



Exploring the Relationships Among Innovation, Collaboration, and School Change in a Mixed Methods Case Study

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Abstract

Continuous school improvement efforts require schools to prepare, organize, and lead change. This study examined how a school created a context for change by implementing an innovation to improve teaching practices, school culture, and student learning outcomes. Implementing innovation requires school leaders to understand the process of change to successfully sustain school improvement efforts. The purpose of this research study was to assess the effectiveness that an innovative hybrid schedule had on improving student learning outcomes and school culture. This mixed-method research study used data generated by the AdvancEd®'s Stakeholder Feedback Survey, the ACT Aspire® Student Achievement Tests, and teacher interviews.

The analysis of this study's data indicated several factors that facilitated change through the implementation of the innovative hybrid schedule. The researcher discovered these overall factors related to the benefits of students changing classes, teachers becoming content specialists, collaboration through PLCs and vertical planning. Additionally, the results revealed that significant change occurred in school culture based on the AdvancEd®'s Stakeholder Feedback Survey. Additionally, student learning outcomes measured by ACT Aspire® Reading and Mathematics Student Achievement Tests showed a statistically significant improvement in both reading and math.

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Introduction:

At the heart of educational reform, is the central idea that education has the power to positively change lives and improve society. Decades of differing philosophies and conventions have placed the idea of change at the forefront of reform efforts (Rothkopf, 2009). Rapid changes and increased technological advances in today's society present new challenges and demands on our educational system. These factors and their consequences are continually forcing educational issues onto national and international agendas. In fact, according to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (2001), "Education has moved up the political agenda... {and} is seen as the key to unlocking not just social, but also economic problems" (p. 48).

In 2008, the National Governors Association (NGA), Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and Achieve released, *Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education*. This report illuminated the need for policy reform concerning college and career readiness and building globally competitive education systems. The report stated,

We are living in a world without borders. To meet the realities of the 21st century global economy and maintain America's competitive edge into the future, we need students who are prepared to compete not only with their American peers, but with students from all across the globe for the jobs of tomorrow. (*Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education*, 2008, p. 1)

In 2009, with approval from the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the Common Core State Standards Initiative was envisioned. Unlike previous attempts at a national consensus of standards, there was widespread support from these influential groups. This reform was just the tip of the iceberg. To further complicate matters, state and district mandates have added to the ever-growing sense that teachers are discouraged and dissatisfied with their jobs. A recent article in *NEA Today* (Feb., 2013), according to the 2012 MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Challenges for School Leadership, indicated teacher dissatisfaction was at an all-time high. The satisfaction rate dropped from 62 percent in 2008 to 39 percent in 2012. More than one-half of the teachers reported feeling under great stress several days per week, as opposed to one-third in 1985.

There have been decades of research findings that indicated the connection between teacher effectiveness and student learning. According to RAND Education's article (2012), *Teachers Matter: Understanding teachers' impact on student achievement*, teachers matter more to student achievement than any other aspect of schooling. Stronge, Ward, and Grant (2011) markedly found that the individual teacher was the most important factor affecting student growth and learning. While teachers matter most, it is unclear how the additional stressors to perform plus the lack of support and professional development for change initiatives has caused rising dissatisfaction with the profession. A perfect example of the lack of support can be exemplified with the implementation of Common Core.

A poll conducted by American Federation of Teachers (AFT) (2013), teachers had concerns regarding the Common Core State Standards. Most of the 800 surveyed teachers felt unprepared to teach the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and less than one third said their districts provided adequate resources. In an article from *NEA Today*, Walker (2013) acknowledged that "teachers needed the opportunity to participate in curriculum development and share their expertise" (p. 41). Without supporting teachers through organizational learning and appropriate professional development for teachers, enthusiasm for the CCSS will quickly diminish. Principals and instructional leaders must provide supports for planning, capacity building, and implementation (Reed, 2013). School leader must advocate, monitor, evaluate, and provide guidance through collaborative learning opportunities such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) (Marzano, 2003; Stronge, 1993).

Materials and Methods

Problem statement

Educational reform appears to be a movement that is being pursued by politicians and educational leaders across the country. The College and Career Ready Standards have required schools to change the structure and content of their curriculum because the new standards are more rigorous and in-depth than previous state standards (CCSSI, 2012; Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011). Traditional elementary school organizational structures and how they function are growing concerns relative to the newly adopted standards. One reason is the fact that the College and Career Ready Standards define the skills and knowledge essential for students to succeed in college and the workplace (NEA, 2010). It is important to not the standards represent an increase in the difficulty and complexity in the math and English language arts (CCSSI, 2012; Porter et al., 2011). Thus, schools must be prepared and organized for the changes required to teach these standards effectively.



To address the reality of the concerns and promote change for the better, the individuals responsible for improving the instruction and curriculum are required to change their behavior (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005). For organizations to lead successful change, schools must establish learning partnerships (Fullan, 2007). This type of collaborative culture requires organizational change (Fullan, 2003, 2007). Change often encompasses the implementation of an innovation such as an idea, new knowledge, or a physical object, such as an innovative hybrid schedule. The need for innovations is sometimes forced on an organization by external or environmental forces (Rogers, 1983). Harvey and Broyles (2010) agreed that “Change virtually always begins in response to some stimulus, whether internal or external, which motivates us to move from doing one thing to doing something else” (p. 10).

Fullan (2007) posits that one of the main reasons that change fails is that there is not underlying conception that grounds what would happen with new structures. He explains that educators are often left out of the conversations centered on the change initiatives and as a result there is not a clear understanding of how change is affecting them. Additionally, Fullan (1993) stated educators must, “redesign the workplace so that innovation and improvements are built into the daily activities of teachers... and adopt institutional renewal with new forms of leadership, collegiality, commitment to, and mechanisms for continuous improvement” (p. 353).

Consequently, if schools are to evolve, to truly become a vehicle for continuous improvement and learning, then they must develop a culture capable of continuous change (Fullan, 1993; 2004; 2007). The question that remains is whether or not an innovation spawned from the need for changing a cultural context within a school can be sustained through a framework of learning partnerships which fosters collaborative, synergistic capacity for continuous improvement. Therefore, how do schools striving to be innovative leverage new ideas or unproven methods to improve practice or solve persistent problems implement change to effectively improve school culture and student learning outcomes?

Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

A central focus of scholarly research on educational change has indicated that change is a complex process. Change requires a new educational paradigm that shifts from traditional systems to a mindset of collaboration. In turn, this mindset will foster a continuous capacity for change. Building the capacity of organizations to learn through professional learning communities can be powerful in establishing collegial trust, organizational change, continuous improvement, and ultimately improving student learning outcomes (Fullan, 2007; Fullan & Hord, 2015; Hall & Hord, 2004, 2011). Schools that adopt collaborative learning environments create a cultural context that is conducive for continual improvement. There is evidence to suggest that a school's capacity for change is directly related to its culture and overall organizational structure (Fullan, 2007; Fullan & Hord, 2015; Hall & Hord, 2011; Hargreaves, 1997; Miller, 2002).

Researches on continuous improvement solidified that schools must adhere to and align improvement efforts to proven quality schools standards. The *AdvancED*® standards for quality schools are outlined in the following standards: Purpose and direction; Governance and leadership; Teaching and assessing for learning; Resources and support systems; and Using results for continuous improvement. These standards align with the characteristics of Hord's five attributes of PLCs and are accomplished through the process describe by Fullan's (2007) phases of educational change. The principles from these concepts served to guide the study and established the framework to evaluate the implementation of an innovative hybrid schedule. Figure 1 shows how Hord's (2004) five attributes and Fullan's (2007) aligned with *AdvancED*® Standards for Quality Schools for continuous improvement.

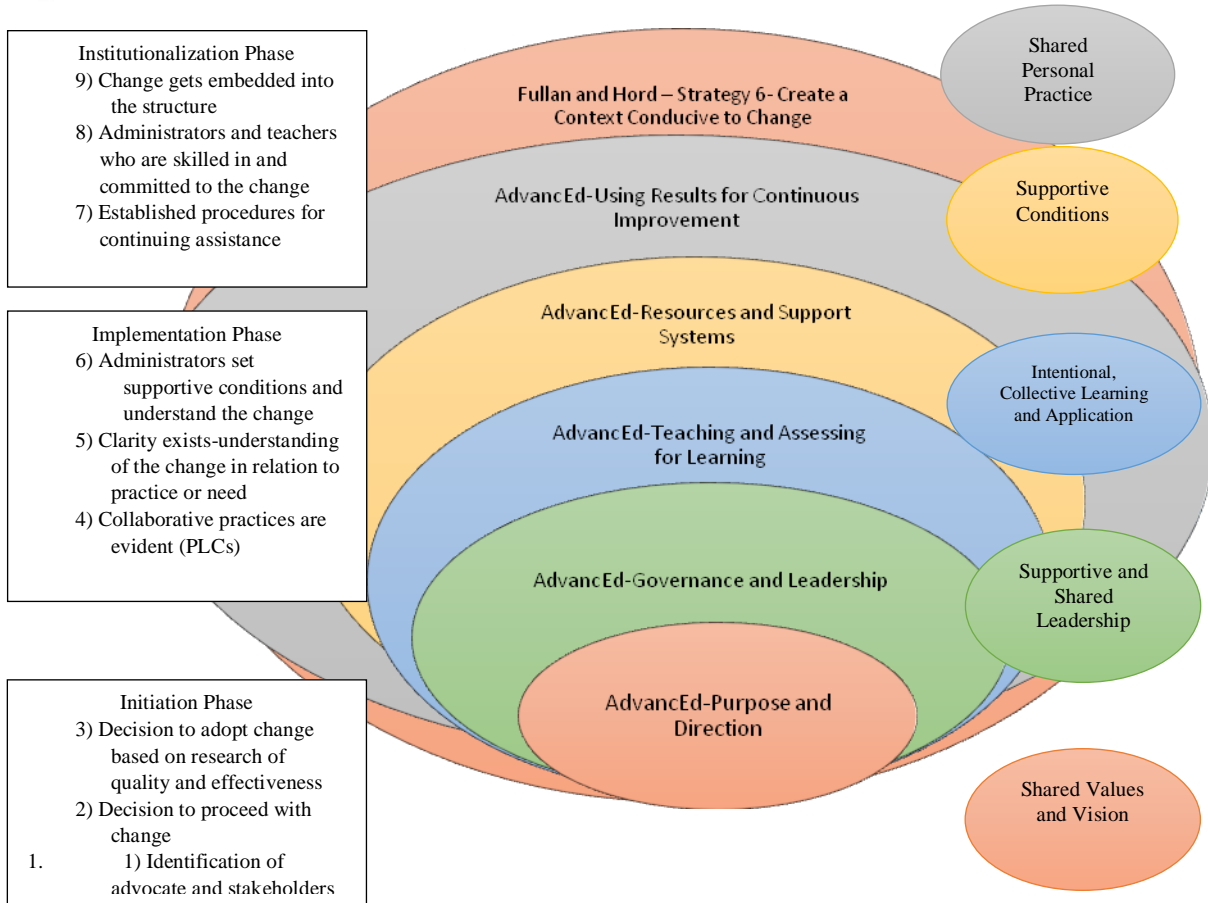


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Correlated with Quality School Standards

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What do teachers perceive as factors that facilitated and/or hindered the implementation of the Innovative Hybrid Schedule?
2. As perceived by the teachers, to what extent has the school culture changed as a result of the implementation of the Innovative Hybrid Schedule?
3. To what extent have student learning outcomes changed with the implementation of the Innovative Hybrid Schedule?
4. What are the perceived program outcomes related to the implementation of the Innovative Hybrid Schedule?

Significance of the Study

The study was designed to assess the effectiveness of implementing an innovation to bring about a change in school culture. The researcher attempted to deepen the understanding of the relationship of educational change and school culture. Findings from this study contribute to the existing literature pertaining to implementing educational innovation, as well as, adding insight to the literature related to the influences of the attributes of PLCs have on implementing change to establish a context for innovation that improves school culture and learning for students.

Literature Review

Based on the literature review, there was an abundance of research relating the connections of PLCs to improved instructional practices. However, there was limited research that linked sustained innovation through implementing the attributes of PLCs to improved school culture and student learning outcomes. To guide this study, the literature review included literature on leadership, educational change process, and professional learning communities. Each section reviewed was directly linked to the conceptual framework of



this study. The literature sections were necessary for understanding links to the overall concept of the research study.

Leadership

Many leadership theories contributed to the foundational aspects of defined leadership styles and approaches, all of which helped shape and inform the diversity of leadership in the educational setting. Overall, the variety of leadership approaches considered leadership as a process of influencing other to achieve a common goal. Several leadership concepts explored were distributed leadership, instructional leadership, and transformational leadership. Spillane et al. (2003) stated that distributed leadership decentralized the leadership functions so that belong to the group not solely vested with the principal. Leithwood et al. (2004) referred to instructional leadership describes the principal as vested more with the instructional and professional development aspects of a school setting, not on traditional managerial tasks. Additionally, Leithwood et al. (2004) defined transformational leadership was concerned with the charismatic and affective elements of leadership and how leaders inspired followers to accomplish great things.

Change Process

In looking for way to help individuals and organizations to grow and learn, we must not ignore the forces of change and the impact they have as we seek new ways of working together. Fullan (1993) warned that "Change is ubiquitous and relentless, forcing itself on us at every turn" (p. vii). Change is about a shift in our thinking and in the way we do things (Fullan, 2007). Fullan (2007) believed that educators must become skilled agents of change. If our educational system is to grow, the capacity for change is vital. Fullan (1991) stated "one of the most fundamental problems in education today is that people do not have a clear, coherent sense of the meaning about what educational change is for, what it is, and how it proceeds" (p. 4). Fullan (2007) suggested that educational change occurs in three phases. Initiation was the first phase and occurred when the need for change and innovation was recognized. Implementation was the second phase, the process of commitment to the change, and carrying out the use of the innovation. Institutionalization was the third phase and the change became an integral part of the way the organization functioned.

Professional Learning Communities

DuFour (2004) professed that professional learning communities have the capacity and the potential to empower teachers and improve their practice. DuFour et al. (2008) suggested that teachers in effective PLCs focused on how their students learn, which strategies and interventions worked to help students, and what they had to do to enhance student's learning. DuFour et al. (2008) defined a PLC as a group of

Educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that they key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators. (p. 14)

Hipp and Huffman (2010) believed that PLCs were "Professional educators working collectively and purposefully to create and sustain a culture of learning for all students and adults" (p. 12). Darling-Hammond noted collaboration associated with a professional community of teachers was a key element for successful schools. Additionally, Fullan (2007) stated

Active PLCs with schools in which teachers observe one another's teaching, and work with school leadership to make ongoing improvements, the greater the consistency and quality of teaching across the whole school, at which point all students in the school benefit. (p. 54)

The literature review demonstrated that there are many variables that play an active part in the educational change process. Research indicated learning partnerships such as PLCs that have attributes of supportive and shared leadership, shared values and beliefs, collective group learning, supportive conditions, and shared personal practice provide the context for improving collaboration and organizational learning. However, a deficit in the research remains related to implementing innovation, changing school culture, improving instructional practices and student learning outcomes for continuous improvement efforts.

The school, which was the subject of the study, had implemented an innovative hybrid that provided a change in organizational structures which allowed teachers to become content specialists over a two-year period. In addition, the selected school site implemented the different components of professional learning communities in an effort to strengthen collaboration and improve school culture. Purposeful sampling was used for this study.



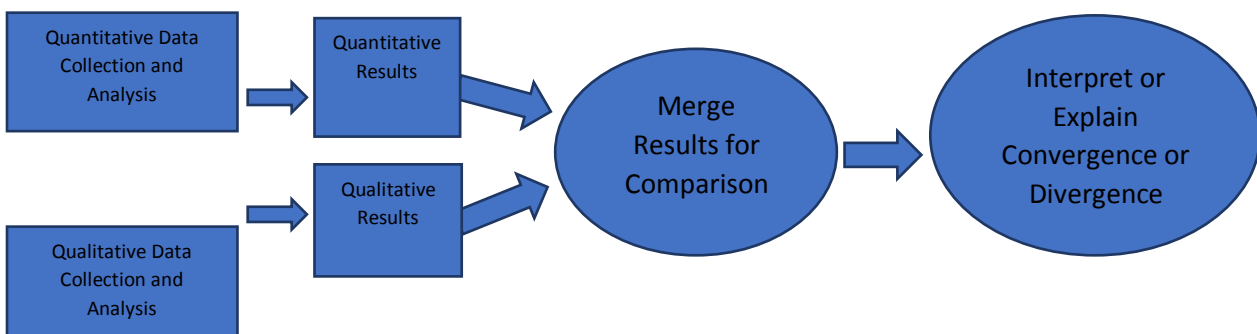
Research Design and Methodology

The research study utilized a mixed method case study design. Research was conducted to examine the implementation of an innovation and whether the school culture changed as a result of the innovation. The study investigated perceived program outcomes and examined the perception of teachers concerning the school culture and student learning outcomes. Utilizing mixed methods permitted the expansion of results which allowed for greater richness and detail through exploring specific features of each method (Trochim, 2002). The rationale for using the case study design was the fact this design provided significant insights and perspectives from participants in a bounded system (Creswell, 2012, 2015; Gillham, 2010; Merriam, 2009). Using a case study methodology, allowed the researcher to discover and identify the perspectives of the participants, along with other sources of evidence, the impact the innovative hybrid schedule had on changing teaching practices, school culture, and student learning outcomes. Furthermore, a case study provided descriptions of how school culture functioned from those participants that were actively involved. This approach served the research paradigm and conceptual framework for understanding the relationships how implementing an innovation effected school culture and drove the process for continuous improvement by utilizing the attributes of professional learning communities.

The qualitative data used in this case study were collected through in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted with the teachers that were actively involved in the initiation and implementation of the innovative hybrid schedule. The survey data were collected at the beginning and end of each school year over a two-year period. The survey used was *AdvancED's*® stakeholder feedback diagnostic tool that was used to measure the school climate. The survey addressed the Standards for Quality Schools and was electronically formatted through the *AdvancED*® Assist portal. The student learning outcome data were generated using *ACT Aspire*®. These data were state mandated and administered to all third through fifth graders.

Mixed methods researchers are required to use a combination of quantitative (numeric analysis) and qualitative (thematic analysis) approaches to report findings. A visual model, Figure 2, provides a sequence to this study indicating that qualitative methods and quantitative methods were used in the convergent design.

Visual Model of Convergent Parallel Design



Source: Creswell, J. (2015). *A concise introduction to mixed method research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Figure 2. Convergent Parallel Design

Results

Results of the data analysis revealed a statistically significant correlation between the Innovative Hybrid Schedule and improvement in student learning outcomes based on the *ACT Aspire*® test scores. Statistically significant gains were shown in both data sets of 3rd to 4th grade reading and math and 4th to 5th reading and math scores.

On the overall *ACT Aspire*® Mathematics test data, Stella Elementary School tested n = 69 students in grades three through five. The mathematics data points included *ACT Aspire*® Spring 2014 Mathematics and 2015 Spring Mathematics for 3rd – 4th grade and 4th – 5th grade students. The data indicated statistical significance was reached in both groups.

Stella Elementary School tested n = 69, 3rd – 4th and 4th – 5th grade students on the *ACT Aspire*® Reading (data set 3b). The 2014 Spring administration of the *ACT Aspire*® were the baseline scores. Only the students that completed both testing sessions at Stella Elementary School were used in the data sets. The data revealed that statistical significance was reached in the *ACT Aspire*® Reading test scores. Table 2 and



Table 3 provide the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). statistics for *ACT Aspire*® test data. The data indicated statistical significance was reached. There was a large effect size $\eta = .407$ which indicated a strong relationship between the implementation of the innovative hybrid schedule and improved student learning outcomes.

Based upon the statistical analysis, each data set showed statistical significance. The overall data for mathematics and reading showed that statistical significance was reached after the implementation of the Innovative Hybrid Schedule.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, Degrees of Freedom, Eta Square, and p Values for the ACT Aspire® Mathematics Test

ACT Aspire® Mathematics Student Test Scores	Spring 2014		Spring 2015		F	Eta Square	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
	412.19	3.541	414.49	3.118	35.517	.346	<.001

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, Eta Square, and p Values for the ACT Aspire® Reading Test

ACT Aspire® Reading Student Test Scores	Spring 2014		Spring 2015		F	Eta Square	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
	411.26	4.544	414.04	.4.542	45.946	.407	<.001

Additionally, statistically significant gains were shown in the *AdvancEd*®'s Stakeholder Feedback Survey results with each of the following Quality School Standards: Purpose and Direction, Governance and Leadership, Teaching and Assessing for Learning, Resources and Support Systems, and Using Results for Continuous Improvement. Means, standard deviations and results of the Spring 2014 and Spring 2015 administration of the *AdvancEd*®'s Stakeholders Feedback Survey were reported for each of the five standards addressed in the *AdvancEd*®'s Stakeholder Feedback Survey. Table 4 indicates the Means, Standard Deviations, Eta Square, and p values for Purpose and Direction, Governance and Leadership, Teaching and Assessing for Learning, Resources and Support Systems, and Using Results for Continuous Improvement addressed by *AdvancEd*®'s Stakeholder Feedback Survey.

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, Eta Square, and p values for Purpose and Direction, Governance and Leadership, Teaching and Assessing for Learning, Resources and Support Systems, and Using Results for Continuous Improvement addressed by *AdvancEd*®'s Stakeholder Feedback Survey

AdvancEd®'s Stakeholder Feedback Survey	Spring 2014		Spring 2015		F	Eta Square	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
	4.1417	.14384	4.2872	.15171	29.718	.382	<.001

These were reported as Purpose and Direction, Governance and Leadership, Teaching and Assessing for Learning, Resources and Support Systems, and Using Results for Continuous Improvement. The correlations, Eta Square between the Spring 2014 and Spring 2015 of the *AdvancEd*®'s Stakeholder Feedback Survey ranged from .382 to .183. This was interpreted as a large effect size. To assess whether or not school culture and climate changed during the implementation of the innovative hybrid schedule the researcher completed a two level within subjects Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The five standards' average resulted in a statistically significant change, $F(1,4) = 29.718$, $p < .001$ with the mean scores for the Spring 2014 lower than Spring 2015 for all five sections identifying school culture and climate indicators.

In interpreting the *AdvancEd*®'s Stakeholder Feedback Survey, the innovative hybrid schedule promoted a positive school culture. Additionally, the effect size was large, partial $\eta^2 = .382$. This could indicate the



possibility that the school culture was significantly improving in a positive direction and the school culture was perceived by teachers in a positive manner after the implementation of the innovative hybrid schedule.

Teacher interviews supported the findings from the quantitative data. Four consistent themes emerged from the interviews to validate the quantitative data. They were as follows: Benefits of Changing Classes, Teacher Collaboration, Improvement in School Culture, and Teachers as Content Specialist.

School culture. The process of data triangulation revealed four emergent themes related to the improvement in school culture. The first emergent theme identified in the interview process and supported the quantitative findings that indicated school culture is moving in a positive direction. When questioned during the interview process Teacher stated:

I think it's had a great effect on school morale and teachers, because we are encouraged to work together. We have to collaborate with each other for our students, and for our classrooms to be effective, and to run effectively.

Teacher9 shared:

I think it's created a positive school culture. Teachers feel competent in the area that they're teaching.

Teacher6 supported the findings:

It has definitely had an overwhelming positive effect, we can definitely spend time focusing on becoming experts on our subject matter and not have to be so fragmented. I also think it's been positive in morale, which is kind of dealing with children, we're not stuck in the same room with the same behavior problems, the same children all day.

Collaboration. Through the interview process, a second emergent theme of collaboration among teachers also created a positive change in school culture. Additionally, the effects of collaboration improved school and teacher morale because the organizational structure promoted learning partnerships in which the teachers collaborated and shared instructional practices. Teacher 7 who was an active participant in the implementation process at Stella Elementary School explained:

It has helped certainly by being able to connect with colleagues on specific things, because we're so individualized as teachers that we're focused on our content area, so it's been actually very helpful, very beneficial, to discuss what works, what doesn't work, sharing information, and sharing strategies with other teachers.

Teacher 2 supported this finding:

I think the morale at the school is excellent since we started hybrid schedule, you have teachers that are able to be specialized in what they love teaching.

Teacher 1:

I think it has had a great effect on school morale and teacher, because we are encouraged to work together. We have to collaborate with each other for our students, and for our classrooms to be effective and run effectively.

Three of the four overarching themes of benefits of changing classes, teachers as content specialists and teacher collaboration through PLCs and vertical planning were facilitating factors for the implementation process of the innovative hybrid schedule. Building educator capacity for change, innovation, and successful institutionalization requires a significant amount of professional learning. These is noted in the following teacher responses.

Teacher collaboration was a resounding point that Stella teachers found as a prominent factor which provided the key to successful implementation of the innovative hybrid schedule. As Teacher 3 established:

I think what mostly helped the implementation process is the vertical planning where we all got together, and we were able to look at our standards...

The interviews established that teachers believed allowing students to change classes was a deciding factor in the process of implementing the change at Stella.

Teacher9 stated:

The students rotate to different classes throughout the day instead of staying with their same teacher all day long.

Teacher 5 elaborated on this benefit:



It is very innovative, obviously. I think the schedule itself provides opportunity for the students to be able to have movement. It's different than most schools in our area, which provides I think, a learning opportunity that is unique to Cloverdale and to our students that we have.

Participants also reported that focusing on a few subjects and becoming a subject content specialist was overwhelming the key factor for implementing the innovative hybrid schedule. The participants –Teacher 7 and Teacher 8 – expressed that they can focus deeply on one or two subjects they teach and master the content and skills needed to teach their subject areas effectively.

Teacher 8 stated:

We can provide individualized instruction in a content area, characteristic to a middle or high school setting, but more hands-on, small group, group work, time for peers to interact. Certainly, for myself as the educator, a lot of room to really perfect the area that I'm instructing. Teachers are being better prepared.

Teacher 7 concurred:

Teaching specific content areas, I believe really allows a lot of confidence for the teachers, the instructors, for perfecting their curriculum and perfecting the standards and understanding exactly what their content area is.

Regardless of the type of innovation, literature on leadership suggests the principals' understanding of organizational change and learning be used as guides for effectively implementing innovation. The literature identified a key to successful implementation of an innovation or change is to create a context that supports practices which foster professional learning within an organization. The interviews with Stella teachers described how the structure of the innovative hybrid schedule supported professional learning opportunities. The hybrid schedule provided the structure and organization for increased collaboration such as participating in content specific professional learning activities and vertical planning teams. Teachers described how the innovative hybrid schedule provided opportunities for teachers to collaborate, problem-solve, and improve their instructional practices. To change the behaviors of teachers within a school, their assumptions, beliefs, and values will have to begin to change. These changes assist in creating a context for making a cultural shift within a school.

Conclusions

The researcher of this study investigated the effects of the change process through the initiation and implementation of an innovative hybrid schedule. The study explored how school culture and student learning outcomes were impacted through the implementation of innovation. The researcher explored teacher's perceptions on how the innovative hybrid schedule assisted in creating a context for collaboration. Thus, cultivating their instructional practices that ultimately improved student learning outcomes.

The researcher believes student learning outcomes is the most important element concerning teachers, administrators, and educational leaders. While improving student learning should be the goal of all schools, it is necessary to recognize there are many factors such as school culture, organizational structure, and leadership styles that impact student learning outcomes. The researcher recognizes the role that positive school culture and teacher collaboration have on improving student learning. When teachers collaborate with other teachers and become a content specialist, students and staff benefit from the positive outcomes.

Results suggested the two variables of student learning outcomes and school culture improved at the same time because teachers were able to effectively implement an educational change through an innovation. Findings from this study will greatly contribute to the existing literature pertaining to implementing educational innovation, professional learning, and collaboration. Furthermore, additional insight gained on how these impact a school's ability to sustain a culture of innovation and improve learning environments for students will be available for practitioners. To meet the needs of students, school leaders, researchers, and educational stakeholders can utilize the findings from this study to increase their knowledge on how schools which create a context for change cultivate a culture that inspires engaging teaching and learning.

While there is no causal link, it is obvious the professional learning partnerships, collaboration, and student learning improved during the implementation process of the innovative hybrid schedule. The results indicated that the relationships between implementing an innovative change such as the innovative hybrid schedule and incorporating professional learning had a positive impact on the teacher collaboration, school culture, and providing the opportunities for teachers to become content specialist. The researcher confirmed that implementing innovation created a positive change in school culture and improved student learning outcomes. Teachers believed the innovative hybrid schedule was the connection that created a context for change. Additionally, it established collaborative opportunities which supported professional learning, learning partnerships, and vertical planning. These collaborative opportunities were perceived as positive outcomes of



the change initiative. Lastly, the innovative hybrid schedule allowed teachers to focus on one content area and become content specialists which ultimately impacted improvement in student learning outcomes.

Conflicts of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest concerning this research study.

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