

Researching & Developing Organizational Leadership (and Management): The Entailments of a Distributed Perspective

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The Distributed Leadership Studies
<http://www.distributedleadership.org>

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**“We have one hunter and one gatherer...
everyone else is a consultant”**



Human Development Work

- **Uncertain or contested ends and means**
- **Mutual dependency between practitioner and client**
- **Unpredictability of practitioner-client interactions**



The Circumstances of Human Development Work

- **Pluralistic Institutional Environment**
- **Involuntary Clients**
- **Accept everyone who enters**
- **Practitioners who are members of professions**



The Realities of the Leader's World

“Every time I came in this office... it was someone waiting, needing something from me, needing an answer,... from the parents to the students to the teachers; everyone at every moment ... overwhelming”

Adriana

Angela

“Being a good principal is like dancing that wonderful tango, blindfolded, yet serving lunch, breakfast and dinner on skates to 500 people,” [each of whom has] ordered something different” [and each of whom] “brings...their own set of dynamics, personalities, that you have to be acutely aware of in order to serve them.”

Diagnosis and Design

- **Diagnosis = identify nature or cause of something**
- **Design = shaping the organization and system infrastructure to purposes**

The Argument

- **Getting beyond an ‘implementation mindset’, engaging the twin process of diagnosis & design in organizational leadership and management work.**
- **To do diagnosis and design well a framework is necessary; one option is a distributed framework that has several affordances (and some constraints).**
- **Engaging with the entailments of taking a distributed perspective to diagnosis and design.**
- **Acknowledging the necessities and the challenges for practitioners of taking a distributed perspective to leading and managing.**

Preview

- What is a *Distributed Perspective on Leadership and Management*?
- What are the *entailments* of putting a Distributed Perspective into practice in *Research and Development* work on Leadership & Management?
- What *enables* and *challenges* taking a Distributed Perspective for Organizational Leaders?

Task One

- **Examine the two definitions of leadership.**
- **Identify one similarity and one difference between the two definitions.**



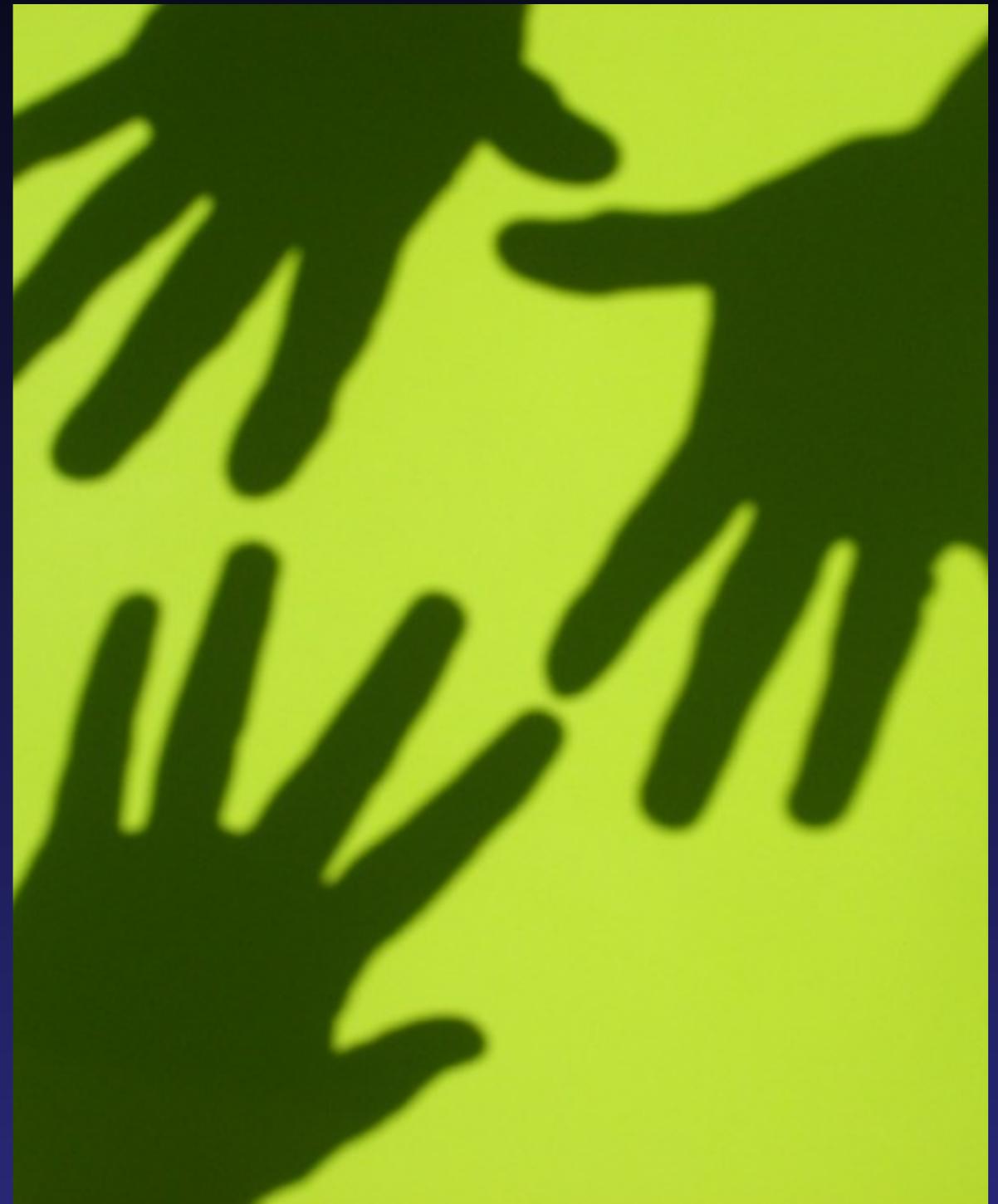
Leadership

- **[Leadership refers] to the interaction among members of a group that initiates and maintains improved expectations and the competence of the whole group to solve problems or attain goals.**
- **[Leadership refers] to people who bend the motivations and actions of others to achieve certain goals; it implies taking initiatives and risks.**



Management

Management is about maintenance; maintaining current organizational arrangements and ways of doing work (*Burns, 1978; Cuban, 1988*)



A Distributed Perspective on Leadership and Management: The Elements

Task Two

- What does 'distributed leadership' mean to you?
- Write a one-sentence definition that captures your understanding of distributed leadership.



A Distributed Perspective

- **A diagnostic framework that draws attention to particular dimensions of leadership & management work**
- **A design framework for guiding leadership and management improvement efforts**



The Leader-Plus Aspect

- **The Leader-Plus Aspect:**
 - **The principal often works with others when performing leadership and management tasks**
 - **At times other formally designated leaders take responsibility for leadership and management tasks**
 - **And, individuals with no formal leadership designations often have a hand in leading and managing instruction**



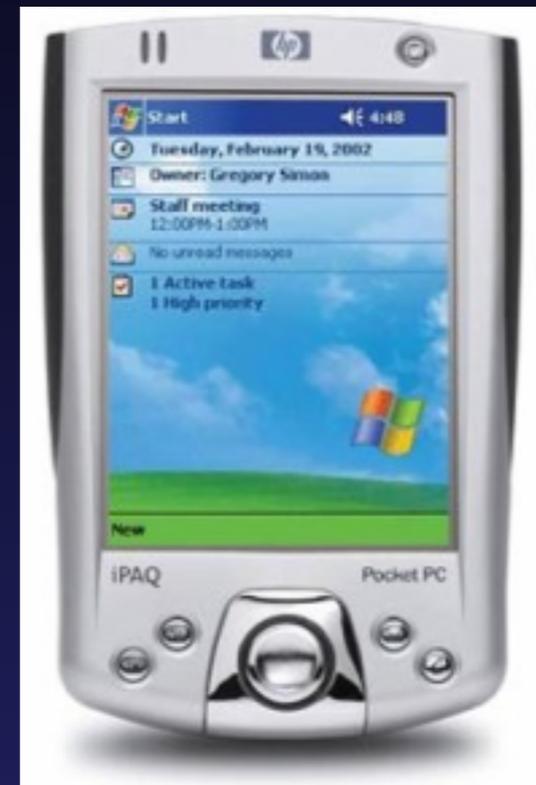
An Alternative to the 'Heroics of Leadership' Genre

“Initially I tried to do it all. I was trying to do it all and that was impossible. You cannot be all things to all people... I don't know everything about everything.”

Principal Johnson

Using Logs: The Case of ESM Log

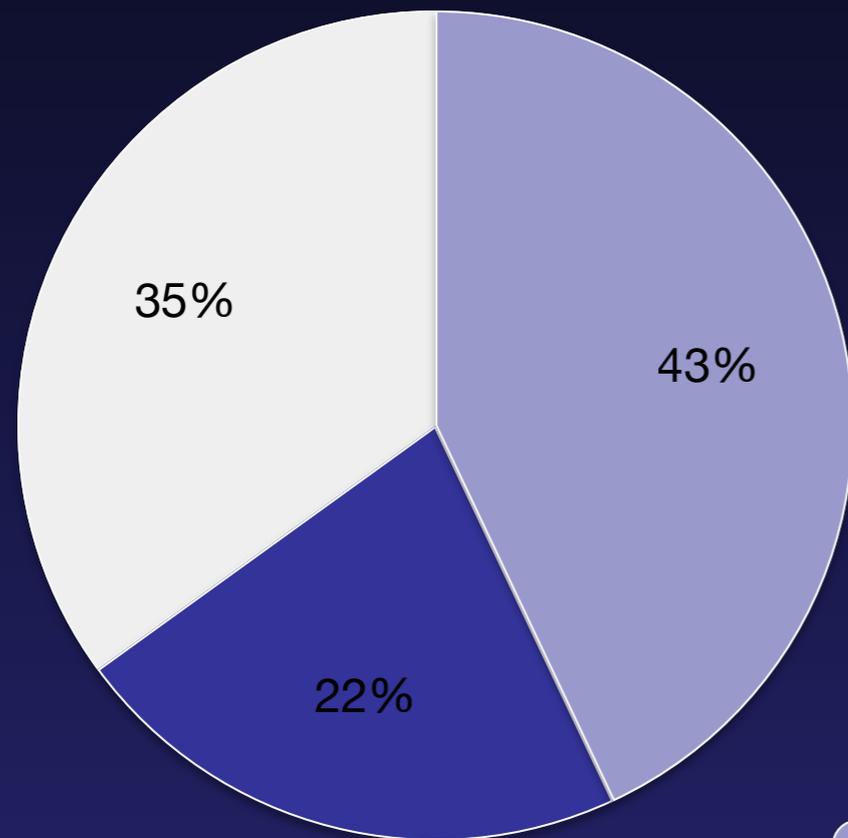
- **Experience Sampling Methodology (ESM) Principal Log**
 - School principals beeped at random intervals
 - Completed brief survey on PDA when beeped
 - Wuestions - e.g. Where? What? Who?
 - Six-day period - Spring 2005
 - 42 of 52 principals provide data for multiple days
 - Response rate for 42 = 68%
 - Total number of observations = 2066
- **End of Day Log (EOD) Validity:**
 - ESM Log
 - Shadow data for five school principals
 - Percent agreement between ESM & Shadow Data ranged fro 73% - 100%



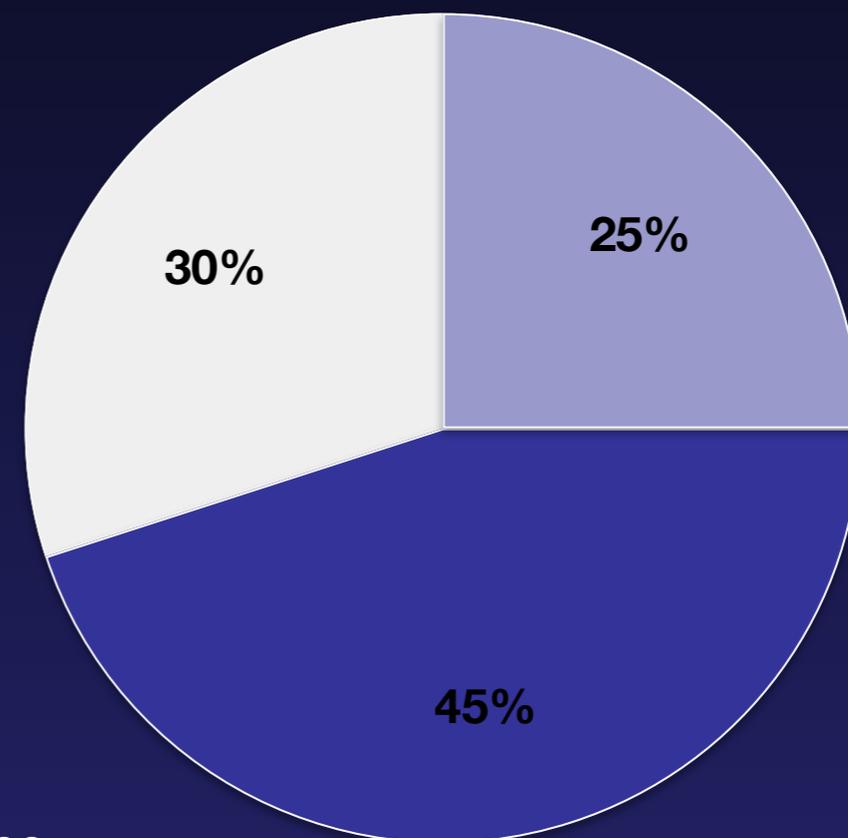
Camburn, E., Spillane, J. P., & Sebastian, J. (2010). Assessing the utility of a daily log for measuring principal leadership practice. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46(5), 707-737.

The Principal's Workday: The Significance of Others

Administrative Activities



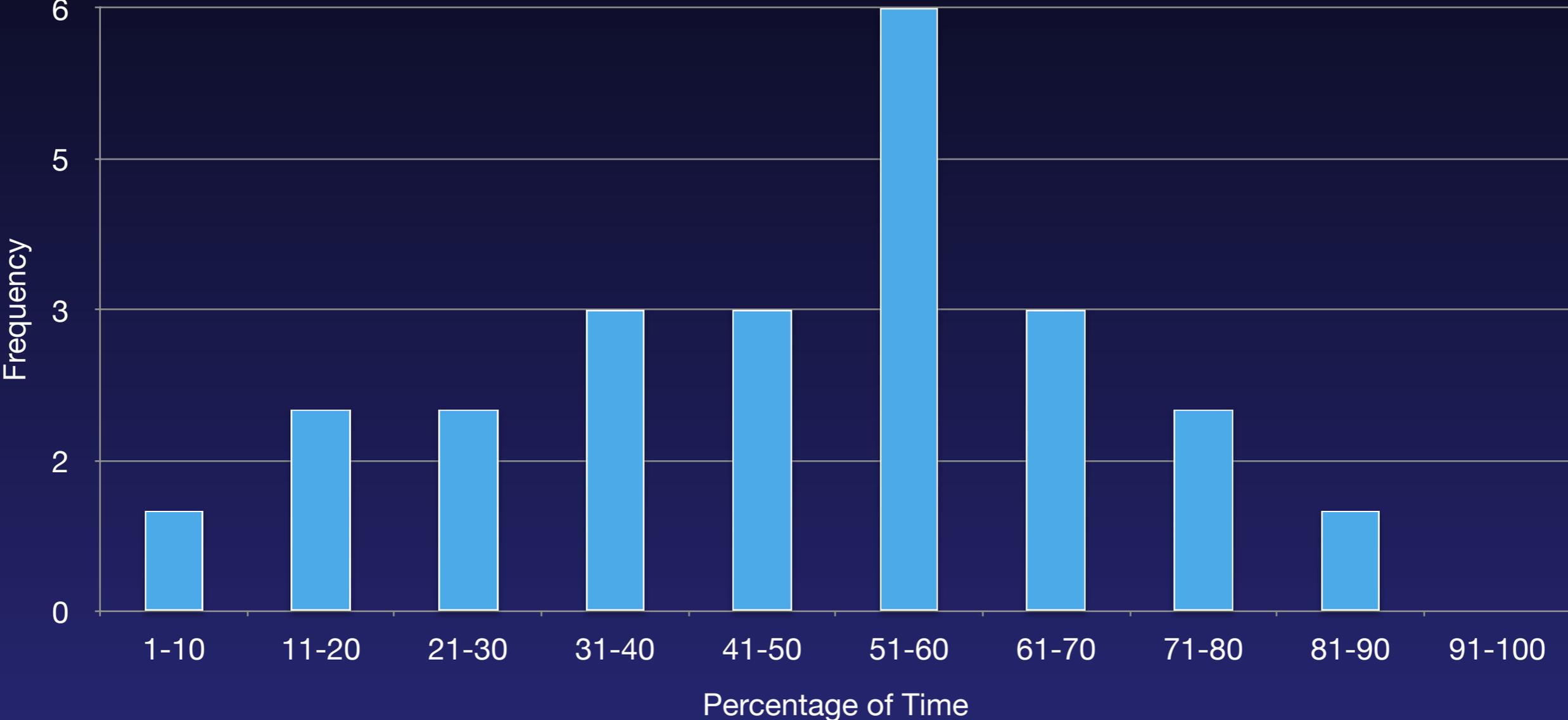
Curriculum and Instruction Activities



- Leading Alone
- Not Leading
- Leading with Others

Co-Performance: Between School Variance

Figure 2(b). Frequency Distribution of Percentage of Principals' Activities Co-lead with Someone Else (N=23).



A Distributed Perspective: The Practice Aspect



Challenging Popular Conceptualizations of Practice

- **Practice = individual behavior or action**
- **Practice resides solely in the here and now**
- **Practice is distinct from social structure causing people to...**

Task Three

- **Watch the brief video clip.**
- **How many times does the white team touch the ball?**

Anchoring Leadership

Students'
Opportunities To Learn



Teaching



What gets taught?

How is it taught?

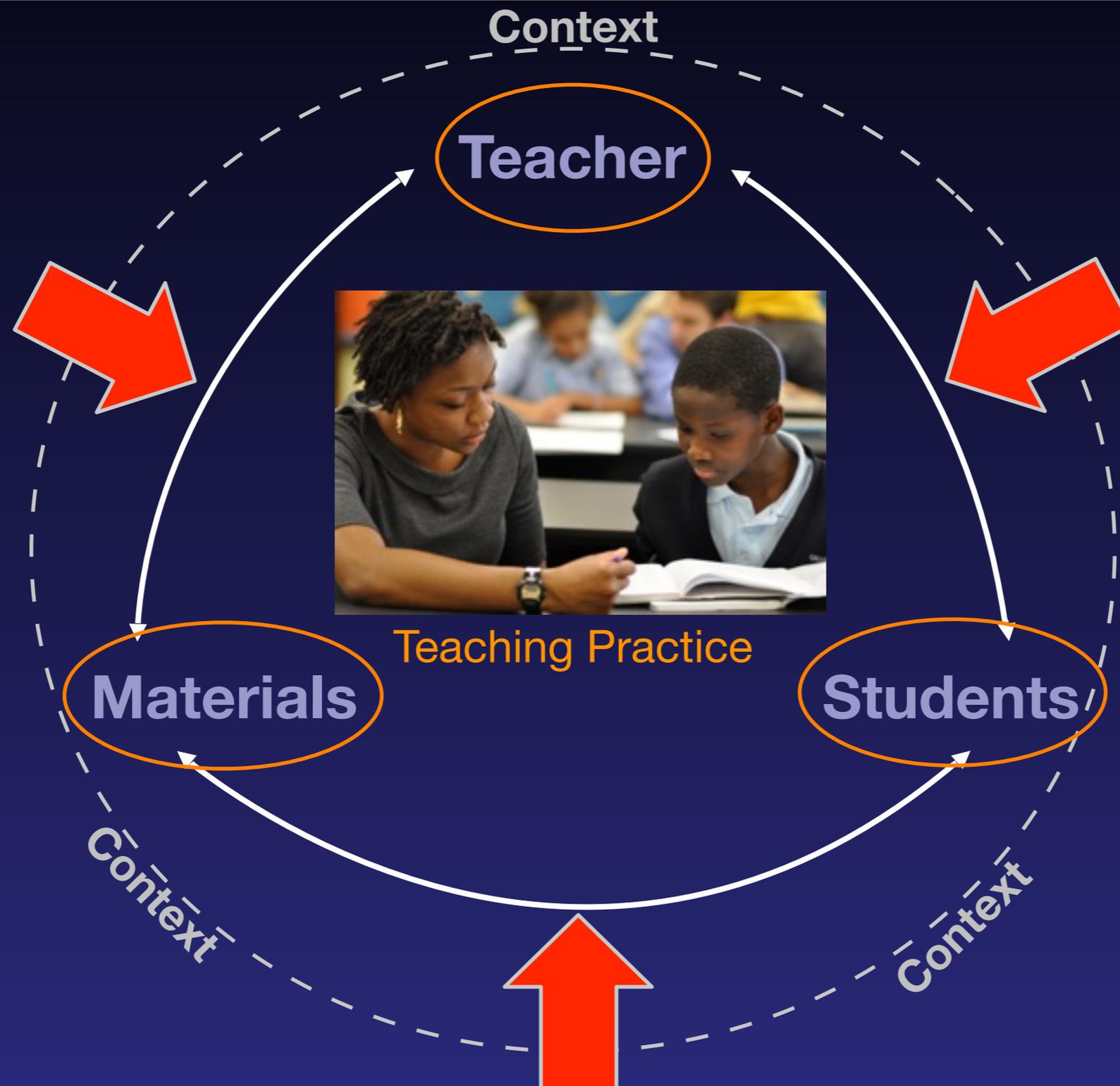
Leading and Managing



Teaching as a Social Practice

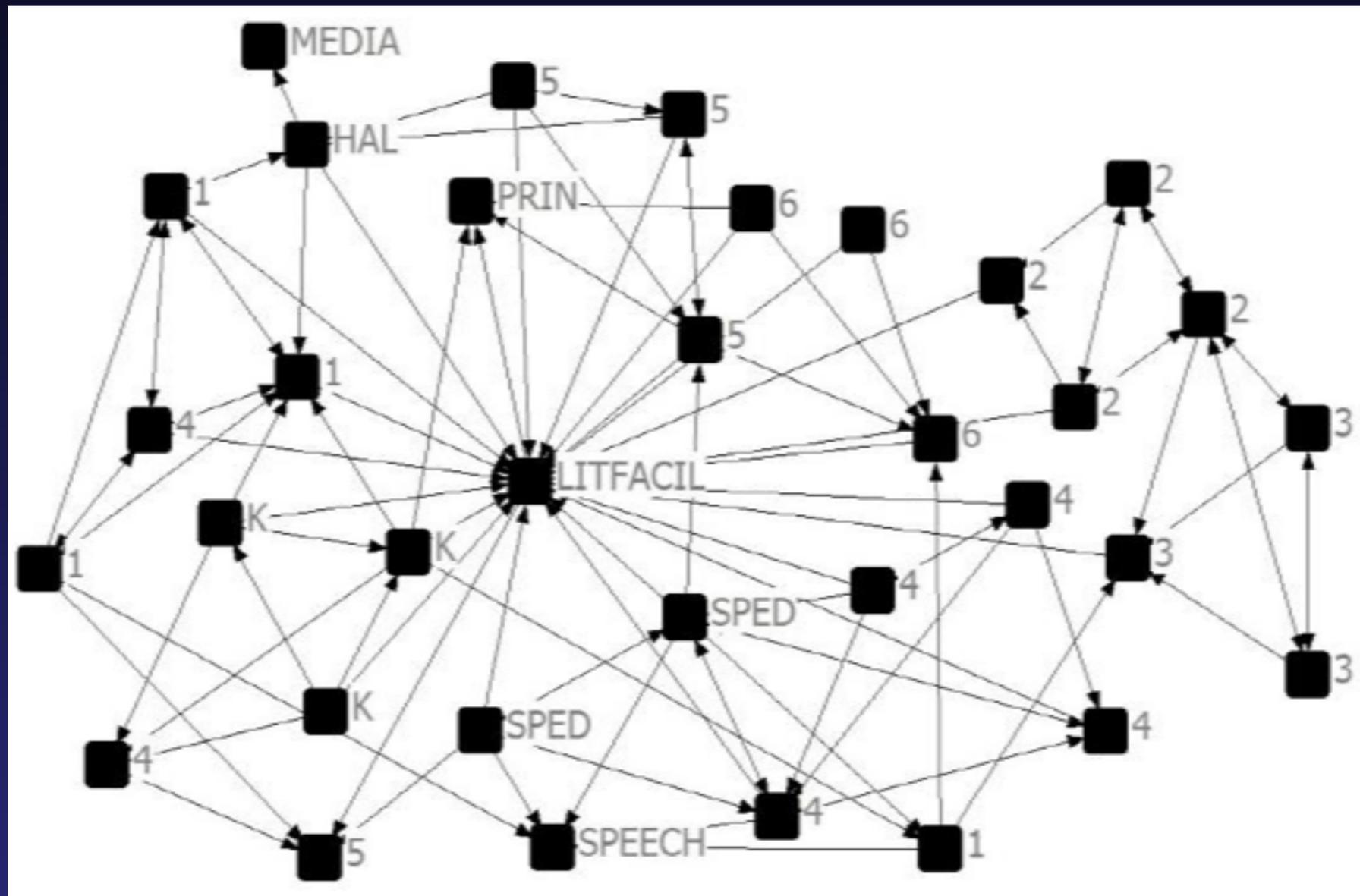


Teaching and Leadership



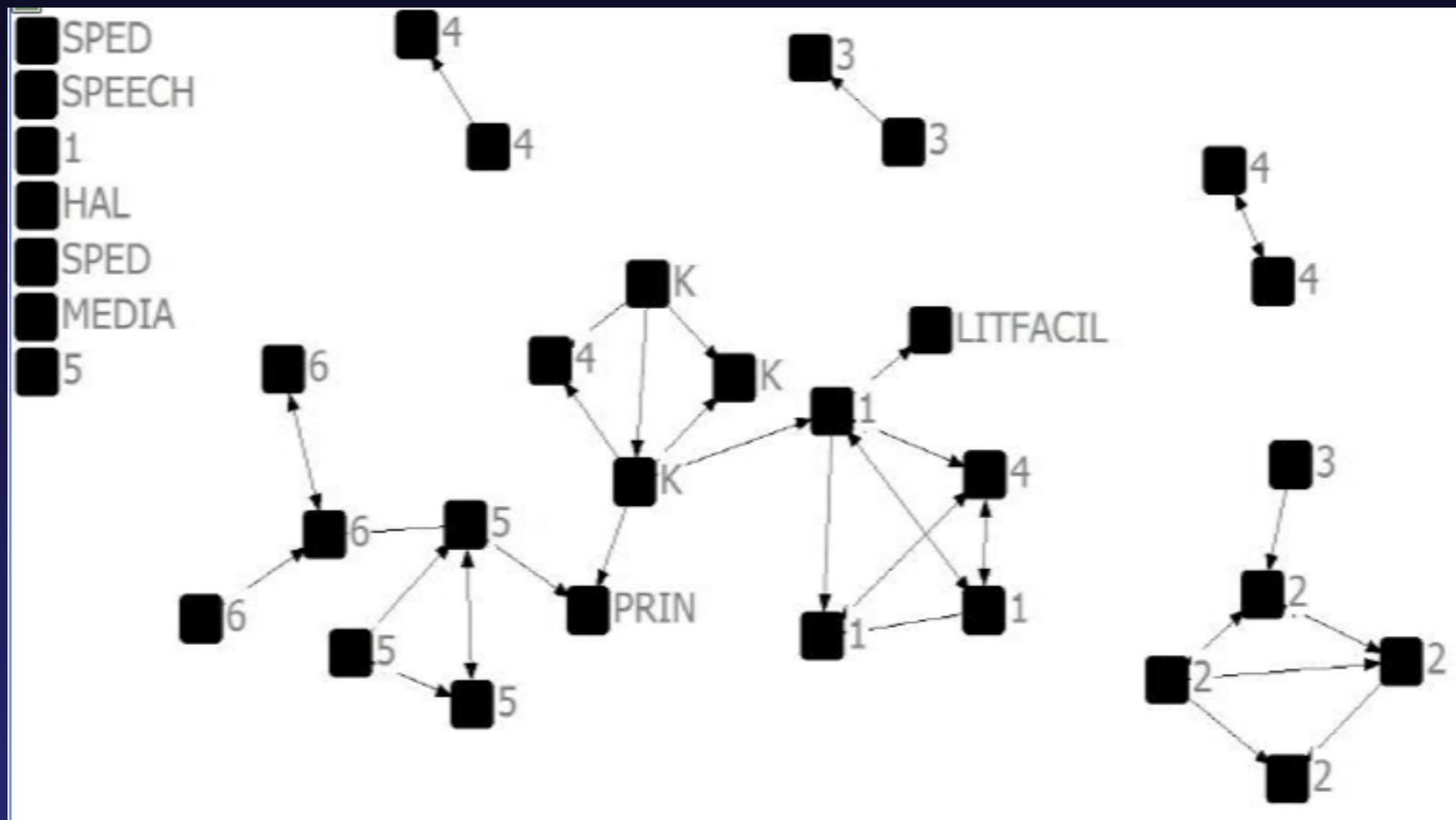
The Subject Matters - Language Arts

Kingsley Elementary School: Instructional Interactions about Literacy



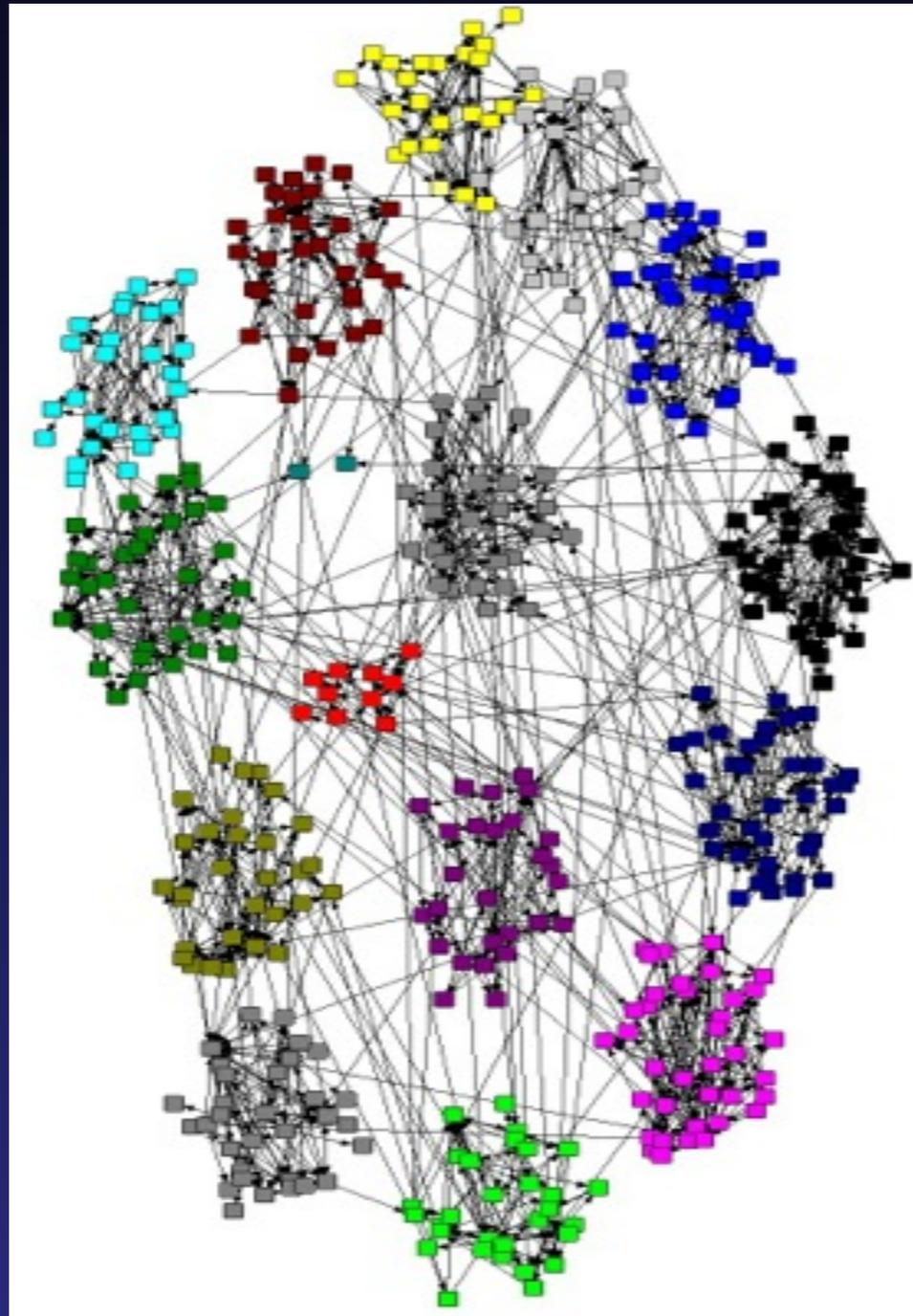
The Subject Matters - Science

Kingsley Elementary School: Instructional Interactions About Science

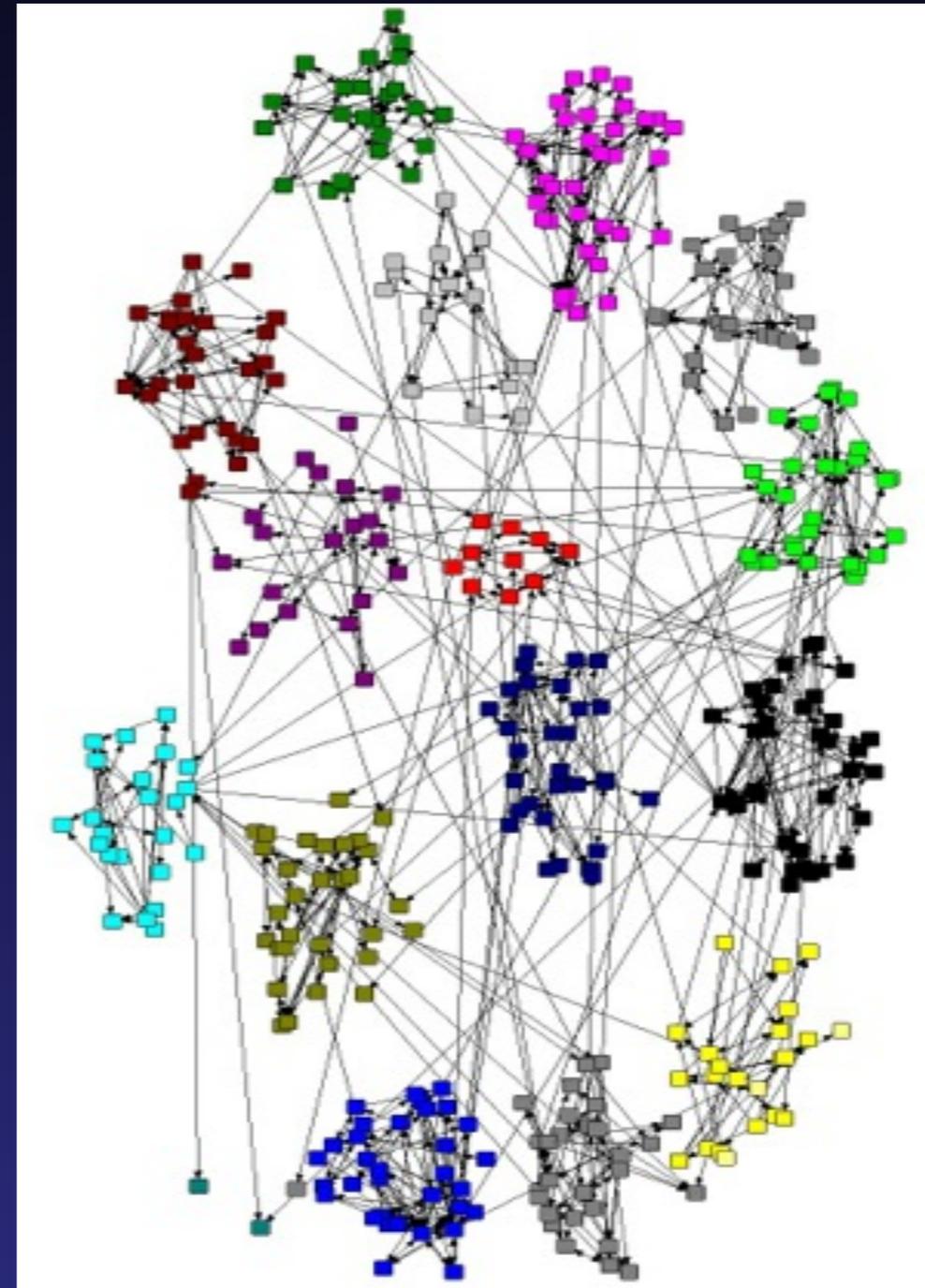


A System View: Instructional Advice and Information Interactions

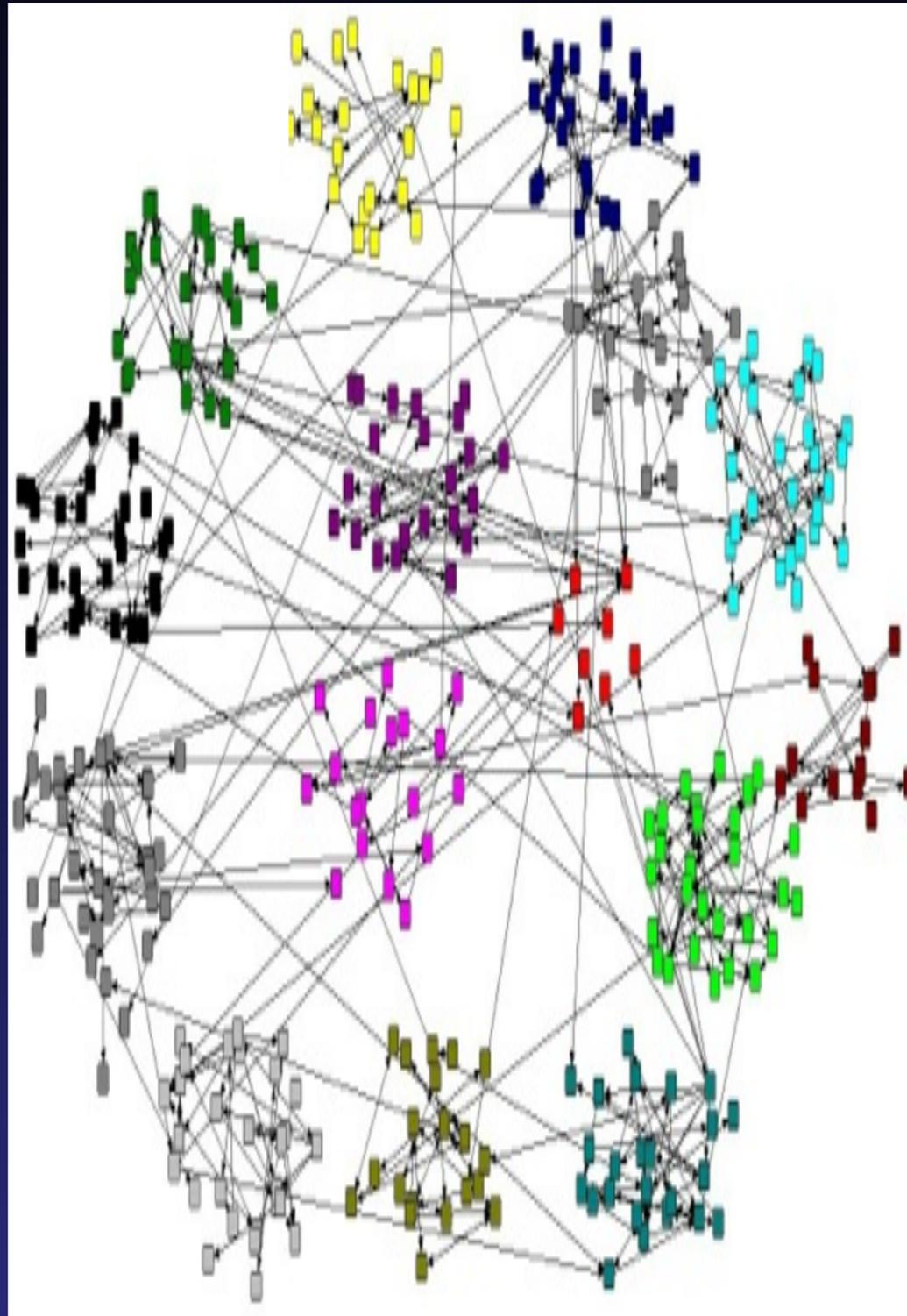
English Language Arts



Mathematics



School and School Systems: Science



**Putting A Distributed Perspective
into Practice in Research and
Development Work on Leadership
& Management**

Putting Distributed Perspective into *Practice*

- Focusing on *practice*, the practice of leading and managing
- Practice as fundamentally about *interactions*, not just actions
- Looking at the *designed* and *lived* organization *in tandem*
- Attending to *followers* in order to understand leadership (and management)
- Focusing on *aspects of the situation* as instantiated in practice, both *constituted in and constitutive of...*

DESIGNED
Formal positions, organizational routines as represented in formal documents and accounts

VS

LIVED
Organization as experienced in day-to-day life of organizational members

A Puzzle from the Field

Everybody did absolutely their own thing as far as literacy. Some people used the Basal series ... we had different Basal series going in the building. A lot of people were going to a literature-based instruction. Nobody ever talked to each other. It was just - everybody went into their own room, closed the door and did their own thing.”

(Baxter Teacher)

(Kosten Teacher)

“There may be four classes at a grade level and they did not even talk. They did not have a clue at what was going on in each other's classrooms ...”

(Adams Principal)

When I first started in 1991 [the principal] was very, very laid back, and we had a lot of creative teachers in this school, and you pretty much were able to do what you needed to do and use your creativity and kind of go with your own flow more or less.”

Research Approach: Study Sites

School	Student Enrollment	Low Income	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Limited English
Adams	1,021	97%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Baxter	1,127	66%	7%	47%	22%	24%	38%
Kosten	1,569	73%	8%	40%	19%	34%	48%
Kelly	261	90%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Research: Data Collection

School	Interviews	Observations of Organizational Routines
Adams	93	39
Baxter	48	25
Kosten	62	56
Kelly	16	11

Data Analysis

- ***Phase 1:*** In-depth school cases
- ***Phase 2:*** Closed coding of interviews using HyperRESEARCH (e.g., organizational routines, roles and responsibilities, policy)
- ***Phase 3:*** Closed coding of field-notes & meeting transcripts using NVivo (e.g., technical core, policy)
- ***Phase 4:*** Open and closed coding of 22 meeting transcripts from Adams School (e.g., policy, professionalism, social tactics). (Kappa ranged from 0.70 to 0.95)

Leading Teaching and Learning by Designing Organizational Routines

- **Adams School:** Breakfast Club, Grade level meetings, Teacher Talk, Teacher Leaders, Five-Week Assessment, Literacy Committee, and Mathematics Committee.
- **Baxter School:** Cycle Meetings, Leadership Team Meetings, Literacy Committee, Math/Science Committee.
- **Kosten School:** Report Card Review, Grade Book Review, Lesson Plan Review, Faculty Meetings, Grade Level Meetings.
- **Kelly School:** Skill Chart Review, Professional Development.

Organizational Routines at Adams School

	Functions	Tools	People
Five Week Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Formative evaluation -Teacher Accountability -Monitor Instruction -Teacher Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Standardized Tests -Standards -Student Assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Language Arts Coordinator -Assistant Principal -Principal -Teachers
Breakfast Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teacher Development -Build Professional Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Research Articles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teachers -Language Arts Coordinator -Principal
School Improvement Planning (SIP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify Instructional Priorities & Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Previous Year SIP -District Guidelines -Test Score Data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Principal -Administration -Teachers (approved LSC)
Classroom Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teacher Development -Monitor Instruction -Accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -School Protocol, -District Protocol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Principal -Assistant Principal
Real Men Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student Motivation and Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Language Arts Co-ord. -Assistant Principal -Principal -Community Members

The Five-Week Assessment

“We were just kind of casually saying that for the majority of teachers they all work very hard, but some of them get very low results when it comes to these achievement tests ... So this [Five Week Assessment] was a way to find out ‘Are they learning?’”

(Literacy coordinator)

(Literacy coordinator)

“The [standardized] tests ... didn’t give us much information about what we could do to improve our scores because we received the results well after we could do anything about it. We thought that a more frequent assessment ... would tell us where the children were”

“The Five Week Assessment enabled teachers to see assessment as a tool for letting them know what they need to work on in the classroom. That was the goal.”

(Principal Williams)

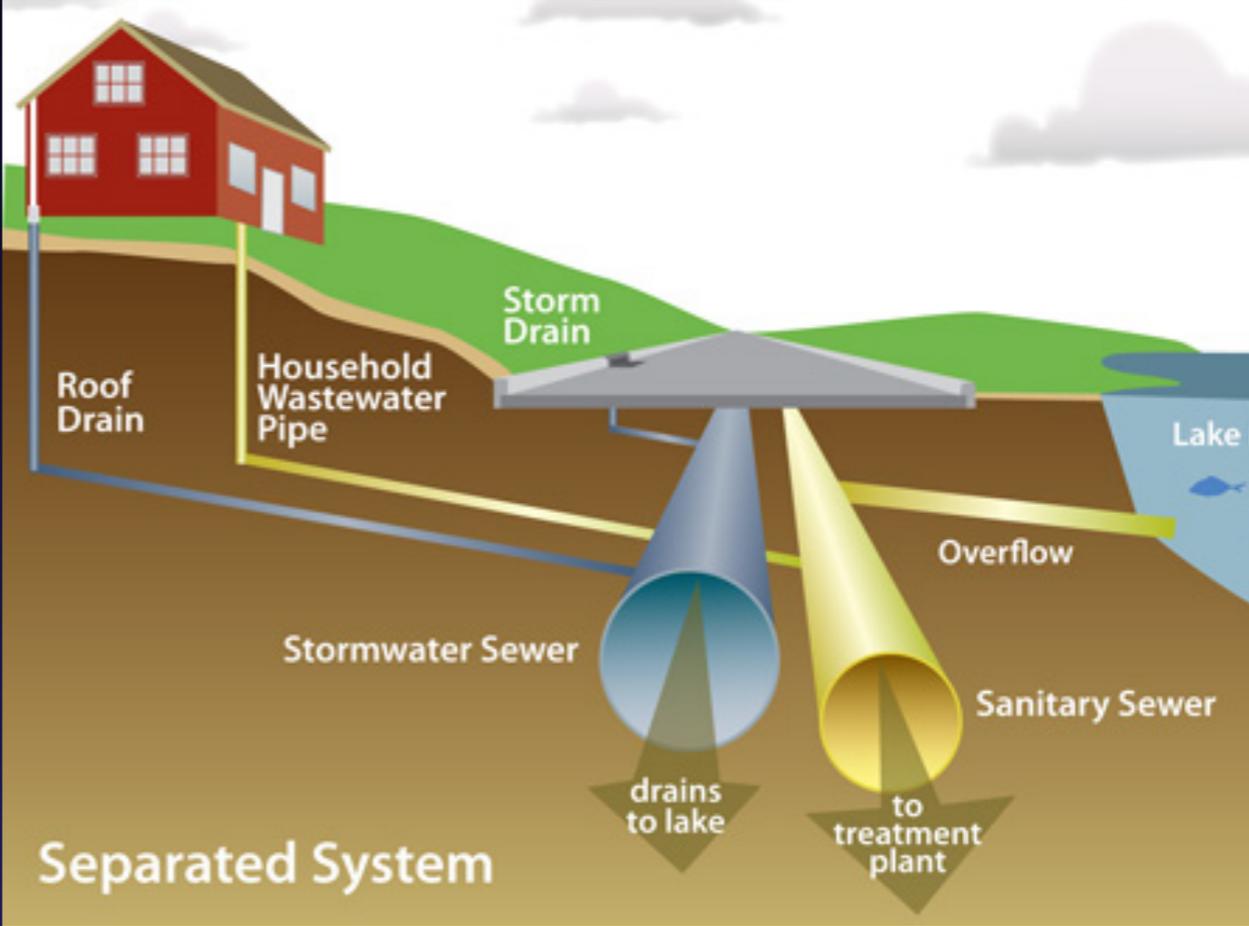
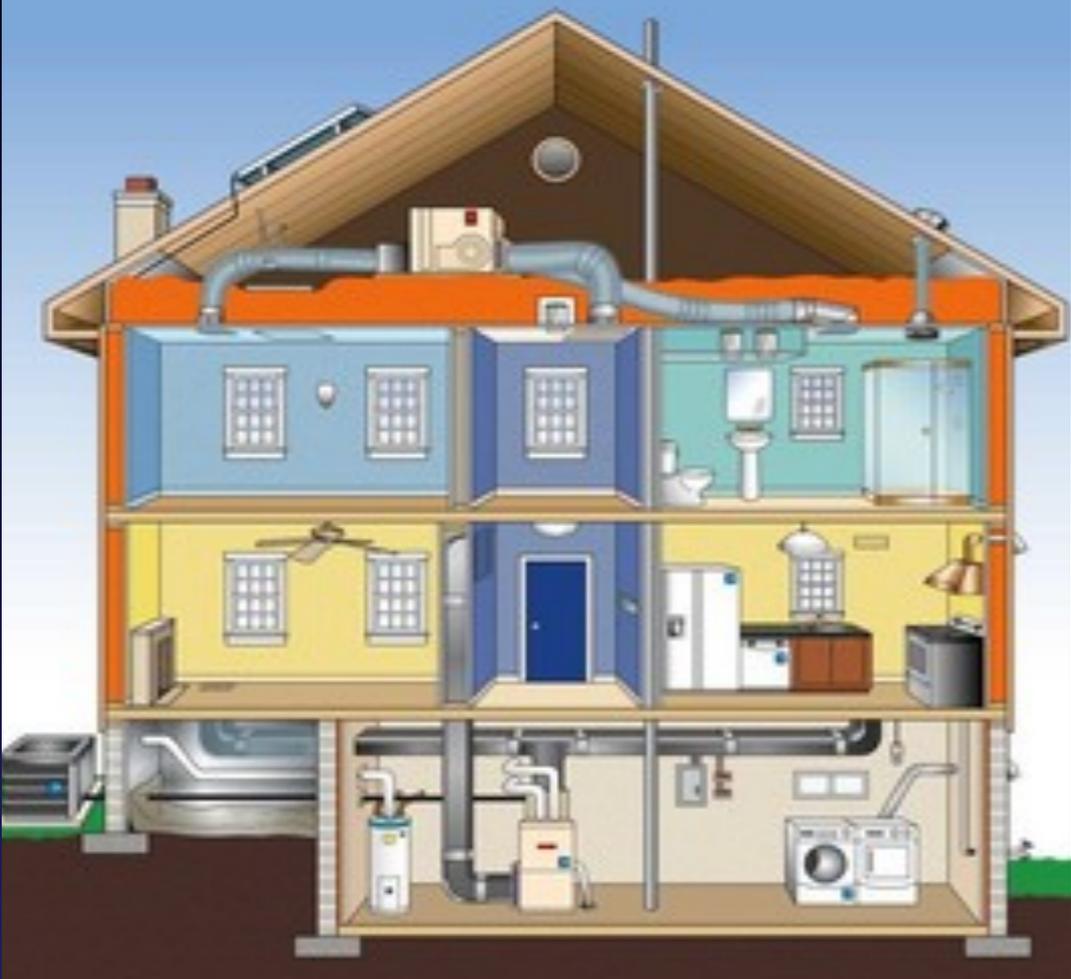
Organizational Routines

- **Organizational Routines:** “repetitive, recognizable patterns of interdependent actions carried out by multiple actors” (*Feldman & Pentland, 2003*)
 - **Ostensive Aspect:** Ideal form — general idea or script of the routine
 - **Performative Aspect:** Routine in practice in particular places, at particular times
- **Concerns about the organizational routine construct** — rigid, mundane, mindless, explicitly stored (*Cohen, 2007*)

Why Organizational Routines?

- **Pragmatic reasons:**
 - **Popular mechanism in reform efforts**
 - **Key external reform lever (e.g., School Improvement Planning)**
- **Conceptual reasons**
 - **Focus attention on patterned interactions**
 - **Provide frame for examining relationship between structure, agency, and practice**
 - **Involve cognitive, normative, and regulative dimensions**

Infrastructure



CONCEPTS
NORMS
SCRIPTS
POLICIES
SCRIPTS
TOOLS
PROCEDURES
STRUCTURE
WORK
FRAMES
CONCEPTS
POSITIONS
ORGANIZATIONAL
ROUTINES
RULES
POSITIONS
REGULATIONS
FRAMES
POSITIONS
ORGANIZATIONAL
ROUTINES
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ORGANIZATIONAL
ROUTINES
RULES

Organizational Routines and Social Interactions

- **'Socio-technical system' ... inter mental models (Hutchins, 1995) in material and abstract tools**
- **Organizational routines embody representations of what it means to learn, teach, and improve teaching.**
- **Organizational routines embody norms.**
- **Organizational routines have both affordances and constraints enabling some sorts of interactions about somethings, constraining other sorts of interactions about other things.**

Development Work: Asking the Difficult Questions about Organizational Routines

- What is the theory of action behind the routine?
- What arguments explain and evaluate the routine?
 - Why should it work?
 - Why might it not work?
 - What are the advantages of this routine?
 - What are the disadvantages of this routine?
- How is the routine connecting with/anchored in teaching and learning?



Two Research Studies

“Cloverville” Study

- One urban, midsize district in the southeastern United States
- 30 participating schools, K-6 (also middle and high schools)
- Principal Questionnaire (PQ), School Staff Questionnaire (SSQ), principal logs, observations, interviews
- Survey responses collected in Spring 2005, '07

NebraskaMATH Study

- One mid-sized district in Nebraska
- 14 participating schools, K-6
- School Staff Questionnaire (SSQ), administrative records, test data, interviews
- Survey responses collected in Spring 2010, '11, '12, '13

Social Network Instrument

Screen Shot from SSQ - Math Advice Questions Page 1

School Staff Survey



NORTHWESTERN
UNIVERSITY

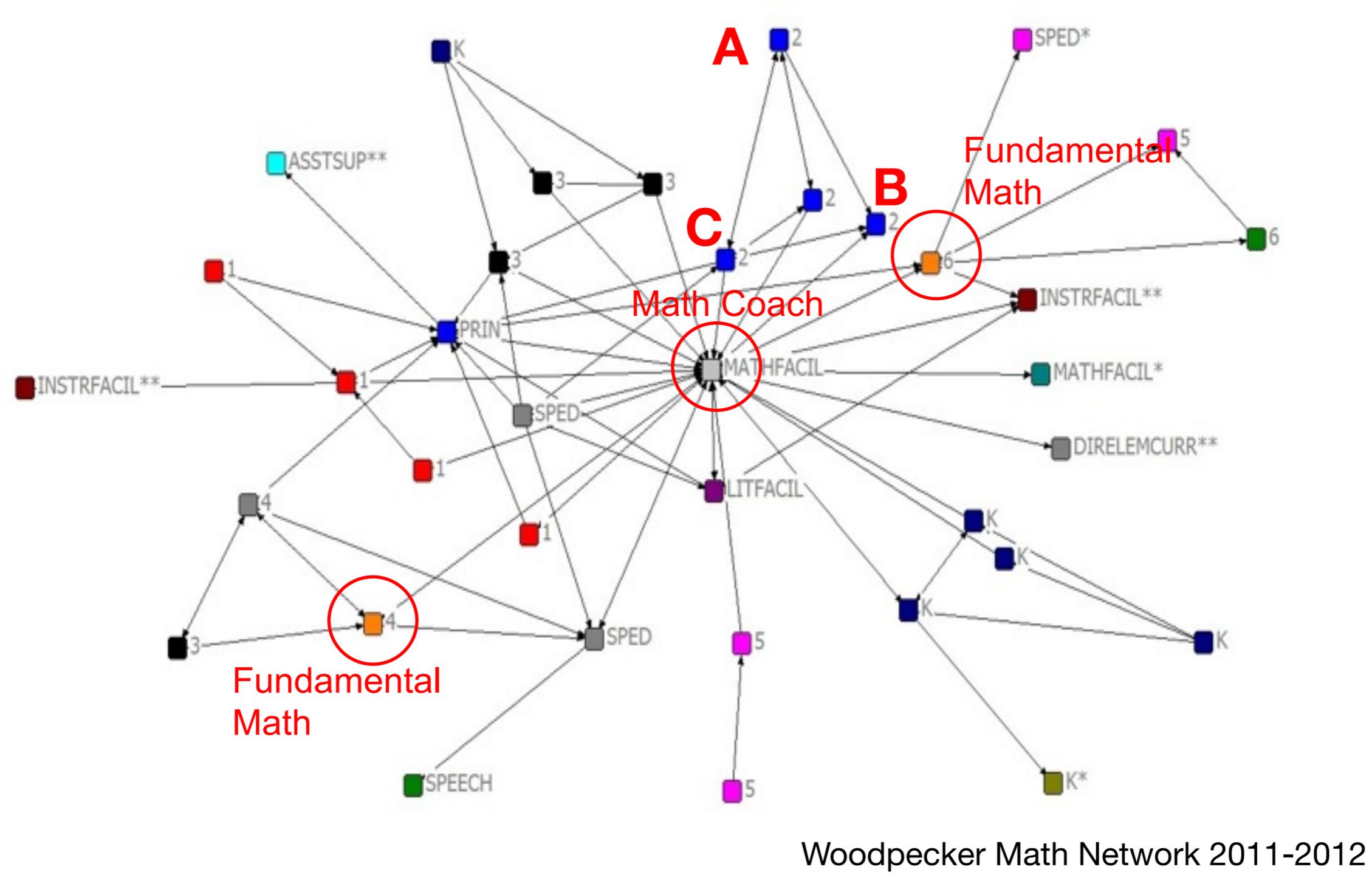
During THIS SCHOOL YEAR, to whom have you turned for advice or information about teaching Mathematics? Please write full first and last names, and give a brief description of that person's role or position. You do not need to fill all the spaces.

I have not sought advice from anyone.

Name
Jim Spillane
James Pustejovsky
Virginia Pitts
Cindy Sigal

Role
principal
6th grade teacher
math coordinator
roommate - also a teacher

Advice and Information Interactions



Network Centrality Measures

- **Degree Centrality**
 - **In-degree = the number of people who sought out and actor for advice or information**
 - **Out-degree = the number of people that actor sought out for advice for information**
 - **Betweenness centrality = the extent to which an actor links two other actors in the network**
- **A measure of brokering**

$$C_B(n_i) = \frac{\sum_{j < k} g_{jk}(n_i)}{g_{jk}}$$

Why Focus on Advice and Information Interactions?

- **On-the-job interactions associated with the transfer of advice and information — essential to knowledge development**
 - **Socialization: Tacit Knowledge — Tacit Knowledge**
 - **Externalization: Tacit Knowledge — Explicit Knowledge**
 - **Combination: Explicit Knowledge — Explicit Knowledge**
 - **Internalization: Explicit Knowledge — Tacit Knowledge**

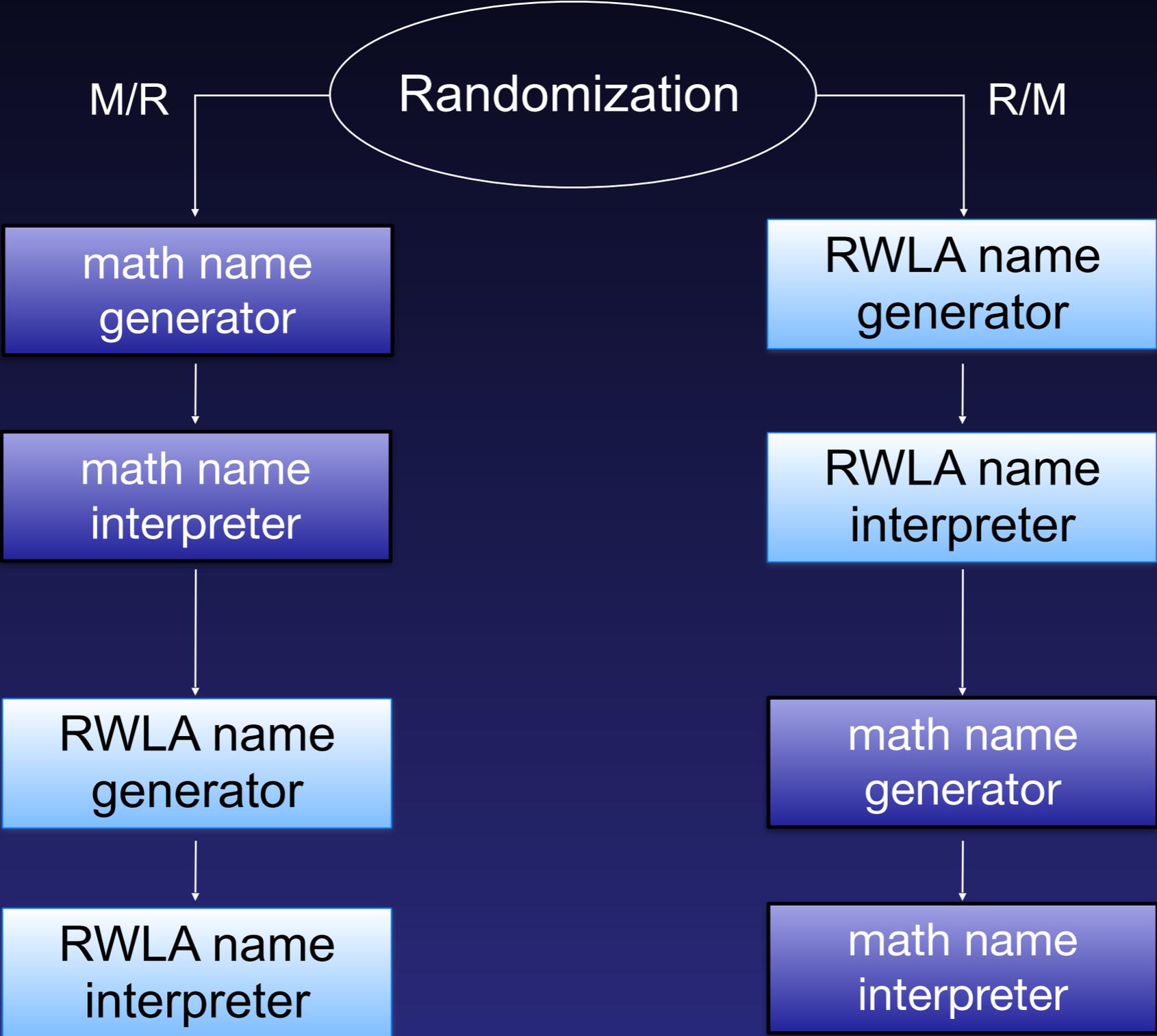
Blau, 1957; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Choo, 1998; Coburn, 2001; Daly & Finnigan, 2010; Elmore, 1996; Eraut & Hirsh, 2007; Frank, Zhao, & Borman, 2004; Hill, 2004; Little, 2002; Smylie, 1995; Spillane, 2004

School Staff Social Network Questionnaire: Validity Work

- **SSSNQ picks up subject-specific interactions**
- **Under-report unsolicited advice & formal interactions**
- **Observations of others (as distinct from verbal exchanges) may be under-reported**

Pitts, V., & Spillane, J. P. (2009). Using social network methods to study school leadership. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 32(2), 185-207.

School Staff Social Network Questionnaire



Average Number of Alters Listed by Subject and Treatment Group

Subject area	R/M (n = 126)	M/R (n = 138)	Difference
RWLA	3.2	1.9	1.3*
Math	1.5	1.7	-0.2
Total	4.7	3.6	1.1*

Pustejovsky, J., & Spillane, J. P. (2009). Question-order effects in social network name generators. *Social Networks*, 31(4), 221-229.

Why Focus on Advice and Information Interactions?

- **Social relations as source of resources such as trust, expertise, opportunities for joint sense-making, and incentives for innovation.**
- **On-the-job interactions are associated with the transfer of advice and information - essential in the development of new knowledge.**

Blau, 1957; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Coburn, 2001; Daly & Finnigan, 2010; Elmore, 1996; Eraut & Hirsh, 2007; Frank, Zhao, & Borman, 2004; Hill, 2004; Little, 2002; Smylie, 1995; Spillane, 2004

Formal Organizational Structure and Teaching Advice & Information Interactions

- Teachers more likely to seek advice from others of same gender and race
- Prior tie strongly associated with having a current tie
- Formal leaders more likely to provide advice or information
- Teachers in the same grade more likely to receive or provide advice or information
- Teachers more likely to seek advice about a subject from teachers who reported more PD in that subject

Spillane, J. P., Kim, C. M., & Frank, K. A. (2012). Instructional advice and information seeking behavior in elementary schools: Exploring tie formation as a building block in social capital development. *American Educational Research Journal*, 49(6), 1112-1145.

District Infrastructure Design for Teacher Leadership: The Case of Auburn Park

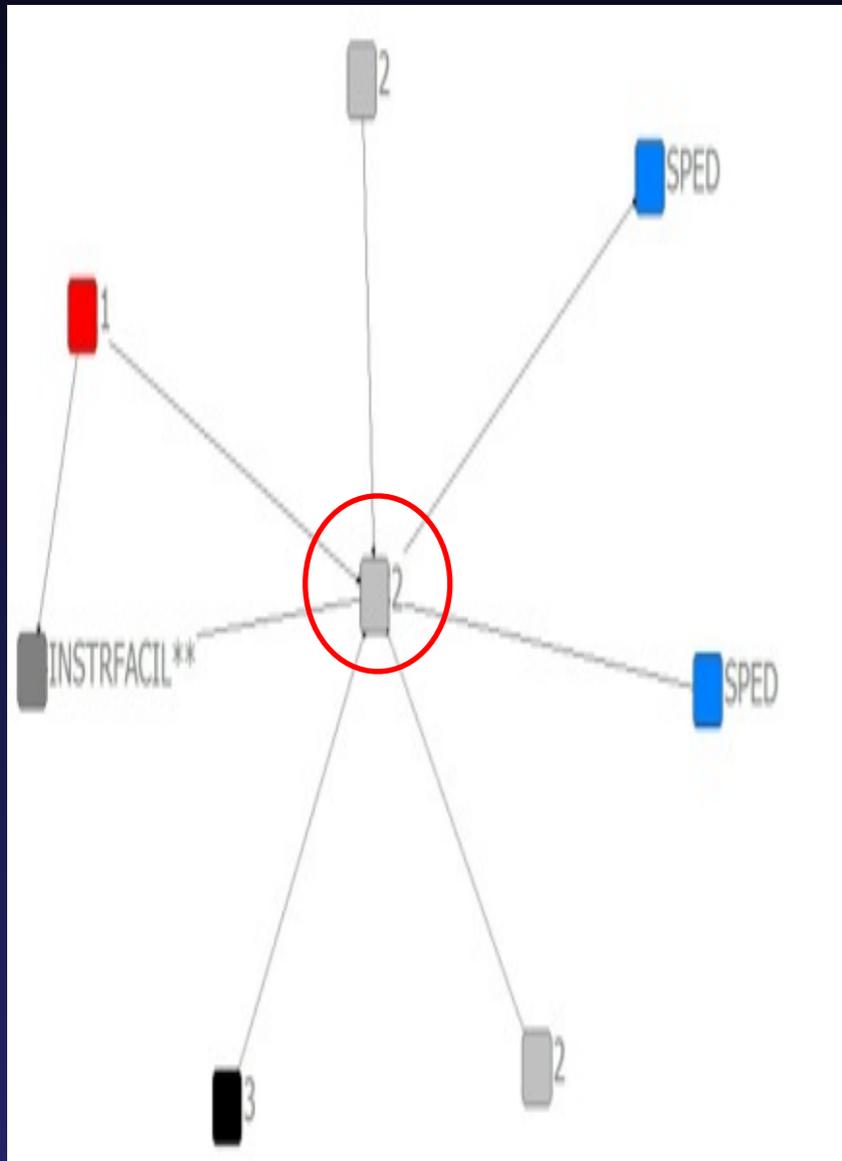
- **Infrastructure for mathematics instruction**
 - **New Inquiry-Based Elementary School Mathematics Curriculum**
 - **Resource and material adoption (investigations)**
 - **State standards alignment**
 - **Unit assessment development**
- **Infrastructure (re)design for teacher leadership**
 - **District-wide and school specific organizational routines (e.g., arrays, toolbox, PLCs).**
 - **Math coaches in some schools**
 - **Professional development in math for select teacher leaders**

Teacher Leadership and Training as a Marker of Expertise

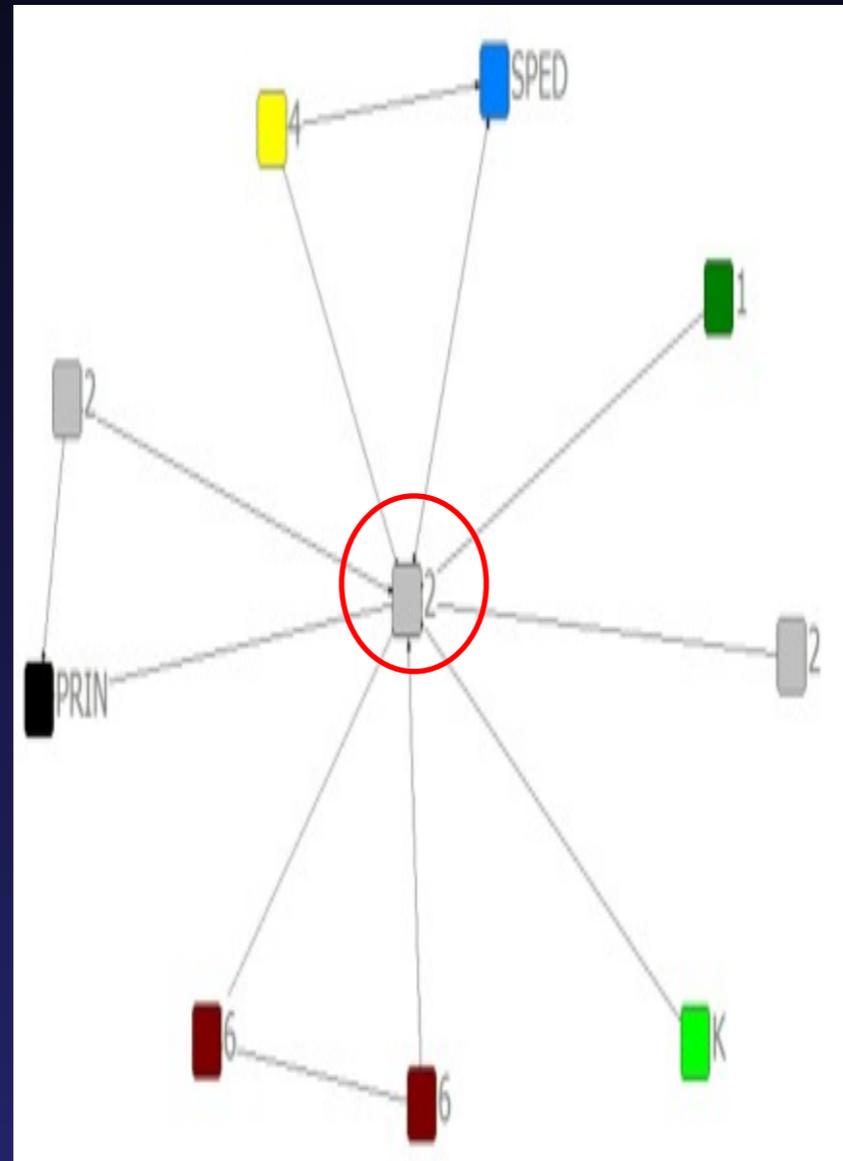
Karen (1st grade)

“Because he’s a second grade teacher....He’s kind of become the math person to see because he’s taken this extra training that nobody else in the building has done, and I know that he’s interested in math so, he’s just one that I’ve gone to that I know focuses very heavily on, I like his beliefs and the way that he has his room set up and the way that he carries himself.”

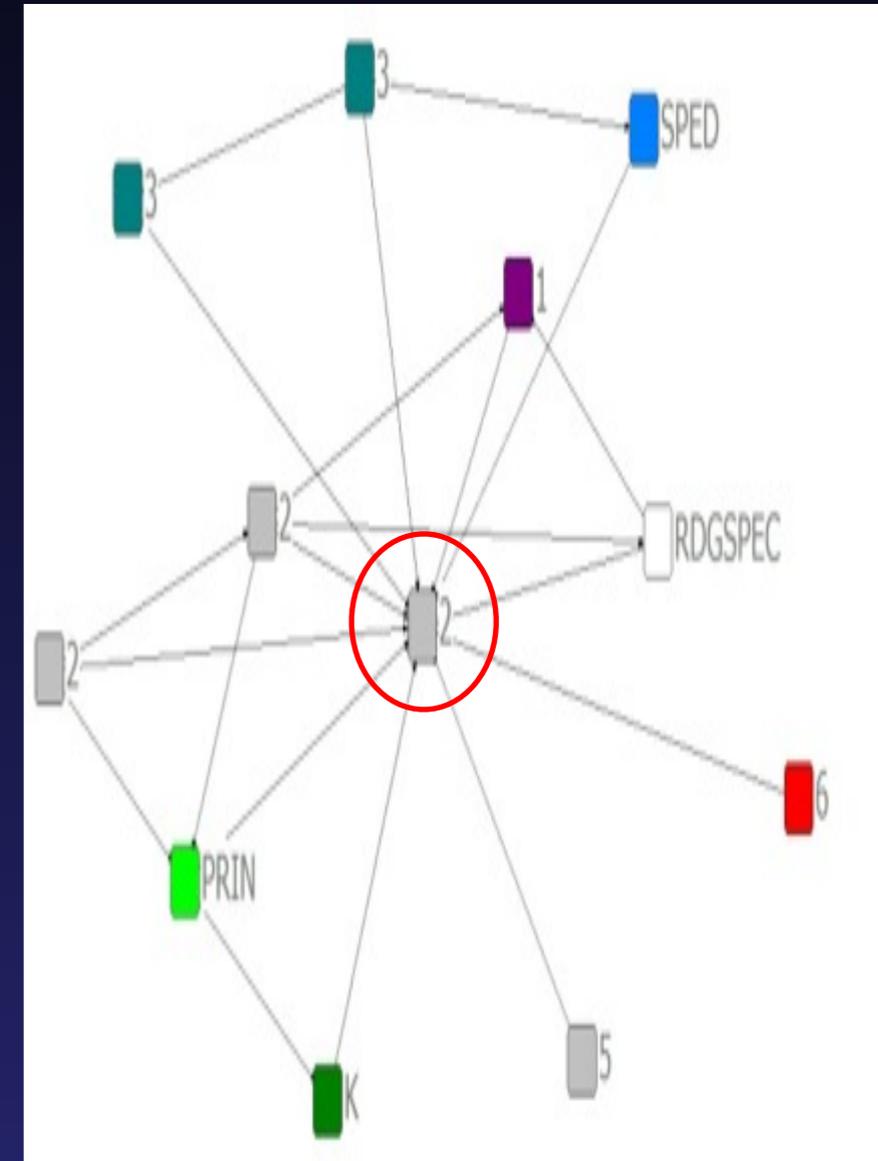
Professional Development & Teacher Leaders for Mathematics (John)



2009-10



2010-11



2011-12

Formal Position Promotes Advice Seeking

“[Emily] really wasn’t our facilitator [last year], though she was my co-worker, just a third grade teacher. I knew she had a wealth of knowledge, I just wasn’t in [her classroom] when she was teaching math. But, now that she’s moved into this math facilitator position, that’s different...She’s been trained in it. And, she’s gone to school for it and she’s a great coach. She knows a lot about math and I trust her that she has a lot of, a wealth of knowledge... She’s the go-to person.”

Angie, Special Education

Infrastructure Redesign Promoted Advice and Information Seeking in Mathematics

Average In-Degree for Teacher Leaders and Other Teachers, Auburn Park School District

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Toolbox Members (6)	1.60	2.80	2.67
Fundamental Math Participants (9)	4.33	6.00*	6.00
Math Coaches (3)	6.33	16.33**	18.00
Other Teachers (256)	1.54	1.60	1.36

Infrastructure Redesign Promoted Brokering in Mathematics

Average Betweenness for Teacher Leaders and Other Teachers, Auburn Park School District

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Toolbox Members (6)	5.00	75.80*	48.86
Fundamental Math Participants (9)	32.44	144.33*	115.42
Math Coaches (3)	38.67	248.67**	222.97
Other Teachers (256)	10.85	24.81*	11.90

Teacher Leadership as a Coupling Mechanism

Change in Teachers' Beliefs about and Reported Practices in Mathematics

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Beliefs about Mathematics Instruction Mean (SD)	3.35 (0.5)	3.46*** (0.5)	3.51*** (0.5)
Reasoning and Problem-Solving Practices Mean (SD)	2.39 (0.4)	2.52*** (0.4)	2.64*** (0.5)

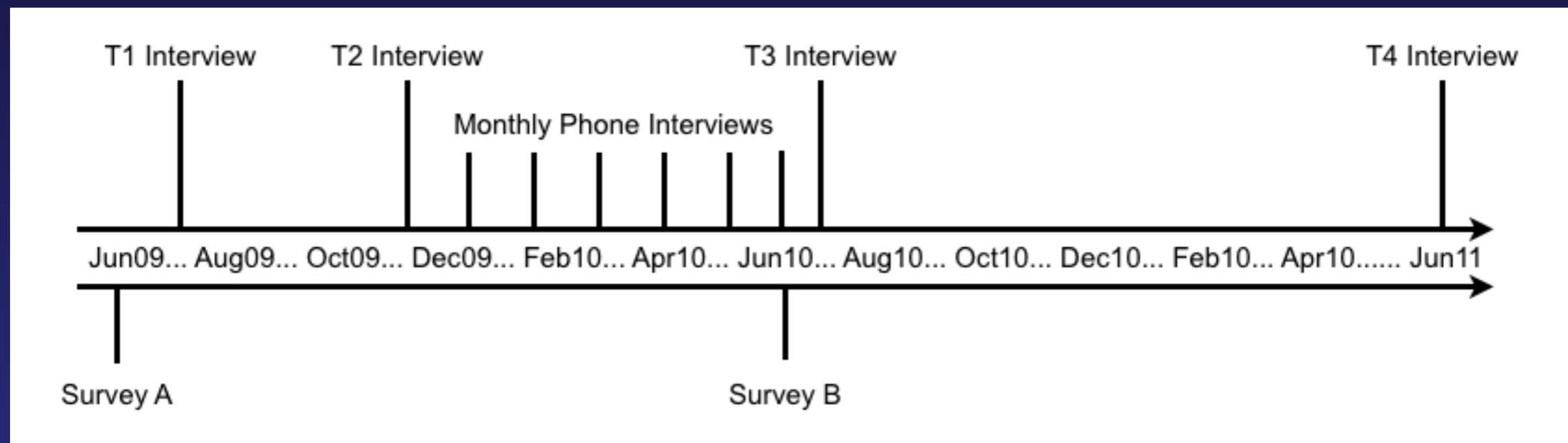
Notes: Means are based on teachers from 12 schools with over 70% response rates who responded in every year of the survey. Significant differences are for comparisons to 2009-10.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$; + $p < .10$

How the Leader's Work Situation Enables and Challenges Taking a Distributed Perspective in Practice

The Study

- **Design**
 - **Longitudinal mixed method design: surveys, interview, observation, administrative records**
 - **Two cohorts of new principals (2009-10 and 2010-11) surveyed**
 - **Purposeful sub-sample of Cohort 1 & random sub-sample of Cohort 2 for interview**
 - **Framing: Sense-making perspective**
- **Cohort One data collection:**



Cohort One & Two

- Hired in different public school types:
 - all performance levels
 - some neighborhood schools
 - some new schools, some selective enrollment & charter schools
- Data analysis
 - Several iterations of coding using NVivo:
 - open coding
 - closed coding

Demographics	C1	C2
Race		
Black	7	5
White	7	8
Latino/a	5	3
Other	0	1
Gender		
<i>Female</i>	10	10
Male	8	7
Age		
30-39	8	7
40-49	8	8
50+	2	1
Principal Preparation Program		
New Leaders, New Schools	4	3
LAUNCH	3	0
University of Illinois – Chicago	3	2
Years Experience – Teaching		
3-7	7	6
8-15	6	7
16+	5	4
Years Experience – Administration		
0-2	6	6
3-5	7	5
6-12+	5	6

Enabler: 'Jack of All Trades'

- “Jack of all trades and master of none I would say. It’s a **little bit of every profession rolled up in one**. It’s being a CEO of a company but having to do everything in that company from janitorial all the way to dealing with the CEO of Chicago Public Schools ... We’re mom, we’re a teacher, we’re a guidance counselor, we’re a friend, we’re a mentor, a coach.”

Emily

- “Your hands are in all the **cookie jars**. So like you need to know a little bit about everything and a lot about everything to some degree ... you need to be able to juggle the big balls of running a school. And be ok with the dropping a little ball once in awhile.”

Nancy

Enabler: 'Janus-Faced' Nature of the Work

Nelson

- And every, everyone's need is different ... Because it's like you work to feed and nurture those ... I'm still Glenda; you know Glenda's good, she's also a witch.

- "It varies. A lot of it depends on the team. Sometimes you have to be a chameleon. ... some days- some years you have to crack the whip, other times you can you know reflect or kind of relax and say 'well that worked and let's keep doing what we're doing'."

Angela

Enabler: Unpredictability/Volatility

- “Being a captain of a sailboat. You’re kind of in control, but you’re at the mercy of the wind too. You kind of set the course, direct it, sometimes the wind is your friend, sometimes it’s your enemy...”

Nelson

- “It’s like surfing without a surfboard on any given day. I mean one minute you’re on the board and the next minute you’re drowning ... the next thing you know, a wave comes and smacks you and you’re like ‘what happened?’ How do I get back above water? I mean things can just come out of nowhere.”

Lori

Inhibitor: Ultimate Responsibility

- “I’m responsible for the whole building of students and **I’m ultimately**—for most purposes—the end all, be all accountability person. **Everything falls on me** ... no matter what One thing that really was smacking me in the gut Sunday night was **the responsibility part**. It’s like **the ultimate responsibility** ...”

George

Nelson

- “**the buck stops at your desk.** ... everything stops at my desk **so I’m ultimately accountable** for everything in this building. ... Everything is your responsibility.”

- “Captain of a ship ... things sometimes are smooth sailing and then in a moment, the winds can turn, and you’re not sure you’re gonna stay afloat ... **I’m the last one out.**”

Kathy

The Challenge of Distributing Leadership

“that tendency to ... micromanage, I just felt like I had to keep that in check. ... that was never my style before, but I think just because I would kinda get overwhelmed with the idea of the responsibility that I felt like I had to have my hand in, you know, all the different things going on. So I just had to challenge myself to let go gender differences ...

Kathy

“it was hard to release that, because I like to be in [involve], and some of it is trusting that it will get done, but with this [person] I know it will get done effectively and right. It's also just wanting to be a part of the process whole heartedly, but I can't whole heartedly be a part of everything”

Kara

The Challenge of Distributing Leadership

- “If it’s a bilingual, I’ll send them to Evelyn. If it’s a testing question ... I’ll send them to Helen. ... And not to pass the buck, but they already know cause I gave them a sheet on who’s responsible, but sometimes they just want me to hear.”

Carol

Conclusion: Moving Forward

- **Putting diagnostic and design work central in leadership for teaching and learning.**
- **Diagnosis and design necessitates some sort of framework – one possibility is a distributed framework.**
- **A distributed framework focuses attention on the practice of leading (and managing) – interactions and infrastructure are essential elements.**
- **We must engage with the implications of anchoring our diagnosis and design work in the core work of human development organizations.**

Entailments for R&D on Instructional Improvement Practice

- *A real time and an historical time* understanding of practice
- Attention to infrastructure in research and development work on the practice of leading and managing improvement in human development work
- Multi-level analytical approaches that attend to micro, meso, & macro levels simultaneously
- Adopting a developmental approach and focusing on both change and maintenance efforts
- Embracing the bidirectionality of relations among the macro, meso, and micro

Papers

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More At:

- <http://www.distributedleadership.org>
- <http://distributedleadership.org/DLS/Presentations.html>