Introducing the Collaborative Data Inquiry Practitioner Toolkit

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Candice Bocala:

Hi, everybody. Welcome. If you're just joining us, we're going to get started and think and talk together about a new collaborative data inquiry practitioner toolkit. Which we are very interested and excited to introduce to you all today. Thanks for being here.

Quick check-in question in the chat is if collaborative data inquiry ... Whether collaborative data inquiry is new to you or something you've engaged in before, what comes to mind when you hear this? What kinds of practices, what kinds of routines, what models have you used or engaged with out in the field? Just want to hear a little bit from you in the chat. What comes to mind? What is your experience with collaborative data inquiry? Go ahead and put your thoughts into the chat while we're adding other folks to our webinar today. We can go to the next slide.

So I'm really pleased to introduce our toolkit team. You'll hear from many of us on today's webinar, but together we represent an amazing group from SRI Education as well as New York University. And I am at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. And we came together to create something that we hope is useful and usable by educational teams that are using data. Really benefited from the collaboration across these different organizations and across all of these different folks. So thank you to the team. If you haven't yet told us what collaborative data inquiry means to you or what comes to mind, please go ahead and put that into the chat.

So in our agenda today, we'll start off with giving an overview of the toolkit and talking about how we designed it and what it's meant to do. We're going to really focus on the observation rubric, which was a big part of the toolkit and what different educators can use to observe and think about the quality of their data team meetings. We'll have an opportunity for quick Q&A after we introduce the toolkit.

Then we are going to have some practitioners who ... Sorry, first we're going to talk about the results of our validation study when we use the toolkit in two real districts to look at different outcomes for teachers and for students. And then finally, we'll have a panel of practitioners who did use the toolkit to explain what it was like to go and observe data team meetings using the rubric, what it did for them as learners in these different settings and coaches and leaders. And also what they think it did for the teams that participated in the process. So stay tuned to the end of the webinar to hear from our amazing panelists from two different school districts. So we'll end again with Q&A. Go ahead and advance.

So the first is to define what collaborative data inquiry means. I know that lots of you put in different words into the chat that collaborative data inquiry to you is an opportunity to unpack data with peers. It's an opportunity maybe to develop collective efficacy, to use genuine curiosity about what it is I'm looking at, to think about how to interpret data together. So all of these are common ideas that we also came up with when we thought about what collaborative data inquiry means. And for us, it's a process in which teams work together to analyze and interpret data, identify patterns and insights, and use this information to inform decisions aimed at improving teaching practices and student learning. So the key here is that this is a cycle, that these data are being used within a cycle. You can go to the next slide.

And so this toolkit really aims at helping education practitioners to understand and identify all the things that good teams, data teams do when they are engaged in this collaborative inquiry process. And we're hopeful that it can help people to support teams as they engage in any kind of data-driven decision-making process. I will say as a representative of the Data Wise Project at Harvard University, a lot of the insights we used drew upon that work and my connection through the Data Wise Project. And we were really grateful to partner with many Data Wise coaches and practitioners as we were testing this. But this toolkit is designed to be used for any teams that are engaged in collaborative data inquiry using any model that you could imagine. All right, I'm going to the next slide.

So as I mentioned before, kind of why this toolkit exists, we're hopeful that it could help you monitor the progress of these instructional teams, understand the extent to which the conversations that are happening, the actions that these teams are taking is sort of grounded in what we know of from the literature and the scholarship about what effective collaborative data inquiry looks like. It can help coaches and school leaders and system level leaders provide actionable feedback using the rubric and the other tools. It can help us identify spots where collaborative data inquiry is really going well, as well as places where teams that might need additional support or coaching. And we know that school districts make big investments of time in various collaborative data inquiry models and frameworks, and this can help those schools and districts understand what is actually happening so that they can make the best use of that investment.

All right. So I'm going to turn it over now to Lindsay to take us into the toolkit and the components.

Lindsay Brown:

Thanks, Candice. Excuse me. Okay.

So now that we've talked a little bit about how we see this toolkit supporting instructional teams, I'm going to take a closer look at how it was designed and what the different pieces look like in practice. So I'm going to walk you through the various tools, our instruments that we've developed to help leaders and coaches monitor progress and provide feedback. So we're going to focus today a lot on the observation rubric. And what this is it's used by an external observer to record team processes as they occur in a single meeting. But you can compare observation scores from different team meetings to get a sense of how things change over time.

There's also a team meeting exit ticket, and this captures team members' feedback on the observed meeting. There's an end of year survey, and this captures team members' perceptions of team functioning throughout the year as opposed to on a specific meeting. There's a user guide, and that provides detailed instructions about all of the toolkit components. So the user guide is intended for observers assessing these team meetings in schools. We really tried to break down what it looks like to use this and provide some scaffolded support there.

There's also a team reflection protocol, and those are guidelines for sharing the toolkit results with the teams for coaching. So this is designed by Carmen and Adam, who are two Data Wise certified coaches about how they might discuss this with people. And then there's a data dashboard that visualizes the data collected by the toolkit. And this together is the practitioner toolkit.

There is going to be access to any of the individual instruments on the link page or PDF that has everything in one place. So I believe someone is putting the toolkit link in the chat. There it is. Okay, great.

Okay. So let's take a little bit of a look at the conceptual overview of the toolkit. So what kind of things did we try to understand was happening in the meetings? So this is based on the data inquiry literature, the research. It's designed to measure three domains of team processes that are in the research as contributing to effective team functioning. So those things are in blue here. You see collaborative inquiry, team structures and culture and team member investment. In each domain, these blue boxes have several constructs. Those constructs are the bullet points that are related that sit within the domain. And then each of those constructs has indicators, which are the things that you actually look for in the classroom. And in just a second, we'll take a look at what that rubric looks like.

And the toolkit is designed to help practitioners recognize teams that are efficient and effective in collaborative data inquiry. But also to support teams that might need additional support in achieving proficiency.

So let's now dig in a little bit to what this observation rubric looks like. So you can see at the top where this blue arrow is, we have the domain of collaborative inquiry. You can see we have the construct of focus for data inquiry. And then there's a little bit of a description of what that looks like. And then each of these rows are the indicators that are the observable practice that we're looking for within the meeting. And then you can see each of those indicators has a description at the emerging, developing, and proficient levels. And this is designed to give us a continuum of practice as opposed to saying, this thing is present or this thing is absent. But what does this look like at ... What quality is this at within the meeting?

And the process for rating this is we rate each indicator first on emerging, developing, or proficient, and then aggregate all of those scores up to the construct level. So you can see this blue bar at the bottom is on a scale from one to seven. This represents the construct score, and we use the indicator scores of emerging, developing, and proficient to aggregate up to the construct level score.

We do recommend that people are trained on the observation rubric before implementing it so that you have some understanding of how it's used. And we do also recommend that people watch the whole meeting to score so that they really have a sense of what's happening throughout. There's a different number of indicators per construct like it says here on the side, and so that will vary a little bit by rubric. Okay, next slide. Great.

Okay. So like we said at the beginning, there's a lot of different components to this toolkit. So we just looked at the rubric, which provides an outside perspective, but now we're going to dig just a little bit deeper into the exit ticket in the end of year survey, which are more the internal perspective from the team members themselves. So the exit ticket is completed individually after an observed meeting by the team members who were observed. And this is designed to be really quick, five minutes or less. It can be done right on your smartphone, and you can see just a little screen grab here of what that looks like.

And then there's an end of year survey, which is more in depth because it happens less frequently. That takes about 25 minutes to complete. But it's really intended to capture a more holistic view of the team's experience over the preceding months and their perspective of what's happening on various things.

Okay. So I'm going to pause there to see if there are any questions from the chat about how the toolkit was designed or how it worked. So Candice, would you let us know if there's anything that we should address?

Candice Bocala:

We have no questions yet. But this is an invitation to put questions that you have using the Q&A button at the bottom. We'd prefer that to the chat if that's possible. But we'd love to answer any questions that you have at this point, just hearing about the rubric or hearing about the survey. No questions yet, Lindsay, but we'll give people maybe a minute to think and see if any questions come in.

Lindsay Brown:

Okay. Sounds good.

Candice Bocala:

If you don't have questions now, this is also a great time to click into the link to access the toolkit, which is in the chat. And it'll take you to the webpage where you can download all of these resources. Super happy to have this available and publicly available for everybody today.

Those are those different instruments that Lindsay mentioned, an observation rubric, an exit ticket, a survey for teachers, and a user guide and a debrief guide that you can use with Teams. And I still don't see any questions, so maybe we ... Oh, we do have our first one. So first one is there a suggested timeline for engaging in the various components or cycles of the tool?

Lindsay Brown:

I guess I can take that one, unless somebody else wants to jump in. I'm not sure exactly what you mean by timeline, maybe you can clarify. But what we do recommend is that people should at least be at a point in the process where they've identified their focus for data inquiry. Because all of the parts of the observation rubric are intended to start from that point. And so if you're more in the exploration phase at the beginning where you're digging into data, but you haven't really focused yet on a specific question, then it's probably too early for us to recommend using the toolkit. I don't know if there's anything else people want to add.

Candice Bocala:

I wonder if we could say also a little bit more about the relationship between the observation rubric, the exit ticket, and then the end of the year survey.

Lindsay Brown:

Sure. So the observation rubrics are intended to be used in any meeting after people have passed a certain point in the collaborative data inquiry cycle. The exit tickets are intended for team members who are providing their own perspective of what's happened in that meeting so that you can triangulate data among those different sources because we know that's important. And then the end of your survey only happens once a year. And so we wouldn't anticipate that you would need to provide resources or time or data analysis towards that more than once per year.

Candice Bocala:

Thanks. That could help some people as they're planning out when they use which component when. So far, that's still our only question, so maybe we can move along and see if other questions come in. And please feel free to use that Q&A button at the bottom of your screen to add any additional questions.

Lindsay Brown:

Okay. I'm handing it off to Paul.

Paul Burkander:

Great. Thanks so much, Lindsay. So I'm going to take some time to talk about the results from our validation analysis. And I'm going to give a very high level overview of our results. Those who want more details should look out for our full report due out soon.

But our goal in validating the toolkit components was to test whether the observation rubric, the exit ticket, and the end of year survey are measuring the dimensions of collaborative data inquiry meetings quality that we want it to measure. And we can't directly test that because we don't have other measures of CDI meeting quality. So instead, we ask two sets of research questions intended to give indirect evidence. And Lauren or Kate, could you go to the next slide? Yes. Thank you.

So our first set of research questions asks how the statistical relationships of these items compare to our theorized relationships for them. And then the second set of research questions examines the degree to which these toolkit components predict team member and student outcomes. We do this because high quality collaborative data inquiry meetings are expected to lead to improved team member and student outcomes. So correlations between the toolkit components and those outcomes would support the claim that the toolkit is measuring those dimensions of collaborative data inquiry meetings that we care about. Next slide, please.

So our validation analyses use data from two school districts, both in the Northeastern US, both serving high proportions of African American and Hispanic students and high shares of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. Our study focused on schools and data teams serving grades K through eight, just so we could have access to the standardized benchmark assessments that are given in those grades in Math and English, Language Arts. Next slide.

So the data used for our validation analyses included data from the observation rubric, from the exit ticket and the end of year survey from the toolkit. And we also collected administrative data on team member outcomes and student demographics, excuse me, team member demographics, student demographics, and student outcomes. The team member outcomes were measured on the end of year survey. Next slide, please. Great.

So looking at the statistical relationships among items on each of the observation rubric, the exit ticket, and the end of year survey, we saw a relatively high degree of correlation across most of the items. With each of the toolkit components capturing one or two distinct dimensions of meeting quality. So for example, the exit ticket had 14 items on it. Those were relatively highly correlated with each other and seemed to be measuring two distinct factors or two distinct dimensions of meeting quality.

Now, maybe that the meeting quality is actually capturing more construct, but perhaps things like data use and application of learning are just so highly correlated that in the data, we can't see them as distinct components. So we just see two distinct components in the exit ticket. Next slide, please.

And we also examined the relationship across toolkit components. For example, between the exit ticket and the observation rubric, looking at things like how the correlation between the common measure of data use compared to the correlation of data use versus focus for data inquiry, for example. And really, we found that the correlations were similar across toolkit components, whether we are looking within the same construct or across different constructs. And we think that this may be due to just differences in the toolkit components in the captured perspective and in the reference period.

For example, as Lindsay mentioned, the observation rubric differs from the exit ticket and end of year survey, and that it's an external perception. Whereas the exit ticket and end of year survey are capturing team member perspectives. Similarly, the observation rubric and exit ticket are capturing meeting quality from a single point in time. Whereas the end of year survey is capturing quality from all meetings across the school year. Next slide, please.

Okay. So to examine the relationship between toolkit components and team and student outcomes, we used a three-step process. First, we used a systematic procedure called LASSO to select a set of control variables that is, for example, student achievement at the beginning of the year. And the collaborative data inquiry toolkit components to include in the model. LASSO is a fancy method for identifying the set of variables that are most predictive of an outcome. And even just the selection by LASSO is an indication that the variable has a meaningful relationship with the outcome variable.

Second, we estimated regression models for each team and student outcome using the full set of LASSO selected co-variates and toolkit components. And we tested for whether the selected toolkit components were statistically significantly associated with the outcome. Finally, we did repeat this exercise using just one toolkit component at a time. For example, using just the exit ticket. But today we're going to focus on the results that use all the toolkit components at the same time, so I won't spend much more time on that. Next slide, please.

Okay. So this table is showing the results for our team outcomes and for each of the toolkit components. The first column here is the single factor from the observation rubric, that single dimension of meeting quality that the observation rubric seemed to be measuring. The second two are the factors from the exit ticket, and the final two columns are the factors from the end of year survey. In each of these cells, a check mark indicates that the toolkit component was selected by LASSO, providing evidence that that component is predictive of the outcome. And then an asterisk indicates that the toolkit component was statistically significantly associated with that outcome.

So each toolkit component was selected for at least one team outcome. And you can see that by noting that all of these columns have at least one row that has a check mark beyond just the first row, which indicates that it was selected for at least one column. And all toolkit components were jointly predictive of team members' data proficiency, teacher self-efficacy, and burnout as measured from the dimension of personal accomplishment, as indicated by the asterisks in those rows. So this is providing strong evidence of the relationship between these toolkit components and team member outcomes. Next slide, please.

Okay. And this slide shows the results for our student outcomes. For student outcomes, only items from the end of year survey were selected as predictive. But these were not statistically significant. This may be in part because our baseline student measures, which included a baseline measure of student achievement at the beginning of the year, are just such strong predictors of these student outcomes that there is relatively little room for the toolkit components to add predictive value. And it may also be because it takes more than one year of data inquiry meetings before the quality of those meetings is meaningfully associated with student achievement.

All right, and I'll pass it back to Kate.

Kate Laguarda:

All right. Thanks, Paul.

We have a great panel of practitioners to share with you today about their experience using the toolkit. These are instructional leaders from the two districts that participated in our validation study, and you can see their names here. We have Amy Alkiewicz, who's the Director of Educational Improvement Services at the Rochester City Public Schools. Dan Hurley is the Executive Director of School Innovation at the Rochester City Public Schools. Keisha Redd-Hannans is the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Instruction and Assessment at the New Haven Public Schools, and Edith Johnson is Director of Professional Learning and Leadership Development in the New Haven Public Schools.

And what these instructional leaders all have in common is that they are within their districts, they and colleagues within their districts are responsible for supporting collaborative data inquiry in instructional teams. And supporting instructional teams as they attempt to approve instruction in their schools. And so they worked with us to pilot test the practitioner toolkit and specifically the meeting observation rubric. And so we are very excited that they're here with us today to share some reflections.

So let's start with Rochester. And Dan, can you just tell us a little bit about instructional teams at your district? Who are they? When did they meet? And what is your expectation around data use or collaborative data inquiry?

Dan Hurley:

Sure. Thanks, Kate.

So in Rochester, our teacher teams at all of our schools engage in collaborative data inquiry in grade level or department PLCs that are really embedded in the school day. These teams meet once a week, sometimes twice a week. And at least one of those per month is dedicated specifically to data inquiry. And using evidence of key strategies from school improvement plans, trying to look at data and make sure that implementation is going well and the outcomes are what we want. These PLCs, they include classroom teachers, instructional coaches, SL teachers, special education teachers. They're usually led by an administrator.

And in our district, we have Data Wise as a foundation. So rolling agendas, we have adopted Data Wise norms, clear objectives in the agendas, ensuring that we are documenting the work of improvement. And I guess the real expectation is that teams are utilizing data to make instructional shifts based on evidence. And so we do actually have a tool, we call it the evidence analysis protocol, and that kind of takes teams through here's what, so what, now what, kind of activity. And all of that is aligned with the Data Wise equity questions as well. So that's kind of how our teacher teams meet and the expectations that we have for them.

Kate Laguarda:

Okay, let's hear from New Haven, Keisha, how do instructional teams meet in your district? Who's on the teams? And what are your expectations?

Keisha Redd-Hannans:

Thanks, Kate.

We are very similar to our colleagues in Rochester, as far as our collaborative data inquiry teams. We implemented collaborative data inquiry teams because we needed to maximize our meeting time. And so ensuring that our meeting time that we had, we were using it efficiently and had a clear focus and purpose for our meetings. And the toolkit aided us in meeting our goals of efficient meetings, maximizing time, but also having clarity of purpose.

In addition to that, our meetings became more focused on data as the Data Wise process requires a relentless focus on evidence. And so we became very reflective in our own practice of really thinking about how are we viewing and seeing our kiddos? What is the data actually telling us? And checking our biases at the door.

And so with the inquiry tool, it fostered more collaboration amongst colleagues as we had to also remind one another that we needed to share the airspace and make sure all voices were heard during meetings. So not only was the observers observing and providing feedback to our instructional data teams, but we also, as observers, were receiving our own professional learning at the time to also make sure that we engage in the process in a productive manner as well.

Kate Laguarda:

All right. Thank you for providing that framing.

I'd like to ask you all how the CDI toolkit, the observation rubric that you took into team meetings to observe their practice, how did it support your observations of instructional team meetings? And what were some of your key takeaways from the meetings? What did it allow you to observe in a new way? And Edith, I'm going to start with you.

Edith Johnson:

Thank you. Hello, everyone.

So what we did in New Haven is we have our district guidance team. Which is five people who we really were able to calibrate our learning. So one of the things that we did is we really looked at the tool, what were we looking for? So when we walked into these meetings, we were able to really look at deeply, what are we looking for after we did our observations? And then we were able to calibrate what we were looking for. And we found that that really helped our own personal learning. And really digging into what are we seeing on these teams? How are we providing feedback?

And I thought one of the takeaways for me as a director of professional learning as we continue to roll out Data Wise district-wide with over 40 schools, understanding that each school has their own personalities. We really were able to know what each school is doing well. Where are there areas of growth? Where are there areas of success? How can we replicate those pieces? So I think that was really key for us as a district team to learn. And then how can we support those teams individually and collectively as a district?

Kate Laguarda:

Thank you for that.

Amy, what about you? How did the rubric support your observations of teams? And what were some of your takeaways?

Amy Alkiewicz:

Hi, everyone.

So similar to Edith, we are a large district as well, we have 39 schools. So using this toolkit across our district really gave us great insight into exactly how our teams are doing currently with collaborative data inquiry. Because we do support so many of our schools across our district with continuous improvement. So as a way to monitor and measure progress, it gave us that information. But it also helped us to take a look at our own practice to determine how we might need to support and turn the mirror on ourselves as key supporters of the work.

One of the things I really like about the toolkit is how the rubric is presented as a continuum of practice. Like it was shared earlier in the call. It's very important for teams, especially when they're looking at the rubric and looking at the pieces of what is being observed, that they see it as an opportunity for support and growth. Versus a compliance check or part of an evaluation or anything like that, that it is truly a way that teams can get support and continue to grow.

So that's something I really like about it, especially that it shows how there are really several constructs. And within those constructs, there's several indicators. So it really gives you that opportunity to scope out or drill down on a particular indicator in a construct. If you are looking to give some specific feedback to a team on a specific area, it really gives you the opportunity to do that.

I would also say that for us looking across our district, we were able to use the dashboard kind of visualization tool at the end to see where all our teams fell on the constructs. And we were able to say, oh, wow, look at how we fell on data use. Why is it that we're in developing there? Let's have some conversations about how we could support our teams with maybe coaching conversations or some additional scaffolds that those teams might need, with having that relentless focus on evidence and leading it to those adjustments. So that's one of the ways, for me, that it helped me to say, okay, this was an area that maybe I am hindering some school success with continuous improvement if they need more resources or support.

Kate Laguarda:

Keisha, what about you? What were some of your key takeaways from using the tool? Using the rubric?

Keisha Redd-Hannans:

Let me just check to make sure you can hear me. I'm having a little connection issues. Okay.

So for me, I think I want to go and also acknowledge our facilitator's roles changed from meeting to meeting. So it didn't just fall on the principal. We had individual teachers also facilitating meetings, constructing the agenda. So for our instructional teams, it brought in leadership. There was more shared leadership amongst the members of the team that it didn't just solely fall on our Principals.

Systems and structures were very clear as far as what the expectations were. And following the rubric, it gives you a clear protocol to use during your meeting time. Do you have a meeting agenda present? Are your activities aligned to your focus? And you're constantly reevaluating and thinking as you construct the agenda. Here's the purpose of today's meeting, what activities will best help me successfully achieve the goal?

We also learned a lot around reflection time. Our school teams were able to reflect and say, we need more work in ensuring that all voices are heard. Or we need more evidence before we make a claim on a particular area in saying, here is where our students are really good at doing. Here's what now they need work. This is the next level of work.

And so ensuring that we were looking at enough data sources. I saw someone in a chat asked around data. We find that our teams are looking at exit tickets that teachers may be given. But also looking at state and district level assessments as well as classroom observation evidence. So all of this is part of the collaborative data inquiry role. I honestly can't see implementing a data process without using this particular toolkit. Because you only have but a limited time during the day and this toolkit truly promotes efficient use of time and outcomes as you use the time.

Kate Laguarda:

Thank you for that. Dan, what about you? What are some of your takeaways when you go in and use this rubric with Teams?

Dan Hurley:

So I'm going to take this up to the balcony a little bit and just say once I had this tool available, it's like gold for me, honestly. Because I may go to four, five, six schools in a day and observe several meetings. In between have calls about different projects that are going on. So having this toolkit gives me the opportunity to refocus and be present with the teams in a much sharper way, I guess, is the way to put it. Because we have norms to ground ourselves in. This is something that I can ground myself in when I'm working with a team. So to me, having that anchor is really important.

So that's just one of the big things is just having this to help me focus, provide that sharp blends to look at what the teams are actually talking about. Really look at what is the quality of the thinking and is this conversation or this engagement that this team is having, is it going to impact students? That to me is a superpower of this tool. And just like I said, making sure the quality of the thinking and the impact is going to be there that our meetings have.

I think about a team that I was with earlier this week that was talking about student work and they were so focused on task completion and it didn't seem to me like they were really focused on is this aligned to our grade level standard? And so having that rubric there, when I think about the suitability of what the conversation is and the data they're looking at, did that all match? And it was able to really help me enter into the conversation with the team and say, "Hey, let's take a look and not think just about task completion here, but how aligned to our standards is this?" So it's a really helpful tool.

Kate Laguarda:

So your comments about entering into the conversation and supporting the teams to really think about alignment to standards is a great segue to my next question. Which was how these takeaways ... How these insights that you've gained have informed your support for teams. And I wanted to start with you, Dan, there. Do you have anything to add to what you just said about how doing these observations has caused you to approach supporting your support for teams in a different way?

Dan Hurley:

Absolutely. I think, like I said, I may see several teams in a day. So differentiating that support and the rubric certainly supports that. And I think Amy and Keisha both talked about looking district-wide at what teams need what.

So for me, as I go see teams, I can differentiate my support based on where I see them in the rubric and their progression across it. So that and then like I said, the rubric as a tool to give me language to help with entering that. So if I see ... Like I have a team that has a facilitator that often dominates the conversation, and so we can talk about the pattern of dialogue that we saw during this meeting, and it might be unbalanced. And it gives that fair language, it's not threatening. It doesn't make somebody feel defensive when you say, "Oh, the pattern of dialogue here has been a little unbalanced." So I really like it for that reason too, to help give words to the support.

Kate Laguarda:

Keisha, what about you? What are some examples of support you've provided to teams because of the insights you've gained from the rubric?

Keisha Redd-Hannans:

Yeah, I think the biggest supports that we provided to the team besides on the spot feedback that we would give them based upon the rubric was we were able to identify across district high-performing teams. And we leveraged those high-performing teams to lead professional learning sessions as models of excellence. We were able to videotape a few teams in action and have them share with other Principals their actual meetings.

And even right now, we're engaging all of our Principals and Assistant Principals in an opportunity to visit schools to also see real time how our collaborative data inquiry process is occurring at different schools that we've identified as highly efficient and highly proficient, I should say, in meeting time and using this tool as well.

Kate Laguarda:

Amy, what about you? And I'm also curious to hear whether teams reacted differently to observations and how you navigated that? But how did the rubric help you provide feedback and support to teams?

Amy Alkiewicz:

Yeah, so I do feel, to your point, that some teams reacted differently to the process. But one of the ways that we level set it in the beginning when we started this pilot was to make sure that the teams that we were observing had well-advanced notice and were very familiar with what was going to be happening, what exactly the purpose was, what the scope of it was, exactly what they should be doing during that time that the focus was collaborative inquiry and not some other type of team meeting.

So I think because we were intentional with telling them the purpose and giving them advanced notice, I found that several of the teams were very eager actually to get feedback. And almost right after the observations, reaching out to say, "Hey, can you share a little bit about how we did and what areas were our strengths and what should we work on?" So I think because we were transparent and clear and we had a lot of communication, I definitely would recommend that. It made that process a little smoother in terms of teams feeling comfortable with having maybe somebody from central office come into their school who's not usually there. Because they knew what the purpose was and they knew that it wasn't a type of activity where they needed to feel uncomfortable in that situation. So that was something I noticed, but it also was some ... We laid some groundwork with that, which I think is important.

Another thing that I noticed with some of the teams is that I found that some teams were in a place where they were having lots of discussions about curriculum and perhaps instruction or maybe some standards. But it was really about the lessons themselves and not yet at that place of, okay, well, how are our students doing with these lessons? And what evidence do we have about that? What writing samples or pieces of work or classroom assessments are we going to look at so that we can ground our statements and evidence? So I did notice that in schools where they might've felt like they were in a place where they were having those discussions.

So that led me to examine some ways that I could support. So I designed some tools and resources to help some of those facilitators have those conversations and bring back that norm of grounding our statements in evidence, so that we could have those discussions about actual adjustments to practice based on the evidence and have next steps for the classrooms. So I think that was one of the biggest things for me, especially in terms of that data use construct, which we realized we needed a little bit more focus and support on. So that's one of the ways that I've taken some next steps to support the teams with that construct.

Kate Laguarda:

Great. Thank you for that. Edith, what about you? How does your insights that you've gained from observing teams, how has that informed the support you provide or the feedback that you give them?

Edith Johnson:

Really to build off of what Keisha and Dan and Amy said, I think to blow it out a little bit, all those things that they just shared, but also I think it really forced ... The insights were tremendous. We're rolling this out district-wide, and I think for me, it really forced our guidance team to think about what are our next steps? How do we continue to build capacity? Not only at the district level Principals, but at those teams?

I was also thinking through about when we talk about those things, I think for me as a coach, it was really great with the peer-to-peer adult learning. So we saw some teams, they were a little apprehensive about having those deep conversations about data. We saw some growth with that. Some teams were having some challenges around the team dynamic. We have certain people who they take over.

So one of the things that I think this tool helped myself as a coach, also our data teams are where the strengths and areas of growth for each individual team. And what I found is when we gave them feedback, then we went back to observe, we saw a difference. So that Chatty Kathy on the team that took over may have stepped back and let Quiet Susie talk a little bit more.

I also found that what was most powerful with this tool, depending on what step the team was on, really reflecting on their own internal processes of what am I doing as a classroom teacher? How am I delivering that instruction after we just really looked at our student data? So what are those adult moves that we need to do better on? So I found those were really key.

And it also really helped us plan what would that professional learning, Keisha touched on those pieces, for the 2025-26 school year. And even now, we've done these things, now, how are we building this out in our professional learning district-wide for the 26-27 school year?

Kate Laguarda:

I just want to encourage folks to put questions in the Q&A, and we will turn to that in just a minute. I want to close by asking our panelists what advice you have for other districts or other instructional leaders that might be thinking about picking up this toolkit and trying it out in their schools, in their district. What advice do you have? Amy, you want to start us off?

Amy Alkiewicz:

Sure. Love to.

So I think my number one thing is know your teams. Think about who your teams are, where your teams are. Work on having that supportive, established relationship prior to using it. If you're a building leader, that might be there a little bit more. But if you're a system leader like I am, you might need to make sure that you have set up the stage to be able to do this work with teams so that can be the most meaningful, being clear and transparent, I would say. I would definitely recommend that.

Another big piece of it is using the rubrics to make things actionable, putting it right into action. Whether it's action for yourself and reflection into your support to schools. Or how can you use it to meet with the team so collectively you can build the efficacy of the team to decide what adjustments they want to make. I would definitely recommend that as well.

And then lastly, turning the mirror on yourself as much as possible through the use of this. This is all about just growth and continuous improvement. And where we put ourselves as supporters in that is, I think, super important to me.

Kate Laguarda:

All right. Edith, will you speak to this question from the perspective in New Haven? What advice would you give other instructional leaders that are thinking about picking up this tool? We have a couple of questions that have come in the Q&A, so I want to make sure we get to everyone's questions. But what advice do you have?

Edith Johnson:

Dig in. Really simple. Dig in. Don't be afraid. Just jump into the cold water and you'll be fine. I think the biggest thing for us that we did as a team is the first thing we did is we sat with the rubric. And we went as a team before we even went into schools, into our school teams, is we really dug into the rubric. We looked at it, read it together, talked about it. Well, what does it look like? What do we know that our leaders already know? Where are the areas we think they may need support on?

I think Amy said it perfectly, know your teams. And if you're in large districts like we are, you don't always know every single person, every single teacher when you walk into the schools, you might know some of them. But get to learn those teams, show up, talk to those Principals. How are those teams doing before you visit? Are they aware of the purpose? I think once they understand we're not coming in, we're central office, we're here to make sure you're doing what we tell you to do. But presenting it and framing it in a space of we're here in service to help support. And I think that was key coming in that people get nervous, but once they see, okay, we're not here to check a box to make sure you're doing what we told you to do. But we really want this to be about teaching and learning and improvement and growth, you'll start to see this shift. So dig in is what I say.

Kate Laguarda:

Thank you so much.

I hope that everyone joining us today appreciated the insights from this really committed and skilled group of instructional leaders. Thank you for being here.

Let's see if we have some questions from our participants. There's one in the Q&A and invite you to add others if you have others. This question is, how did teachers respond to the coaching that came from this tool? So you talked about giving feedback, you talked about supporting teams. Did you see teachers responding? And if so, in what way? Maybe I'll send that to Keisha.

Keisha Redd-Hannans:

So very interesting question. Yeah, so in the beginning, it feels really forced for teachers. It feels a little robotic for teachers. Oftentimes they come in a meeting, they just drop their class off. They may want to start talking about an event that happened in the classroom that day or some other topic at home. But this rubric forces you to come in the room, do a quick check-in, and then you're off to meeting and focused.

And so teachers in the beginning were like, "Oh, this doesn't feel natural." But by meeting two or three, they really got used to the flow of how the meeting should run, the efficiency of time, and comment shifted from it becoming a delta to the protocol and how the meeting is outlined. To, "I appreciate the way we use time. This was an efficient meeting."

So there will be a spot where there will be some trepidation, some concern around meeting time. My advice would be focus on the foundational skills, looking at your norms, your meeting norms, your meeting agenda. Making sure those structures are truly in place, defining roles, who's the facilitator, who's the note taker, who's the timekeeper. Those elements are really important to see that you have an efficient meeting.

Kate Laguarda:

Amy or Dan, would you like to add anything to that? What did you experience in terms of teacher's response to your feedback?

Dan Hurley:

Amy said it earlier, they were excited about the feedback. I think as we worked with teacher teams and observed teacher teams, they really had a desire to have more impactful meetings. And so they ate up the feedback and we saw adjustments in their practice based on feedback from the rubric.

Amy Alkiewicz:

Yeah, I would add to that, Dan. I would just say that when we looked at ... Because we did observe each team twice, the same team twice. So I think when we looked at our results, we did see that the teams grew from that first observation to the second across the constructs. So I think that was one piece of, okay, how is it going now that we had to look back on?

I think the other thing that's important to all of this is that our teams and our district, we've been working through the Data Wise improvement process for many years now. So all of these teams have spent a lot of time in step one of organizing for collaborative work and sitting together to develop shared norms and structures and a team why and all of those pieces that are super important for the foundation of the work. So that's another important piece so that we can get to this point of teachers are feeling comfortable with getting feedback and putting some things into place. When that question was asked, I did think about that, how it's important and how much time we spent in that phase of doing this work.

Kate Laguarda:

I have another question that maybe you can address quickly. We've about a minute left. How are you defining data? What things fall in the bucket of data that are candidates for engaging with in a collaborative data inquiry meeting?

Amy Alkiewicz:

I can jump in a little bit, I know Keisha spoke to this a little bit. But we like to use the ... We talk about the different levels of data here in our district. But we like it when we have our teams come with some street data. So we can have data that's close enough to the classroom as possible that really gives us insight to the student's experience. So sometimes it can be an exit ticket, sometimes it can be a formative assessment. But sometimes it could be a student survey or some interview questions that we ask students about their experience with instruction. So I think we try to use that term so that we can think about data beyond just test scores.

Kate Laguarda:

Thank you. All right, Candice.

Candice Bocala:

Yes. So we just want to thank you all for attending, those of you who are still hanging out with us. And also thanks to our panelists, the amazing team at NYU and at SRI, our advisors, many of whom were Data Wise coaches, our academic advisors, Ellen Mandinach, who's on this call, Carmen Williams, Adam Parrott-Sheffer as well. And our previous collaborator, Carol Tate, is on this call. So thanks to several people who helped us out today.

Please download the resources and feel free to use them in your settings. We hope they're useful for you. Thank you.

Kate Laguarda:

Thank you, everybody, and have a great day.