

From High Discipline Referrals to High-Engagement Classrooms: A Design-Based Approach to Creating a Campus-Wide Culture of Positive Learning Support for At-Risk Student Populations through Transforming Educators' Instructional Teaming Practices

Joseph G. Claudet

ORCID: 0000-0001-7318-5542

Department of Educational Psychology, Leadership,
and Counseling Texas Tech University, Box 41071 /
College of Education Lubbock, Texas 79409-1071 USA

ABSTRACT

Instructional leaders in many school districts throughout the United States are increasingly confronted with spiraling numbers of discipline referrals from teachers who are unable to manage the off-task behaviors and discipline infractions of the growing percentages of diverse, academically at-risk students populating their classrooms. Many of these at-risk students, who come from families that are economically disadvantaged and have culturally rich and linguistically diverse backgrounds, have become stigmatized and minoritized by an education system whose curricula are often woefully inadequate in being able to meet the unique social and academic support needs of these diverse learners. This article profiles how one high school principal and his instructional turnaround leadership task force colleagues working in a high diversity urban school district utilized multi-leveled data analysis investigative thinking and innovative professional learning program design strategies derived from the education improvement science literature to implement a comprehensive intervention program for ninth through twelfth grade teams of core content teachers and their instructional supervisors. The specific goals of the intervention program were to: 1) change educators entrenched pedagogical thinking and instructional planning mindsets regarding the motivation levels and learning capabilities of the high discipline referral students who regularly engage in off-task disruptive behaviors in their classrooms; and 2) transform teachers' instructional data teaming practices to better serve the academic learning support needs of the campus's minoritized students. The design-based approach to instructional improvement employed in the high school case study leveraged the use of multiple cycles of new knowledge and skills acquisition, critical self-reflection, and immersive professional learning to assist educators in exploring how to engage together in authentic data teaming and data analysis-informed differentiated instructional planning to craft high-engagement classroom learning environments and interactive instructional units to effectively address the academic development and support needs of the campus's diverse, at-risk learners.

Keywords: high diversity school districts, at-risk learners, education design research, authentic data teaming.

INTRODUCTION

Identifying and implementing effective strategies for addressing the learning support needs of at-risk student populations is a persistent challenge confronting school leaders in K-12 school districts throughout the United States. Moreover, increasingly large percentages of the diverse students falling into the category of *at-risk learners* who are enrolled in elementary (kindergarten through fifth grade) and secondary (middle, junior high, and high school) campuses in these K-12 school districts are economically disadvantaged/low poverty, minoritized, and emergent bilingual/immigrant students whose home and family backgrounds create additional sets of learning challenges for these diverse learners in comparison with other student populations (Lopez et al., 2013; Scanlan & Lopez, 2013; Theoharis, 2009). These diverse students' social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, in conjunction with their economic disadvantages, make it much more difficult for these students to demonstrate positive learning development and growth in American classrooms on a par with other, less disadvantaged students who can adjust and thrive more readily in response to a school district's structured educational curriculum. Indeed, minoritized students in U.S. schools unfortunately all too often do not receive adequate levels of the kind of social and cultural support they need and deserve from educators to perform academically in ways that reflect their true learning potential. As Muhammad Khalifa points out: "...culturally responsive school leaders must protect and promote the practices that include minoritized students and the spaces in which they exist. This requires active stances and behaviors of anti-oppression. If asked, most principals would likely say that their goal is to lead an inclusive environment. But how can this happen if leaders and staff do not understand how identities and communities are minoritized, and can neither recognize these spaces nor understand how to promote their inclusion within schools? Research time and again has demonstrated that schools are often not inclusive of minoritized students, and thus they do not feel a sense of belonging in school." (Khalifa, 2021, p. 81)

The well-documented shortcomings of campus-based school leaders and teachers in being able to provide appropriate *inclusionary learning environments* in elementary and secondary classrooms for minoritized students remains a pervasive shortcoming of instructional improvement leadership in American schools (Adair, 2018; Berkowitz, 2022; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Khalifa et al., 2016). One direct result of educators' failures in providing fully inclusionary teaching and learning environments for diverse students is the proliferation of student off-task behaviors that routinely occur in elementary and secondary classrooms and the large numbers of teacher discipline referrals that campus-based administrators must contend with. Not surprisingly, many of the students who routinely engage in off-task, disruptive behaviors and who are repeatedly disciplined for their lack of attentiveness and unwillingness to participate in classroom learning activities are the very same minoritized students school leaders are so quick to declare they are wanting to be culturally and academically responsive to. In the face of the spiraling percentages of discipline referrals plaguing many elementary and secondary schools, campus-based instructional leaders often learn the hard way that simply adopting generalized vision and mission statements that articulate a commitment to *providing inclusive learning opportunities for all students* does not readily translate into immediate, practical results in terms of demonstrations of positive, high-engagement learning on the part of the diverse students sitting in their school classrooms. This disconnect between school vision/mission statement proclamations and the actual teaching and learning environments and rampant, daily off-task behaviors of minoritized students in

classrooms is most pronounced in *secondary schools* (middle, junior high, and high schools). It is in these secondary school settings that minoritized students have become so accustomed (after multiple years of registering poor learning performance as measured by campus and district learning assessment indicators) to feeling uninspired by the instructional units and lesson activities planned and delivered by their teachers—instructional units and interactive activities that do not resonate in meaningful ways with these minoritized students' linguistic and cultural heritage and experiences and that, accordingly, do not incite in these students any genuine enthusiasm for learning—that these minoritized students have become hardened to their circumstances and have developed *deeply entrenched negative attitudes* about the futility of participating in classroom learning and have come to question the value of pursuing an education at all.

Minoritized students, like all developing learners, are full of energy and are naturally inclined to want to explore and learn about new concepts and ideas when these concepts and ideas are presented in meaningful, well-designed interactive instructional units. However, minoritized students accumulated negative attitudes and sense of futility in even attempting to participate in the perceived *un-inclusive* (from the minoritized students' perspectives) classroom learning environments these students are forced to be a part of each school day effectively short circuits these students' interest in learning and causes these students to seek other outlets for their learning energies. These students' repressed learning energies all too often are then redirected into classroom off-task behaviors that many teachers then react to and interpret as being "disruptive" and illustrative of these students' lack of motivation and interest in learning. It is in this way that the negative spiral of *un-inclusive classroom teaching and learning environments fostering student dis-engagement leading to student disruptive behaviors* perpetuates itself in many secondary classrooms in American schools. The ultimate upshot of this negative spiral of low learning engagement and sub-par academic performance on the part of minoritized students is that many secondary educators begin to incorrectly adopt and internalize *deficit thinking pedagogical mindsets* regarding the motivation levels and learning capacities of these students whom teachers and school leaders then label as academically "at-risk".

Instructional leaders working in secondary schools, however, do not have to resign themselves to accepting teachers' learned deficit thinking pedagogical mindsets and instructional planning practices as the necessary default situation on their campuses. Often, the real reason many teachers give up instructionally on the "at-risk" students populating their classrooms is because these teachers have not actually invested sufficient time and investigative effort in seeking to understand—through careful analyses of their at-risk students' disaggregated learning performance assessment data—the underlying *root causes* of these minoritized, at-risk students' off-task behaviors and poor academic performance. Not fully understanding the data-supported underlying root causes fueling these at-risk students' learning problems and challenges, these same teachers are not prepared and motivated to work intentionally in their grade-level teacher teams to find ways to plan genuinely differentiated instructional units and lessons that could potentially incentivize these students to *want to become actively engaged* in classroom learning. Thus, school leaders must find creative ways to redirect and recharge teachers' often lackadaisical data teaming practices so grade-level teams of teachers can learn how to focus their instructional planning efforts more intentionally on engaging together in careful, systematic analyses of their students' disaggregated learning assessment data in ways that can help teachers accurately identify and instructionally plan for the specific, data

analysis-informed differentiated learning support needs of their at-risk students. Instructional turnaround leaders seeking to proactively address the achievement gaps and unique learning support needs of the minoritized, at-risk students on their campuses can harness a relatively new tool in the improvement science and school improvement literatures—namely, *design-based school improvement thinking*—to develop and implement data analysis-informed, targeted professional learning intervention programs that have the power to change teachers' deficit thinking pedagogical mindsets and ineffective lesson planning and teaching behaviors through transforming an entire campus's instructional data teaming culture.

A substantive, evolving body of conceptual writings and empirical studies has emerged in the past two decades in the *education improvement science* literature that highlights the usefulness of leveraging data-analytic investigative thinking and intervention program design strategies as very practical tools that school leaders can adapt and apply to energize their own campus- and district-level instructional improvement efforts (McKenney & Reeves, 2012; Plomp & Nieveen, 2010; van den Akker et al., 2006). One distinctive characteristic, in particular, of the *investigative thinking* and *empirical approach* championed by proponents of design-based research within this education improvement science literature is an intentional focus on: 1) using systematic data analysis methods to zoom in on and carefully identify both the surface-level and often obscure, underlying dimensions of persistent, knotty, and generally hard-to-solve problems associated with students' learning performance gaps and educators' related professional instructional practices in context-specific elementary and secondary school settings; and 2) leveraging multi-leveled, data-analytic investigative techniques to probe the underlying root causes fueling these intractable problems (that often can be traced to educators' own entrenched deficit pedagogical thinking and instructional planning and teaching behaviors) as a means to generate new data-informed insights that can turbocharge the design and implementation of creative, highly practical intervention solutions that can effectively address and solve these real-world problems of practice in schools and school districts. As Anthony Kelly explains: "One of the broad goals of design research is to dynamically clarify the initial and goal states and the operators, and to *illuminate the nature of the problem* [emphasis added]-i.e., to "tame" a wicked problem by better specifying its character and making it open to intervention. In educational settings, design research is recommended when one or more of the following conditions operate to make the problem more wicked and open than simple and closed, for example: when the content knowledge to be learned is new or being discovered even by the experts; when how to teach the content is unclear: pedagogical content knowledge is poor; when the instructional materials are poor or not available; when the teachers' knowledge and skills are unsatisfactory; when the educational researchers' knowledge of the content and instructional strategies or instructional materials are poor; and when complex societal, policy or political factors may negatively affect progress." (Kelly, 2010, p. 76) Additionally, design researchers emphasize the decidedly *practical nature* of educational design research in declaring that design research is "the systematic study of analyzing, designing and evaluating educational interventions in order to solve complex educational problems for which no ready-made solutions are available and to gain insight into key design principles." (Nieveen, 2010, p. 90) As Nienke Nieveen further states: "Design projects strive after two types of main results: The first aim comprises high-quality interventions (such as programs, products and processes) designed to solve complex educational problems. This type of output puts forward the practical relevance of design research. It is for that reason that design research is also labeled as being use-inspired, applied oriented and/or socially

responsible research (van den Akker, 1999; Reeves, 2000). The second main output of design research is the accompanying set of well-articulated design principles (Linn, Davis & Bell, 2004; van den Akker, 1999) that provide insight into the: purpose/function of the intervention; key characteristics of the intervention (substantive emphasis); guidelines for designing the intervention (procedural emphasis); its implementation conditions; and theoretical and empirical arguments (proof) for the characteristics and procedural guidelines. ...In order to reach both types of output (high quality interventions and design principles), design researchers carefully combine design and research activities resulting in an *iterative development approach* [emphasis added]." (Nieveen, 2010, p. 90)

This kind of *problem-centered and practical solution-focused approach* to tackling wicked, intractable problems of teaching and learning improvement is especially well-suited to the kinds of persistent, unyielding instructional improvement challenges school leaders regularly confront in their elementary and secondary campuses. Thus, school leaders interested in exploring new, creative ways to tackle some of the most difficult and heretofore intractable teaching and learning improvement challenges existing in their schools and school districts can tap into the power of design-based improvement thinking through integrating design-based concepts and strategies directly into their overall school turnaround leadership teaming practices to significantly strengthen their efforts in realizing demonstrable instructional improvement for all students on their campuses.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this article is to highlight the growing percentages of diverse student populations (including large numbers of economically disadvantaged, minoritized, and emergent bilingual/immigrant students) comprising the overall student populations of secondary schools (i.e., middle, junior high, and high schools) in the United States and how educators' general shortcomings in being able to create engaging, interactive classroom teaching and learning environments for these diverse students have resulted in spiraling instances of "disruptive off-task behaviors" and "discipline infractions" by these underserved, minoritized students that campus-based administrative instructional leaders must regularly contend with. The widespread occurrence in secondary classrooms of minoritized students' disruptive off-task behaviors and resulting discipline referrals by classroom teachers has, in turn, posed ongoing larger challenges for instructional improvement leaders (campus principals, assistant principals, content-area department chairs, grade-level faculty team leaders, school counselors, etc.) in their efforts to close learning gaps for these diverse student populations—academically "at-risk" student groups who are comprising ever larger percentages of the overall populations of learners in these school leaders' secondary campuses and districts. The urban high school case study profiled in this article describes how one principal and his instructional turnaround leadership task force colleagues, situated on a large high school campus in a high diversity urban school district, worked in consultation with the author (a university-based researcher and school district instructional improvement consultant) to apply *multi-leveled investigative data analysis methods* and *design-based intervention program development strategies* to address their campus's rampant "at-risk student discipline referral" and "closing the achievement gap for minoritized students" problems.

The primary focus of the high school campus consultancy work reported in this article involved guiding the high school principal and his instructional improvement task force colleagues in

adopting a *design-based approach* to campus-wide instructional improvement to substantially reframe their heretofore unsuccessful teaching and learning improvement efforts. This design-based approach to instructional improvement engaged the principal and his task force members in learning how to collaborate together in new ways within two main “design-based school improvement” investigative activities: 1) engaging together in systematic, multi-leveled analyses of their high school’s disaggregated student learning performance data in conjunction with complementary analyses of observational and perspectivist data obtained through conducting observations and interviews with the campus’s multiple grade-level teams of teachers to probe possible underlying root causes of students’ learning deficiencies; and then 2) leveraging the results of their collective data analyses to develop and implement an innovative, campus-wide “*multi-phase professional development (PD) intervention program*” for teams of grade-level teachers and their instructional supervisors. The goal of the PD intervention program was to involve teams of grade-level teachers and their campus-based instructional supervisors in a carefully designed series of interactive professional learning sessions to: 1) examine teachers’ own (sometimes deeply entrenched) deficit thinking pedagogical mindsets and ineffective instructional planning and classroom teaching practices in response to the unique learning support needs of minoritized, at-risk students; 2) acquire current literature-supported content knowledge, insights, and data-teaming strategies on how to better understand and effectively plan instructionally to meet the specific cultural and linguistic support needs of the at-risk learners in their classrooms; and 3) explore how to creatively apply evidence-based “best practice” principles and techniques found in the current culturally relevant pedagogy, student discipline restorative practices, and instructional improvement literatures to transform teachers’ own collaborative practices and create a *campus-wide culture of transformative instructional teaming* to address the learning support needs of at-risk learners.

RESEARCH METHODS

The high school instructional improvement case study efforts reported in this article employed the *Design-Based School Improvement Logic Model and Operational Steps Process* developed by Rick Mintrop (2016) as the specific school improvement methodology to guide campus change agent leaders in addressing the improvement challenges detailed in the case situation. Mintrop’s analytic logic model and operational steps process represents a particular form of improvement science thinking that is specifically tailored to address persistent, hard-to-solve problems associated with turnaround instructional improvement leadership in K-12 school settings. The author, serving in the role of a university-based researcher and district improvement consultant to this urban high school community, guided the campus principal and his instructional improvement colleagues in applying Mintrop’s analytic logic model to engage together in a series of deep data dives into multi-leveled campus-wide and grade level-specific data to investigate what could be some possible underlying root causes of the “high discipline referral” and “closing the achievement gap” problems for minoritized, at-risk students existing on their campus. The author then guided these campus instructional improvement leaders through Mintrop’s seven-step operational process to learn how to leverage the results of their collective campus-wide data analyses to collaborate in new ways as *professional learning program designers* to design, develop, and implement a literature-informed, multi-phase professional development (PD) intervention program to address the specific professional learning and instructional data teaming support needs of the campus’s content area teachers across multiple grade levels.

Mintrop's design-based school improvement seven-step operational process, in a nutshell, consists of immersing school leaders directly in: 1) generating an initial (*high inference*) Student-Learning Problem rationale statement along with an accompanying intuitive Theory of Action (If/Then) statement that reflects the perceived surface-level student-learning problem(s) currently existing on the campus; 2) conducting an in-depth Exploratory Needs Assessment (ENA) that involves collecting and carefully analyzing multiple kinds of relevant data to investigate surface-level student-learning problems and underlying root causes of those problems; 3) generating a data-informed and school improvement literature-supported statement of the refined (*low inference*) Problem of Professional Practice existing on the campus; 4) identifying multiple contextual factors that could help provide school leaders with a more nuanced understanding of *why* the identified student-learning performance problems and underlying root causes of those student-learning problems are persisting on the campus; 5) conducting reviews of relevant knowledge bases related to the campus's specific student discipline referral and instructional improvement problems; 6) generating a refined Theory of Action (If/Then) Statement that articulates specific intervention strategies school leaders can implement to achieve substantive schoolwide teaching and learning performance improvements; and 7) constructing a Change Drivers Diagram and accompanying detailed Multi-Phase Intervention Program Implementation Plan that provides a carefully constructed timeline and clearly articulated set of procedures for providing grade-level teams of teachers and their instructional supervisors throughout the campus with literature-supported content knowledge, skills, and strategies to address the identified low-inference Problem of Professional Practice and reinvigorate teachers' collective instructional data teaming practices to effectively serve the academic support needs of diverse, at-risk learners.

A detailed description of how Mintrop's (2016) design-based school improvement *analytic thinking and multi-step operational process* was utilized by the author to guide the collective intervention efforts of the campus-based instructional improvement leaders in the case situation is provided in the Urban High School Case Study presented below.

Urban High School Case Study

The urban high school case study presented below provides an overview of design-based instructional improvement intervention efforts completed by a campus principal and his educator colleagues in one urban high school in Texas who have reached an impasse on how to deal with the spiraling number of discipline referrals and overall low academic performance among the campus's population of male Hispanic students. The case study highlights how these educators worked together as an "instructional turnaround leadership task force" to analyze their campus's multi-leveled student learning assessment data along with multiple sets of observational and perspectivist data gleaned from teachers on their own grade-level instructional team planning and classroom teaching practices (including teachers' descriptions during informal interviews of the ongoing discipline struggles they routinely face in trying to deal with the large numbers of academically at-risk students populating their classrooms) to try to identify possible underlying root causes of these at-risk students' off-task disruptive behaviors and learning deficiencies. The case study then describes how the task force leveraged the results of their collective data analyses in conjunction with design-based intervention program development strategies to generate and implement a "*multi-phase professional development (PD) intervention program* for grade-level teams of core content teachers and their instructional supervisors across ninth through twelfth grades on the campus. Pseudonyms for

the urban high school, the principal, and other instructional improvement leaders involved in the design-based instructional improvement efforts are used throughout the case narrative.

Leading Design-Based Instructional Improvement in an Urban High School: Addressing At-Risk Students' Track Records of High Discipline Referrals and Academic Learning Deficiencies through Transforming Educators' Instructional Teaming Practices

Initial Framing of Turlingen East High School's Student-Learning Problem:

Javier Rios Gutierrez has worked with minoritized, at-risk students for the twenty-seven years he has been in education. Coming from a family of immigrants himself and a first-generation college graduate, Javier Gutierrez has always been highly appreciative of the support and encouragement he has continuously received from his family in pursuing a career in education as an important way to give back to his community through teaching and inspiring the next generations of Hispanic learners. Throughout his first sixteen years in education working in various urban city school districts in Texas as a high school biology and chemistry teacher, Javier Gutierrez prioritized designing and implementing differentiated instructional units that recognized and leveraged the unique cultural and linguistic backgrounds of his students in ways that could captivate students' interests and incentivize students to want to take active ownership in their own learning. For Gutierrez, crafting *high-engagement learning environments*—culturally and linguistically sensitive teaching and learning environments that his diverse and often at-risk students could meaningfully relate to—became his singular passion early-on in his teaching career. Most recently, during the past nine years of teaching high school biology and chemistry in two of the high schools in Turlingen-Cisneros Independent School District (ISD), a large urban school district located in a sprawling metroplex in southeastern Texas, Javier Gutierrez continued his record of innovative teaching and dedicated commitment to the success of his diverse students. As a result, Gutierrez quickly became recognized by campus administrators and his teaching peers in Turlingen-Cisneros ISD as a highly effective instructional unit planner and classroom teacher who was passionate about designing culturally and linguistically rich interactive learning opportunities for his students—*high-engagement* learning opportunities that could effectively motivate even his most “academically at-risk” students to see the value in obtaining an education as a way to change their lives for the better. Javier Gutierrez's positive reputation for diversity-responsive teaching excellence among educators, students, and members of the district community was a crucial factor in the decision by the Turlingen-Cisneros School Board to hire Gutierrez as the new principal of Turlingen East High School beginning with the 2022-2023 school year. In appointing Gutierrez to the administrative leadership position of the largest, most diverse high school campus in the district, the superintendent made it clear to Gutierrez that his challenge would be to leverage his decades-long experiences as an innovative educator and instructional leader to create a positive, inclusive teaching and learning culture at Turlingen East High School that could “turn around” the campus's multi-year record of poor overall academic performance through effectively addressing the learning support needs of the campus's highly diverse student populations.

While eagerly accepting the challenge of providing instructional turnaround leadership to Turlingen East High School in this new phase of his educational career, Javier Gutierrez was also mindful of the multiple teaching, leading, and learning challenges that educators were having to confront in his district. Over the past decade, Turlingen-Cisneros ISD has witnessed substantial growth in the district's Hispanic student population groups, including large influxes of Hispanic immigrant students/families from Central American countries such as El Salvador and Honduras.

Impacted by these enrollment increases, Turlingen-Cisneros district administrators have had to grapple with multiple vexing organizational challenges over the past several years, including: 1) persistent student learning performance deficiencies among multiple Hispanic student sub-populations (i.e., economically disadvantaged, minoritized, and immigrant/emergent bilingual students) reflected in significantly lower scores on state-mandated learning accountability measures for these student sub-populations in comparison with their non-Hispanic student peers; 2) increasingly high yearly teacher turnover rates; and 3) continuing challenges in diversifying the district's teacher workforce, particularly in the core content areas of English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. One of the current situations at the Turlingen East High School campus as well as throughout the district that is a by-product of these challenges and is particularly concerning to Javier Gutierrez is the large number of discipline referrals that are routinely issued by core content teachers to Hispanic male students who are disruptive during classroom instructional activities and must be removed from the classroom and sent to the principal's office to be disciplined. Content area teachers at Turlingen East High School, like many of their teacher colleagues in other junior and senior high school campuses throughout the district, have continually expressed their frustration to their campus administrators regarding not being able to cope with the highly disruptive and disrespectful behaviors of these unruly students in their classrooms. Unable to curtail these Hispanic male students' disruptive behaviors, these students have left many teachers with no choice but to write up discipline referrals to have these students removed from their classrooms so that teachers can "teach the students who want to learn". As one Turlingen East High School math teacher explained to Principal Gutierrez during the first weeks of the 2022-2023 school year: *I've been teaching high school geometry and algebra here at Turlingen East for the past seventeen years, and the frequency and intensity of these Hispanic male students' disruptive behaviors have increased year after year. Not only are these students engaging in off-task behaviors that make it clear that they have no real interest in learning, but their repeated loud outbursts and distracting behaviors make it difficult for the other students to remain attentive during classroom instruction. These unruly students are the very same students whose parents never attend school-sponsored parent night curriculum events and who fail to return my requests for phone conferences regarding their child's grades in my classes. Because of many of these parents' lack of responsiveness and unwillingness to participate in the learning support culture of our campus, I've concluded that these parents simply do not value the education their children are receiving at Turlingen East—and, unfortunately, these parents' attitudes appear to be rubbing off on their kids. These Hispanic male students have reached the point where they seem to no longer care about getting an education and they are engaging in these disruptive classroom behaviors to vent their frustration on the system and their teachers. Many Turlingen East teachers feel the same way I do. We are evaluated as teachers on our ability to prepare our students to successfully pass the state-mandated End of Course exams in the primary content areas. The only way we can do that is to focus our efforts on the students whom we can control and who consistently demonstrate their interest in learning.*

The above pointed comments from this veteran math teacher reflected the pedagogical mindsets of many core content area teachers at Turlingen East High School. Principal Gutierrez knew that teachers' high levels of frustration in not being able to deal with the rampant discipline problems in their classrooms was creating a sense of *instructional defeatism* within the ranks of grade-level core content area teacher teams and negatively impacting the overall teaching and learning culture of the campus. Moreover, principal Gutierrez was well aware that recommending that

Hispanic male students with a record of high discipline referrals simply be transferred to the District Alternative Education Program (DAEP) campus as a way to remove these disruptive students from the high school campus's classrooms (and, thus, absolve teachers from any responsibility for supporting these students in their learning development) was not a "solution" that was anywhere near being in the long-term best interests of these students. It was already widely known among campus administrators that the district's DAEP campus essentially served as a holding pen for "at-risk" students that were deemed too unruly and disruptive for core content teachers to handle in the district's regular education classrooms. Indeed, the district's DAEP campus each year was often alarmingly understaffed due to the inability of DAEP campus administrators to recruit and hire strong teachers with the instructional abilities to be able to adequately address these at-risk students' unique academic learning support needs. For principal Gutierrez, the challenge of finding a creative solution to the dilemma of how to deal effectively with the *out-of-control student discipline problem* at Turlingen East High School would quickly become the central instructional turnaround leadership challenge defining his principalship for the foreseeable future.

Based on the collective insights accumulated through conversations with both individual teachers and grade-level teams of core content area teachers during the first two months of the 2022-2023 school year, Javier Gutierrez was able to generate the following initial (high inference) "student-learning problem" statement for Turlingen East High School: Substantial growth over the past several years in the overall percentages of Hispanic students (including large numbers of economically disadvantaged students as well as emergent bilingual/immigrant students) in Turlingen-Cisneros ISD has led to some vexing challenges for core content area teachers at secondary campuses throughout the district in dealing with the discipline problems these teachers are experiencing in their classrooms. Thus, the immediate challenge for instructional leaders (campus principals, assistant principals, grade-level team leaders, instructional coaches, etc.) at Turlingen East High School in addressing this student-learning improvement problem is to provide more direct supervisory guidance and modeling to grade-level teachers in all core content areas (English/language arts, math, science, and social studies) on how to utilize assertive discipline strategies in their classrooms to forestall student disruptive behaviors and maintain an orderly classroom instructional environment conducive to active student engagement in learning. Following from this initial (high inference) "student-learning problem" statement, principal Gutierrez formulated the following intuitive If/Then operational statement: If I charge my assistant principals and instructional coaching staff with providing core content area teachers with literature-supported best practice strategies on classroom discipline management and direct them to actively model for teachers how to integrate these discipline management strategies into teachers' regular classroom teaching practices, then teachers will gain more confidence in their ability to control their classroom teaching/learning environments. As a result, student disruptive behavior infractions will subside and there will be an overall decrease in the number of discipline referrals per semester on the campus.

Refined Reframing of Turlingen East High School's Student-Learning Problem as a Context-Specific Problem of Professional Practice:

By the end of the second six weeks of the 2022-2023 school year it had become clear to principal Gutierrez that core content area teachers on the campus were not utilizing the discipline management strategies the assistant principals and instructional coaches were providing them

in ways that could significantly address the ongoing student discipline behavior issues in their classrooms. Realizing that the out-of-control student discipline problem on his campus had metastasized into a real “teaching and learning effectiveness” dilemma situation for both the campus and the district, Javier Gutierrez knew that he would need to adopt a “team approach” to address this organizational challenge. Gutierrez reasoned that through bringing in multiple educators and administrative staff to collaboratively investigate the root causes of these issues he and his colleagues would be able to identify a long-term solution strategy—a *practically implementable* strategy that stakeholders throughout the school community could agree upon that could benefit both teachers and students. So, in early November 2022 principal Gutierrez tapped key instructional leaders on his campus to become members of an Instructional Turnaround Leadership (ITL) Task Force at Turlingen East High School to join him in his efforts to tackle this entrenched set of student discipline and classroom teaching and learning effectiveness problems. The ITL task force that principal Gutierrez assembled consisted of several instructional leaders across multiple grade levels on the campus, including: all five assistant principals, eight core content area teacher team leaders (two teacher team leaders each from grades nine, ten, eleven, and twelve), two instructional coaches (one coach serving the ninth and tenth grade teacher teams, and a second coach serving the eleventh and twelfth grade teacher teams), two learning interventionists, and three guidance counselors.

Principal Gutierrez and his ITL task force colleagues began their investigative efforts by collecting and analyzing direct observational data through attending core content area teachers' grade-level team meetings across ninth through twelfth grades. During these grade-level teacher team meetings, ITL task force members observed and took notes on teachers' instructional planning practices, including teachers' team activities in analyzing their students' available formative learning assessment data and the kinds of data-informed conversations teachers were engaging in to inform their overall instructional planning efforts. In addition, ITL task force members also conducted multiple informal focus group interviews with ninth through twelfth grade teacher teams to obtain core content area teachers' perspectives regarding their students' motivation levels and classroom behavior patterns and the challenges teachers felt they were facing in working to support the academic learning needs of the students in their classrooms. ITL task force members' analyses of collective observational and perspectivist data yielded some important findings regarding teachers' current attitudes toward their students and their associated pedagogical thinking and instructional planning behaviors. These findings included: 1) teachers voiced their frustrations repeatedly during weekly grade-level planning meetings and in focus group interviews on the degree to which multiple students (predominantly Hispanic male students) were engaging in disruptive behaviors during classroom lessons that were unmanageable and that were adversely impacting the ability of other students to concentrate and stay focused on learning activities; 2) as a result of the persistent and uncontrollable instances of student disruptive behaviors in their classrooms, teachers have developed entrenched, negative perceptions regarding the motivation levels and learning capabilities of students committing the ongoing behavior infractions (predominantly Hispanic male students); 3) these negative perceptions of students have influenced teachers' pedagogical thinking, resulting in teachers adopting a *defeatist mindset* in which teachers have become resigned in their belief that there is no amount of instructional planning they can engage in to motivate these disruptive students to participate actively in classroom learning activities; and 4) teachers' collective negative perceptions of some students' motivation levels and learning capabilities in conjunction with their defeatist attitudes and attendant pedagogical mindsets have combined to create a “PLC lite”

culture in grade-level team meetings (DuFour and Reeves, 2016) in which teachers essentially go through the motions of instructional planning in their professional learning community grade-level teams (i.e., PLCs) at a very superficial level without actually engaging in any substantive data teaming efforts.

Armed with these findings, principal Gutierrez and his ITL task force colleagues then proceeded to review multiple relevant school improvement literatures that could yield some insights and practical strategies for dealing with widespread teacher deficit thinking and ineffective instructional planning practices. The literatures ITL task force members reviewed included: 1) closing the achievement gaps for at-risk student populations (Byrd, 2020; DuFour et al., 2010; Griner & Stewart, 2013; Haynes, 2011; Hirsh, 2005; Kamm, 2018; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Leithwood et al., 2010; McGee, 2004; Sun et al., 2020; Valencia, 2015); 2) student disruptive behaviors and restorative practices (Barton-Vasquez, 2017; Berry, 2020; Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015; Butler et al., 2012; Chu & Ready, 2018; Crowe, 2017; Fabelo et al., 2011; Losen, 2011; Nelson, 2002; Pranis, 2014; Raybuck-Bonilla, 2020; Skiba, 2014; Skiba & Losen, 2015; Henault, 2001; Rubio, 2014; Townsend, 2000; Wachtel, 2016); 3) teacher deficit thinking (Bertrand & Marsh, 2021; Dudley-Marling, 2015; Dweck, 2016; Ford et al., 2002; Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Goddard et al., 2015; Valencia, 2010, 2015, 2020; Weiner, 2006); 4) authentic data teaming, data coaching, and instructional team capacity-building (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hattie, 2009; Love et al., 2008; Love, 2009; Martinez & McGrath, 2014; Murphy & Meyers, 2009; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Pianta et al., 2021; Sparks & Many, 2015; Stringer, 2013; Taylor, 2008); 5) professional learning communities (Beauchamp & Dentith, 2004; Blanc et al., 2010; Dufour & Marzano, 2011; Vescio et al., 2008); 6) culturally responsive instructional supervisory leadership (Khalifa, 2020, 2021; Khalifa et al., 2016; Theoharis, 2009; Theoharis & Brooks, 2012); 7) bilingualism and second language acquisition (Cummins, 1979, 1981, 2000; de Jong & Harper, 2005); 8) dual language instructional planning (Chin et al., 2009; Goldenberg, 2008; Ramirez & Faltis, 2020); and 9) creating productive professional learning cultures in schools (Murphy, 2016; Murphy & Torre, 2014; Ritchhart, 2015).

Problem Reframing. Principal Gutierrez and his ITL task force colleagues' collective analyses of teacher team observational and perspectivist data along with their review of current turnaround leadership strategies and instructional teaming best practices contained in the instructional improvement, restorative student learning practices, and educational psychology literatures convinced Gutierrez and his colleagues that they needed to "reframe" their change agent leadership thinking to focus more on the underlying "root causes" of their campus's surface-level student discipline and teaching and learning effectiveness problems. Indeed, task force members now understood that they would need to focus their turnaround intervention efforts on addressing the identified root-causal professional practice concerns associated with educators' own deficit thinking attitudes and negative pedagogical mindsets regarding how to go about instructionally planning to properly support the learning needs of at-risk learners that were contributing to and perpetuating teachers' complacent instructional teaming behaviors. Thus, as a way to articulate their literature-supported, further refined change agent instructional turnaround leadership thinking, principal Gutierrez and his ITL task force colleagues developed the following new, root-causal data analysis-informed reframed (low inference) Problem of Professional Practice rationale statement for Turlingen East High School (and, by extension, for Turlingen-Cisneros Independent School District): Many Turlingen East

High School core content area teachers have developed some ingrained negative attitudes regarding the motivation levels and learning capabilities of substantial numbers of students in their classrooms (notably, Hispanic male students in particular) in reaction to these students' persistent disruptive classroom off-task behaviors. As a result, teachers have adopted an overall 'defeatist mindset' regarding the futility of controlling these students and planning instructional interventions that could engage these students actively in classroom learning activities. These negative attitudes and defeatist mindsets adopted by teachers in response to students' persistent disruptive behaviors have promoted a general overall 'deficit teaching climate' and "PLC lite culture" situation characterized by high levels of teacher resignation and instructional planning complacency both at Turlingen East High School and throughout the district that is preventing grade-level teacher groups from engaging in authentic data teaming practices. This 'deficit teaching climate' and 'PLC lite culture' situation is generating multiple negative feedback loops that are further inhibiting campus- and district-level instructional leaders' efforts in enacting meaningful transformative changes in teachers' instructional planning thinking and classroom teaching practices. Following from this reframed Problem of Professional Practice rationale statement, principal Gutierrez and his ITL task force members were then able to formulate the following refined Theory of Action (If/Then) operational statement: IF Turlingen East High School instructional turnaround leadership task force members adopt a 'designed-based approach' to teachers' transformative instructional improvement through developing and pilot-implementing a new 'Authentic Data Teaming Initiative' for educators (i.e., campus-based teams of grade-level core content area teachers and their immediate instructional supervisors) that focuses on directly immersing educators in learning about processes of authentic data teaming, differentiated instructional unit planning that incorporates literature-supported 'restorative practices' for actively engaging at-risk students in classroom learning, and job-embedded peer coaching and collegial mentoring activities to further promote teachers' professional 'team learning', THEN educators will gain new 'best practice' insights and strategies on how to craft high-engagement classroom teaching/learning environments and be properly incentivized to want to expand and deepen their instructional data-teaming capacities in ways that can meet the unique academic support needs of the diverse "at-risk" learners in their classrooms.

Based on the above analytic logic informed by the collective instructional improvement insights and strategies gleaned from their review of relevant literatures, principal Gutierrez and his ITL task force colleagues proceeded to construct the following Turlingen East High School Change Drivers Diagram (see Figure 1) as a conceptual and strategic roadmap to guide their "intervention program design" next steps.

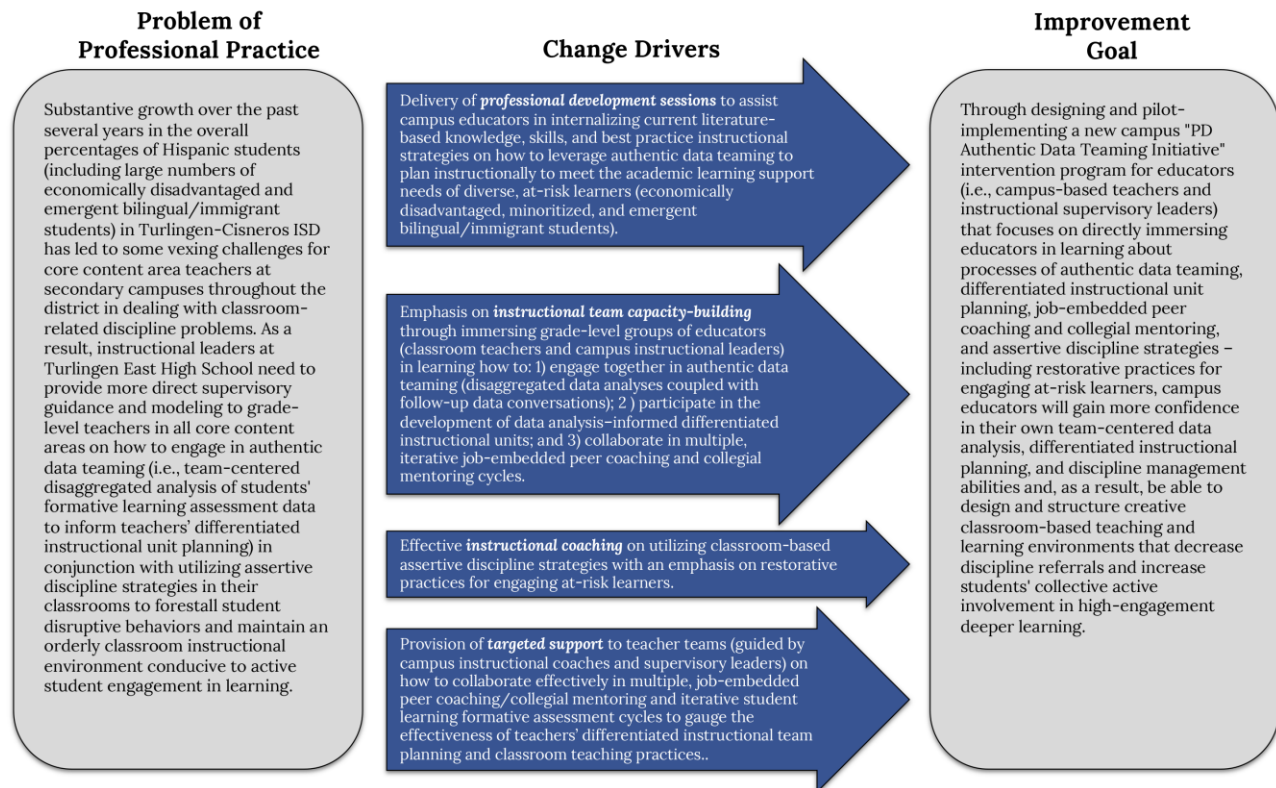


Figure 1: Turlingen East High School Change Drivers Diagram

Intervention Design Development:

Using the above analytic logic to guide their design-based intervention thinking, principal Gutierrez and his ITL task force colleagues identified four specific change drivers that they believed could be utilized as effective operational “drivers” of authentic data teaming and instructional improvement for educators (campus-based teachers and instructional leaders) at Turlingen East High School. The first change driver focuses on assisting campus educators in internalizing current literature-based knowledge, skills, and best practice instructional strategies on how to leverage authentic data teaming practices to plan instructionally to meet the academic learning support needs of diverse, at-risk learners. These at-risk learners are typically students who are economically disadvantaged and marginalized and can include large numbers of emergent bilingual/immigrant students. The second change driver emphasizes the importance of engaging in intentional instructional team capacity-building through involving educators directly in learning about the two dimensions of authentic data teaming. These two dimensions involve teams of grade-level teachers directly in: 1) conducting “deep data dives” into students’ disaggregated learning performance assessment data to probe and identify the underlying root causes of students’ learning deficiencies; and then 2) engaging together in follow-up “data conversations” to discuss how the results of teachers’ collective disaggregated data analyses can inform and guide their differentiated instructional unit planning and classroom teaching practices. As an integral component of these instructional team capacity-building efforts, instructional supervisory leaders can then encourage campus educators to engage together in multiple, iterative job-embedded peer coaching and collegial mentoring cycles to assess the degree to which educators feel they are effectively incorporating/integrating differentiated instructional insights and strategies into their

classroom teaching practices to positively enhance learning opportunities for diverse, at-risk learners. The third change driver highlights the need for instructional supervisors to provide campus teachers with targeted instructional coaching on how to utilize evidence-based assertive discipline strategies, including restorative practices for engaging at-risk learners, in their classroom teaching to maximize students' high-engagement involvement in peer-learning activities. Finally, the fourth change driver accentuates the importance for campus instructional supervisors of providing ongoing, targeted support to grade-level teams of teachers in learning how to collaborate together in the "dual professional learning strategies" of peer coaching/collegial mentoring coupled with iterative student learning formative assessment review cycles to properly gauge the overall effectiveness of teachers' collective differentiated instructional team planning and classroom teaching practices.

Using their Change Drivers Diagram as a literature-supported, practical roadmap to guide their design-based improvement applied operational thinking, principal Gutierrez and his ITL task force colleagues then proceeded to construct their Instructional Improvement Intervention Program "Implementation Plan" for Turlingen East High School (see Table 1). The Turlingen East High School Intervention Program Implementation Plan consisted of multiple sets of professional development (PD) modules designed to involve grade-level teams of Turlingen East High School core content teachers in multiple content knowledge acquisition and interactive applied learning activities to develop teachers' instructional teaming capacities for addressing the achievement gaps of at-risk learners. The professional learning content and activities comprising the Turlingen East High School Intervention Program Implementation Plan focused specifically on assisting grade-level teams of teachers in developing/redirecting their own pedagogical thinking and team-centered instructional planning and classroom teaching practices in the interrelated areas of authentic data teaming and differentiated instructional planning that incorporates evidence-based assertive discipline and restorative practices for engaging at-risk learners to enhance the high-engagement, peer-to-peer learning performance of the campus's multiple diverse student populations.

Table 1: Turlingen East High School Instructional Improvement Intervention Program "Implementation Plan"

Week	Format	Content / Activity
1	Meetings of all grade-level teacher teams	Introducing key concepts: • Addressing the achievement gap for at-risk learners • Recognizing and examining teachers' deficit mindsets regarding the motivation levels and learning capabilities of at-risk learners • Exploring and understanding the underlying root causes of students' unruly and disruptive classroom behaviors • Building caring relationships with students as a prerequisite to nurturing students' positive engagement in classroom learning • How and to what extent do cultural and linguistic backgrounds impact the <i>academic development</i> learning support needs of economically disadvantaged and minoritized students (including students who are bilingual and who have progressed through second language acquisition programs in elementary and middle grades)? • Investigating the difference between "PLC lite" grade-level instructional planning and the multiple components of <i>authentic data teaming</i>

		• How can teachers employ <i>authentic data teaming, data analysis–informed differentiated instructional planning, and restorative practice techniques</i> to provide the diverse, at-risk students in their classrooms with well-designed, immersive academic content that can jumpstart at-risk students’ active involvement in classroom activities and energize their high-engagement learning? • How can grade-level teams of teachers adapt and apply knowledge, skills, and best practice strategies from the literatures on <i>culturally responsive instruction, bilingualism and second language acquisition, and dual language instructional planning</i>, along with insights and instructional management techniques culled from the literature on <i>student disruptive behaviors and restorative practices</i>, to revitalize and enhance their overall instructional data-teaming capacities ?
2	Meetings of all grade-level teacher teams	Sessions on <i>authentic data teaming</i> practices: • Grade-level teams of core content teachers in ninth through twelfth grades participate in “practice sessions” on how to conduct systematic analyses of disaggregated student-learning performance data to investigate students’ learning problems (including the low-engagement classroom behaviors that may be operating as symptoms of these learning problems) and identify the underlying root causes of students’ learning deficiencies (i.e., factors that may be impeding identified at-risk students’ academic development). • Grade-level teams of core content teachers in ninth through twelfth grades, with supportive targeted coaching from their campus’s instructional supervisory leaders (principal, assistant principals, instructional coaches, grade-level team leaders), engage together in <i>collaborative data conversations</i> about the results of their collective practice session data analysis efforts and how teachers can utilize these data analysis results to directly inform their instructional unit planning efforts. • Grade-level teams of core content teachers in ninth through twelfth grades participate in a complete, grade level–specific <i>immersive team-learning project</i> (one project for each grade-level teacher team) on how to apply the above authentic data teaming practices and leverage the disaggregated data analysis results of their teaming efforts to plan and implement a fully articulated “culturally relevant instructional unit” in their classrooms.
3 and 4	Classroom observation/peer coaching and collegial mentoring cycles	Teachers in ninth through twelfth grades conduct multiple classroom observations of fellow teachers focused on observing teachers’ effectiveness in implementing innovative instructional strategies in their classrooms that promote at-risk students’ high-engagement, interactive peer learning. • Core content teachers in ninth through twelfth grades are paired into “co-partner teams” within their own grade level to engage in multiple classroom observation/peer coaching and collegial mentoring cycles to examine teachers’ effectiveness in applying their newly acquired content knowledge, classroom management techniques, and differentiated instructional strategies to their classroom teaching practices.

		Co-partner teacher teams also observe students to identify successful instructional strategies and activities that engage at-risk students in deeper learning.
5	Debriefing sessions	Grade-level teams of core content teachers in ninth through twelfth grades participate (both in individual grade-level team meetings and collectively as a schoolwide data team) in a series of informal team meetings to reflect on their collective experiences and discuss new insights gleaned from their participation in the “knowledge and skills acquisition”, “immersive team-learning project”, and “multiple classroom observation/peer coaching and collegial mentoring cycle” components of the overall multi-week intervention program.

Principal Gutierrez and his Instructional Turnaround Leadership (ITL) task force colleagues designed their campus-specific instructional improvement intervention program “implementation plan” to provide multiple grade-level teams of teachers, guided by their campus-based instructional supervisors (principal, assistant principals, instructional coaches, grade-level team leaders), with opportunities to examine current pedagogical knowledge and instructional teaming best practices in a number of current school improvement and educational psychology literatures related to and informing the specific Turlingen East High School instructional improvement challenges identified by the ITL task force. Thus, in week one of the intervention program teachers and instructional leaders participated in professional development sessions to examine current content knowledge, pedagogical insights, and instructional strategies contained in several relevant literatures on: closing the achievement gaps for at-risk learners; unpacking the potential “deficit mindsets” that teachers can often develop as a response to the perceived motivation levels and learning capabilities of marginalized, at-risk learners; exploring student behavior management issues and using evidence-based restorative practices; and understanding how students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds impact the *academic development* learning support needs of economically disadvantaged and minoritized students (including emergent bilingual/immigrant students). During this initial week of the intervention program, teachers were also introduced to the current literature on *authentic data teaming* and *data analysis-informed differentiated instructional planning* to build teachers’ understandings of how they can tap into the power of authentic data teaming and disaggregated data analysis techniques to transform and invigorate teachers’ team-centered instructional planning efforts to design, develop, and implement genuinely differentiated lessons and instructional units to expand learning opportunities for their at-risk students. The second week of the intervention program centered on immersing core content teachers in ninth through twelfth grades in multiple “practice sessions” on how to develop their collaborative data teaming skills within the two main components of authentic data teaming, namely: 1) learning how to conduct *deep data dives* into students’ disaggregated learning performance assessment data to probe and identify the underlying root causes of students’ learning deficiencies; and 2) learning how to engage together in *team-centered data conversations* to discuss how the results of teachers’ collective disaggregated data analyses can inform and guide their differentiated instructional unit planning and classroom teaching practices. Following their participation in these authentic data teaming “practice sessions”, ninth through twelfth-grade teacher teams were then guided by their instructional supervisors in engaging in a grade level-specific *immersive team-learning project* (one project for each grade-level teacher team) on how to apply the above authentic data teaming practices and

leverage the disaggregated data analysis results of their teaming efforts to plan and implement a fully articulated “culturally relevant instructional unit” in their classrooms.

Weeks three and four of the intervention program engaged teachers in participating in multiple classroom observation/peer coaching and collegial mentoring cycles. This involved organizing teachers within each grade level into “co-partner teams” to leverage classroom observation/peer coaching and collegial mentoring as *immersive learning opportunities* to examine the extent to which teachers were able to fully internalize and practically apply their newly acquired content knowledge, classroom management techniques, and differentiated instructional strategies in their daily classroom teaching practices. The iterative *constructive feedback* individual teachers received through weeks three and four of the intervention program from their “co-partners” on the perceived strengths and weaknesses of their classroom teaching along with the co-partner *reflective conversations* teachers were able to engage in on how effective individual teachers perceived themselves to be in applying their newly acquired pedagogical content knowledge and differentiated instructional strategies to their classroom teaching practice were integral components of the intentional *immersive learning design* of the intervention program’s classroom observation/peer coaching and collegial mentoring cycles. The final week of the intervention program consisted of a series of informal team “debriefing sessions”. During these debriefing sessions, Turlingen East High School teachers (both in individual grade-level team meetings and collectively as a schoolwide data team) were invited to reflect on their collective experiences during the professional development intervention program and discuss among themselves how their participation in the various components of the five-week intervention program may have helped teachers acquire new *instructional planning and classroom teaching insights and strategies* that could demonstrably transform and revitalize teachers’ overall pedagogical practices to benefit at-risk students’ learning.

From a design perspective, the iterative sets of new knowledge acquisition meetings, authentic data teaming “immersive learning” project activities, observation/peer coaching and collegial mentoring cycles, and final team debriefing sessions comprising the five-week-long intervention program constituted a *multi-phase implementation plan* for creating a campus-wide culture of transformative instructional teaming to support at-risk learners (see Figure 2). Through participating in this multi-phase professional learning program, grade-level teams of teachers along with their instructional supervisors across the campus were able to engage together in carefully planned professional development sessions and structured “immersive team-learning” experiences designed to expand educators’ core content knowledge while also challenging teachers to critically examine their own long-held pedagogical attitudes/beliefs and current instructional planning practices. The overall goals of this multi-phase implementation plan design were to: 1) change educators’ pedagogical mindsets regarding the motivation levels and learning capabilities of at-risk students; 2) provide grade-level teacher teams with new knowledge and skill sets for engaging together in authentic data teaming; and 3) empower teachers to integrate their newly acquired instructional knowledge and skills in ways that could directly address at-risk student population learning performance gaps and create expanded, culturally-sensitive high-engagement learning opportunities for all students.

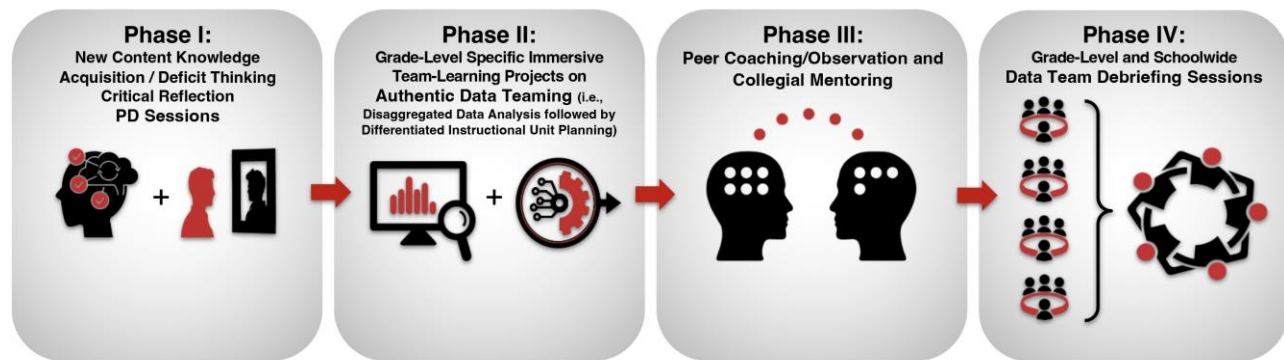


Figure 2: Multi-Phase Implementation Plan for Creating a Campus-Wide Culture of Transformative Instructional Teaming to Support At-Risk Learners

Design-Based Instructional Improvement Results and Findings

Through their involvement in designing, implementing, and evaluating the intervention program activities detailed in the above design-based urban high school improvement case study, principal Gutierrez and his Instructional Turnaround Leadership (ITL) task force colleagues were able to generate some data-supported Design-Based Instructional Improvement Results and Findings emanating from their collective Turlingen East High School intervention efforts. The following design research results documented the perceived “professional learning benefits” campus-based educators (i.e., teams of grade-level teachers and their instructional supervisors) experienced through their involvement in the five-week “instructional improvement system” professional development intervention program. A first result that emerged was that Turlingen East High School ninth through twelfth grade teams of teachers and their instructional supervisors were able to effectively leverage the “deep data dives” into their students’ disaggregated formative assessment data to develop more data analysis-informed insights regarding the unique “socially, linguistically, and culturally-rooted” learning challenges and consequent behavioral and instructional support needs of Turlingen East High School’s large population of diverse, at-risk students. A second result emerging from analysis of the intervention program’s process and impact data was that the “authentic data teaming project” and complementary “peer coaching and collegial mentoring” immersive applied-learning design of the Turlingen East High School Instructional Improvement Intervention Program challenged teachers as they progressed through the program to arrive at a conscious realization through critical self-reflection of how their own unexamined ‘deficit thinking’ assumptions and attitudes regarding the perceived motivation levels and learning potentials of the large numbers of at-risk students populating their classrooms—a knee-jerk reactive and superficially rationalizing ‘deficit thinking’ stance many teachers had developed based to a large degree solely on the high percentage of at-risk student disruptive behaviors teachers were having to routinely contend with in their classrooms—was negatively influencing teachers’ overall pedagogical thinking and instructional practices and preventing teachers from developing in positive ways as ‘authentic, data-driven instructional teams’.

These case study results enabled the campus principal and his instructional improvement task force colleagues, working with the university-based consultant, to generate some broader professional learning outcomes (i.e., design research findings) associated with the overall design, development, and implementation of the Turlingen East High School Instructional

Improvement Intervention Program. The first finding emerging from the case study's results was that teachers can be incentivized to change their default instructional teaming mindsets and practices from a predominantly "PLC lite" modality to a genuine commitment to "continuous professional growth" through direct exposure to the expanded team-learning opportunities available through participation in carefully designed "fully immersive" professional learning intervention programs. The second finding derived from the collective results was that campus principals tasked with identifying and addressing the learning support needs of diverse, at-risk students demonstrating persistent learning gaps in comparison with other student populations can work intentionally with leadership colleagues to engage in in-depth analyses of relevant grade-level and schoolwide student-learning performance data in conjunction with examining teachers' team-centered instructional planning practices to design targeted instructional improvement intervention programs for teachers. These targeted intervention programs can directly immerse teams of teachers in professional learning sessions that can: 1) expand teachers' knowledge and critical perspectives regarding the root causes of students' disruptive behaviors and learning deficiencies and help teachers better understand the social, cultural, and academic learning support needs of at-risk learners; 2) introduce teachers to the instructional planning processes and payoffs associated with authentic data teaming; and 3) deepen teachers' ongoing peer-to-peer professional learning through motivating teachers to engage together in iterative cycles of classroom observation/peer coaching and collegial mentoring to continually improve their professional practice. These kinds of data-informed and thoughtfully designed instructional improvement intervention programs can be powerful tools for expanding teachers' awareness and understanding of the multiple social, linguistic, and cultural learning challenges their at-risk students face while also creating new opportunities for teachers to substantively deepen their instructional teaming practices in ways that can result in new high-engagement learning experiences for all students.

DISCUSSION

This section provides a literature-informed discussion of key features of the data-analytic investigative thinking and multi-phased intervention program design and implementation efforts engaged in by the campus principal and his Instructional Turnaround Leadership (ITL) task force colleagues in the Turlingen East High School case study highlighted above. The discussion is divided into two sections focused on: 1) the advantages of adopting a *design-based interventionist approach* for nurturing high-engagement learning cultures in high diversity school districts; and 2) how *immersive professional learning programs* can serve as powerful transformative catalysts for developing educators' authentic data teaming capacities.

Adopting a Design-based Interventionist Approach to Nurturing High-Engagement Learning Cultures in High Diversity School Districts

The systematic data collection and analysis efforts principal Gutierrez and his Instructional Turnaround Leadership (ITL) task force colleagues conducted to investigate the underlying root causes of the persistent student disruptive behavior infractions and attendant discipline referrals that had come to characterize the dysfunctional classroom teaching and learning environments at Turlingen East High School yielded some revealing findings. The task force's collective investigative findings brought to light teachers' widespread frustrations regarding the "behavioral unmanageability" of multiple students (predominantly Hispanic male students) in their classrooms and how many teachers' unfavorable perceptions of these disruptive students' motivation levels and learning capabilities had begun to negatively impact teachers' overall

pedagogical thinking and instructional planning. The intractability of this situation had resulted in many core content teachers in the campus's ninth- through twelfth-grade instructional teams adopting a *defeatist mindset* in which teachers had become resigned in their belief that there was no amount of instructional planning they could engage in to motivate these disruptive students to participate actively in classroom learning activities. Teachers' collective negative perceptions of these disruptive students' motivation levels and learning capabilities in conjunction with teachers entrenched defeatist attitudes and attendant pedagogical mindsets then combined to negatively impact the professional climate of the campus and created a pervasive "PLC lite" instructional planning culture (DuFour and Reeves, 2016) throughout Turlingen East High School. Reflecting this general overall laissez faire instructional planning mentality permeating the campus culture, groups of core content teachers within individual grade levels then proceeded to widely adopt the practice of engaging in "superficial" instructional planning during their grade-level team meetings, believing that any attempt on their part to engage in substantive data teaming was simply not worth the effort.

The decision by principal Gutierrez and his ITL task force colleagues to embrace key intervention design concepts and strategies found in the improvement science literature (Plomp & Nieveen, 2010) and integrate these concepts and strategies directly into their turnaround instructional leadership planning efforts proved decisive in enabling Gutierrez and his task force to design a targeted PD intervention program that could yield positive, campus-wide instructional improvement results. Through adopting the design-based improvement investigative strategy of engaging in systematic collection and analysis of relevant data relating to students' classroom behaviors and demonstrated learning abilities as well as a variety of perspectivist data on teachers' own pedagogical thinking and grade-level instructional planning efforts, Gutierrez and his colleagues were able to trace the underlying *root causes* of their campus's persistent student-learning problems directly to teachers' own entrenched defeatist instructional mindsets and professional practices. In conjunction with these intensive data analysis efforts, principal Gutierrez and his ITL task force's review of current turnaround leadership strategies and instructional teaming best practices contained in the instructional improvement, restorative student discipline/classroom behavior, and educational psychology literatures convinced Gutierrez and his colleagues that they needed to "reframe" their change agent leadership thinking to focus more on the underlying root causes of their campus's surface-level student discipline and teaching and learning effectiveness problems. Through engaging in these collective design-based investigative efforts, Gutierrez and ITL task force members realized that the specific "targeted PD intervention program" that they needed to develop for their campus would have to directly address teachers' own *deficit thinking attitudes and negative pedagogical mindsets* regarding instructionally planning to support the learning needs of at-risk learners—the very deficit thinking attitudes and negative mindsets that were, in fact, fueling teachers' complacent instructional teaming behaviors. In short, Gutierrez and his ITL task force colleagues now better understood that *the most effective path to improving students' learning was through transforming educators' own professional learning*. This fundamental insight on how instructional improvement leaders in K-12 schools and school districts can productively "reframe" their change agent leadership thinking about students' persistent learning performance achievement gaps by focusing not only on the readily apparent, surface-level "student-learning problems" themselves but also by intentionally probing the underlying (data-supported) *root causes* of students' learning problems that can often be traced directly to problems or deficiencies in educators' own professional practices is

underscored in the recent design-based improvement literature. As Rick Mintrop explains: “The achievement gap is a huge problem in the United States and elsewhere. But [educators] will have to realize that the gap is not a problem of practice, but the result of many practices, and this result is indicated by a measurable achievement gap. Indicators point to problems, but are not the problem of *practice*. No designed intervention can close the achievement gap directly; educators can only change beliefs, attitudes, or practices that may eventually be registered on the indicator. School and district leaders have the strongest influence on adults, not students. *So, leaders’ problem of practice should focus on beliefs, attitudes, or practices of adults who are members of, or associated with, their organization* [emphasis added].” (Mintrop, 2016, p. 66)

The data-informed *design-based interventionist approach* adopted by principal Gutierrez and his ITL task force provided Turlingen East High School educators with the structured sequences of immersive learning experiences participating teams of grade-level teachers needed to: 1) acquire new content knowledge, skills, and strategies to reinvigorate their instructional data teaming efforts; and 2) be able to directly apply these newly acquired knowledge, skills, and strategies to their day-to-day instructional team planning and classroom teaching practices. The substantive result of the Turlingen East High School Instructional Improvement Intervention Program initiative was that Turlingen East educators were able to *transform the teaching, leading, and learning culture* of their campus from one characterized by inordinately high numbers of student discipline referrals to a campus-wide positive learning support culture focused on providing high-engagement classroom learning opportunities for all diverse students, including students identified as being academically at-risk.

Using Immersive Professional Learning as a Transformative Catalyst for Developing Educators’ Authentic Data Teaming Capacities

The intervention development design strategy employed by principal Gutierrez and his ITL task force colleagues of incorporating multiple, thoughtfully planned opportunities for *immersive professional learning* into Turlingen East High School’s Instructional Improvement Intervention Program proved to be a decisive factor in contributing to the intervention program’s overall effectiveness in transforming teachers’ team-centered professional learning and collaborative growth. Specifically, the Turlingen East High School Intervention Program’s *immersive professional learning* design was instrumental in: 1) exposing teacher participants to new kinds of pedagogical thinking and instructional planning activities associated with the practice of “authentic data teaming”; and 2) challenged teachers to engage together intentionally in multiple iterative cycles of peer coaching and collegial mentoring that enabled teachers to critically *apply* their newly acquired knowledge and skills to their day-to-day professional practice. One of the key aspects of the Turlingen intervention program design was that the program did not consist *solely* of a series of professional development sessions that focused on presenting grade-level teams of teachers with new knowledge and strategies and then leaving teachers to figure out on their own how to use the new information in their own professional work. Although the Turlingen intervention program certainly did contain multiple PD sessions during weeks one and two on a number of important content knowledge and instructional competency areas (including: addressing and closing the achievement gaps for economically disadvantaged and minoritized at-risk learners; exploring and understanding the multiple cultural and linguistic root causes of diverse students’ disruptive behaviors and learning deficiencies-including students who are bilingual and who have progressed through second

language acquisition programs in elementary and middle grades; using restorative practices and building caring relationships with students as a means to nurture students' positive engagement in classroom learning; etc.), the program's design focus did not end there. The inclusion of follow-up *co-partner team applied learning opportunities* during weeks three and four of the intervention program engaged teacher participants in multiple iterations of "classroom observation/peer coaching and collegial mentoring cycles" that enabled teachers to: 1) *integrate* the newly acquired pedagogical knowledge and instructional strategies into their daily professional activities; and 2) *critically assess*—through classroom observations and collegial conversations with their peers—if this new knowledge and strategy information was of practical use in helping teachers craft interactive, high-engagement instructional units that could directly address the specific learning support needs of their at-risk students. These co-partner team applied learning cycles were integral components of the overall intervention program design that were focused specifically on ensuring that teachers would have structured opportunities *to learn from each other* on how to actively apply the new knowledge and strategies in their own classroom settings and critically evaluate the effectiveness of their application efforts in meeting the particular learning support needs of their students.

The professional development sessions during week two of the intervention program focusing on assisting teachers in learning about the two components of "authentic data teaming" were of critical importance to developing teachers' *data-focused* instructional teaming capacities. The two components of authentic data teaming include teachers collaborating in their grade-level data teams to: 1) conduct "deep data dives" into students' disaggregated learning performance assessment data to probe and identify the underlying root causes of students' learning deficiencies; and 2) engage together in follow-up "data conversations" to discuss how the results of teachers' collective disaggregated data analyses can inform and guide their differentiated instructional unit planning and classroom teaching practices. Grade-level teams of core content teachers in ninth through twelfth grades participated during week two "practice sessions" in learning how to: 1) conduct systematic analyses of disaggregated student-learning performance data (formative assessment data obtained from teacher-made tests, benchmark assessment scores on individual instructional units, etc.) to investigate students' learning problems, including problems involving students' repetitive surface-level, low-engagement classroom behaviors that may be operating as symptoms of students' real academic learning problems; and 2) identify the underlying root causes of students' learning deficiencies—that is, linguistic, cultural, and social factors that may be impeding identified at-risk students' positive academic development. Turlingen East High School grade-level teams of core content teachers in ninth through twelfth grades, guided by their campus's instructional supervisory leaders (principal, assistant principals, instructional coaches, grade-level team leaders), then engaged together in *collaborative data conversations* to discuss the results of their collective practice session data analysis efforts and how teachers could utilize these data analysis results to directly inform their team-centered instructional unit planning. Following the authentic data teaming "practice sessions", participating teacher teams then engaged in a complete, grade level-specific *immersive team-learning project* (one project for each grade-level teacher team) to acquire hands-on experience in how to apply the new "authentic data teaming" methods to analyze their students' disaggregated learning performance data and then leverage the results of their collective data analyses to plan and implement individual, fully articulated "culturally relevant instructional units" in their respective grade-level classrooms.

From a personnel change agent leadership perspective, the most significant impact of the Turlingen East High School Instructional Improvement Intervention Program was the *change in professional mindsets* that was observed in participating teachers as grade-level teams of teachers navigated through and completed the five-week intervention program. Focus group interviews conducted by instructional supervisors with teachers following the various professional development sessions in the first and second week of the program as well as additional focus group interviews conducted with teachers during weeks three and four and at the conclusion of the five-week intervention program provided cumulative perspectivist evidence that teachers' pedagogical thinking and attitudes regarding how they viewed their instructional planning and classroom teaching responsibilities had progressively changed in positive ways as a result of their participation in the intervention program's immersive learning experiences. Collective teacher perspectives emerging from these sets of focus group interviews indicated that Turlingen East High School teachers across ninth through twelfth grades had experienced a demonstrable shift in their overall professional mindsets as a result of their involvement in the instructional improvement intervention program.

In her book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (2016), Carol Dweck argues persuasively that individuals can enhance their overall personal and professional well-being and success by engaging in ongoing critical reflection regarding their life beliefs and attitudes and continually monitoring the extent to which they are able to purposefully move from a "fixed" to a "growth" mindset in their life endeavors. According to Dweck, individuals who develop and hold onto a relatively "fixed" mindset are those who prefer to remain static in their intelligence and learning (i.e., who prefer to "look" smart rather than engage in risky, new learning), avoid personal and professional challenges, become defensive or give up easily in the face of obstacles, perceive expending additional effort as fruitless or impractical, ignore critical (sometimes negative) feedback as useless, and feel threatened by the success of others. Conversely, individuals who cultivate a "growth" mindset are those who seek opportunities to acquire new learning, embrace difficult challenges, persist in the face of obstacles and setbacks, view expending additional effort as a path to mastery, welcome and learn from constructive criticism, and find lessons and inspiration in the success of others (Dweck, 2016, p. 263). In Dweck's view, the true path to personal and professional success is for each individual to make an intentional effort to strive continuously to critically evaluate one's own beliefs and attitudes and to consciously seek to move from a "fixed" to a "growth" mindset in all of life's endeavors. As Dweck emphasizes, the decision to change from a "fixed" to a "growth" mindset involves an individual making the decisive choice to "change from a *judge-and-be-judged* framework to a *learn-and-help-learn* framework" (Dweck, 2016, p. 254).

Process and impact data collected and analyzed both during and following the implementation of the Turlingen East High School Instructional Improvement Intervention Program produced some noteworthy evidence of the changes that occurred in teachers' pedagogical thinking and instructional mindsets as they progressed through the various PD sessions and immersive learning experiences included in the intervention program. Some of the most compelling evidence that emerged was in the way teachers began to *reframe* their professional connections to their classrooms and to their grade-level instructional teams. As one tenth-grade math teacher, a veteran educator with twenty three years teaching experience in Turlingen-Cisneros Independent School District and who has been teaching math at Turlingen East High School for the past ten years, explained during the focus group interviews conducted during week five of

the program: Over my two-plus decades of teaching math, I've developed some well-honed classroom disciplinary rules that I've always believed have allowed me to structure my classroom environments in ways that enable me to maximize the effect of the instructional strategies I use to teach the math principles and applications my students must learn in order to pass the state accountability tests. And up until now I've never really questioned the soundness of these disciplinary rules and instructional strategies. But I have to admit that my participation in this intervention program—and especially in the 'immersive team-learning project' that focused my tenth-grade team colleagues and me on learning how to engage in analyzing our students' disaggregated formative assessment data and then utilizing the results of these analyses to plan and implement a 'culturally relevant instructional unit' in our classrooms—opened my eyes to my own need to reevaluate my own beliefs and behaviors on how I approach designing and delivering instructional units that can actually meet the learning support needs of the students currently in my classroom. The cultural and linguistic backgrounds of many of the students in my classroom today are, in fact, much more diverse than in previous years. Somehow, I guess, because of our own need as teachers to stick to the classroom rules and strategies we've found work for us in the past, I've never really stopped to critically reflect on my own instructional practices and evaluate in my own mind if the rules and strategies I've clung to for so long actually work for the much more highly diverse numbers of students I'm now charged with teaching. As I and my teacher co-partner engaged together in the peer observation and collegial mentoring cycles during weeks three and four of the intervention program, we discussed how the new knowledge and insights we gained during the PD sessions on the unique cultural and social learning challenges and support needs of economically disadvantaged students, and especially the linguistic learning difficulties of bilingual students, have altered our thinking on how we need to go about planning our instructional units and structuring our classrooms in more culturally and linguistically relevant ways to expand peer-to-peer interactive learning opportunities for all of our students. Expanding my own thinking on the need to be much more aware of and responsive to the unique cultural and linguistic learning support needs of individual students and the responsibility I have as a teacher to integrate the insights I develop about students' individual learning needs directly into my ongoing instructional planning and teaching practices and how doing this can substantively improve my own classroom discipline routines and teaching effectiveness is without question my biggest professional learning takeaway from this instructional improvement program.

The end-of-study reflections of other teacher participants similarly echoed the reflective comments of this tenth-grade math teacher. The combined pairing of the "immersive team-learning project" development component in week two of the intervention program (focused on helping teachers gain hands-on experience with authentic data teaming practices and then learning how to utilize their data analysis results to plan and implement a fully articulated "culturally relevant instructional unit" in teachers' own classrooms) with the multiple sets of "classroom observation/peer coaching and collegial mentoring cycles" during weeks three and four of the program provided participating teachers with a distinctive iterative set of immersive professional learning experiences. These immersive learning experiences provided teachers with opportunities to: 1) critically evaluate their effectiveness in being able to apply their newly acquired content knowledge, classroom management techniques, and differentiated instructional strategies to their classroom teaching practices; and 2) gauge the impact of the newly implemented management techniques and instructional strategies on enhancing the

culturally and linguistically relevant “high-engagement learning” of the diverse students in their classrooms. Collectively, these immersive learning experiences acted as a *transformative catalyst* for positively changing teachers’ pedagogical thinking and instructional mindsets and served to expand and invigorate teachers’ overall data teaming capacities.

CONCLUSION

The Turlingen East High School Case Study presented in this article report highlighted the specific *instructional turnaround leadership* entrenched difficulties and design-based intervention efforts of one high school principal and his campus-based leadership colleagues tasked with the challenge of addressing the persistent at-risk student learning performance gaps and associated day-to-day disruptive classroom behaviors of a substantial sub-population of students (i.e., Hispanic male students) that had effectively served to stall and undermine any previous efforts to achieve meaningful, positive overall student-learning improvement progress on their campus. Through tapping into the power of *design-based school improvement strategic thinking* to turbo-charge their multi-leveled, data-driven investigative efforts, principal Gutierrez and his Instructional Turnaround Leadership (ITL) task force colleagues were able to identify some specific, data-supported underlying root-causal factors relating to core content teachers’ own negative pedagogical thinking and instructional planning mindsets and behaviors that enabled the principal and ITL members to conceptualize some literature-supported change drivers that could inform the design and delivery of a targeted Instructional Improvement Intervention Program for the campus’s multiple grade-level teacher teams.

The results and findings emanating from the collective root-causal data analysis and intervention program development and implementation efforts completed in this case study provide some positive evidence for how campus-based school leaders can leverage and apply design-based improvement principles and intervention design strategies found in the improvement science literature to develop and implement carefully structured, multi-component intervention programs to substantively expand professional learning opportunities for campus-based educators. Specifically, grade-level teams of core content teachers participating in the Turlingen East High School Intervention Program were able to gain new content knowledge and learn how to leverage and apply authentic data teaming strategies that enabled teachers to: 1) critically reevaluate their pedagogical attitudes/beliefs regarding the motivation levels and learning capabilities of their diverse, academically at-risk students; and 2) reconceptualize how to go about crafting high-engagement classroom learning environments for all students. The final improvement outcome of the Intervention Program implemented at Turlingen East High School was that teams of grade-level core content teachers throughout the campus—with guidance and support from their instructional supervisors—were able to acquire *new habits of pedagogical thinking and instructional data-teaming practice*. These newly acquired habits enabled educators to transform their classrooms from “high discipline referral” to “high-engagement learning environments” and, in doing so, nurture an overall campus-wide positive learning support culture that could better address the academic development needs of all diverse learners.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the high school principal, his instructional turnaround leadership task force colleagues, and the multiple teams of grade-level core content teachers and their instructional supervisors who participated in the

design-based instructional improvement intervention program activities reported in this article. The indomitable spirit and determination of these change agent leaders to realize meaningful instructional improvement on their campus serves as an inspirational example of how school leaders can learn how to *work together in new ways* to transform educators' instructional teaming practices to effectively address the unique academic development and learning support needs of their diverse students.

Disclosure Statement

The author affirms that there were no relevant financial or non-financial interests involved in connection with the school improvement research activities completed for this article report.

References

- Adair, J. K., Colegrove, K. S.-S., & McManus, M. E. (2018). Troubling messages: Agency and learning in the early schooling experiences of children of Latina/o immigrants. *Teachers College Record*, 120(6), 1-40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811812000608>
- Barton-Vasquez, K. (2017). *A case study of significant disproportional discipline of African American students in special education: Inquiry in a suburban school district*. [Dissertation, Loyola Marymount University]. <https://search-proquest-com.lib-e2.lib.ttu.edu/docview/2016061353/?pq-origsite=primo>
- Beachum, F., & Dentith, A. M. (2004). Teacher leaders creating cultures of school renewal and transformation. *The Educational Forum*, 68(3), 276-286. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131720408984639>
- Berkowitz, R. (2022). School matters: The contribution of positive school climate to equal educational opportunities among ethnocultural minority students. *Youth & Society*, 54(3), 372-396. <https://doi-org.lib-e2.lib.ttu.edu/10.1177/0044118X20970235>
- Berry, D. (2020). *Effectiveness of social emotional learning and restorative practices on 9th grade students*. [Dissertation, Trevecca Nazarene University]. <https://search-proquest-com.lib-e2.lib.ttu.edu/docview/2404390684/?pq-origsite=primo>
- Bertrand, M., & Marsh, J. (2021). How data-driven reform can drive deficit thinking. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 102(8), 35-39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00317217211013936>
- Blanc, S., Christman, J. B., Liu, R., Michell, C., Travers, E., & Bulkley, K. E. (2010). Learning to learn from data: Benchmarks and instructional communities. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 85(2), 205-225. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01619561003685379>
- Boyes-Watson, C., & Pranis, K. (2015). Appendix 3: Theoretical essay on why circles are important in schools. In *Circle forward: Building a restorative school community*. Living Justice Press & Institute for Restorative Initiatives.
- Butler, B., Lewis, C., Moore III, J., & Scott, M. (2012). Assessing the odds: Disproportional discipline practices and implications for educational stakeholders. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 81(1), 11-24. <https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.81.1.0011>
- Byrd, M. (2020). Capitalizing on differences: Keys to unlocking the academic achievement gap. *Multicultural Learning and Teaching*, 15(2). <https://doi.org/10.1515/mlt-2019-0003>
- Chin, N. B., Genesee, F., & Hamayan, E. (2009). *Literacy instruction for English language learners*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Chu, E., & Ready, D. (2018). Exclusion and urban public high schools: Short- and long-term consequences of school suspensions. *American Journal of Education*, 124(4), 479-509. <https://doi.org/10.1086/698454>

- Crowe, K. (2017). *Perceptions of restorative justice in urban high schools*. [Dissertation, Brandman University]. <https://search-proquest-com.lib-e2.lib.ttu.edu/docview/1973619371/?pq-origsite=primo>
- Cummins, J. (1979). Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimum age question, and some other matters. *Working Papers on Bilingualism*, 19, 121-129.
- Cummins, J. (1981). *Bilingualism & minority language children*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children caught in the crossfire*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853596773>
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The flat world and education: How America's commitment to equity will determine our future*. New York: Teachers College Press. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171009100403>
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (June 2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute. Report available at: https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf
- de Jong, E. J., & Harper, C. A. (2005). Preparing mainstream teachers for English-language learners: Is being a good teacher good enough? *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 32(2), 101-124.
- Dudley-Marling. (2015). The resilience of deficit thinking. *Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.22329/jtl.v10i1.4171>
- DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & Karhanek, G. (2010). *Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
- DuFour, R., & Marzano, R. (2011). *Leaders of learning: How district, school, and classroom leaders improve student achievement*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
- DuFour, R., & Reeves, D. (2016, March). The futility of PLC lite. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 97(6), 69-71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721716636878>
- Dweck, C. S. (2016). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Random House.
- Fabelo, T., Thompson, M., Plotkin, M., Carmichael, D., Marchbanks, M., & Booth, E. (2011). *Breaking schools' rules: A statewide study on how school discipline relates to students' success and juvenile justice involvement*. Council of State Governments Justice Center and the Public Policy Research Institute, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX.
- Ford, D. Y., Harris III, J. J., Tyson, C. A., & Trotman, M. F. (2002). Beyond deficit thinking: Providing access for gifted african american students. *Roeper Review*, 24(2), 52-58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02783190209554129>
- García, S. B., & Guerra, P. L. (2004). Deconstructing deficit thinking: Working with educators to create more equitable learning environments. *Education and Urban Society*, 36(2), 150-168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124503261322>
- Goddard, R., Goddard, Y., Kim, E. S., & Miller, R. (2015). A theoretical and empirical analysis of the roles of instructional leadership, teacher collaboration, and collective efficacy beliefs in support of student learning. *American Journal of Education*, 121(4), 501-530. <https://doi.org/10.1086/681925>
- Goldenberg, C. (2008). Teaching English language learners: What the research does and does not say. *American Educator*, 32, 42-44.

Griner, A. C., & Stewart, M. L. (2013). Addressing the achievement gap and disproportionality through the use of culturally responsive teaching practices. *Urban Education*, 48(4), 585-621.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912456847>

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. New York: Routledge.

Haynes, M. (2011, February). *Transforming high schools: Performance systems for powerful teaching*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Henault, C. (2001). Zero tolerance in schools. *Journal of Law and Education*, 30(3), 547-553.

Hirsh, S. (2005). Professional Development and Closing the Achievement Gap. *Theory Into Practice*, 44(1), 38-44.
https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4401_6

Kamm, C. (2018, June). Equity and Opportunity: Closing the Achievement Gap. Connecticut Association of Public-School Superintendents. Retrieved from
https://www.capss.org/uploaded/2014_Redesign/Leadership_Development/Student-Centered_Learning_NEWSLETTERS/44_june_2018/Kamm-Solutions_Equity-and-Opportunity_Closing-the-Achievement-Gap.pdf.

Kelly, A. E. (2010). When is design research appropriate? (pp. 73-84). In *An Introduction to Educational Design Research*. Proceedings of the seminar conducted at the East China Normal University, Shanghai (PR China), November 23-26, 2007.

Khalifa, M. (2020). Promoting culturally responsive leadership practices. *School Administrator*. Retrieved from
<https://my.aasa.org/AASA/Resources/SAMag/2020/Feb20/Khalifa.aspx>

Khalifa, M. A. (2021). *Culturally responsive school leadership*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Khalifa, M. A., Gooden, M., & Davis, J. (2016). Culturally responsive school leadership: A synthesis of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(4), 1272-1311. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316630383>

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a crucial race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47-68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146819509700104>

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Strauss, T. (2010). *Leading school turnaround: How successful leaders transform low-performing schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

López, G. R., Harvey, L., & Chesnut, C. (2013). Latino English language learners in a changing demographic landscape: Critical issues for school leaders to consider in implementing best practices. In L. C. Tillman & J. J. Scheurich (Eds.). *Handbook of research on educational leadership for equity and diversity* (pp. 257-286). New York: Routledge.

Losen, D. J. (2011). Discipline policies, successful schools, and racial justice. *UCLA: The Civil Rights Project / Proyecto Derechos Civiles*. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4q41361g>

Love, N. (Ed.). (2009). *Using data to improve learning for all: A collaborative inquiry approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Love, N., Stiles, K., Mundry, S., & DiRanna, S. (2008). *The data coach's guide to improving learning for all students: Unleashing the power of collaborative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Martinez, M. R., & McGrath, D. (2014). *Deeper learning: How eight public schools are transforming education in the twenty-first century*. New York: The New Press.

- McGee, G. W. (2004). Closing the achievement gap: Lessons from Illinois' golden spike High-Poverty High-Performing schools. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 9(2), 97–125. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327671espr0902_2
- McKenney, S., & Reeves, T. C. (2012). *Conducting educational design research*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203818183>
- Mintrop, R. (2016). *Design-based school improvement: A practical guide for education leaders*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Murphy, J. (2016). *Creating instructional capacity: A framework for creating academic press*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483386003>
- Murphy, J., & Meyers, C. (2009). Rebuilding organizational capacity in turnaround schools: Insights from the corporate, government, and non-profit sectors. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership*, 37(1), 9-27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143208098162>
- Murphy, J. F., & Torre, D. (2014). *Creating productive cultures in schools: For students, teachers, and parents* (1st ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Nelson, M. F. (2002). *A qualitative study of effective school discipline practices: Perceptions of administrators, tenured teachers, and parents in twenty schools* [Doctoral dissertation]. East Tennessee State University. <https://search-proquest-com.lib-e2.lib.ttu.edu/docview/304802882?pq-origsite=primo>
- Neufeld, B., & Roper, D. (2003). *Coaching: A strategy for developing instructional capacity*. Cambridge, MA: Education Matters.
- Neuman, S., & Cunningham, L. (2009). The impact of professional development and coaching on early language and literacy instructional practices. *American Journal of Education*, 46, 532-566. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831208328088>
- Nieveen, N. (2010). Formative evaluation in educational design research (pp. 90-101). In *An Introduction to Educational Design Research*. Proceedings of the seminar conducted at the East China Normal University, Shanghai (PR China), November 23-26, 2007.
- Pianta, R. C., Lipscomb, D., & Ruzek, E. A. (2021). Coaching teachers to improve students' school readiness skills: Indirect effects of teacher-student interaction. *Child Development*, 92(6), 2509–2528. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13600>
- Plomp, T., & Nieveen, N. (Eds.). (2010). *An Introduction to Educational Design Research*. Proceedings of the seminar conducted at the East China Normal University, Shanghai (PR China), November 23-26, 2007.
- Pranis, K. (2014). *The little book of Circle Processes: A new/old approach to peacemaking*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books Publishing.
- Raybuck-Bonilla, C. (2020). *The perceptions of high school students in northern California on proactive restorative justice elements* [Doctoral dissertation, Brandman University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. <https://search-proquest-com.lib-e2.lib.ttu.edu/docview/2393720136?accountid=7098>
- Ramirez, P. C., & Faltis, C. J. (2020). *Dual language education in the US: Rethinking pedagogy, curricula, and teacher education to support dual language learning for all*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367853242>
- Reeves, T. (2000). Enhancing the worth of instructional technology research through “design experiments” and other developmental strategies. Retrieved from <http://it.coe.uga.edu/-treeves/AERA2000Reeves.pdf>

Ritchhart, R. (2015). *Creating cultures of thinking: The eight forces we must master to truly transform our schools* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Rubio, A. (2014). *Student misconduct and isolation from the school environment: A study of student, teacher, and administrator perceptions of school discipline at an urban middle school* [Doctoral dissertation, California State University].

Scanlan, M., & López, F. A., (2013). Leadership promoting equity and excellence for bilingual students. In L. C. Tillman & J. J. Scheurich (Eds.), *Handbook of research on educational leadership for equity and diversity* (pp. 380-403). New York: Routledge.

Skiba, R. J. (2014). The failure of zero tolerance. *Reclaiming Children & Youth*, 22(4), 27-33.

Skiba, R. J., & Losen, D. J. (2015). From reaction to prevention: Turning the page on school discipline. *American Educator*, 39(4). Retrieved from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1086522>

Sparks, S. K., & Many, T. W. (2015). *How to cultivate collaboration in a PLC*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Stringer, P. (2013). *Capacity Building for School Improvement: Revisited*. Boston, MA: Sense Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-329-4>

Sun, M., Kennedy, A. I., & Anderson, E. M. (2020). The Multidimensionality of School Performance: Using Multiple Measures for School Accountability and Improvement. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 28(89). <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.28.4689>

Taylor, J. E. (2008). Instructional coaching: The state of the art. In M. M. Mangin & S. R. Stoelinga (Eds.), *Effective teacher leadership: Using research to inform and reform* (pp. 10-35). New York: Teachers College Press.

Theoharis, G. (2009). *The school leaders our children deserve: Seven keys to equity, social justice, and school reform*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Theoharis, G., & Brooks, J. S. (2012). *What every principal needs to know to create equitable and excellent schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Townsend, B. L. (2000). The disproportionate discipline of African American learners: Reducing school suspensions and expulsions. *Exceptional Children*, 66(3), 381-391. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001440290006600308>

Valencia, R. R. (2010). *Dismantling contemporary deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice* (1st edition). New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203853214>

Valencia, R. R. (2015). *Students of color and the achievement gap: Systemic challenges, systemic transformations* (1st edition). New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315776637>

Valencia, R. R. (2020). *International deficit thinking: educational thought and practice*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367855581>

van den Akker, J. (1999). Principles and methods of development research. In J. van den Akker, R. Branch, K. Gustafson, N. Nieveen, and T. Plomp (Eds.), *Design approaches and tools in education and training* (pp. 1-15). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-011-4255-7>

van den Akker, J., McKenney, S., & Nieveen, N. (2006). Introduction to educational design research. In J. van den Akker, K. Gravemeijer, S. McKenney, & N. Nieveen (Eds.), *Educational Design Research* (pp. 67-90). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203088364>

Vescio, V., Ross, D., & Adams, A. (2008). A review of research on the impact of professional learning communities on teaching practice and student learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(1), 80-91.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2007.01.004>

Wachtel, T. (2016). IIRP: International Institute for Restorative Practices. *Defining Restorative*. Available at:
https://www.iirp.edu/images/pdf/Defining-Restorative_Nov-2016.pdf

Weiner, L. (2006). Challenging Deficit Thinking: Urban teachers must question unspoken assumptions about the sources of their students' struggles. *Educational Leadership*, 64(1), 42-45.