring, with a goal of meeting to two...with two to three students per day. Here you can see a variety of approaches to this. Some teachers created their own trackers, some teachers came up with the idea of grouping students, so that they could then individually meet for...with each student. One teacher used bookmarks that you see in the right-hand corner. And the idea here was for students to be able to place a bookmark in their writing folders to indicate when they wanted a writing conference.

[Slide: Data Displays: Time Tracking in First Grade]

This shows how the data was displayed. This is an example of what happened in one teacher's classroom. She collected data about writing time with a median of about eight minutes of writing time for students. And her goal was to increase that number to really get to the 20 minutes. So, she came up with a change idea, and her change idea was to reduce teacher talk in the first portion of the lesson. And after she introduced this idea into her instruction, she found out that students' writing time increased to 15 minutes.

[Slide: What's different about learning huddles]

So, thinking about, what is different about these learning huddles? And I saw some questions that came up in the chat about that. So, in, in a learning huddle, what we've noticed that's different is that everyone is engaged. Teachers are talking about instruction, and we're hearing honest reflection about teaching. Some teachers have said that this is the most

productive their PLCs have been, because the discussions are focused. We've noticed that teachers are taking ownership of the process as well. We see that they're able to put ideas to the test from their own experience, rather than from something that we might suggest. And then they see those ideas evolve and actually make a difference with their students.

In Year 2 we're noticing that teachers have internalized the protocol. It doesn't seem to be as lock-step anymore, and it's starting to become a more natural way for them to have a conversation. Teachers are more comfortable going straight to the data and discussing next steps, and it appears that they have internalized this type of inquiry and the steps.

[Slide: Your turn]

So, you've been taken through what a huddle looks like, some examples of data, and I'm going to turn it over now to Laura, who is going to give you an opportunity to think about how this connects to your own experience.

KIM AUSTIN

Go ahead.

LAURA BUCKNER

...question, the most recent one that came in, what suggestions do you have for helping teachers to select appropriate and practical data to collect? Maybe we can start with...

KIM AUSTIN

That's great. Yeah, that's a great question. And I, I will start an answer and then maybe hand it over to Sola to reflect on that one as well. So that's been a really interesting process. We didn't just say, "Oh, go, you know, figure out what data to collect." We actually, for each of the, the four topics we mentioned earlier, we gave them some choices. So as you saw with conferring, they could keep a tracker that just kept track of how many conferences they were holding. They could keep a tracker that had the topics included. That one teacher used a bookmark, and that's how she actually solved the problem of "How do I know which students want and need a conference?"

So it's been a combination of us sharing things like exit tickets, and temperature checks, as options, and also teachers coming up with their own trackers. But it is challenging to keep the data collection focused enough for really good discussions, and so that you could see a change over time. So, I was working with a team a couple weeks ago that said, "We just want to see if the students have improved their writing." And as you can imagine, that's a much broader topic than how many conferences do I have? So, that, that was a conversation about how, how are you going to determine what improved writing is and what your goals are? So, you can imagine the...how these conversations can get quite rich. Sola, do you want to reflect on that one?

SOLA TAKAHASHI

Sure. Just to add on to what you're saying. I want to focus on the, the practical part of it, in particular.

KIM AUSTIN

Mm-hmmm (affirmative).

SOLA TAKAHASHI

Because I, I think there are these nuts and bolts logistics of figuring out how to get data on a regular basis that is timely. So teachers are getting the, getting the information that they want from that data quickly. And so we have...we've done things like setting up some Google sheets where when teachers enter some numbers, it automatically updates a line graph, or a, a run chart. So, they have that visual really in real time as they go. But there's also just the, the data collection part of this. You know, we've explored things like, you know, there are these exit tickets, but, you know, that means someone has to collect that paper, and count things up, input the spreadsheet...and that could be harder, and just more time-consuming than, than what teachers have time for.

So we've explored things like having a chart paper where students put stickies on ...in different boxes, so we can...so it's easier to count that up. Or for younger students, doing a, a thumbs-up and thumbs-down on about certain questions, and teachers counting that up. So we've been trying to, to think pretty broadly about, about how to help this to be really practical and doable within the timeframe of, of teachers' work lives.

LAURA BUCKNER

We had another question. I think it came from Mary. Does the success of this approach depend on teachers having high-quality strategies to discuss in the first place?

SOLA TAKAHASHI

I guess, I'll, I'll start off, because I did start to, to write in the chat about that. And then I'll also pass it off to Kim and Darl to, to pick up on that as well. Yeah, so it, it is helpful to, to have high-quality strategies. We have the great benefit in this project of having the Collaborative Classroom curriculum to begin with as, as a starting point. So, it's not that teachers are, you know, inventing everything as they go along. They, they do have a great curriculum that they're drawing on.

But in terms of the particular change ideas of, of how to make this go well to give those student...give students those learning opportunities, yes. It is, you know, helpful to have change ideas that are, you know, high, high-leverage, high-quality. And we have folks like instructional coaches, for example, who are part of these conversations. Sometimes Collaborative Classroom folks are able to be a part of these conversations as well, and to help refine some of those change ideas.

But, it's also, I think, you know, a balance with the, the really critical teacher agency piece of this. And so we...this is not about us telling teachers what to do, this is really very much about teachers being in the driving seat of identifying changes to try, and really leveraging their professional knowledge and wisdom as well. And so there...a lot of the change ideas are generated by the, the teachers, and, and, and there, I think, the data, the data do play this critical role of being the, the mirror, against... You know, you thought this was going to be a, a good idea, and how did it, how did it...what did the data tell us about how this went? Really helps to refine the quality of those change ideas over time, as well.

KIM AUSTIN

I see another question about the change ideas from Kristy. She says, "I'm curious if you're tracking some of the actions that resulted in positive change to share with others?" And, yes. That, to me, that's the most exciting part of this work, is when you see a change idea that had a positive impact, and then our challenge as the improvement hub is to figure out how to get those ideas to spread. So, initially it's very natural, change ideas are shared in those grade-level teams, and teachers are borrowing or, or mirroring their colleagues. But we also meet with team leads, so that they can share change ideas across grade levels, and we have an ongoing list of, of both the challenges that teachers have brought up, and the change ideas that they've had that have seemed to make a, a difference.

And, as I mentioned earlier, they aren't super complex. Some of them are as simple as: be more specific with the focus of the conference; meet with students in small groups so that I can confer with more across the course of the week; preview lessons to determine the most important parts so that I can keep to my timing and my pacing; set a timer; reduce the number of students who share out during the lesson. So that was, several teachers found that they called on four, or five, or six students to share out, they quickly were eating up their independent writing time. So, they could either reduce it, or have them turn to their partner. So very sort of straightforward things to implement, but that seemed to make a difference.

[Slide: Challenges]

So, what did we learn so far? I mentioned some of the challenges earlier. From huddle to huddle, discussion facilitation skills do vary; you'll have some facilitators who are very, sort of hands on, and make sure the protocol is like step by step, and some who are a little more laid back, and that yields different types of discussion. So, it's something that we are focusing on with our team leads and helping them to reflect on: How did that go? Did you stick to the protocol? How was your timing? Did everyone get to talk? So that's been one of the challenges that we've sort of fed right back into, okay, you know, how can we support that moving forward?

Protocols, if you've ever experienced one, I remember the first time I experienced one, it felt very constraining. Like almost too lock-step and people couldn't talk when they wanted to talk. And we definitely had teachers who experienced that at the beginning. But what's great, and what Darl alluded to is, over time, the whole process becomes more natural, and the teachers

are doing the steps of the protocol without really calling them out, or in some cases even referring to the agenda. So, and that's the goal. It's the goal isn't to, to learn a step-by-step process, the goal is to have certain kinds of conversations with equitable talk grounded in data.

We talked a little bit about the data challenge, both collecting and tracking, and choosing what data sources to use. And I'm sure a lot of you can relate to the challenge of, well, here's the data, let's try to stay in it, you know, for a little while, before we pop off to another topic in the conversation. So, just staying in the analysis has been a challenge. Data collection is definitely another layer for really, really busy elementary school teachers teaching multiple subjects. But for the most part, teachers have said that it's doable. So, while they initially have felt like, oh, it's one more thing, after they collect data for seven to 10 days that...for the most part they've said, I, I can do this, and it's actually really helping me see things in a, in a whole new way.

And lastly, cultivating an improvement mindset. So, this process is really holding up a mirror to your own practice and saying, gosh, did I get to writing this week? Did I get to conferring this week? And it's not comfortable, but over time I think we've been able to, to support and develop that culture of, yeah, I kind of missed the mark there, but here's my idea for how to close that gap.

[Slide: Successes]

So, on the success front, as I mentioned, we've seen a really high level of engagement in the learning huddles themselves. At both schools, they happen at around 2:30 on a Wednesday afternoon, and all of the teachers are in the same room. So, they're all in their...at their own tables, their grade-level tables. And it really is like a hive, and walking around that room, you wouldn't see people on their phone or doing other things... Th- these teachers are really engaged in the process, and we think that's due in part to the s- supportive backbone of the protocol structure.

They are collecting data about their own practice. And we actually think that's unique, you know. So often data discussions these days are focused on student data. This is about instruction, and its impact on learning. They're noticing things in their practice they didn't notice before, probably some of you have had the experience of once you start tracking your...how many steps you take every day or every week, you start to notice patterns. But you probably wouldn't have if you just had to recall by memory, gee, how much did I walk this week? So, tracking itself is a powerful change idea. They're reflecting on their instruction in, in new ways, not just what's in the curriculum or what strategy are we working on, but you know, how, how am I building my classroom community over time?

They're making changes. It's not, you know, necessarily across the board in every classroom we've seen, you know, all positive indicators. But, a number of bright spots that lead us to believe that we're headed in the right direction.

They are developing that improvement mindset. They're using the language of improvement. What's your change idea? What are you going to try out? So it's becoming a little more natural than it was in Year 1. And my favorite part is, they're sharing change ideas with colleagues. I feel like that's the gold. And if we can surface those and spread them throughout the system, and other folks can learn from them, that's a really exciting piece of this work.

[Slide: Teachers as Learners]

This is, we wanted to kind of summarize what we think is different about this approach, and some of the chat has sort of pushed on that question. Well, it sounds like this, and it's sort of like that. Here, here are some of the differences that we have identified. Professional development sort of stereotypically tends to be the one-shot workshop, where experts are outside of the classroom, there's not a lot of choice, and knowledge is "delivered." As you all know, those of you involved with PLCs, it's a...that's a very different model for learning. That is learning to improve, it's regular and ongoing. It requires a certain kind of commitment. Everyone needs to show up and participate.

The experts are inside and outside the classroom. I think for the first part of the year, last year, the teachers were kind of looking around for "Where is our Being a Writer expert?" And then they realized at a certain point, "Oh, okay. We're the experts, so we know our classrooms the best, we know our challenges the best, and we can help each other. We're implementing more choice as we go," which acknowledges and supports teacher agency. Teachers are really accountable to their students. Did they get their writing time? Did they get their conference? Are they collaborating effectively? It's both individual and collective learning. And knowledge is developed over time, through testing changes in that inquiry cycle.

[Slide: Teacher Voices]

We wanted to end with teacher voices. I wish I had some actual teacher voices. But in lieu of that, we have some quotes. And I thought we'd, rather than reading them, we'd just let you peruse them, take them in, and there's also an opportunity to ask any remaining questions about any of the resources available, or anything you didn't get a chance to say.

LAURA BUCKNER

Yeah, Kim, there's been a few additional questions added to the chat. And I see Christine's been responding, but I thought maybe we could end with a few of these. So, the first one is, Richard wrote in, "How much time was spent on the front end to familiarize everyone to understanding the purpose and use of the improvement huddles and improvement science so that they were used well?"

KIM AUSTIN

Oh, I love that question. So we thought a lot about how much improvement language and improvement theory to introduce at the beginning, including the terms of "Plan Do Study Act." And we actually went towards the direction of let's try something first, and then reflect on

what we did. So, kind of do first and then introduce some of the theories. So, we had a summer institute with the, the teachers from both schools where we introduced the curriculum. Which they're brand new to the curriculum, so they needed to get up and running with that.

But we also did a huddle with them. And we spent a lot of time both introducing it, each part of it. Kind of going over each part, and the purpose of each part. And then we spent a lot of time debriefing it. How did that feel? How did that go for you? What was that like? And that's where, you know, people were... It enabled people to say, that was kind of uncomfortable, or that was kind of cool. One thing some of our partners have been noticing is, when they go out and try a version of this for other purposes, or with other groups, if you don't introduce initially the, the purpose and the rationale behind it, it can be a lot more difficult. It doesn't go quite as smoothly.

Another thing that, that we learned along the way, is that focus...that topic focus is really important. So, if the topic was something like, how do we improve our students' writing, that's much too broad. So that, that institute was really important, and the inquiry cycle graphic that we showed earlier is also something that we're using to help teachers understand the purpose of the huddles and the structure of the inquiry cycle.

[Slide: End Slide]