An investigation into the implementation of the instructional consultation team model

Kathleen A. Senita

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An Investigation Into the Implementation of the Instructional Consultation Team Model

by

Kathleen A. Senita

Dissertation

Submitted to the College of Education

Eastern Michigan University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
Educational Leadership

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Ypsilanti, Michigan
Dedication

To my husband, Paul; to my children, Jennifer, Andy, Alex, and Sarah; and to my friend at my feet as I worked, Zeke: for their support, encouragement, love, and patience.
Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the following people for helping me stay the course during my doctoral work. I would especially like to thank my committee chair, Dr. David Anderson. Dr. Anderson willingly stepped in when my study took a different path in its early stages. He provided me with much-needed guidance, calmness, encouragement, questions, and support.

I would also like to thank my dissertation committee: Dr. Richard Geisel, Grand Valley State University, who has supported me throughout my educational specialist and doctoral work, and Dr. Eboni Zamani-Gallaher and Dr. Janet Fisher (both of EMU), who were also there to read, question, guide, and encourage throughout key points in the process.

I am grateful for the staff at Belding Area Schools who were willing to participate in this study so I could fulfill a dream and prove beyond a doubt that I was capable of the time, energy, and work involved in making this dream a reality.

I am tremendously grateful to Mrs. Jessie Madden for her support and kindness and always letting me “pick her brain” just one more time about the Instructional Consultation process.

I am also tremendously grateful to Mr. Scott Hubble, mentor and friend, for encouraging me and for instilling in my heart to always do what is best for the students. It is through this heartfelt belief that I worked through this process.

I am also grateful to Cara Kissling, my editor, and to Laural Lombardi, who transcribed my interviews. Their tedious work made my work much easier.

Finally, I would like to thank my dissertation cohort friends, who were there through our class not just as fellow students but as another small family. It is a support in a part of my life that will not be forgotten.
Abstract

The reauthorization of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004 made Response to Intervention (RtI) an acceptable alternative for identifying students with specific learning disabilities (SLD). The purpose of this study was to examine one particular problem-solving approach, Instructional Consultation (IC) teams within an RtI framework, to determine the knowledge, skills, and beliefs of teachers and administrators about this model and its effect in identifying and supporting students with learning disabilities between two elementary schools in one Michigan school district.

Interviews were done with a typical case sampling of interviewees from within both buildings. Interviewees were both participants and nonparticipants within the IC model. Each interview was completed at a time convenient for participants. A second, more specific interview was completed with key participants for deeper understanding of initial data analysis.

Subfindings included: 1) although interviewees have a good understanding of the IC process, the understanding doesn’t preclude them from being resistant to its use; 2) a lack of significant understanding of the process and leadership styles have a major effect on the implementation and engagement of the IC team and staff; 3) factors including teacher professional development, building culture, and instructional practices intertwine in their effect on IC implementation; 4) the role of the IC facilitator and administrator have a large effect on the implementation and engagement of the IC team and staff; and 5) understanding of the IC process and how it is presented to building teams affects staff knowledge of understanding the process for identification of students with SLD.
Underlying all subfindings is the key finding of communication, which I will refer to as the “telephone game.” In other words, IC communication—and how it travels throughout the school system—affects every subfinding.

Identifying key people in the process, such as the facilitator and the administrator, are crucial to the implementation and engagement of a building’s IC team. One could use resulting information to create tools, such as rubrics, to monitor IC model understanding and implementation and engagement status of IC teams within a building and district. Further, the rubrics could guide problem solving and decision making for strong implementation of the IC team model.
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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) accountability regulations and the mandates of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 reauthorization changed the definition of eligibility criteria for specific learning disability (SLD). They demanded 80% of special education students spend 80% of their learning time in the general education classroom setting—leaving school districts searching for successful ways to implement these mandates (Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, 2004). The reauthorization granted states the right to use Response to Intervention (RtI) as an acceptable form of eligibility criteria for identifying students with SLD. As states implement RtI, questions of validity, reliability, and process implications have emerged.

Through mandates put forth in the reauthorization of IDEA and the Michigan Department of Education interpretation of the regulations, schools in Michigan can no longer refer a child for a suspected learning disability based solely on the discrepancy model that had been in place since 1977.

The IQ-achievement discrepancy model was the traditional way to diagnose a student with an SLD (Schatschneider, Wagner, & Crawford, 2008). Typically students with a specific learning disability are students with average to above-average intelligence with a specific cognitive area of weakness. Using the discrepancy model, a school psychologist gave a student both a cognitive assessment to gauge intelligence and an educational achievement test to assess the student’s progress in comparison to peers at his or her age level. A comparison was then made between the two sets of scores. If a student’s IQ test score was at least two standard deviations above the scores on the achievement test in any area, the student was considered as having a specific learning disability due to a significant discrepancy.
Districts must now show a significant amount of data detailing that research-based interventions and progress monitoring have been used as inherent pieces of this data collection. RtI is to include universal screening; research-based, high-quality differentiated instruction; scientific, research-based interventions of increasing intensity specific to the students’ deficit needs; and continuous progress monitoring to guide further instruction and interventions (Bradley, Danielson, & Doolittle, 2005). This is in contrast to the IQ-achievement discrepancy model in that RtI puts the emphasis on problem-solving through screening, differentiated instruction, interventions, and monitoring while the IQ discrepancy model relied on cognitive and educational achievement test scores before intervening with differentiated instruction, intervention programs, or monitoring of progress.

A review of current literature and state department information from all 50 states (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009) showed states at various levels of implementation of the RtI process. An overarching underpinning of research on RtI showed a lack of a clear definition of RtI itself and its effectiveness or detriment in determining specific learning disability eligibility. The literature revealed RtI is not new, but is being treated as such, since its specific inclusion in IDEA (Bender & Shores, 2007). The literature review spanned research on RtI, explaining different models and approaches to the process, and defined key concepts and theoretical frameworks within this topic, providing questions and implications for practice and research. The broad-based extant literature encompassed national proportions. Implications for practice and research need to be narrowed to particular state mandates and regulations for districts and schools.

Among the various RtI models are a variety of processes that may be implemented to provide instructional strategies for students who are at risk of failing. The use of Instructional
Consultation (IC) teams is one of these processes that details systematic interventions and progress monitoring to collect required data. It varies from the traditional RtI problem-solving process in that it provides shoulder-to-shoulder consultation with the teacher to improve and enhance teaching strategies affecting curriculum, which improves and enhances student achievement for many students, rather than direct service to one student (Gravois & Rosenfield, 2006).

**Statement of the Problem**

The phenomenon of this research study is the Instructional Consultation team problem-solving approach used within an RtI framework. Specifically, it is the implementation and divergence of the IC process in two elementary school buildings within the same district and how this divergence will affect implementation of the IC team initiative. Given the same trainings, teacher choice in use of the model, freedom to participate in further IC training, similar students, and many changes in leadership, the two buildings appeared to have traveled two different paths in the implementation stages of IC. What were the similarities and differences in their experiences with this model and why? The K–2nd-grade building was able to maintain the majority of the original team members, expanding the number of cases taken in, while the 3rd–5th-grade building struggled to organize a team.

In six years the K–2 building had three principals and the 3–5 building had four principals. Contributing to the differences within these two buildings could be that each principal brought his or her unique perspective and experiences to the staff and building, contributing to a building culture unique to the particular building. Do these factors contribute to the separate paths? Peshkin (1993) stated:
Evaluation, the last of my four categories, covers a vast territory of possibilities which encompasses much of what I have discussed in the above categories and subcategories, but which for now I will confine to *policies, practices, and innovations*: Have they been implemented? With what impact? What has the process been like? How do they work? For whom do they work? Are there exceptions? (p. 27)

To these questions that Peshkin posed, this research hopes to discover answers about the IC team implementation through a program analysis.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the qualitative study was to examine teacher and building leader understanding and perception of the IC team process as a means of understanding its implementation in a district. This study will help understand and inform how to effectively implement scientifically research-based intervention framework models to staff within districts so children receive the full benefits of the intervention model. As an instructional leader, it is this researcher’s duty to understand and be able to guide others in recognizing implementation flaws to minimize and/or eliminate those flaws in future processes.

**Significance of the Study**

This research departs from current and previous research in that it examines a particular component (IC) of a much larger framework (RtI) to understand if the concerns of implementation fidelity are specific to the particular problem-solving model (IC) or an overall implementation process breakdown due to other variables affecting IC. The research includes a literature review on teacher professional development in instruction, changing roles of teachers, building leader roles in student achievement and school improvement, organizational culture, and IC as one component of an RtI framework model. Researching these and other components,
such as teacher effect on instruction and interventions, as well as differentiated instruction, may offer insight into their effect on IC implementation fidelity. This study researched a component, IC teams, to determine its effect in identifying and supporting students with SLD in a particular district.

**Guiding Research Questions**

This study examined teacher and building leader understanding and perception of the IC team process as a means of understanding its implementation effectiveness in one district.

The following research questions guided this inquiry:

1. What factors affect IC team implementation?
2. To what extent does significant understanding of the IC team process, and the understanding of an RtI framework, affect staff and administration knowledge of the process for identification of a specific learning disability?

**Conceptual Framework for the Study**

Figure 1 captures the overall basic conceptual framework and focal point components within the study.
INSTRUCTIONAL CONSULTATION IMPLEMENTATION

INSTRUCTIONAL CONSULTATION MODEL

TEAM FORMED and TEAM TRAINING

Teacher Request
Student not making progress in ELA, math, or behavior for a period of time; teacher requests help

Regardless of outcome, teacher can request help for same or different students

Remain in core curriculum if progress made

Monitor: check for success/continue PM/change strategy if necessary

Referral for special education if minimal or no progress made

Monitor: check for success/change strategy/PM/check for progress

Team Receives Request
✓ Meets/discuss
✓ Case manager takes case

Contract: Gain Agreement
✓ CM/teacher: Gain shared perspective of student and assess strengths/weaknesses
✓ Strategies identified
✓ Progress monitoring

PRINCIPALS
✓ Leader role in student achievement
✓ Leader role in school improvement
✓ Leadership style
✓ Constructive-developmental theory

TEACHERS
✓ Instructional practices
  ➢ Professional development for instruction
  ➢ Differentiated instruction
  ➢ Changing roles
  ➢ Const.-dev. theory

BUILDING CULTURE
Organizational Theory

SLD
Cognitive theory
RtI

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the IC study.
In the overall conceptual framework map, each group, the principals and the teachers, are in separate, unique roles to the IC team. These roles then intertwine due to interactions the principals and teachers have with each other. How they see their roles affects not only their own perception of IC but also the perception that others may have.

When an intermediate school district or local school district decides to implement the use of IC teams as a delivery system of IC, training is commonly provided. Once district building teams complete initial training, teachers may request assistance. As assistance is requested by teachers, the IC team begins the process of case managers taking cases and meeting with the teachers; the case manager contracting with teachers and setting goals and strategies; teachers’ progress monitoring; and case managers assisting teachers with strategies and progress monitoring and checking for progress.

In the Conceptual Framework Map, principals and teachers are in separate, unique roles. The principals are leaders of students, teachers, and their buildings and need to be cognizant of how their leadership style and role affect each of these components. The teachers have changing roles, based on student needs, and therefore need to be cognizant of differentiated instruction and the role professional development has for instruction. Other key components to understand while studying the IC model are SLD, cognitive theory, and RtI, and the effect they may each have individually, intertwined with other pieces of the framework, and/or both.

The set of any or all of these interactions, intertwined with building culture, may have an overall effect on the implementation of any intervention process, whether it is IC teams or another problem-solving approach. How it has an effect on the implementation is a question the researcher wishes to answer through this dissertation research project.
Organization of Chapters 2–6

Chapter 2 presents the review of literature that grounds this study, containing a review and description of each of the key concepts and theories addressed in Figure 1 along with two other concepts—found as a result of the research—important to this study. Chapter 3 addresses a description and discussion of research design and methodology, including a restatement of the purpose of the study, guiding research questions, unit of analysis organizational characteristics, and profiles of each school. It also contains descriptions of the research instruments, sample, research bias, limitations, and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 contains findings, discussion, and summary of the school A findings, along with a restatement of the guiding research questions and a summary statement. Chapter 5 contains findings, discussion, and summary of the school B findings, along with a restatement of the guiding research questions and a summary statement. Chapter 6 includes a restatement of the purpose, guiding research questions, and summary of key findings. In its closing, it draws conclusions, makes recommendations, and discusses implications for future research.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Given the conceptual framework, Chapter 2 presents the Review of Literature that grounds this study, containing a review and description of each of the key concepts and theories addressed. The key concepts and theories addressed in this chapter include: 1) federal definition of specific learning disabilities; 2) cognitive theory; 3) Response to Intervention; 4) the special educator’s new role in regard to their position in an RtI framework; 5) the Instructional Consultation team model, including a sample case study; 6) building leaders’ effect on RtI and IC teams, including a) student achievement, b) school improvement, and c) leadership style; 7) teacher effect on RtI and IC teams, including constructive-developmental theory, a) professional development and b) differentiated instruction; 8) building and organizational culture, including organizational theory.

In Figure 1, the main components of this conceptual framework are the general IC process itself, building principals, teachers, and the building culture. Interwoven in the “principals and teachers” concepts is constructive-developmental theory, and in the “building culture” is organizational theory.

A review of the literature is necessary to understand components of the framework and definitions of key concepts within those components.

**Specific Learning Disabilities**

IDEA 2004 contains the same definition of specific learning disability as earlier versions of IDEA. The act states the definition as follows:

The term “specific learning disability” means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or
written, which disorder may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.

Such term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Such term does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. (Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, 2004)

Before IDEA 2004, a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and academic achievement in one or more of the following areas—oral expression, listening comprehension, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, written expression, mathematics reasoning, and mathematics calculation—needed to exist to be identified as eligible with a specific learning disability. Critics called the discrepancy model the “wait-and-fail model,” for students had to continue to fail before sufficiently large deficits met the definition of a severe discrepancy (Schatzneider et al., 2008). With the number of students being misidentified as specific learning disabled growing by 200% since 1977 (Berkeley et al., 2009), concern continued to mount with the discrepancy model of eligibility. IDEA 2004 said states and school districts were not required to use a severe discrepancy between ability and achievement to determine eligibility of SLD. The use of RtI became an acceptable alternative to identifying students with SLD.

Cognitive Theory

Cognitive theory is the basic premise for discussions entailing eligibility for SLD, the process of RtI, and comprehensive evaluation of cognitive assessments. Processing competencies and deficits, coupled with learning failures that are unexpected, is in essence a specific learning disability (Kavale, Kaufman, Naglieri, & Hale, 2005). Since 1977, significant numbers of
validated neuropsychological measures were used to identify children with SLD. There must have been a consistent pattern between cognitive and academic deficits, and a significant discrepancy must have been found between the students’ cognitive assets and deficits (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003). Research shows there is overlap between students eligible as SLD and students who are low achievers, claiming the ability-achievement discrepancy model does not differentiate between them (Fuchs et al., 2003). Further, research finds that the discrepancy model was applied inconsistently in terms of measurement and interpretation of scores. Research stated that the discrepancy approach failed to meet the needs of students who were not identified and failed to provide successful interventions through differentiated instruction (Hale, Kaufman, Naglieri, & Kavale, 2006).

RtI models, either standard or problem solving, continue to gain momentum among proponents seeking answers to federal and state mandates. Research states large populations of underachieving students, who otherwise might not be serviced and fall further behind, will receive research-based interventions and instruction preventing failure (Fuchs et al., 2003). Conceptually, the framework of research-based differentiated instruction and student progress monitoring greatly improves achievement standards and drives implementation of RtI in states and districts. Current research proposes using RtI and comprehensive evaluation in a multi-tiered approach in the prevention and intervention of learning difficulties and the identification of students with SLD (Fuchs et al., 2003). An underlying understanding of cognitive theory will help educators understand the variables of the discrepancy model, RtI, and IC, which will aide in providing differentiated instruction, tiered supports, and monitoring before implementation of any type of comprehensive evaluation for an SLD is sought.
Response to Intervention

With the reauthorization of IDEA 2004 came a provision for districts to implement an RtI framework as an alternative form of identifying students with a specific learning disability. RtI is to include universal screening; research-based, high-quality differentiated instruction; scientific, research-based interventions of increasing intensity specific to the students’ deficit needs; and continuous progress monitoring to guide further instruction and interventions (Bradley et al., 2005). It is when students do not respond to high-quality differentiated instruction and research-based interventions that then they may be considered at risk for eligibility as a student with a specific learning disability.

Literature on RtI suggests two models: the problem-solving model and the standard protocol model. The problem-solving model (Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2006) addresses the student’s specific needs with a specific, research-based intervention. Typically an intervention team defines the problem, plans the intervention, implements the intervention, and progress monitors the intervention (Fuchs et al., 2003). The standard protocol model gives research-based standardized interventions to groups of students with similar deficits for a specific period of time (Johnson et al., 2006).

Each of these models is done through a tiered approach of interventions. Berkeley et al. (2009) researched the progress of RtI in all 50 states and found that most states have adopted a three-tier model. When visualizing this model, it typically consists of three tiers, from bottom to top, in the shape of a triangle. Tier 1 is the core curriculum, in which 80% of the student population should be able to succeed. Tier 2 is in addition to Tier 1 and represents a percentage of students, 15%, who struggle in the core curriculum, needing strategic research-based interventions to succeed. Tier 3 is for those students, 5% of the student population, who require
intensive interventions and supports to gain access to and have success in the core content.

Figure 2 depicts a visual representation of the typical three-tier model.
Figure 2. Typical three-tier Response to Intervention model.

Core Curriculum

Tier I:
80% of students able to access/succeed in core

Tier II: 15% need strategic interventions

Tier III: 5% need intensive interventions
All of the three-tier models vary slightly in descriptions and meaning. Often this provides confusion for districts when transient students have been in a process in one district and move to another, finding tiers and eligibility do not match (Berkeley et al., 2009). For example, does the referral for special education happen at the end of Tier 2 as they enter Tier 3, or do students enter Tier 3, and after no response to interventions at Tier 3, a referral is processed? There were no clear guidance measures in place to answer this question. Gravois and Rosenfield (2006) suggested implementing IC teams at Tier 2 if schools choose to use the problem-solving approach; however, other districts may choose the standard-protocol approach.

Two major differences exist at Tier 2 between the two approaches. The problem-solving approach uses a team approach for making instructional decisions and uses a variety and a multiple number of interventions per student. The standard-protocol approach leaves the instructional decision making to the interventionist. This person uses a standard protocol and delivers one standard intervention. Both types of approaches are similar at Tier 1 and Tier 3. At Tier 1, both approaches use a universal screener (class-wide assessment) to identify any struggling readers. Students are then progress-monitored frequently to assess performance and rate of improvement. At Tier 3, both approaches also ensure that students with insufficient progress receive more intensive interventions and most likely a referral for special education services.

There is no clear guideline to determine which approach is most appropriate for varying local school districts (Berkeley et al., 2009). Districts and schools must read the literature to objectively evaluate their system of RtI to determine using a problem-solving or standard protocol approach to make improvements and changes as necessary.
Reynolds and Shaywitz (2009) voiced concern that RtI is being used as the only method of diagnosis of SLD, leaving out a part of the federal requirement altogether of needing a comprehensive evaluation. Being identified as a student with a specific learning disability, or not being identified when one should, could be life changing. Definitive procedural guidance, with clear communication, should guide such decisions to help avoid mistakes. Without this guidance, the fidelity of implementation of RtI and IC may be lacking (Reynolds & Shaywitz, 2009).

Schatschneider et al. (2008) questioned the reliability of identifying a student as having a specific learning disability using RtI due to variables in teacher quality, teacher instruction, and the validity of interventions. According to Borko (2004), research concerning teacher professional development—what and how teachers learn from professional development and the effect it has on student learning—is “relatively young,” leaving a gap and a serious need in this area as we forge ahead with multiple education reforms.

**Special Educators’ New Role**

NCLB 2001 and IDEA 2004 both require improving the achievement outcomes of all students by using scientifically based instructional practices. IDEA 2004 adds to its previous eligibility requirements for SLD by including language for the use of RtI as a method of determining said disability. Implementation of RtI will assist districts in meeting the needs of all students and improve achievement outcomes to reach yearly standards put in place by NCLB known as Adequate Yearly Progress. With their specialized training in differentiated instruction, individualized interventions, and progress-monitoring techniques, special educators are gold mines of unique assets: They are prepared to assist districts and schools with RtI implementation and to improve access to the educational curriculum for all students, in contrast to their previous
role of providing it only for a particular group of identified special education students (Cummings, Atkins, Allison, & Cole, 2008).

Cummings et al. (2008) compared and contrasted the roles of special educators in an RtI context in the following chart (p. 25):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Historical Context</th>
<th>RtI Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Starting point is typically when a student is referred for special education evaluation</td>
<td>Starting point is before there are serious learning problems (universal screening)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing Instruments</td>
<td>Summative (single point) assessment, typically using global achievements</td>
<td>Formative (multiple measures using different but equivalent test forms) assessment of a student’s learning over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Provide intensive instruction to a relatively stable group of students within a given year</td>
<td>Provide differentiated instruction to a variety of students; grouping is flexible and dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Environment</td>
<td>Somewhat isolated. Work with general educators is relatively infrequent</td>
<td>Collaborative Consultation with educators and specialists within a building is required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cummings et al. (2008) stated it is not so much that the role changes, but rather the specific skill set within the role broadens. Special educators will assist teachers in classrooms with earlier identification of students’ deficit areas; provide scientific, research-based instructional strategies and differentiated instruction; provide and collect progress-monitoring data; and provide consultation when students fail to respond.

Working together in this RtI model provides all students the opportunity to access the whole curriculum in the least restrictive environment. Further, it has potential to prevent either misidentification and/or over-identification of students with SLD. Current special educators often perceive the implementation of RtI as a threat to their job security in that RtI is touted as a
“fix” for the over-identification of students with learning disabilities (Cummings et al., 2008). Looking at the needs of a district when implementing RtI, special educators are a highly valued asset given their skills in differentiated instruction, progress monitoring, and individualized instructional strategies. Special educators should focus on helping all students achieve to their potential in the least-restrictive environment; and for those students who have significant needs, it is an opportunity to provide the intense, individualized, high quality instructional strategies that special education students need (Cummings et al., 2008).

**Instructional Consultation**

What is IC? What is its purpose? Why do we use it in our schools?

From the experts, Kaiser, Rosenfield, and Gravois (2009), the following paragraph describes the specific characteristics and primary goal of IC:

IC is a school-based consultation model developed by Rosenfield (1987, 2008) that represents a form of consultee-centered consultation. IC is characterized by a collaborative problem-solving process to address both academic and behavioral referral concerns of teachers. The primary goal of IC is to create and maintain student success within the general education classroom by enhancing the capacity of the teacher to provide empirically supported instruction and management techniques for students who are at risk. The underlying assumptions of IC hold that to facilitate the learning of all students, a) the instructional match, teacher-student relationship, and the setting are the focus of problem solving, and b) a strong problem-solving and learning community in the school is the foundation for professional and student success. Thus, teacher professional development is a critical component of the process. (p. 446)
Another underlying assumption of the IC problem-solving approach is to frame the problem solving around the teacher-student instructional match and not around the specific student. In many previous at-risk student identification problem-solving processes, teams of school personnel tried to fix the student by pulling the student out of the core curriculum, presenting the student with specific remediation strategies in isolation by an “expert,” often without collection of valuable progress monitoring data. “Rather than viewing the problem as a student deficiency, or worse still, as a defect in a student’s ability to learn, it is preferred that the problem be viewed as an inadequate match between the student and the setting” (Rosenfield & Gravois, 1996, as cited in Gravois, Gickling, & Rosenfield, 2007, p. 36).

The IC problem-solving process involves the student’s teacher and consultants working collaboratively to improve student performance through a series of stages of the process. Deficit thinking has been described as placing the blame for low achievement on the student rather than on the educational system with which they are in (Cooper, 2006). It makes the student the problem. IC takes the focus off the student being the problem that needs to be fixed and examines all aspects of instruction and curriculum.

When an ISD or local school district decides to implement the use of IC teams as a delivery system of instructional consultation, training is commonly provided. Once initial training is completed with district building teams, teachers may request assistance. As assistance is requested by teachers, the IC team begins the process of case managers taking cases and meeting with the teachers; case managers and teachers contracting, doing instructional assessments, setting goals, and designing strategies; teachers progress monitoring; and case managers assisting with strategies and progress monitoring and checking for progress. Figure 3
visualizes the key concepts of this process in a concept map. A detailed description follows the map, providing key terms, steps, and concepts of IC.
Figure 3. Conceptual framework of IC process.
The goal of IC teams is to enhance, improve, and increase student and staff performance. The objectives of an IC team are to develop a systematic support network within each building, including the trained IC team; enhance teachers’ skills in and application of best practices of instructional assessment and delivery; develop school-wide norms of collaboration and problem solving; and utilize data for classroom and school decisions (Gravois, Gickling, & Rosenfield, 2002).

According to Gravois, Gickling, and Rosenfield (2002), the following critical dimensions of the IC team are necessary for the process to work to its potential in any given building.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative consultation process for problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative working relationship between case manager and teacher based upon the use of reflective communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stages of problem solving:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Entry and contracting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Problem identification and analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Intervention design and planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Intervention implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Intervention evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Closure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment: Curriculum-based and behavioral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery System Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structures by which the collaborative consultation process is delivered and maintained within a school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team functioning: representative team membership that meets weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearly articulated process for requesting assistance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Brief request-for-assistance form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Referring teacher becomes a part of the problem-solving process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Active administration support and participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of case management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation of cases and student progress:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Student Documentation Form (SDF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ System tracking form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In any given IC team there are key roles and specific functions for each of those roles (Gravois et al., 2007). One of the first key roles on an IC team is the team facilitator. This person
receives advanced training and coaching in the IC process, is in charge of introducing and
initiating the IC process within the school building, provides aid to students by supporting their
classroom teachers, facilitates professional training for all staff members, and supports/trains the
IC team members.

Another key role is the IC team. Members of the team could include general education
teachers, special education teachers, administrators, school psychologists, school counselors,
health providers, social workers, and possibly others. The key function of any IC team member is
to provide systematic support to teachers who have requested assistance by utilizing the IC case
management model. They also assist in aligning school resources, such as paraeducators or
materials for student and teacher support. The goal of the building administrator is to establish a
clear vision for objectively reviewing and aligning curriculum and instructional practices,
maintain the integrity of the IC process, and become an active participant of the team by taking
cases (Gravois et al., 2002).

Steps that are included within the IC model process are as follows. A set of training
modules teaches team members specific information about each step (Gravois et al., 2002).

**The IC process.**

*Step 1: Request for assistance (part of contracting).* The first step in beginning the IC
process on a student who is struggling within a classroom is the teacher’s request for help. This
step is voluntary however highly recommended in buildings that have adopted the IC process as
their intervention problem-solving model. Without the teacher’s request for assistance, the
process cannot begin. One of the dimensions of the delivery system is a “clearly articulated
process for requesting assistance,” including a brief request-for-assistance form, the referring
teacher becoming a part of the problem-solving process, and active administration support and participation. Below is a sample request-for-assistance form (Gravois et al., 2007).
Teacher: _____________________________________________

Date: _______________________________________________

I need assistance with:

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

I am available to meet (times and location):

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Does the parent(s) share your concern? Please circle.

Yes          No          Don’t know

Figure 4. Sample request-for-assistance form.
Once the teacher completes the request-for-assistance form and delivers it to the IC facilitator, the next step of the process begins.

**Step 2: Team member volunteers as case manager (part of contracting).** During this step the IC team meets and reviews the referring teacher’s request for assistance. Based on case manager caseloads, repertoire with the teacher, and experience on the team, a team member volunteers to be the case manager. Critical to this step is the case manager’s ability to effectively use collaborative and reflective communication skills, ability to use the systematic problem-solving process, and the ability to perform instructional and behavioral assessments (Gravois et al., 2002). Once the team member has agreed to be the case manager, the case manager reaches out to the referring teacher for step 3.

**Step 3: Contract for professional collaboration.** During this step the purpose of the contracting stage is to introduce the referring teacher to the problem-solving model and gain agreement to work in professional collaboration with the case manager. Again, as it was at step 1, this step is a choice for the referring teacher. Once the referring teacher learns of the problem-solving process, he or she must make an informed decision about whether to participate with the case manager. If the referring teacher declines to participate, the case is closed. If the referring teacher agrees to participate, the case manager and the referring teacher sign a contract, and they proceed to the next step. A sample contract, adapted from Gravois et al. (2007), follows in Figure 5 (Ionia Intermediate School District, 2007).
**Instructional Consultation Roles and Responsibilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Case Manager</strong></th>
<th><strong>Teacher</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully explain the IC process and guide the case through the problem-solving process</td>
<td>Collaborate and communicate with the case manager to clarify the focus of the problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help clarify the focus of problem solving and the teacher’s concern(s) (student/instruction/task)</td>
<td>Remain the primary contact with the parents and inform them of your concerns, strategies put into place, and their child’s progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate with and support the teacher requesting assistance</td>
<td>In collaboration with your case manager, record the student’s baseline data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete instructional assessments with the teacher to examine what the student can do and where to begin instruction</td>
<td>Meet the case manager weekly to continue problem solving and/or share student data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate with the teacher to create and implement specific, research-based interventions</td>
<td>Implement the intervention as agreed upon by the case manager and yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete the Student Documentation Form (SDF) with the teacher and bring the SDF to weekly meetings to make changes, add information, or record weekly data</td>
<td>Collect progress data to share with your case manager at weekly meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize and schedule a case review or problem solving with the IC team if the teacher and case manager are stuck</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Knowing what IC requires from both the case manager and teacher, do you agree to enter into this process? If yes, please sign below indicating your dedication to the process, your teaching, and student.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case manager</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_____________</td>
<td>______________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 5. Sample contract between case manager and teacher.
**Step 4: Problem identification/analysis.** The purpose of step 4 is to gain a shared perspective of the referring teacher’s concerns about the student, assess the student’s strengths and weaknesses, collect data, and set baseline goals. Concerns should be stated in an observable and measurable term. In order to measure the area of concern, the teacher and case manager need to establish a baseline of current performance levels and set goals. To do this, they conduct three instructional assessments to obtain explicit knowledge of teacher concerns and student strengths and weaknesses. The case manager may spend anywhere from one to eight sessions gathering information to identify the concern, determine classroom and instructional practices that may affect the concern, and collect current student data. Data in this sense of the term is classroom-based and directly related to the teacher’s concern and not a standardized test score. This step accounts for 80% to 90% of the work of an IC case (Gravois et al., 2002).

**Step 5: Strategy/intervention design.** The goal of step 5 is to collaboratively develop interventions based on best instructional and management practices that target specific areas of the previously set goals. Once a clearly defined problem statement has been identified, the case manager and the referring teacher review the data collected to try to understand the gap between the student’s current performance and the teacher’s desired performance for the student. Together the case manager and teacher examine possible strategies, instructional techniques, or delivery that might help the student reach the set goal. The case manager and teacher may also ask other team members for assistance or resources available. Even though the goal is set for a particular student, this stage is also used to develop practices that the teacher can comfortably implement and can be embedded within the general education classroom (Gravois et al., 2002).

**Step 6: Strategy/intervention implementation.** The purpose of step 6 is to ensure actual and accurate implementation of the agreed-upon strategies that the case manager and teacher
developed in step 5. Here the case manager supports the teacher to ensure that the teacher puts all aspects of the intervention strategies into practice within the classroom. It is also the case manager’s duty to work with the teacher to find solutions to concerns that arise during the implementation step.

**Step 7: Strategy/intervention evaluation.** During step 7 the teacher and case manager evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies or interventions that target the specific area of the identified concern. In this step, they establish specific meetings to monitor student progress and to compare progress with the baseline and goals that were set in step 4. The teacher shares the responsibility to collect, chart, and analyze data to make it more meaningful to herself. Any decisions to continue, change, or terminate a strategy or interventions are expected to be based on the progress monitoring data.

**Step 8: Follow-up/redesign/closure.** At step 8 the purpose is to conclude the IC collaborative contract between the teacher and case manager around the original concerns if the goals have been met. Gravois et al. (2002) stated three criteria for closing a case: success in meeting the agreed-upon goals; teacher comfort in continuing the strategies developed when appropriate; and success in fading the strategies developed so that the student is able to progress within the general class with little or no additional support when appropriate. The case manager and teacher will meet and review progress toward the established goals and jointly make the decision to close the case if appropriate. At the end of a closed case, the teacher, the case manager, and the system manager (facilitator) receive copies of the case. Most times a case summary is completed to provide information to parents, future teachers, and relevant staff. Figure 6 contains a sample summary form (Gravois et al., 2002).
INSTRUCTIONAL CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Student name: ___________________________ Date of summary: ________________
Teacher name: _______________________ Grade: _____ School: _________________________

Instructional Consultation (IC) is a problem-solving process used to assist school personnel in adjusting instruction and in adapting the educational environment to benefit staff and students. The teacher requested assistance from _____________Elementary School’s IC team on ___________________.

During consultation with the case manager, the concern was identified as:

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

The following interventions were developed and implemented:

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

The results of the interventions were:

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

___The teacher and case manager recommend continuation of interventions for the _____school year.

___Consultation was terminated on the following date: ______________________

State reason:

____________________________________________________________________________________

Referring teacher: _______________________________ Case manager: _________________________

CC: Student CA folder

CC: IC student records/teacher/case manager

Figure 6. IC sample summary form.
**Step 9: Minimal or no progress.** In the event that a student makes minimal or no progress on the goals set specifically for him or her between the teacher and case manager, the teacher and case manager can use the data collected through the process to establish new goals or determine to approach the IC facilitator about a referral for special education. In the event that the case manager and the teacher jointly agree to refer the case to the IC facilitator, the IC facilitator will then process the information with the building administrator and district special education director during an evaluation planning meeting.

*Evaluation planning meeting.* During an evaluation planning meeting, the IC facilitator consults with the building principal and special education director that a referral for special education is possible. The facilitator reviews case notes and the progress made or lack thereof. The facilitator then consults with and gathers information from other teachers the student may have, parents, and itinerant staff such as a school social worker, speech therapist, occupational or physical therapist, school psychologist, or possibly the autism team, who may become a part of the evaluation process.

*Referral process.* After data are collected, a school psychologist or IC facilitator completes the Request for Evaluation of Existing Data (REED) form. The facilitator secures parent agreement with signature(s) and provides the parent a copy of the Special Education Procedural Safeguards and Prior Written Notice form. At this time the special education director assigns a Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) representative to the case to monitor the evaluation process timelines and procedures. In the case of a suspected SLD, a school psychologist typically assumes this role.

*Timeline and individualized education planning meeting.* Once a parent has signed the REED, a school district has 30 school days to complete the evaluation. If for some reason the
evaluation team cannot meet the deadline or the child/parent becomes ill and the student is not available, an extension agreement can be made between the parent and the school district to extend the original 30-day timeline (IDEA, 2004).

On or before the 30 school days have passed, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting must be held to discuss the evaluation results and whether the student is eligible for services. Required participants for this meeting include the parents, general education teacher, special education provider, building or district administrator, and the evaluators, including the MET representative. At this IEP meeting, each evaluator and teachers discuss results. Parents are also asked to give any further information or reports they may have. A recommendation is then made for eligibility based on these combined results and criteria for eligibility through IDEA and Michigan Special Education Administrative Rules and Regulations (IDEA, 2004).

Results. If the student is found eligible for services under one of the 13 eligibility categories, an IEP is written to provide specific programs and services that go above and beyond the general education setting and curriculum to provide access to that curriculum. Once the IEP is written and the offer of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is offered, and parents have signed, the IEP services can begin. If a parent does not sign the IEP or the child is found ineligible, the teacher has the option of requesting assistance from the IC team (IDEA, 2004).

The phenomenon of the IC model case process is at the core of this research. To gain a concrete understanding of this process, I present a sample IC. It will follow the same step outline as previously presented in this chapter.
Sample IC case.

**Step 1: Request for assistance.** Teacher A voluntarily requests assistance on the request-for-assistance form on February 18, 2011. The primary concerns for this teacher about this student, Student A, are “overall reading, in particular, word recognition, decoding CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant) words, number sense and writing.” Student A is in first grade and 7 years, 9 months old. Teacher A is able and willing to meet any day during his prep time and before or after school.

**Step 2: Team member volunteers as case manager.** During the IC team meeting the request-for-assistance form is discussed and a case manager volunteers to take the case.

**Step 3: Contract for professional collaboration.** Case manager approaches Teacher A about a convenient time to meet. The case manager presents the teacher with a copy of “Problem Solving Stages and Contracting,” which outlines the IC steps so that he may follow along as they discuss the collaborative steps they will work through together. Together they review these steps (steps 1 through 8 as described earlier in this document) and clarify each step for the teacher. The teacher is then asked if he agrees to enter into the process in collaboration with the case manager for the benefit of the teacher, the student, and the process. Teacher A agrees to contract with the case manager and signs the contract on March 10, 2011.

In steps 1 through 3, a potential communication issue may arise at both the request for assistance phase and/or the contract for professional collaboration phase. In some instances, due to the nature of IC being of teacher choice to participate, some teachers may choose not to participate, therefore essentially “ending” any possible communication about a particular struggling student with a team member. Teachers may choose not to participate for a variety of reasons. In the professional collaboration phase, after reviewing the contract and conversing
about the strategies that will be employed once they jointly sign the collaboration contract, the teacher may choose for a variety of reasons not to sign the contract. This, too, will end any further possible communication about strategies and interventions to use with the struggling student in the classroom.

**Step 4: Problem identification/analysis.** Beginning on March 10, 2011, and in subsequent meetings, the teacher and case manager collaboratively work together to gain a shared perspective of the teacher’s concerns and to gather instructional practices and classroom-based data to assess the student’s strengths and weaknesses. The teacher and case manager review data from classroom assessments and universal screeners, such as the DIBELS. The student shows weaknesses in the areas of overall word recognition, decoding CVC words, number sense and writing. Together, over a period of time, they prioritize his four concerns that he had brought forth on the request-for-assistance form. Teacher A, on his own within the classroom, is able to change a few instructional practices with Student A and successfully resolves the CVC concern with the student. Both the case manager and Teacher A agree word recognition is a top priority, because without the ability to read, it is difficult to move forward. Writing and number sense can be addressed later.

During this stage, the case manager and Teacher A do a “three-trial method” to determine a baseline of the words that Student A knows. During a three-trial method, this student is given words from the pre-primer (PP) through first-grade Dolch word lists because his word recognition is very low. The total number of words in this combined list is 133. During the first trial, the student is given all 133 words. The teacher shows the student a word card. If the student knows the word, it goes into the “known” pile. If the student doesn’t know a word, it goes in the “unknown” pile. During the second trial, the word cards from the “known” pile only are shown
to the student. Again, if the student recognizes the word, it goes into a “known” pile. If the student is unable to recognize it during the second trial, it goes in the “unknown” pile. This process is then repeated one more time for the third trial. From this information a baseline is determined, a goal is set, and a graph with an aim line is started for data collection later in the process.

Student A knows 24 out of 133 PP through first-grade Dolch words using the three-trial method. The short-term goal set in collaboration by the case manager and Teacher A is for Student A to learn five new words per week for a total of 54/133 known PP through first-grade Dolch words at the end of the six-week intervention period. The 54 is derived from the baseline of 24 original known words plus five new words each week times a six-week intervention schedule, adding 30 new words to his original 24 known words.

During this step, being that 80-90% of the teams’ and teachers’ time and effort is spent in this step of the process (Gravois et al., 2002), ongoing and open communication between the case manager and teacher is very helpful to the process. A potential issue in IC is when or if the communication breaks down or is nonexistent. (Gravois et al., 2002).

**Step 5: Strategy/intervention design.** On March 17, 2011, the case manager introduces and teaches the incremental rehearsal strategy to Teacher A and his paraeducator as both adults work with Student A. Incremental rehearsal is a reading strategy taught to case managers during IC-specific training. Incremental rehearsal is when a student is presented with flashcards containing unknown words in a group of known words. It has been shown presenting unknown information along with known information allows for high rates of success in increasing retention of the unknown items. With incremental rehearsal there is a model procedure to follow, which is summarized below.
Incremental rehearsal procedure. The student is presented material on a 90% known to a 10% unknown ratio during the practice periods with words at an instructional level.

1. Identify nine words at the student’s instructional level that the student can read quickly. These would be considered the known pile.
2. Identify 10 words the student cannot read quickly. These would be considered the student’s “unknown” pile.
3. Using nine words from the known pile and one word from the unknown pile, present the first known word and have the student read it aloud.
4. Present the unknown word and read it aloud, having the student repeat the word.
5. Give the next known word and have the student read it aloud, followed by the unknown. If the student errs or waits longer than two to three seconds, the teacher should state the word aloud then prompt the student to state the word. This rotation should continue until the student can answer all cards within the two- to three-second timeframe per word.
6. Once an unknown becomes a known, an “old” known can be removed from the known pile and the “new” known (a previous unknown) can be placed in the known pile.
7. You may then add in a new unknown word and start the process again at step 3.

This strategy is implemented March 17 and is used continuously with Student A, except for snow days (March 24, 2011) and spring vacation (April 1–8) until this student’s IC case is closed.

**Step 6: Strategy/intervention implementation.** At step 6 the case manager continues to monitor that the intervention agreed upon by the case manager and teacher is being implemented
with fidelity. On March 30, 2011, the manager meets with Teacher A and the paraeducator who state that although they had just begun the strategy, it seems to be “going well” with Student A. The following week is spring vacation.

In a more challenging case where perhaps the student isn’t making as fast a rate of progress, ongoing and open communication along with data review may be needed between the teacher and case manager, as it was in step 4, before moving into step 7. A breakdown in communication may make it difficult for the process to continue and to know whether the strategies could have helped the student.

**Step 7: Strategy/intervention evaluation.** At step 7 the case manager and teacher evaluate how well the strategy is working for the teacher and student. In this case, the manager and Teacher A are pleasantly surprised with Student A’s progress. On April 19—only three weeks into the six-week period and with a one-week vacation in that time period—Student A now knows 41 words. When the case manager and Teacher A meet on April 28, the data plotted show Student A has gained six more known words for a total of 47 words.

**Step 8: Follow-up/redesign/closure.** The case manager and Teacher A meet on May 10 to do the final data plots from the last two weeks. Data show that on May 4, the student was at 52 known words, and on May 10, Student A has a total of 58 known words, four known words over the original goal the case manager and Teacher A had set for Student A at step 4.

At this point, the case manager and Teacher A feel success for the teacher, for the student, and for the collaborative IC process. Teacher A continues to use the incremental rehearsal strategy through the end of the school year and the closure of the IC case on Student A. The case manager and Teacher A complete the IC summary form and place copies of it in Student A’s cumulative file, the IC facilitator’s office, and Teacher A’s files.
For sample purposes this was a rather simple case. Many other cases are not as simple and do not always show such great progress.

In regard to the research at hand, the problematic communication areas addressed after steps 1–3, 4, and 6 are important to address. These are all areas in which understanding how communication becomes problematic among the individual variables within the conceptual framework will help in understanding the effects it has on IC model implementation.

For teachers and students in which progress is minimal, even with a change in strategies, it would then be time to implement step 9, which is the end of IC and the beginning of a special education evaluation.

Building Leaders’ Effect on RtI and IC Teams

**Student achievement.** What is the role of the principal? How should principals spend their time? What should be their primary concern? How has that role changed since the role of the principal was introduced to American education?

According to Lashway (2003) the influx and growth of standards-based accountability intensified those questions. In his research, Lashway quoted the following additions to the principals’ role according to the Institute for Educational Leadership (2000):

Principals today must also serve as leaders for student learning. They must know academic content and pedagogical techniques. They must work with teachers to strengthen skills. They must collect, analyze, and use data in ways that fuel excellence. They must rally students, teachers, parents, local health and family service agencies, youth development groups, local businesses and other community residents and partners around the common goal of raising student performance. And they must have the
leadership skills and knowledge to exercise the autonomy and authority to pursue these strategies. (para. 3)

As the standards-based era continues to push forward with the reauthorization of NCLB, groups such as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium and the National Association of Elementary School Principals have risen to the occasion and have provided contemporary guidelines for professional standards that policymakers, university professors, and practitioners can agree upon. These standards are often used to guide principal preparation programs in most states (Lashway, 2003).

**School improvement.** As Lashway (2003) implied, principals are not only held accountable for overall building operations and managerial tasks, they are also held accountable for high-stakes items such as student academic achievement and success and the school improvement process within their building. Research literature shows that buildings in which principals appeared to be more directly engaged with teachers and the implementation of new methods, the more apt teachers were to be consistent in using the innovation than in buildings in which the principals seemed to be less involved (Rutherford, Hall, Hord, & Huling, 1983). This literature also showed that schools with supportive principals had a higher rate of teachers implementing the new program than those schools who felt their principals were not supportive of the new method (Rutherford et al., 1983). Also key in this literature were the definitions of words such as “successful,” “supportive,” and “engaged” as they were used to describe the principals.

Determining the most important priority role of what the principal leadership position should entail remains to be debated and clarified. During this time of debate and clarification, principals need support from other administrators and to be engaged in their own learning to
provide the support and engagement that teachers need for successful school improvement in their buildings.

**Leadership style.** One of the underlying questions of this research involves the degree of impact that a building leader’s leadership style may have on student achievement and school improvement during the implementation of the IC process. Research literature is scant in the area of leadership style as a change facilitator for school improvement. According to Hall, Rutherford, Hord, and Huling (1984), the reason for this is the inability to accurately describe the attributes such as style and behavior. Hall et al. stated that the words have been used interchangeably even when there were no clear definitions of either attribute.

In their research and review of other studies that produced somewhat similar results to each other, Hall et al. determined three operational definitions of three different leadership styles in regard to school improvement (Hall et al., 1984). These three styles were the Initiator, the Manager, and the Responder. The Initiators had clear, long-range goals that drove their school improvement process for their building. These goals were based on current knowledge of classroom practice and knowledge of student needs. Initiators set high expectations in reaching these goals not only for themselves but also for students, staff, parents, and community.

A key difference between the Initiators and the Managers was just that: The Initiators initiate, while the Managers tended to support whatever innovation was determined to be needed, but they did not initiate the change. They needed direction and guidance from other administrators, such as curriculum directors.

Responders allowed teachers to take the lead on change and tended to believe their role was to do the traditional administrative tasks of the principal. Responders also tended to think with short-term goals rather than long-term school improvement goals (Hall et al., 1984). An
interesting implication presented from this study by Hall et al. (1984) pertained to the “climate” of the building. The researchers wondered if leadership style affected the climate of the building.

Understanding the various types of leadership styles of building principals may help one to understand how these different styles affect the implementation of current or new programs, such as the IC process, and why it may have diverged in these two buildings. Principals with an Initiator leadership style may be very enthusiastic and drive their school improvement process yet still not support IC because they have been trained in other intervention problem-solving framework supports. Principals of the Manager leadership style may approach it from the standpoint of stating their support; however, they do not initiate any of the changes nor will they become active participants in the IC process.

One of the delivery system variables of IC is “active administration support and participation” (Gravois et al., 2007). If the principal is one of such leadership style that does not become supportive or active in the process, teachers may feel abandoned in the initial implementation, resisting further use of the process. Research literature shows that buildings in which principals appeared to be more directly engaged with teachers and the implementation of new programs, the more apt teachers were to be in implementing and being consistent in using the program than in buildings in which principals seemed to be less involved (Rutherford et al., 1983).

It is also a possibility from a constructive-developmental theory point of view that building principals operate under the same parameters as teachers concerning learning styles and may unknowingly bring this dimension into the mix of the building culture or teacher roles within their buildings. IC asks the building principals to participate in the IC process at the same level as their building teacher by going through the same training and taking an IC case, which is
not a typical role of an administrator’s position in a building. This may make building principals uncomfortable and feel like they are relinquishing their authoritative or leadership position with teaching staff.

**Teachers’ Effect on RtI and IC Teams**

Kegan’s constructive-developmental theory (as cited in Drago-Severson, 2009) explains the importance of understanding the different ways adults learn. Constructive-developmental theory focuses on the adult as a “meaning-maker” of experiences, taking into consideration cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal experiences (Drago-Severson, 2009). The theory focuses on how these pieces interact and intertwine with one another, leading us to understanding ourselves and others. In the realm of teachers, understanding others would be to understand their students in their own classrooms.

One important facet constructive-developmental theory acknowledges is that development is not necessarily based on intelligence. This distinction is made between transformational learning and informational learning. Informational learning is simply gaining skills and knowledge, further increasing what we know. Transformational learning changes how a person knows, which can help adults understand complexities in life, such as their students and classrooms.

Key to the constructive-developmental theory is learning and understanding the adults’ current way of knowing, as it is what forms how a person interprets his or her experiences. As educators often describe “meeting the students where they are and moving them forward,” constructive-developmental theory applies this to adult learning and growth as well.

Understanding Kegan’s stages of development and the processes involved in moving from one way of knowing to the next may help one to understand and frame barriers to change in
instruction and strategies. It is through this lens that teacher instruction, staff professional
development, changing roles of teachers, and leader role in school improvement will be viewed.

**Professional development.** As educational reform continues to take grasp on our
educational system, demands are being placed on teachers to improve the quality of their
instruction to meet the high standards-based accountability mandates. The No Child Left Behind
Act (NCLB) of 2001 mandates that states need to ensure the availability of high-quality
professional development for all teachers. It does not, however, address specifically what this
entails concerning defining high-quality and quantity of professional development. It does not
address how this component, linked to student success, would differ from previous one- to five-
day workshops that are content-specific and do not address the ever-changing student learning
styles. Furthermore, it does not address one of the challenges teachers face in confronting the
ever-changing student learning styles: changing their own learning and teaching style.

Typically we teach the way we were taught and we learn the way we were taught to learn.
Most of our education has been teacher-directed learning rather than independent learning,
therefore, most teachers have difficulty leaving the front of the classroom to model collaborative
instructional techniques (Buchler, 2003). As we ponder the effect teacher professional
development has on student learning and success, our focus needs to address the issue of
defining “high-quality” professional development. What exactly does that mean? Walker-
Dalhouse, and Risko, (2009) stated:

Professional Development is essential when implementing any systematic change. For
RtI, in particular, communication and shared decision making is essential (Haager &
Mahdavi, 2007). Classroom teachers need sustained support in their efforts to monitor
student progress and determine effectiveness of instruction, in determining how to use
daily observational data to identify modifications that may be required (Richards, Pavri, Golez, Cagnes, & Murphy, 2007), and determining how to address time management. (p. 86)

Walker-Dalhouse & Risko (2009) further stated:

On-going professional development is needed with attention to instruction, materials, and assessments that are especially appropriate for students with cultural and linguistic differences (Drame & Xu, 2008). A problem-solving model that emphasizes one-to-one professional development and facilitation by a designated case manager, preferably a reading specialist, is recommended to teach teachers more effective classroom intervention strategies. For example, the problem-solving, team-driven approach (Gravois & Rosenfield, 2006) which employs instructional consultation teams was found to be effective in reducing the number of African American, special education referrals and proposed as one way to help teachers differentiate instruction based on socio-cultural factors. Traditional in-service professional development programs that are unresponsive to these factors will not help teachers gain the knowledge and skills needed to provide high-quality instruction for all students, especially culturally and linguistically diverse students (Xu & Drame, 2008). (p. 86)

**Differentiated instruction.** Proponents of RtI believe differentiated instruction plays a vital role and link to high-quality instruction and in keeping students in the general education curriculum (Murawski & Hughes, 2009). Gartin, Murdick, Imbeau, and Perner (2002) defined differentiated instruction as “the planning of curriculum and instruction using strategies that address student strengths, interests, skills, and readiness in flexible learning environments” (pp. 1–8).
Tomlinson (2000) defined differentiated instruction broadly as “a way of thinking about teaching and learning” (p. 6). The premise of differentiated instruction is not individualized instruction for each child within a classroom; rather, it incorporates the following beliefs:

- students differ in their readiness to learn;
- students differ in their readiness significantly enough to affect their learning;
- students learn best with high expectations and support from adults;
- students learn best when material is connected to their interests and experiences;
- students learn best in a safe community; and
- schools must maximize each student’s capacity (Gartin et al., 2002).

According to Tomlinson the key to differentiated instruction was the relationship between the curriculum and instruction and using the essential elements of content, process, intended product, and learning environment. To identify appropriate instructional strategies as part of data-based instructional planning, a comprehensive assessment is needed (Walker-Dalhouse & Risko, 2009). Some districts are using one assessment tool to screen, plan for instruction, and progress monitor. Teachers also use running records and reading inventories for additional data. Assessment tools that are ongoing and assess more than one set of skills are best for meeting RtI standards (Walker-Dalhouse & Risko, 2009).

Once content is presented in numerous ways keying in to student interests or learning styles, students are often able to learn the curriculum that was previously difficult to learn (Tomlinson, 2000). To differentiate curriculum content, a variety of materials should be considered during planning, such as multisensory inputs, differentiated reading levels, and/or recorded texts. Often state standards determine content; however, teachers determine the amount and level of the content as appropriate to each individual student based on data-informed
decisions. Differentiating learning processes differentiates the structures within which the content is supported. Tomlinson (1995) suggested the following guide to teachers in designing strategies to ensure success of all students in the curriculum content, including students with SLD:

- Have a clear purpose.
- Focus on a few key ideas.
- Guide them in understanding the ideas and the relationships among them.
- Offer opportunities to explore ideas through varied modes (e.g., visual, kinesthetic, spatial, musical).
- Help them relate new information to previous understanding.
- Match their level of readiness. (p. 53)

The element of differentiated instruction referred to as “product” is the student output showing their understanding of the presented curriculum. Typically teachers assess students with paper/pencil assessments to gather student understanding information. Differentiated instruction provides teachers the opportunity to assess their students based on individual student need. Students may produce artistic products such as PowerPoint presentations, drawings, or collages; performance products such as role-plays and skits; spoken products such as oral reports and songs; visual products such as photography and book jackets; construction products such as 3-D design figures and dioramas; and leadership products such as hosting a debate or chat room (Gartin et al., 2002).

According to Gartin et al. (2002), the key to using any format of differentiated product is using a rubric containing key elements of understanding for the specific curricular area. Differentiating the classroom environment is the last of the four elements of providing effective
differentiated instruction. Teachers need to consider the classroom physical environment, social climate, and student instructional groupings when processing decisions for differentiating instruction. Students should be able to work collaboratively or individually, have freedom of movement, feel safe, and be free from distractions in their environment. Due to the high accountability expectations of NCLB, school districts are scrambling to find and use effective strategies to improve achievement scores of all students, including students with SLD. Differentiated instruction may fill this void.

Although differentiated instruction about students is a foundational piece of RtI and IC, it is teacher learning that is of importance in this research. Most important is differentiated instruction as it applies to teachers within professional development and tied to Kegan’s constructive-developmental theory and transformational learning.

Understanding how the teacher’s role affects IC may shed light on why these two buildings diverged on their implementation of IC. A component of Figure 1 and Figure 3 is the IC process itself. One of the four main components of Figure 1 is the teacher.

A key piece to the IC process is the word voluntary. To begin the IC process in a school, it is necessary for teachers to volunteer to become an IC team member and participate in many hours of training and practice skills learned during this training. Once an IC team is trained and ready for cases, teachers must voluntarily fill out a request-for-assistance form and turn it in to the facilitator. Teachers who have voluntarily completed the request-for-assistance form must then voluntarily meet with a case manager to review roles and responsibilities of the teacher and case manager and sign a contract agreeing to participate in the IC process.

A second key piece to IC is that it is a form of professional development for the IC team and teachers requesting assistance. Facilitators and team members must attend and participate in
training and practice many new skills. Teachers requesting assistance must learn and practice new teaching strategies and then use them in the classroom (Gravois et al., 2007). If a teacher is of the nature who resists change or believes oneself is already an adequate or proficient teacher and does not feel a need for additional support, the teacher will not volunteer to become an IC member or request help.

Addressing teacher learning styles through a constructive-developmental theory may help one understand how to approach the teaching staff in a variety of ways to enhance the rate of implementation and consistent use of the IC process within buildings. For teachers to feel comfortable in addressing student learning difficulties in different ways, we must first make teachers comfortable in their own learning, whatever style that might be. Key to the constructive-developmental theory is learning and understanding the adults’ current way of knowing, as this is what forms how people interpret their experiences. Constructive-developmental theory applies the “meeting the students where they are and moving them forward” approach to adults as students, as well (Drago-Severson, 2009).

**Building and Organizational Culture**

The building and organizational culture underlies the IC problem-solving process within two elementary schools in a local district. To research the IC process without also examining the building culture related to the two elementary schools would result in a lack of information for the proposed study.

Organizational theory is the basic premise or lens through which school building culture can be viewed. Schein (1990) provided the following definition of culture:

For our purposes it is enough to specify that any definable group with a shared history can have a culture and within an organization there can therefore be many subcultures. If
the organization as a whole has had shared experiences, there will also be a total organizational culture. Within any given unit, the tendency for integration and consistency will be assumed to be present, but it is perfectly possible for coexisting units of a larger system to have cultures that are independent and even in conflict with one another.

_Culture_ can now be defined as (a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 111)

Schein (1990) said several historical research avenues influence how we perceive organizational culture. He called them survey, analytical descriptive, ethnographic, historical, and clinical descriptive research. Of these avenues, a historical perspective lens will be used to gain understanding and provide insight of an overarching concept, building culture, in this research study. Questions during the interview process of research gave the researcher information about some of the assumptions that may be held regarding the building culture of the organization.

Understanding the dynamics of building culture can also help one begin to understand why there may be a divergence of the IC implementation process within two buildings in the district. Organizational theory is the underlying groundwork for a discussion in regard to building culture and how it may affect the implementation process and facilitate a divergence. In Figure 1, all of the pieces of the conceptual framework interact together to frame a bigger picture
of a phenomenon that is happening in a larger institutional culture and organization, therefore building culture does not stand alone; it underlies the unit of analysis.

Culture in itself is difficult to define and understand. According to Schein (1990), any definable group, such as a district, can have a culture, and within that group there can be many subcultures, such as the separate buildings and groups within those buildings. He also defined culture as a pattern of basic assumptions invented or developed as a group as the group works together through adaptations to problems, which have worked well for the group and are then taught to new members as to how to think or feel toward those problems (Schein, 1990).

It is within the study of the two buildings’ cultures that it would be important to know the faculty profile (number of years teaching experience, years in the building or district, and level of education of the teachers) to determine what or if any of the items contributed to subcultures within the building that then contributed to the overall building culture. It might also be important to determine the effect of administrative changes and the building culture. In other words, does the new building administrator change the building culture or does the building culture change or inhibit the new building administrator, and how does this affect the implementation of programs already in place or about to begin, such as the IC process?

When determining the effect of the change of the building administrator and/or the faculty profile, one might also look at how these two items affect communication within the building and greater organization(s), such as the district and ISD. Communication, as a concept itself, and as it relates to all of the concepts previously reviewed, became an increasingly critical component of this research.

Pliska, in a study on implications for issues related to strategic planning for implementing student outcomes, stated “Tremendous issues had to be confronted by school districts as
curriculum, assessment, and a vision for the district were planned in order to address the learning outcomes” (Pliska, 1996). Furthermore, she found two areas that dominated the issues. These areas were communication and resources. Within resources, there were both economic and personnel issues, and within communication there were issues such as understanding the rules of the game, management of the process, special interest groups and personal agendas, availability of information, organizational issues and attitudes and relationships on the steering committee. As with Pliska, this research found communication dominating the issue of implementation; however, the second area was not resources but the area of deficit thinking.

It is difficult to give the culture of these two buildings without research to define the pattern of basic assumptions that are discovered or invented by a given group. And although this is not a cultural study, it underlies the organizational unit in which the unit of analysis is contained.

Summary

Chapter 2 provided the reader insight into the concepts and literature the researcher reviewed. I reflected upon components of the unit of analysis and factors that may affect the implementation of the Instructional Consultation team model. I included theories important to each of those facets to provide further explanation of my thought process of understanding the concepts as they framed this study. Having readers understand the three main concepts of SLD, RtI and IC, along with cognitive theory and deficit thinking, helps them to see the overall importance of the study of the implementation process of IC. Narrowing in on professional development, differentiated instruction, teachers and administrators, along with Kegan’s constructive-developmental theory and communication, focuses on transformational learning that is important to any form of change.
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of Chapter 3 is to explain the research design and methodology used in this study. There are 14 sections in this chapter: 1) purpose of the study, 2) guiding research questions, 3) unit of analysis, organizational characteristics, 4) School A profile, 5) School B profile, 6) summary of school profiles, 7) research tradition and methodology, 8) subject sample, 9) research instruments, 10) method of analysis, 11) research bias, 12) methodology limitations, 13) ethical considerations, and 14) summary.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the qualitative study is to examine teacher and building leader understanding and perception of the IC team process as a means of understanding its implementation in a district. This study seeks to understand and inform how to effectively implement scientifically research-based intervention framework models to staff within districts, so children receive the full benefits of the intervention model. As an instructional leader, it is this researcher’s duty to comprehend and be able to guide others in understanding implementation flaws to minimize and/or eliminate those flaws in future processes.

Guiding Research Questions

1. What factors affect IC team implementation?

2. To what extent does significant understanding of the IC team process, and the understanding of an RtI framework, affect staff and administration knowledge of the process for identification of a specific learning disability?
Unit of Analysis, Organizational Characteristics

The unit of analysis for this research project is the intervention program, Instructional Consultation, and its divergence within two elementary schools in a west Michigan school district.

This rural town in west Michigan is situated in the northwest corner of Ionia County, 25 miles east of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and 123 miles northwest of Detroit, Michigan. It has approximately 13,000 residents and a variety of businesses, ranging from retail shops to manufacturing and extrusion firms. This and the surrounding towns in the county offer many outdoor activities, such as horseback riding, biking, fishing, hiking, camping, cross country skiing, golfing, jogging, and mountain biking. It is in the heart of Michigan farmland and located only an hour from the state capital in Lansing.

The school district has approximately 2,400 students. The number of students who are considered economically disadvantaged in the district hovers around 55% and is growing with the current economic status of the county. The number of students considered eligible for special education services is 16.4%. In reviewing previous district Adequate Yearly Progress and Ed Yes! reports, this number remains relatively stable from year to year.

The district has one high school, one middle school, and two elementary schools. The district also operates an Early Childhood Center that consists of a licensed at-risk preschool, a Michigan readiness program (Jumpstart), and an early childhood special education program for eligible students. The high school houses approximately 675 students from grades 9–12. It is currently North Central Association (NCA) accredited and claims a 91.3% graduation rate. The middle school houses students in grades 6–8 and contains approximately 500 students. Overall
achievement levels have continued to increase steadily, and special education students attend one or two inclusion classes daily (Belding Area Schools, 2009).

The information for the following school profiles, School A and School B, was derived from the 2010–2011 school staff directories and the district 2008–2009 annual report (Belding Area Schools, 2009).

School A Profile

The first elementary building, School A, houses students in developmental kindergarten through second grade, containing approximately 500 students daily. According to the 2010–2011 staff directory (Belding Area Schools, 2010), this building consists of the following staff members by professional staff, itinerant staff, and paraeducators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building administrator</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental kindergarten teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-grade teachers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second-grade teachers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music, art, gym teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interventionists, math/ELA</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-school suspension coordinator</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School social worker</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech pathologists</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational therapist</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical therapist</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School psychologist</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Consultation facilitator</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraprofessionals</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each classroom contains anywhere from 25 to 28 students at any given time. Special classes (music, art, gym) occur on a rotating basis throughout the grade levels throughout the week. Interventionists and title paraprofessionals are assigned to specific teachers and based on needs determined by the building administrator. These needs and schedules are generally driven
by school improvement data and goals. According to the Belding Area Schools annual report 2008–2009, Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) scores, grade-level common assessment scores, Michigan Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP) scores, and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) scores are used for setting school improvement goals. In particular, per these data, school improvement goals are needed in the area of reading and writing at School A.

School A is the first school some children in the district entertain as their first school experience unless they have entered one of the preschool programs housed at the Early Childhood Center or a private preschool operated within town. At School A the students follow the basic track using the Michigan Core Content Curriculum. All students are expected to follow this path and make progress toward grade-level expectations. All teachers are expected to help each student achieve this goal. Those students whom teachers identify as struggling may receive help through the title paraeducators, interventionists, the process of Instructional Consultation (IC), or special education services if they are eligible.

**School B Profile**

School B houses students in grades three through five, containing approximately 500 students daily. According to the 2010–2011 staff directory (Belding Area Schools, 2010), this building consists of the following staff members by professional staff, itinerant staff, and paraeducators:
Each classroom contains anywhere from 25 to 30 students at any given time. Special classes (music, art, gym, and computer) happen on a rotating basis throughout the grade levels throughout the week. Interventionists and title paraprofessionals are assigned to specific teachers and based on needs determined by the building administrator. These needs and schedules are generally driven by school improvement data and goals. MEAP scores, grade-level common assessment scores, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR), fall/spring writing prompts, Real Math fall/spring assessments, and discipline data are used to determine school improvement goals (Belding Area Schools, 2009). In particular, per these data, school improvement goals are needed in the area of reading, math, and writing. Students transition to School B at the third grade with the exception of students who, per their Individualized Education Plan, are programmed to a different location. At School B most students follow the basic track using the Michigan Core Content Curriculum. These students are expected to follow this path and make progress toward grade-level expectations. Some students, per their Individualized Education Plan, follow an alternative curriculum path using the Extended Grade Level Content Expectations. These students are
expected to follow this path and make progress toward the extended grade-level expectations. All teachers are expected to help each student achieve his or her goal. Those students whom teachers identify as struggling may receive help through the title paraeducators, interventionists, the process of IC, or special education services if they are eligible.

**Summary of School Profiles**

Important information may be drawn and summarized from the number of years of teaching experience, the number of years in the building or in this particular district, and the level of education of each individual teacher or staff member in the previous lists.

According to Kegan’s constructive-developmental theory, the focus is on the adult as the “meaning-maker” of experiences, taking into consideration cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal experiences (Drago-Severson, 2009). The theory focuses on how these pieces interact and intertwine with one another leading us to understand ourselves and others. Knowing how long teachers have been teaching or their level of education may provide the researcher with an understanding of how they learn or why they resist learning or changing. Knowing how long they have been in the district or a particular building may give rise to their interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships and experiences.

A final consideration for the unit of analysis is the time period. The particular intervention program process being studied had occurred over the past five to eight years in the county. I studied the time period in which IC had been at this particular organization, which spans a course of six years.

**Research Tradition and Methodology**

This research followed a case study approach using grounded theory. Data can be collected through observations, written documents provided by the subjects, interviews, and/or
videotapes (Donmoyer & Galloway, 2010). This case study of the phenomena IC was studied by researching and analyzing the IC process in two elementary schools within a rural west Michigan school district.

Grounded theory, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990), is a research method of theory emerging as you gather data. This is different from traditional research methods that begin with a theory and a hypothesis. The first step in this process is to gather data of various types. After data are collected, codes are assigned to key data points and concepts are formed. Notes are taken and written on the concepts, and from this, categories emerge. Once categories emerge, theory begins to rise to the forefront of the data sources. Grounded theory approach is typically used in qualitative research; however, it can be used in quantitative research.

Literature on RtI model research revealed that the majority of studies used a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative methods were used in determining various responses to intervention and standard protocols and calculating actual numbers of students for data on gender or grade (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007; Gravois & Rosenfield, 2006). Qualitative methods were used in determining teacher and administrative perceptions in regard to inclusion, co-teaching, and differentiated instruction (Cummings et al., 2008; Murawski & Hughes, 2009).

I used qualitative methodology for this study to determine teacher and building leader understanding and perceptions of the IC team process. The current focus was to study the IC team problem-solving process as a Tier 2 intervention in two elementary schools within a single-district population. The qualitative set included a teacher and administrative perception survey of such items as knowledge, comfort, use of, and perception of the IC process.
Sampling

This study used typical case sampling as described by Patton (2001):

In describing a program or its participants to people not familiar with the program it can be helpful to provide a qualitative profile of one or more “typical” cases. These cases are selected with the cooperation of key informants, such as program staff or knowledgeable participants, who can help identify what is typical. It is also possible to select typical cases from survey data, a demographic analysis of averages, or other programmatic data that provide a normal distribution of characteristics from which to identify “average” examples. (p. 173)

In selecting people, setting, events, and processes, the following parameters were used:

- People: teaching staff (both those involved in and not involved in the IC process), principals, and IC facilitators. The staff included the following: IC facilitators (two), principals (two), teaching staff requesting assistance (two), teaching staff not requesting assistance (two), and case managers (two). A system was determined to identify participants in a way other than personal identification to provide anonymity.

- Setting: interviews, discussions of IC case.

- Events: interviews.

- Processes: interviews processed, documents reviewed, data gathered on staff and principals, history reviewed and documented.

After permission was granted by building administration to conduct the research study, using the parameters that were set, direct contact to all staff of each building in School A and School B was made through e-mail, describing the proposed study and possible participation by staff. As staff returned e-mail contact, a list was kept per building to determine what type and
how many of each set of “people” were accounted for. School B needed several contacts to obtain the minimum number of participants. Once the minimum number of participants was secured, phone and e-mail contact was used to plan interview meeting dates, locations, and times. Interviews were held using an open-ended questionnaire.

**Research Instrumentation**

In qualitative research the researcher becomes the instrument to collect data. This is done through the use of artifacts and of interviews and an interview question protocol on which to collect the data to be analyzed. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the following items are reliable markers of a good qualitative researcher as the data collection instrument:

- some familiarity with the phenomenon and the setting
- strong conceptual interests
- a multidisciplinary approach, as opposed to a narrow grounding or focus in a single discipline
- good “investigative skills” including doggedness, the ability to draw people out, and the ability to ward off premature closure (p. 38)

For this study, I conducted an open-ended interview of the teaching staff, IC facilitators, and principals from both schools A and B.

Table 1 outlines School A staff who participated; Table 2 outlines School B staff who participated.
Table 1: School A Staff Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position in district</th>
<th>Lives in district</th>
<th>Years of teaching</th>
<th>Years of administration</th>
<th>Years in district</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>Speech pathologist (case manager)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie</td>
<td>Teacher (previous case manager)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carla</td>
<td>School psych./facilitator</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana</td>
<td>Teacher (case manager)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francine</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: School B Staff Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position in district</th>
<th>Lives in district</th>
<th>Years of teaching</th>
<th>Years of administration</th>
<th>Years in district</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Teacher (used IC process)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kendra</td>
<td>Speech pathologist (case manager)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monique</td>
<td>Facilitator (case manager)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Left position</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For confidentiality purposes, note that participants’ names have been changed. Appendices E and F provide further information on the participants’ years in their respective buildings, highest degrees obtained, and the area(s) in which they hold degrees or certification.

The interview protocol included questions pertaining to staff, IC facilitator, and principal perception, understanding, and purpose of the IC process; professional development; teaching methods and strategies; leadership style and role; and building culture. (See Appendix C.) A second open-ended interview was conducted with two IC stakeholders, one being an IC facilitator and the other being an ISD administrator (who was instrumental at bringing IC teams to the county), to further deepen the understanding of the results of the data analysis from School A and School B interviews. (See Appendix D.) Both open-ended interview questionnaire protocols were reviewed, revised, and approved by the researcher’s dissertation chair.

**Method of Analysis**

To analyze data is to make sense of the event or phenomena you are studying. In other words, it is making meaning. One method of analyzing qualitative data is qualitative coding. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), there are simple to more complex methods of coding, such as first-level coding, second-level *pattern* coding, and the process of developing themes, called *memoing*. There are just as many ways to determine your codes—such as predefined, accounting-scheme guided, or postdefined—as there are methods of coding, and one must realize each will change over the course of the research and analysis. Lists of codes will change as concepts or themes emerge, previously unthought-of as part of the phenomenon, as empirical data are collected.

In the process of analysis there is referential meaning, relational meaning, and systemic meaning. Referential meaning refers to the naming and defining of concepts and categories of
concepts in reality. Relational meaning is the significance between the concepts and concept categories previously named and defined. Once concepts are named it helps one hypothesize the relationships between the concepts and concept categories. It can lead to generalizations or explanations. Systemic meaning understands the logic of your process or framework. It becomes the logical conclusion of the hypothesis previously stated and should circle back to the overarching conceptual framework one started with.

In my research, the strategy that emerged for my data analysis was the use of Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) coding methods. Through this method, I used open codes (my findings/themes) and axial codes (my categories/subthemes cutting across the open codes previously defined), which then led to the emergence of my selective code or major “big idea” that connected all of my emerging categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Chapters 4 and 5 will further define these open and axial codes as the research data are discussed for each building.

**Data Analysis**

In the first step of analysis, each of the original 11 interviews was transcribed. Each of the transcriptions was then marked with a building letter code, A or B, and a number, 1–6 for building A or 1–5 for building B. These markings were matched to a master list and provided anonymity for the interviewees.

The second step was to upload the interviews into NVivo software for coding purposes. Each transcription was coded for major categories from the conceptual framework. Themes emerged and were coded as major nodes. Further analysis created subnodes under many of the major nodes. To be considered a node or subnode within a node, the particular theme needed to have been referenced at least three times within a building to be considered significant.
The third step was to create a chart of each of the buildings showing the demographic information collected from each interviewee. During the fourth step, a set of queries was run on each of the nodes and subnodes and analyzed per building. The fifth step consisted of creating a t-chart compilation to compare key concepts and perceptions on each node and subnode between the two buildings. A sixth step included analyzing each category and theme through recording any major quotes stated by participants in relation to those categories and themes. In the event that there was not a major quote, an *NA was recorded. At this point, a saturation point seemed to have been met with the current data set.

I found the need to expand on some of the concepts that emerged through the analysis of the data and the compilation of the t-chart comparing key concepts and perceptions. I determined that more explicit interviews were needed with two experts in the area of IC teams to check for accurate representation of information.

The more explicit interviews were coded and analyzed to deepen my understanding of the emergent themes that had been presented through earlier analysis. The final three chapters expand upon further details of the analysis of all data.

Validity and Reliability

Eisenhart and Howe (1992) provided a starting point for framing thoughts on validity and reliability in research:

Establishing validity requires 1) determining the extent to which conclusions effectively represent empirical reality and 2) assessing whether constructs devised by researchers represent or measure the categories of human experience that occur. . . . Internal validity refers to the extent to which scientific observations and measurements are authentic
representations of some reality; *external validity* refers to the degree to which such representations can be compared legitimately across groups. (p. 647)

**Validity.** Validity is about accuracy. Are we seeing the pattern? Is what we are saying about the reality an accurate statement? Are we able to accurately describe the referential, relational, and systemic meanings? In other words, can we accurately name and define the concepts so that others understand their meaning? Can we accurately describe the meaning of all of the relationships? Can we describe the logic of the system so that others understand it as well as we understand it?

External validity is the ability to generalize. Can we hypothesize how this information would generalize to other organizations in the educational field? Is the information too limited to the population by the narrow sample? Is the information useful for others? As part of this dissertation research, this information would have a purpose for other districts implementing this particular intervention initiative, therefore lending itself to external validity. I am interested in bettering the organization and making the information purposeful for the particular set of elementary schools.

**Reliability.** Can this study be replicated in another population? It seems possible to replicate this study in any one of the other districts in the county that are also using the IC process. In conversations with staff members, information came forth about the issues and concerns with the implementation process of the intervention in other districts as well as the one being studied in this research. Some of the same issues—lack of staff willing to participate as team members, large numbers of cases referred, and lack of leadership—were all voiced. It has become apparent that the intervention process itself may not be the sole reason for the seemingly poor implementation of IC, nor is it likely socioeconomics or size of district, as had previously
been hypothesized. All school districts have the same basic pieces of the puzzle. It is the history and culture of the organization that set the districts apart from one another. Replicating the study would mean studying the same concepts, categories, relationships, and frameworks in one or all of those districts.

In qualitative research, Creswell and Miller (2000) reminded us that determining validity in qualitative studies is challenging on many levels. They tended not to use terms such as validity and reliability for those reasons, instead using terms such as trustworthiness, credibility, and authenticity (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Trustworthiness and credibility revolve around readers believing and trusting in the findings and interpretations of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In other words, the researcher must reflect the experience of the participants and the context in a believable way (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Authenticity is closely associated with trustworthiness and credibility as it involves the researcher accurately portraying the participants’ lived and perceived meanings and experiences (Sandelowski, 1986). Therefore it is essential for the researcher to remain true to the phenomenon and the participants who are being studied (Hammersley, 1992).

To ensure trustworthiness, credibility, and authenticity, Eisner (1991) focused on three issues: structural corroboration, consensual validation, and referential adequacy. “In structural corroboration, the researcher uses multiple types of data to support or contradict the data” (Creswell, 2012, p. 246). According to Eisner (1991), “we see a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility, that allows us to feel confident about our observations, interpretations, and conclusions” (p. 110). Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993) discussed how “referential adequacy materials support credibility by providing context-rich, holistic materials that provide
background meaning to support data analysis, interpretations, and audits” (p. 139). Consensual validation involves “an agreement among competent others that the description, interpretation, evaluation and thematic of an educational situation are right” (Eisner, 1991, p. 112). To ensure the researcher produces a credible study, they suggest employing some of the following approaches or procedures: triangulation, disconfirming evidence, researcher reflexivity, member checking, prolonged engagement in the field, collaboration, the audit trail, thick/rich description, or peer debriefing. This study entertained triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and researcher reflexivity.

**Triangulation.** According to Creswell and Miller (2000), triangulation is looking through only the researcher’s lens and is a process of sorting data to find common themes and categories. One can look across data sources, theories, methods, and different investigators. A common practice among qualitative researchers, and one this researcher employed, is to provide evidence collected through multiple methods, such as interviews and documents. This helps to locate major and minor themes and categories. In using triangulation, data are more valid because the process relies on more than one data point from the study.

**Member checking.** Member checking consists of the researcher taking interpretations and data sets back to the participants of the study for them to confirm the credibility of the information and narrative writing (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Looking through the lens of the participants, researchers automatically and systematically check the credibility of data and information collected and written. Throughout the process of member checking, the researcher has members review the transcripts or observation notes and comment on the accuracy of the information contained within. Participants are also asked to verify themes and categories, look for sufficient evidence, and validate whether the overall narrative is accurate. Researchers may
also add participants’ comments into their final narrative of the study. Throughout the study, interviewees were contacted to discuss and review the information contained within the written work for accuracy.

**Peer debriefing.** Peer debriefing is a review of the research process and data by someone who is familiar with the research, the phenomena being studied, or both (Creswell & Miller, 2000). A peer reviewer can challenge the researcher’s assumptions, provide support, play devil’s advocate, push the researcher in their methods, and ask hard questions about their interpretations. To use peer debriefing, the lens one looks through is someone external to the study. It is best to use this process during the entire time period of the study. Peer debriefing can be done either through written feedback or oral conversation, with the peer acting as a sounding board. This study employed peer debriefing as a process for validating it with peers who were familiar with the research and the phenomena being studied.

**Reflexivity.** Creswell (2003) defined reflexivity as a systematic reflection of who the qualitative researcher is in the inquiry through sensitivity to his personal biography and how it shapes the study. This process is an introspective acknowledgement of biases, values, and interests (p. 182).

Taking into account the information gathered on bias in research, and being cognizant of the role that bias and assumptions may have, this researcher has personal assumptions about the current research. Specifically, these assumptions or views pertain to factors that may have affected the implementation of the IC team process in the two elementary schools and the divergence of the process between the two buildings.

The goal of IC teams is to enhance, improve, and increase student and staff performance. The objectives of an IC team are to develop a systematic support network within each building,
including the trained IC team; enhance teachers’ skills in and application of best practices of instructional assessment and delivery; develop school-wide norms of collaboration and problem solving; and utilize data for classroom and school decisions (Gravois et al., 2002).

Bias one: The assumption about how the IC process was brought to the district and who “owns” it. History in the district showed that there was a divide or tension between ISD employees and the district administration’s perception of their role, or the role of the ISD, in the district. The ISD employees, although hired by the ISD, worked directly for the district on a full-time basis. The district administration recognized that these employees worked for them full-time and even praised their services yet still referred to them as “ISD folks” or the “ISD”—meaning there was a difference between these employees and those hired directly by the district and what they could and could not do. This seemed to become more of an issue when the ISD was in control of a program. This was the perceived case with the IC process. The IC process was driven by the ISD. Making the situation even more complicated is that in particular, it was the special education department of the ISD that controlled the funding, training, and rollout of the process to the districts.

Key to the facilitator’s role is the ability to implement and facilitate the process within the building he or she works. Facilitators in each of the buildings in the local districts were ISD employees. It is the researcher’s assumption and perception that when the ISD presented the process to the district, many of the staff saw it as another stepping stone or hoop to jump through to refer a student for a special education evaluation because it was being presented by the special education staff from the ISD. It was the district’s director of special education, also an ISD employee, who provided district oversight of the IC process in both buildings. It was the ISD’s perspective that the district would “own” the process; the role of the facilitator is to implement
and facilitate as the IC training states, and a district’s building administrator should provide the oversight in the building. The district was perceived to have taken little to no overall ownership of the process within its buildings or within the district.

**Bias two: The IC team process was seen as something separate from the school improvement process.** Even with the passing of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), there has been very slow progress in moving away from the current service model in schools, where students are seen as if something is wrong with them rather than something wrong with the curriculum or instruction. With NCLB, schools were directed to provide “highly qualified” teachers and high quality instruction for all students. IDEA required that all students have access to the general education curriculum. It is the perception of the researcher that staff and building administration perceive IC as something we “do” to students to “fix” them. It is not seen as an avenue to provide the core curriculum to all students nor is it seen as an avenue to help teachers provide high quality instruction. To date, the school improvement documents do not specifically address the IC process as a way to improve curriculum, instruction, or student success.

**Bias three: There was a lack of knowledge and understanding of the basic IC process, and continual change in building administration played a role in this lack of understanding.** According to Gravois et al. (2002), key delivery system variables include structures by which the collaborative consultation process is delivered and maintained within a school building, representative team membership that meets weekly, a clearly articulated request-for-assistance process, use of case management, and documentation of student progress and cases. One key component to the request-for-assistance process is “active administration support and participation.”
History of the IC method in both schools showed that this process had been missing. Preliminary information gathered for this study showed that at the first elementary building within a six-year period, Principal One attended the three-day overview training but did not attend any further training and did not participate in taking any cases as part of the team. Principal Two did not participate in any training and did not participate in taking any cases. Principal Three participated in two days of training, did not participate in any further training, and did not take any cases. In the second elementary building, which in the six-year period started the IC process at year three, the principal (Principal Three) did not participate in any training and did not take any cases. Principal Four had training in a previous district as a teacher, attended a one-day training in his/her current position, and had not taken any cases.

It is the assumption of the researcher that this lack of building administration active support and participation was a crucial missing piece to the vitality of the IC process in both buildings. Without active support and participation, the building administrator cannot encourage and support staff in the process of requesting assistance, collecting data, collaborating collectively, or support a greater school improvement vision.

Research Bias

The concern for research bias in the form of assumptions about the phenomena was in the forefront of this researcher’s mind. In framing the conceptual framework, I was concerned that I was conceptualizing what I wanted to see and possibly not what the reality was of either the framework or the phenomena of the study. That then prompted the question about reality. Whose reality is it and how is it determined? To study research tradition and frame this concept about reality, I turned to Burrell and Morgan (1982).
For further information regarding the researcher’s thoughts of bias and how it defined this study’s choices, please see Appendix L.

**Methodology Limitations**

The current focus of the research was to study the IC team problem-solving process and the divergence of its implementation in two elementary schools within the same school district. The qualitative research instrument included a teacher and administrative perception survey of such items as knowledge, comfort, use of, and perception of the IC process. Potential limitations associated with the conceptual framework and research methods exist. A potential limitation within the conceptual framework was that the researcher was identifying potential concepts that may be helpful but needed to hold these concepts lightly. The concepts were there so that the researcher could critique the common concepts used within the literature. Potentially, the final conceptual framework that emerged may not be the suggested framework. There may also be other concepts contributing to this divergence that were not represented in this framework.

One such concept that emerged was the institutional organization culture and its effect on the individual building cultures. Although the institutional organizational culture could be a study within itself and was not a piece of this particular study, the literature suggested that the researcher should at least consider organizational culture as an explanatory lens. Literature on institutions and organizations by both Scott (2008) and Thompson (2008) supported this concept.

Potential limitations with the interview method existed. One of the first limitations to the interview method was the instrument itself. The researcher presented an open-ended survey for the fact that it wouldn’t inhibit the volume or type of information needed for valid and reliable results to the study. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the researcher as the actual
instrument could present concerns if the researcher does not have certain reliable “markers” of a good qualitative researcher.

Once researchers master the art of being able to observe, record, and respond in a competent manner, they need to be cognizant of observer bias based on relationships they have with teachers and principals and what their personal feelings or biases are about the research phenomena. Guba and Lincoln (1994) discussed the practical issue of “voice” and state:

The inquirer’s voice is that of the “passionate participant” (Lincoln, 1991) actively engaged in facilitating the “multi-voice” reconstruction of his or her own construction as well as those of all other participants. Change is facilitated as reconstructions are formed and individuals are stimulated to act on them. (p. 112, Table 6.2)

This researcher’s concern emerged from the word passionate. The bias or limitation that can result from this was the researcher’s personal passion and interest in this IC process being done with fidelity and becoming embraced by all staff, including building administrators, in both buildings. By continually focusing on the data at hand, I monitored personal biases and passion that might introduce bias in the data analysis, in order to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of the findings.

This study used typical case sampling as described by Patton (2001) because the IC process and the participants of this study were in themselves not well known to others outside the realm of the Michigan consortium of the IC team participants. A limitation that may have affected the interview method was the sampling. As a data collection method, the researcher voices concern with the size of the sample due to the limited number of participants in the IC process at each building and the willingness of members of the building staff to participate. This
causes a concern for validity and the ability to generalize, if so desired, the research outcome information.

**Ethics in Research**

This researcher’s ethical approach to research was the utilitarian approach, probably best known in layman’s terms as the cost-benefit approach. Deyhle, Hess, and LeCompte (1992) raised thought-provoking questions that are well worth pondering:

Whose benefit should be served? When studying administrators, teachers, students, and parents in a local school setting or a school district, which constituency should derive the greatest benefit? Which can best tolerate suffering harm as a result of the research? And among each constituency, which students should benefit and which should do with less? (p. 604)

If you can understand the relationship between the people, the staff, and building principals or district administrators, you can better understand how to effectively implement initiatives to benefit the students and teachers. When initiatives are implemented with fidelity, teachers become better teachers, more students learn more things due to effective and differentiated instruction, and fewer students become curriculum casualties, which often leads to special education referrals and diagnosis.

Regarding the questions posed earlier, the researcher’s typical response as to whose benefit should be served is always the students. Through unintended or intended consequences it may benefit the teachers by improving their teaching skills and making their classrooms more manageable. It may even make the administrators’ job easier with discipline and evaluations; however, what we do should always be for the benefit of the student. Along the same token they should receive the least amount of harm.
The unintended purpose of this research was the goal that all students will benefit by receiving effective instruction. Some students will benefit more by not being labeled with a disability when they truly are not disabled. Other students will benefit from receiving intervention services that can be targeted to a lower number of students, as the number of students receiving good quality instruction increases.

Deyhle et al. (1992) left the researcher with a final thought about ethics:

Instead, we believe that ethics in qualitative research in education is not an issue one faces when he or she goes into a field site but, rather, is a reflection of the entire way in which one lives his or her life. One is not suddenly faced with ethical decisions when one goes into the field. He or she is faced with behaving in an ethical manner at every moment; doing qualitative research in the field simply creates specialized situations with more extensive ramifications that must be examined. (p. 639)

This researcher related well to this quote. My cultural background, upbringing, and work in the field of special education give me specialized opportunities to reflect on the ethical, moral, and legal stances faced each day.

**Summary**

In this chapter the research design and methodology were processed and explained. The researcher restated the purpose of the study and the guiding research questions. The researcher summarized the unit of analysis organizational characteristics and provided a profile for each of the school buildings in which the IC team process was researched. The choice of research tradition and methodology were reflected upon in relation to the choice of sample selection and instrument used for data collection. The method of analysis, research bias, methodology
limitations, and ethical considerations were described and included to give the reader an explicit understanding of the researcher’s thought process.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis, School A

Introduction

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to explain the School A data analysis. There are three sections to this chapter: 1) guiding research questions, 2) findings of analysis for School A, and 3) discussion and summary of key findings.

Guiding Research Questions

1. What factors affect IC team implementation?

2. To what extent does significant understanding of the IC team process, and the understanding of an RtI framework, affect staff and administration knowledge of the process for identification of a specific learning disability?

Findings of Analysis, School A

The five major categories identified from the conceptual framework included understanding the IC process, leadership style, culture, teachers’ attitudes toward IC, and professional development for instruction.

Table 3 shows the open and axial codes for Building A, which were identified after analyzing all of the nodes, subnodes, and interview quotes gathered through the data analysis in NVivo.
Table 3: School A Open Codes and Axial Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Codes</th>
<th>Axial Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to RtI</td>
<td>Use curriculum and data to inform each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use framework with IC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator role</td>
<td>“Driving force” of IC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs administrative support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge to special education</td>
<td>Deficit thinking (“just know”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative directives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documentation/CYA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>About the IC process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within IC for curriculum, data, strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative role</td>
<td>Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turnover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G identifies a chart containing each category and theme with specific major quotes per participant from Building A. The categories and themes were identified through the conceptual framework, interview questions, and interview response analysis. The quote information was further analyzed to determine a type of view, such as supportive or neutral toward each category or theme. In the event that there was not a major quote by the participant, it was recorded as “*na.”

An analysis of the quotes for the open codes showed Relationship to RtI, Facilitator Role, Bridge to Special Education, Professional Development (PD), Administrative Role and the IC process were the most discussed themes—with five or greater references to each of those themes—in Building A. (See Appendix H.) These themes were significant in the aspect that it may help the researcher and reader understand why there had been a divergence in the implementation of the IC process within the two buildings within the district. It may also provide insightful information in regard to recommendations for further research and implications for the future. This will be addressed further in Chapter 6.

Discussion and Summary of Key Findings

Relationship to RtI.

*Using curriculum and data to inform each other.* Of the staff interviewed from Building A, many respondents saw value in using IC data and curriculum to inform each of those areas, as noted during their interview.

Staff valuing the use of IC data to inform curriculum, and curriculum to inform data, understood the need of an RtI framework and also recognized that it may not be in place for a variety of reasons, such as misconception about RtI, leadership differences, and lack of not having all of the structure of an RtI framework embedded. Staff believed having IC as part of an
RtI framework could be a way to use the data from IC to inform curriculum changes. This could be seen in the following partial quote from Francine, School A:

> We definitely need to have a curriculum here at [School A]. There isn’t one for math, science, language arts. And in the next couple of months, we are actually building a curriculum, so it is yeah. And that is a piece that’s missing. And if you don’t have that foundation, then obviously you don’t exactly know what it is that your children are lacking in. Because you don’t have assessments that correctly match and you have the things that you’re teaching. And therefore how do we start IC cases when we really don’t truly know what they’re lacking in? So we have to build that foundation. And that’s happening this summer. And that’s simply not saying that we haven’t ever had one here. It’s just saying that as we’ve transitioned to the common core, we don’t have a current curriculum for any of those subject matters.

**Using IC within the framework.** The researcher also heard among staff that IC needed the support of a strong RtI framework as an integral part of making IC a strong problem-solving approach in the building.

Some examples of the responses toward valuing a relationship between RtI and IC and supporting the use of IC within an RtI framework included this from Andrea, School A.

> Well, I can see that if you had that perfect RtI framework, that ICT is an integral part of that third tier, that it would make sense to use it if you got into that tier, you know, I mean it’s just part of the system that you have access to. So it would almost seem automatic, “All right, well, we’re at this tier, let’s do IC.” Though it’s not necessarily still mandatory, but it’s just this natural consequence. But I don’t think that framework exists here. It’s just ICT all by itself without the framework, but it still is optional.
This observation was from Dana, School A.

Well, it’s the best of both worlds. . . . RtI is a process. I mean it outlines steps by step, lots of if/then statements. And IC is more like, “Hey, let’s get together and talk about this kid.” And so I think when you marry both of them, you still get the benefits of that shoulder to shoulder, I won’t leave you, but I’m also not the boss. I’m just going to help you manage this process . . . . I think RtI helps that.

Finally from Francine, School A:

And I really understand that we need an RtI, you know, framework to be able to show our parents and to show our kids and to show our interventionists and to do all of those kinds of things. And especially to allow our teachers to say, “I did teach this level. I am teaching this level. And guess what I’ve tried in this level? But now I need somebody else to come in and IC to come in and those other situations to come in and help build this for this child.” . . . But and that, I think that has a lot to do with our leadership, too.

Along these same lines, the facilitator placed the same value, if not stronger value, because of her deeper understanding and knowledge of the IC process and RtI, as is seen in the following quote: “The RtI piece, ICT just fits into it. And so it would be wonderful if we get that happening so that we had tiered interventions and ICT, because I think then we could really be productive in both systems” (Carla, School A).

Facilitator role.

Driving force and lack of administrative support for the facilitator. All of the respondents in Building A believed that the facilitator played a key part in the implementation of IC within the building. The data indicate staff recognized how hard it had been for the facilitator to facilitate the implementation process of IC within the building. In this building there was an
overwhelming feeling of respect and rapport with the facilitators. This was heard during the interview process as interviewees spoke about the co-facilitators in response to various questions. Staff believed IC needed a supportive facilitator who had the ability to make IC an integral part of the problem-solving approach in the building. Staff believed administrative support and active involvement in getting staff on board would support the facilitators in making IC a strong problem-solving approach in the building.

Driving force. Examples follow of the responses toward the facilitator playing a key part in the implementation of IC within the building, including this from Francine, School A: “And then to have a facilitator who pulls all kinds of data and finds resources and does all that has been a huge asset to us.” Dana, School A, said: “[J] and [J] have been like such a driving force in our building for IC. It’s been awesome. Now if [J] got up there you know, [J] was the mover and the motivator of IC, and people obviously listened to what she had to say.”

I think [J] and [J] have done a great job at chipping away at making it an effective program, and that’s why they have a lot of cases. But I think they had, it was an uphill climb, because it wasn’t set within that RtI framework, you know. They might not have felt like they had such a big uphill climb had it been laid out differently (Andrea, School A).

Yeah, and [J’s] tried so many things, too. She’s tried staff meetings, she’s tried bulletin boards, you know, outside of the office, with all that stuff on it, you know. And it’s just been a, yeah, it was hard for a while to get everybody on board, but I feel like, I don’t know, talking to [J] and [J], I feel like we don’t really have it so bad (Bonnie, School A).

Absolutely, I believe it is effective, and let me tell you . . . one of the main reasons is because you have [J] who is a huge supporter of it, not only with the IC, but she is one of
those huge supporters and will, it’s pretty much practice what you preach. She goes in, she supports you, she tells you she’s going to support it (Edward, School A).

*Lack of administrative support for the facilitator.* Carla, School A, commented on lack of administrative support for the facilitator: “I think that if the principal was really involved and wanted to learn how to actually implement the process as a case manager and how to take a case, that it would have, I mean, almost immeasurable impacts on the staff and on the building.” Additional quotes regarding facilitator support follow.

Yes, but I think that if they were in that role and taking on cases and being a really big part of it, then the staff would feel a lot more comfortable collaborating with not only each other, but also with that administrator and seeing them as more of a team player. And we absolutely need that. We don’t have that at all right now. So I think it would make a huge difference (Carla, School A).

I would say our hugest problem in this building is administrative support. I think our administrator knows a lot about IC on paper but doesn’t really know the inter-workings and is just kind of very comfortable with letting our facilitators take over and not being, you know, a driving force behind it and in it. I mean we need him on the boat too (Dana, School A).

If you don’t buy into it and you don’t believe that it can affect kids and you’re not there to support the teachers when things are tried, then it’s not going to be a successful program. And that goes for any program. That goes for any assembly. That goes for any new person coming into the building. That goes for a new teacher. That goes for any process that we’re starting to. . . . If you don’t believe in it and make it a priority, then you’re not going to have everybody else on board. It really needs follow-through and
ownership. I mean really, truly this is your thing. This whole, and everything it encompasses and everything that’s, you know, trying to be had by our students and our teachers and our staff, you know, the whole process has to be adopted by the leadership (Francine, School A).

**Bridge to special education.**

**Deficit thinking, directives, and documentation.** Of School A staff interviewed, most staff voiced a response toward seeing a relationship between what they deemed “the bridge to special education” and IC.

The data from the staff indicated some teachers, whether or not they were using IC, perceived IC as a way of getting help with the paperwork and paper trail documentation needed to obtain a referral to special education, not as a way of obtaining a match between the student, teacher, and instruction, as IC intends. The researcher believes from reading the literature on cognitive theory, processing underlying assumptions, and analyzing data from the interviews, staff—whether they are using the process of IC or not—had deficit thinking about the students in their building. Staff perception was that the underlying problem was with the child and not with the teacher-student-curriculum match.

**Deficit thinking.** As described in Chapter 2, deficit thinking has been described as placing the blame for low achievement on the student rather than on the educational system with which they are in. Cooper (2006) explains it in these few words: “In the language of deficit thinking, children who are at-risk suffer because materially, socially, and culturally, they lack so much, not because of the schools they attend fail to meet them where they are in terms of their language and social skills” (para. 4).
Although School A felt fairly confident with its team and facilitators, there remained a perception that a few staff who sought a request for assistance were looking for a special education referral as the overall end of the process because they believed they “knew” the student needed special education services. Edward, School A, said, “But therein lies the other piece, which is, I think that our general ed teachers believe that if we take this student and we give them this special ed, they’re going to be the be-all, end-all, the fixer.” Additional School A quotes follow.

I feel like with anything else, there are probably still a few teachers who aren’t, who still want that, even though they don’t really want it, they feel like they just have to have that ambulance style, like just come, rescue, pull the kid out, take him away and fix him and then bring him back when he’s healthy. I feel like that’s something we still need to overcome in this building (Dana, School A). Instead of thinking, “Well that is a program that can help me as a teacher reach my student or reach my class,” they might see it as something else—a bridge to special education or . . .

No, it, that, that, they see that as “helping me.” “Oh, so you can help me get this person to special ed if I go through ICT? So you’re who I go to for the help to get this child out of my classroom and into the resource room?” No, not really (Andrea, School A).

*Directives and documentation.* The paper trail documentation frustrated team members spending time with teachers, who seemed to not have a desire to change teaching strategies to help students be successful, but may only be requesting IC to document data for a referral to special education for a variety of reasons, as seen in this observation from Bonnie, School A: “I think with certain administrators we’ve had, it was supposed to be, you know, ‘You better put
them in there because that’s the way to track them to get to special ed referral.’” Bonnie commented further: “Or, you know, ‘Just so there’s documentation when they go over to School B, you know, that you’ve been doing something’ kind of thing. So I think people felt a little bit forced into it.” Additional School A observations follow.

OK, but the other thing is I think is that the system that we have in our district and in our building doesn’t support the use of ICT properly—too much emphasis is put on you have to have data and you have to have evidence and, but there’s not that discussion of why. It’s more pressure of you have to have these things or your job is in jeopardy. And so they look at this as a covering my butt kind of thing rather than I’m really going to learn something and my students are going to benefit and I’m going to benefit from this (Carla, School A).

I think, this is just my opinion. It is not effective when we try and we try and we try and use strategies and Day 87 comes and then there’s finally a referral for a child that we knew Day 1 needed something different. But because of the way the process goes, and how it has to be substantiated by the data, that is a frustration for many. And they don’t want to have to jump through those hoops. OK. It has been a frustration for me as well knowing how many strategies I’ve tried in a given time, knowing that I would have to try each strategy for six weeks. OK. And knowing full well that this child’s learning style isn’t conducive to a classroom full of 26 children who are moving at a different rate and who are able to follow directions and focus and not be disruptive and become a behavior issue. So when Day 87 finally comes, I think some people look at that and go, “Well then why do I even bother?” And so I think because of that happening six weeks at a time, in six-weeks bundles, that has turned off a lot of people (Francine, School A).
Professional development.

*About and within IC.* Of staff interviewed from Building A, data indicated a mixed response in the area of professional development on IC. The data showed a belief that professional development specific to IC was needed for all staff, not just team members, to better understand IC as a positive problem-solving approach to help make teachers and students successful. This building had a twofold perception on professional development.

*Professional development about IC.* All staff believed professional development on the IC process itself was necessary to gain a full understanding of the process and its purpose. This training, specifically on the IC process itself, was two days of training with the IC experts, Ed Gickling and Todd Gravois. Staff, once they have the two-day IC training and the depth of knowledge of IC that team members receive, would be more inclined to participate, meaning those staff would then receive the benefit of the specific intervention professional development by participation in the IC process. Quotes follow that support the need for all staff to have the initial two-day IC process training.

And it’s really hard to impart all of that information and all your excitement, cuz when you leave that daylong training, you’re like “Yes! This is going to be great. I can see how this could help our school.” They don’t get that. And I think they need that introduction to IC to help them feel more comfortable and come to us for the right reasons, not seeing it as the bridge (Andrea, School A).

And we’ve had a couple of teachers that are not joining the team but wanted more information, we’ve had them go to the first two days, I think. . . . One of our administrators countywide has been pushing for more people to just get trained. He’s like
they don’t have to join the team, just get the knowledge, go to the first three days (Carla, School A).

Professional development within IC. Professional development within the IC process comes from team members, such as the case managers and facilitators, working directly with the teacher and/or at staff meetings throughout the course of the year. This type of professional development teaches specific strategies and data collection techniques to help teachers’ instruction and student learning. Teachers opting out of using the IC process would not receive this training if it is not occurring at staff meetings.

Dana, School A, offered this response toward professional development as it relates to IC in the building, and how important it is for staff to be involved in IC:

As far as getting stuff that you need, it’s still you’re on your own. You know, you either go and ask people for help or you just keep doing what you’ve been doing the whole time, which is try something new. . . . [With IC] we come in with these strategies, we’re empowering the teachers with, you know, like tools, and, you know, giving them this, you know, like “Great I’ll put this in my ELA toolbox, and this in my math toolbox.”

Administrative role.

Style, turnover, communication. Of staff interviewed, some of the respondents in Building A expressed concern over the lack of administrative support and participation in the IC process and in getting staff on board. Dana, School A, expressed that concern quite passionately:

I just feel like whatever model you have in place for intervention, I mean the kids that are brought to that team should be keeping everybody awake at night, including our principal. He should know all of their names. Or he or she should know their names and know some of their goals and be, you know, they should be haunting us. Especially some
of the kids who with just given the correct amount of intervention will be fine, you know. I feel like if there is a whole school process that you expect your teachers to go through, then you should know every part of it.

Interviewees also noted style, multiple turnovers in administration, and communication as having had a negative effect on the IC process within their building. Following are quotes in respect to each of these areas.

*Style.* Staff indicated the different leadership styles of the many leaders they had experienced over the years may have contributed to the implementation concerns of the IC model. Some responses to style were as follows:

Many of them have been crying because of his leadership style. And I think if he had solutions and he was a team player and he had the ability to problem solve, he would be. . . I don’t think they’d be crying. He would be providing what they needed, instead of just saying, “You’re not doing it right.” “Well, tell me how I’m not doing it right. What should I be doing differently? What do you want from me? What methods and strategies do you think I’m not using that I should be using?” But he doesn’t have that information from what I gather. So, I think his leadership style affects how they teach, because he does *not* have the methods and strategies to give to them (Andrea, School A).

Hmm. There isn’t really [a style]. [Laughs.] I feel like that’s terrible. I feel like we’ve had so many different leadership styles. We’ve had, within the last few years, leaders that are not really great with the kids that age, but they’re better with, you know, dealing with adults and managing adults. But then we’ve had some principals that seem to be better, I don’t know, I want to say “less fake,” but, you know, better, just more natural with the kids and not good management with, with the adults (Bonnie, School A).
Leadership style. I think that I guess his leadership style would be delegation. I don’t know if that’s a leadership style. But, I don’t know how to say this, I guess. He over-relies on other people. There isn’t a lot of leadership. I guess that’s the best way to say it. He will, I don’t know, yeah, there’s not very much decision making. There isn’t, there just isn’t a lot of leadership. He relies on the staff and other people to make decisions for him, and it’s not productive, because the staff don’t, not everybody agrees on everything. And there needs to be someone that does lead, that does have education and research backing their decisions, and we don’t have that (Carla, School A).

So I recognize work. He’s doing work. He’s trying to learn a lot of things. The problem is he just has so much to learn. When the oldest kid in your building is 8 years old and essentially what that means is everybody within this district who’s learning how to read is in our school, you have to know how to teach kids to read. Step by step, phonics, phonemic awareness, and he didn’t. And so I think that that, you know, learning as I go, he couldn’t really come into a classroom and help a teacher move forward who maybe also was struggling with a particular part of that continuum, cuz he didn’t know. So learning as he went type. Trying to be very organized (Dana, School A).

Turnover. Staff indicated the multiple number of building leaders in a small number of years has had an effect on the IC implementation process within their building.

And with the different administrators that they’ve had. They’ve have three principals . . . in the past three years or four years, four years; and each one had a different belief system. It’s like one principal thought it was mandatory. One principal thought it was optional. One principal didn’t care.
You know, it just makes it hard for the teachers, I guess, to really clearly know, “Well, what is it? Are we supposed to? Are we not supposed to?” (Andrea, School A)

We have to stick to a process. So when you have that much turnover in principals, you know, it’s just kind of like you get the essence of IC with a side of my own philosophy, you know. And then when you have, when you’ve had three different bosses with three different philosophies, all of a sudden IC is just kind of “I-what”? (Dana, School A)

Communication. Staff indicated the varying forms and levels of communication had an effect on the level of IC implementation. Some responses in regard to communication follow.

So what kind of has happened is you have, you know, certain teachers that they can say, you know, they’ll say something to the administrator, and the administrator goes along with what they think and maybe not what somebody else thinks. And then that kind of creates a, you know, a, a mess between staff. You know, I feel like that’s kind of how our building has gotten, I feel like, I mean I like the sense that some of our leaders have, you know, given the teachers the opportunity to speak up and say what we’d like to do, but then I sometimes thinks that kind of spirals out of control too, because then, you know, we have so many meetings now in our building where we just sit there and blah comes out. And then we leave and nothing’s solved. Because, you know, everyone has their own opinion and no one makes a decision. You know, so it’s like, it’s great to be able to have your opinion, but someone just needs to say, “This is the direction we’re going” (Bonnie, School A).

I think better conversations and it would provide the staff with a better understanding of the purpose and why am I doing it and that it’s not evaluative. It’s not because I have to
do this because I have to make sure that I have a paper trail. It would be because I need to make sure that I’m meeting the needs of my students right now (Carla, School A).

I think where the breakdown happens is the clear communication of expectations and goals for the building, how those are communicated to that team of “leaders,” quote, unquote. And then the transfer of that information back to grade levels and the rest of the staff. Because this year, and I don’t know that this has anything to do with ICT, but just as far as our building functioning, that communication has completely broken down and even just the communication of like school improvement goals, if that grade-level person takes it back to their grade level, they often are cut down for feeling like. . . . Other people are saying, “Well, you’re trying to run everything” and “You’re trying to tell us what we have to do” instead of it being teamwork and, “OK, you were at this meeting. Tell us what you learned and help us to be able to work toward the school goals.” We don’t have that system (Carla, School A).

I mean I think he was making some good attempts, trying to be a good communicator. I think he thinks maybe in either teeny-tiny pictures or too-big-of pictures. It’s the all that in-between area. You know, how it’s very easy to think like, “This is what I want for my building.” Then maybe get started on a teeny-tiny part of it but then that’s all that would happen (Dana, School A).

I mean you, we all went and saw Todd and we heard his “Toddisms.” Right out of Ed’s mouth, “This is the IC process.” But it’s like telephone. It trickles down to one person who kind of flips it and turns it and then another person and then another. And all of a sudden it kind of turned into something else. And that can’t happen (Dana, School A).
Summary

Analyzing the data from Building A, the researcher found the interviewees had a drive to keep the concept of IC, the IC team, and its work within the building in the forefront of what the building does to help students and staff be successful despite the daily challenges they may face, as presented in the findings. Communication is a key part of keeping the concept of IC and its team in the forefront of the work that is being done within the building. It pervades all of the themes in some way or another. The story that emerges is that somewhere along the lines of communication, communication becomes distorted and has an effect on the implementation of IC.
Chapter 5: Data Analysis, School B

Introduction

The purpose of Chapter 5 is to explain the School B data analysis. There are three sections to this chapter: 1) guiding research questions, 2) findings of analysis for School B, and 3) discussion and summary of key findings.

Guiding Research Questions

1. What factors affect IC team implementation?
2. To what extent does significant understanding of the IC team process, and the understanding of an RtI framework, affect staff and administration knowledge of the process for identification of a specific learning disability?

Findings of Analysis, School B

The five major categories identified from the conceptual framework included understanding the IC process, leadership style, culture, teachers’ attitudes toward IC, and professional development for instruction.

Table 4 identifies the open and axial codes for Building B after analyzing the nodes, subnodes, and interview quotes gathered through the data analysis in NVivo.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Codes</th>
<th>Axial Codes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to RtI</td>
<td>Use curriculum and data to inform each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use framework with IC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator role</td>
<td>Needs administrative and teacher support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge to special education</td>
<td>Deficit thinking (&quot;fix them&quot;)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Relation to ISD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time consuming</td>
<td>Actual workload increases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time: team member, process, teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voluntary concept</td>
<td>Perceived change</td>
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Table 4: School B Open Codes and Axial Codes
Appendix I identifies a chart containing each category and theme with specific major quotes per participant from Building B. The categories and themes were identified through the conceptual framework, interview questions, and interview response analysis. The quote information was further analyzed to determine a type of view, such as supportive or neutral, toward each category or theme. In the event that there was not a major quote by the participant, it was recorded as “*na.”

Results of an analysis of the quotes for the open codes showed Relationship to RtI, Facilitator Role, Bridge to Special Education, Voluntary Concept of IC, and Time Consuming Concept were the most discussed themes, with three or greater references to each of those themes in Building B. (See Appendix J.) These five themes are significant in that it may help the researcher and reader understand why there has been a divergence in the IC implementation process within the two buildings within the district. It may also provide insightful information in regard to recommendations for further research and implications for the future, addressed in Chapter 6.

**Discussion and Summary of Key Findings**

**Relationship to RtI.**

*Using IC within the framework to improve curriculum and instruction.* Of the staff interviewed from Building B, many presented a response toward valuing the use of IC data and curriculum to inform each other.

Building B struggled with IC as a problem-solving approach in and of itself. As seen in quotes by the following interviewees, Building B thought an RtI framework coupled with IC would help their students and teachers be more successful in making progress in the curriculum. Analyzing the data from Building B, the building recognized that through the data collected from
IC cases, its curriculum had gaps, but it struggled with the idea that IC could be a stand-alone problem-solving process in strengthening teacher and student matches in instruction and in strengthening the curriculum overall. The majority of Building B believed that IC was not an effective problem-solving model by itself, and IC would be enhanced once an RtI framework was in place.

**Using data and curriculum to inform each other.** Staff believed having IC as part of an RtI framework could be a way to use the data from IC to inform curriculum changes. Monique, School B, said: “I do think ICT and the data need to be looked at with an open mind and that it could be a benefit to help change curriculum. We’re in this whole mode of accountability, and you’re looking at what can we do better? What can we do better? ICT is a piece of that answer.” Additional quotes follow.

I don’t think that we put aside enough time to do that. We do data analysis on our MEAP scores and our local assessments, but we don’t, when we’re doing that, it’s more of a corrective model like why are we not doing well in this area? Why are we not doing well in this particular area of reasoning in mathematics? Why are we not? The chance to share positives with IC process and strategies we’ve tried, that’s not built in. And that would probably, we’d probably be doing better at it if it was. I mean [JM] grabs those opportunities to share those kinds of things at staff meetings or over an e-mail to the whole staff, but not enough. It’s not built-in (Jennifer, School B).

And that’s been one frustrating thing that through the years you can see a trend. And you can see curriculum weaknesses. And you can see professional development needs. But when you’re, when you share that data and nothing is done with that, that’s extremely frustrating. Because we’re constantly trying to have teachers meet that need that maybe should have been fulfilled
with good instruction in previous years. And that really is one of the most frustrating things, because education, it’s stair steps (Monique, School B).

**Using IC within the framework.** The researcher heard among staff that IC needed the support of a strong RtI framework as an integral part of making IC a strong problem-solving approach in the building.

Some examples of the responses toward this relationship between RtI and IC and supporting the use of IC within an RtI framework included:

Well, especially because if you look at Tier 1, it’s all about instruction. IC can help it. IC can help with Tier 2 when you have that classroom intervention, pull out with classroom intervention. . . . RtI’s the framework; IC is the process to help move through the framework. At least, that’s how I see it (Linda, School B).

But I really think it needs to be a marry between the two. And that was the term that [J] and I talked about yesterday. And actually we didn’t talk about marrying IC and RtI; we talked about marrying IC and intervention. But, in my mind, intervention’s . . . a part of RtI obviously (Linda, School B).

Guaranteed interventions. And again, Todd [Gravois] has kind of backed up in recent months to explain how this fits into an RtI model, but I think we owe it to all kids that if you’re displaying this need, we have a guaranteed intervention to provide you. And if you still continue to develop or display needs, we have another guaranteed, more intense intervention to provide you (Nathan, School B).

**Facilitator role.**

**Needs administrative and teacher support.** Of the staff interviewed in Building B, the data show staff had mixed responses that the facilitator played a key part in the implementation
of IC within the building. Analyzing the School B data, staff, including the administrator, recognized both administrative support and more active teacher involvement would support the facilitator in making IC a viable problem-solving approach in the building.

Some examples of responses toward needing both active administrative and teacher involvement to support the facilitator follow below.

Administrative support.

[If] the administrator is on board and understands and wants to be a part of it, then yes, the process works a lot better than if there are questions or concerns. Right, yeah, even to attend the weekly meetings that we have. . . . But if the administrator truly believes in the system and truly is trying to make it go, then yeah there is a big difference, big difference (Kendra, School B).

Well, I think that’s been part of the problem with our process, at least in our building . . . It’s got to be, it’s got to be a team effort. And I need, I need her to lead the way . . . She’s the IC facilitator; she has more knowledge than anybody. I’m a team player, and I can push things along because of my role in the building. And I will give her my full support, but it’s not going to be just me fixing it (Linda, School B).

Before when it was a stated expectation and administration lived and breathed it as much as the ICT facilitator, although it was a change in the building, it quickly became the norm. But if it isn’t, if it isn’t encouraged and expected by administration, it dies in the building (Monique, School B).

Teacher support.

I think one thing we’re lacking in our building is that [JB], I know [JB’s] not the only case manager, but she, I think she bears a lot more of the load than she probably should
because we don’t have enough regular ed teachers. And I’m guilty of this. I did not
volunteer to sit on the ICT team as a case manager. We’re capable. We just, there aren’t
efficient of us (Jennifer, School B).

Bridge to special education.

Deficit thinking and relation to ISD. Of the staff interviewed from Building B, most
staff showed a response toward seeing a relationship, in some capacity, between what they
deemed “the bridge to special education” and IC. The data from the staff indicates the perception
that some teachers saw IC as the viable path to a referral for special education, not as a way of
obtaining a match between the student, teacher, and instruction, as IC intends. Analyzing the data
from Building B, the building did not feel confident with its team and facilitator. This lack of
confidence in the process, team, and facilitator was interwoven throughout all staff, including the
facilitator and team members, administration, and teachers, and it could perpetuate the
perception that staff who sought a request for assistance were looking for a “bridge to special
education” solution.

Deficit thinking. As described in Chapter 2, deficit thinking has been described as placing
the blame for low achievement on the student rather than on the educational system they are in. It
encompasses the belief that the challenge is embedded within the student (i.e., he is not “right,”
he needs to be “fixed,” I “just know” he’s special ed).

Some examples of staff responses toward the “bridge to special education” concept,
showing the underlying deficit thinking, included Nathan, School B: “I think they know that, in
teaching, but in practice, they want the kid fixed. It’s the old-school handoff model . . . I
think it’s that handoff mentality.” Other responses follow.
I mean sometimes you have a kid where you’re like, “I just know in my gut that this kid needs special ed.” And you’re going through the motions with ICT. And it’s not that you don’t try, but you just know (Jennifer, School B). Unfortunately we had a facilitator that at times played into that and did want to take them off their hands and did want to try to help them and fix them, instead of really confronting the teacher to say, “You own this child, and you own their learning. Let me help you better serve their needs” (Nathan, School B).

**Relation to ISD.** The researcher also found a unique perspective from Building B about the “bridge to special education” concept. The building’s perception about a link between IC and special education was based more on the connections to the Intermediate School District (ISD) and the ISD personnel involved in the IC process, such as the facilitator and itinerant staff, and staff beliefs that IC was a new name for the old process, also connected to the ISD, as seen so clearly in quotes by Jennifer and Monique:

I think people perceive it the way that I said, that it’s for the kids, it’s for helping, it’s to help kids. And I, in all honesty, it is viewed as a path to special ed. It is the new path to special ed. CRT [Child Review Team] was the old path to special ed. It’s still the way you got to get there, you know. It’s just more work (Jennifer, School B).

A lot of research supports that the CRT model didn’t work. Because suggestions weren’t ever really done with fidelity. And the documentation piece of this [IC] requires that. And the new models for special ed eligibility requires that. So . . . probably one of the biggest misconceptions though that people have—and I know part of that is because I am funded by the ISD, and we went from one day being CRT to the very next day being ICT—and so people see it as a gateway . . . to special ed. And I don’t know that that’s anything that
we’re ever really going to be able to really stop because kids aren’t being considered for special ed unless we’ve got data (Monique, School B).

**Voluntary concept.**

*Perceived change of direction from voluntary to mandatory.* Of the Building B staff interviewed, most had ambiguous responses toward the voluntary concept of IC. The data from the interviewees on the concept that IC is voluntary indicated staff sensed a change of positions by different administrators or staff in regard to the IC process being presented as the only problem-solving approach for the district. When first implemented, IC was presented as the only problem-solving model available if a teacher wanted assistance for a student not making progress. The process was also presented as being voluntary. Essentially the choice was to voluntarily use the team for assistance or try and come up with strategies on your own.

During the initial implementation phase, although presented as voluntary, the building administrator at that time told his building that it wasn’t an option not to use IC if they needed help with a struggling student: “And I told our staff, ‘IC is the only option you have. You need to use this process if you have kids that have concerns.’ It wasn’t an option. And again I think I was breaking the rules in saying that” (Nathan, School B). This was confusing to the staff as they were implementing this new model.

As administrators turned over in the building every year to two years, staff received different messages from the various administrators in regard to other intervention processes that were being introduced alongside the IC model—which sometimes even became a strategy within the IC process, as seen in the quote below.

And, for instance, and this got changed because I think the logistics were just kind of sticky, and we were just trying to find the best way to do it, to run LLI [Leveled Literacy
Instruction. But like I said, initially with LLI, we were told if they’re in LLI, you have to do the ICT paperwork on them. And it was almost like a formality, because the intervention was going to be the LLI. But we had to have that documentation. And now we have changed that so that LLI happens automatically to kids that are two years behind grade level based on their spring scores. And then we make adjustments. And then ICT also comes in with kids (Jennifer, School B).

This quote covers a time span of three different administrators in the IC process for this teacher, from initial implementation to the time of the interviews.

Staff also referred to information they received from IC expert Todd Gravois, who more recently stated at a workshop that IC should no longer be voluntary and it should now be systematic due to the length of time it has been the problem-solving model for the building and district. Some used this as a reason for questioning the voluntary status of using the IC process, as it was information that had not been presented to them during the initial implementation training phase. Some used it as validation for their belief that the rules had changed on them.

“Well, here’s what’s interesting is that we saw Todd Gravois in the fall, and now he’s changing his tune that it is mandatory” (Linda, School B).

And some used it as validation for what they perceived from the beginning of the implementation phase, in that it should start out and continually be a systemic model, meaning that everyone should be using it if that is what is being implemented for the building/district, and that it should not be voluntary, as seen in the following quote by Nathan, School B.

But I told them, “I don’t think you want to go through this whole process on your own, so team up with someone who can help you through that process.” So I didn’t, I didn’t really
give them an out. And come to find out, Todd now says you can take that stance in the IC process. He just told that like two months, he told us that like two months ago.

Understanding all three theories on which this study is based can help explain why this concept was difficult for some staff who were already in a deficit thinking mode and stage of development of learning themselves and not so much for others.

**Time consuming.**

*Workload increases and time of team/teacher/process.* Of the five staff interviewed from Building B, the majority of staff had a response toward the “time consuming” concept of IC. The data from the staff that IC was time consuming indicated staff was frustrated with the actual workload it created as a classroom teacher requesting assistance and the amount of time the IC process itself entailed from requesting assistance to closing a case. Analyzing the data from Building B, the researcher found for this building, staff struggled with both the process and giving the amount of dedicated time it would take to use the process with integrity. The facilitator was the case manager of the majority of the cases because there was basically no team to support her. When the researcher posed the question as to why staff was not joining the team, one staff response was:

> Just because of the added workload. I mean, that’s for me, I’ll be honest, it’s hard enough for me to keep up with what I’m doing in the classroom, the ICT cases I have requested; volunteering, too, I mean I feel bad to say it, but volunteering to sit in on that team, it’s an extra meeting every week, and then to also support other teachers (Jennifer, School B).

Staff, according to the interviewees, was not joining the team because it involved extra time they believed they did not have to dedicate to the amount of work it takes to run IC as it is
intended. This in turn created a building without a full team able to take on cases in a manageable timeframe. It left the perception that it was a vicious circle of the concepts of “time consuming,” “voluntary,” and even “bridge to special education” within this building. “In terms of it taking too long. It was too lengthy of a process. Poor follow-up. They would request assistance and not hear back for weeks, sometimes months” (Nathan, School B).

Additional examples of staff responses toward the “time consuming” concept included:

Because it is a time-consuming process, the contracting. You know, you give up probably a whole prep time initially just to get through that. . . . I think the problem is in the attitude of the classroom teacher if they think, if they write the kid off to, “Oh they’re getting LLI, I don’t need to do anything else.” That’s where, because putting, the ICT process is labor-intensive enough for the regular classroom teacher that it really makes you think, “Do I want to do this? Does this kid need this? How much am I willing to do with this kid?” And it makes you very thoughtful about which kids you want to do with ICT. I mean not that you’re not going to do it because it’s too much work for you (Jennifer, School B).

It is a big time commitment on the part of the teacher. And that is probably the hardest part about IC for teachers is that it can be a big time commitment. But recently we’ve been trying to compact that . . . so that it isn’t as a time-consuming process and we can get the ball rolling right away (Monique, School B).

Summary

Analyzing the data from Building B, the researcher found the interviewees had a difficult time supporting using IC as a problem-solving approach the way that it was being supported, addressed, and/or monitored by all of the constituents involved. All of them struggled with it,
and knowing that, the facilitator needed more administrative and teacher support and active participation to move the implementation process forward. Yet the facilitator felt, although not directly stated, that they did not have much control over those pieces. As in Chapter 4, communication is a critical component of keeping the concept of IC and its team in the forefront of the building. It pervades all of the themes in some way or another. The story that emerges is that somewhere along the lines of communication, communication becomes distorted and has an effect on the implementation of IC.
Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of Chapter 6 is to explain the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study. There are seven sections in this chapter: 1) importance and purpose of the study, 2) guiding research questions, 3) conclusions, 4) summary of findings, 5) implications, 6) recommendations for future research, and 7) closing.

Importance and Purpose of the Study

IC and RtI are being used across the nation in 300 schools contained within eight states. In Michigan, the statewide consortium data shows that 72 schools use the IC team problem-solving model within their buildings. Although IC and RtI can be thought of and used separately, they can also be used in combination. Across many areas, IC and RtI are facing challenges in implementation; therefore, we need to determine more about the implementation process to help us discover ways to overcome those challenges.

The purpose of the qualitative study was to examine teacher and building leader understanding and perception of the IC team process as a means of understanding its implementation in a district. This study will help understand and inform how to effectively implement scientifically research-based intervention framework models to staff within districts, so children are receiving the full benefits of the intervention model. As an instructional leader, it is this researcher’s duty to comprehend and be able to guide others in understanding implementation flaws to minimize and/or eliminate those flaws in other future processes.

Guiding Research Questions of the Study

1. What factors affect IC team implementation?
2. To what extent does significant understanding of the IC team process, and the understanding of an RtI framework, affect staff and administration knowledge of the process for identification of a specific learning disability?

Addressing the challenges of the importance and the purpose of the study, literature shows the following factors played a role in the implementation of the IC process in the two buildings. Specifically, the factors that were considered were 1) understanding the IC process, 2) building leadership effect, 3) teacher effect, 4) specific learning disabilities and special education, and 5) relationship to RtI and building culture. It is important to study these challenges in order to understand implementation in relation to the implementation process of IC. Chapter 6 addresses these two research questions in regard to what specific factors had the most effect and to what extent significant understanding of the IC team process, and the understanding of an RtI framework, affect staff and administration knowledge of the process for identification of a specific learning disability. In other words, do they think differently or understand the difference between students who only need interventions and/or strategies and those who need specialized instruction and why we moved toward the use of this problem-solving approach?

Conclusions

“It’s kind of like telephone [the game of]. It trickles down to one person who kind of flips it and turns it and then another and another. And all of a sudden it turns into something else” (Dana, School A).

Looking at the themes in chapters 4 and 5 led the researcher to see “communication” as a common element throughout many, and the nature of communication is captured within this quotation, referenced above by Dana.
Addressing the research question about which factors affect IC team implementation, my research showed that communication is one large, dominant factor affecting IC team implementation.

Using the results of the analysis, discussion, and summary information from buildings A and B, I address the Conclusion Analysis in Figure 7 and supporting documentation that follows.
Facilitator
has most training of team members
key communicator

Relationship to Special Education

Relationship to RtI

Teachers
work with facilitators to understand IC and to strengthen skills

Administrators
support the facilitator and process
be an active participant

Figure 7. Conclusion analysis.
As so matter-of-factly stated by one of the interviewees, the effect communication has on implementation is one of distortion of the original, true process, through a variety of factors addressed in the literature, such as messages and modes.

Addressing the research question, “To what extent does significant understanding of the IC team process, and the understanding of an RtI framework, affect staff and administration knowledge of the process for identification of a specific learning disability?” My research showed that there were misunderstandings, and these misunderstandings did affect staff and administration knowledge of the implementation of the process for SLD identification. These misunderstandings were distortions in the communication process. Distortions can be understood by focusing on two areas: messages to be communicated and the modes of communication. Distortions are changes in the messages, and modes are where the distortions occurred. It also showed deficit thinking was an underlying factor of both.

Based on the open and axial codes, the story that emerged is that somewhere along the lines of communication, the evolved conclusions were that communication became distorted through such factors or modes as Professional Development and Building Leadership (or the administrative role), which then distorted two messages that were to be passed along—those messages being the Relationship to Special Education and the Understanding of an RtI Framework. Although the messages and factors were common to both buildings, how or why it might have been distorted in each building was slightly different. Just like the metaphor the game of telephone implies, there were many little ways that messages through communication were distorted—and not that any one of them was relatively large or unknown—however, all of them added up over time and created a breakdown in communication and eventually implementation.
In analyzing the data for my conclusions, I began to look at what it was about communication that broke down. How did this game of telephone unravel? What message or messages were they (facilitators) trying to communicate? How (or in what mode) were they trying to communicate? To whom (the receiver) were they trying to communicate? Was anyone else trying to communicate those same messages?

**Messages.** The message that was trying to be communicated was that in looking at special education data from many years, researchers found there seemed to be an over-identification of students with specific learning disabilities through the use of the discrepancy model. With the number of students being misidentified as specific learning disabled growing by 200% since 1977 (Berkeley, 2009), concern continued to grow with the discrepancy model of eligibility. IDEA 2004 provided states and school districts the opportunity to no longer be required to use a severe discrepancy between ability and achievement to determine eligibility of SLD.

In trying to stop this over-identification, researchers brought to the forefront a variety of problem-solving approaches, with IC being one of them. The use of RtI also became an acceptable alternative to identifying students with SLD.

**Mode.** The mode of communication was twofold. The message was to be delivered through both professional development about IC, specifically through people such as the facilitator, and through the administrative role, specifically through the building principal and/or other district administrators. In Table 5, conclusions 4 and 5 and the sub-conclusions identified under each, shows the themes related to each of these modes. Through this professional development, team members and administrators were to gain in-depth knowledge of the IC process and then be able to implement it into their buildings/district.
Sender. The facilitator, receiving the most in-depth training of any of the staff, plays a key role in communicating these messages about over-identification and the reason to consider and understand the IC process. They may also be asked to help with the understanding of the RtI framework. They help the staff and administrator to understand IC by inviting the team and the administrator to an overview PD training. The administrator is also relied on to be a sender in that working with the facilitator, it is expected they help support the facilitator implement the process within their buildings. Table 5, conclusions 4 and 5 and the sub-conclusions identified under each, shows the themes related to each of these modes.

Receivers. Once the initial training is complete, the team and facilitator work together to strengthen their skills to implement the process. The facilitator and administrator meet to keep the administrator informed and for the administrator to be able to support the facilitator and the process. For the administrator, the goal of IC is for them to be an active participant in the PD being provided and an active participant in the IC process, taking a case or two. The ultimate goal of the team members is to begin the IC process within their building and begin to make the match between teacher, student, and instruction. The teachers receive information or messages from both the facilitator and the administrators. Table 5, conclusions 4 and 5 and the sub-conclusions under each, identifies the themes related to each of these modes.

Distortions. In the implementation process of IC within these two buildings, just like in the metaphor of the game of telephone, the messages Understanding an RtI Framework and Relationship to Special Education became distorted, caused in large part by the role of the building leadership and the role of professional development. It was through the metaphor of the telephone game that these distortions occurred over time due to a variety of omissions and commissions, which are seen in the open and axial codes in each building. (See tables 3 and 4.)
Although the same messages were distorted by the same factors overall, the reasons in each building varied slightly. An underlying assumption of deficit thinking caused this communication breakdown.

**Deficit thinking.** Deficit thinking has been described as placing the blame for low achievement on the student rather than on the educational system with which they are in. Cooper (2006) explains it in these few words, “In the language of deficit thinking, children who are at-risk suffer because materially, socially, and culturally they lack so much, not because of the schools they attend fail to meet them where they are in terms of their language and social skills” (para. 4).

According to Garcia and Guerra (2004), “Many educational change efforts appear to stall or come to a halt because educators are unwilling to assume responsibility for students’ low achievement and failure (Berman & Chambliss, 2000).” Furthermore, they state:

As a result, reform efforts are undermined by educators’ deficit views and by their beliefs about the children who become the targets of reform (Valencia, Valenzuela, Sloan & Foley, 2001). They believe that the students and families are at fault because, from their perspective, “these children” enter school without the necessary prerequisite knowledge and skills and that so-called uncaring parents neither value nor support their child’s education (Betsinger, Garcia & Guerra, 2001; Valencia et al., 2001). Because these educators do not view themselves as part of the problem, there is little willingness to look for solutions within the educational system itself (p. 151).

As the open and axial codes emerged, letting the selective code morph out into the open, I had to entertain the thought that these two buildings struggled with implementation the same way our students struggle, and was that due to “doing what we always do hoping for a different
outcome?" Is that why the messages were distorted? The IC model is a different way of thinking: We are looking at providing strategies and interventions right inside our own classrooms! This was new to some staff, and we didn’t consider how to best teach that to our staff and how to help them move forward in their own learning—we weren’t good models. This is an example of why it is important for those in charge of leading change in their systems to keep the work of Kegan’s constructive-developmental theory, and the premise of needing transformational and not informational learning, in mind as they look to infuse major shifts within their systems.

Looking at the factors or modes of distortion and examining the axial codes under each, the mixed messages that staff received on IC between the facilitator, and administrators’ interpretations of the messages, the role of the administrator definitely had a piece to play in that process. As Building A pointed out, administrative turnover had a large effect on group dynamics; all spoke to the inconsistency of the IC process, the support and participation (or lack thereof) of the administration, and the lack of communication in regard to the process or staff in general. When implementing a change, key people must be aware that group dynamics can affect the implementation process anytime there is a change.

When I considered the messages that were distorted through communication, I found it was our deficit mode of thinking that led the teams and/or administrators to think “here we go again” when they were first presented professional development on IC. Did they go and “hear” but not really “listen” because they believed they already knew what they needed to about students who struggle and where they would eventually end up? Did they continue to “blame” the student for their struggles? Did administrators hear “one more thing on my plate”? This made me ponder how we could apply what we know about theory and the story that was told here to future implementation processes.
An analysis of the patterns emergent in the data from buildings A and B revealed the following themes were the most dominant factors affecting the buildings’ IC team implementation and engagement: Relationship to RtI, Bridge to Special Education, Professional Development on IC, Administrative Role, Facilitator Role, Voluntary Concept, and Time Consuming. Relationship to RtI, Administrator Role, Bridge to Special Education, and Facilitator Role were key to both buildings, while Professional Development on IC was prominent to Building A but not Building B, and Voluntary Concept and Time Consuming were prominent to Building B but not to Building A. These will be discussed, compared, and contrasted in the following sections.

**Message conclusions.**

*Understanding an RtI framework.* A distortion in the message about RtI came from miscommunication about the concepts of IC and RtI as they were presented to staff. Interviewees from both buildings voiced gathering multiple sets of data that were showing patterns of weaknesses in curriculum and/or instruction and also voiced frustration in a lack of its use in school improvement decisions for strengthening curriculum and instruction. The data from Building A indicated all understood the need for an RtI framework and also recognized that it was not in place for a variety of reasons, such as change of positions by administrators on the concept of RtI and IC being two separate entities, leadership qualities, and lack of not having the structure of an RtI framework embedded within their school improvement process. Analyzing the data in Building A, the researcher concluded staff values having IC as part of an RtI framework would be a way to use the data from IC to inform curriculum changes in addition to helping students and teachers make an instructional match in the curriculum. The researcher also concluded there was a persistent sense among staff that IC needed the support of a complete RtI
framework as an integral part of continuing to implement and engage teachers in making IC a working problem-solving approach in the building.

In Building B, however, data show staff struggled with IC as a working problem-solving approach in helping students and teachers make an instructional match in the curriculum. Analyzing the data from Building B, the researcher concluded Building B seemed to recognize, through data collected from IC cases, their curriculum also had gaps, but it struggled with the idea that IC could be a part of the solution. Building B still viewed IC as a separate entity from RtI and that an RtI framework, in and of itself, would take care of curriculum issues once it was embedded. The researcher also concluded staff was confused with the concepts of RtI and IC, as they interchanged key terms from each concept with those from the other; for example, they referenced the “tiered intervention model, shaped like a pyramid” when speaking about the IC process. This confusion could add to the idea that IC and RtI are separate entities that do not work together and could be the distortion that hampered the effect of the implementation of IC.

From the experts, Kaiser, Rosenfield, and Gravois (2009), the following paragraph describes the specific characteristics and primary goal of IC:

IC is a school-based consultation model developed by Rosenfield (1987, 2008) that represents a form of consultee-centered consultation. IC is characterized by a collaborative problem-solving process to address both academic and behavioral referral concerns of teachers. The primary goal of IC is to create and maintain student success within the general education classroom by enhancing the capacity of the teacher to provide empirically supported instruction and management techniques for students who are at risk. The underlying assumptions of IC hold that to facilitate the learning of all students, a) the instructional match, teacher-student relationship, and the setting are the
focus of problem solving and, b) a strong problem-solving and learning community in the
school is the foundation for professional and student success. Thus, teacher professional
development is a critical component of the process (p. 446).

Another underlying assumption of the IC problem-solving approach is to frame the
problem solving around the teacher-student instructional match and not around the specific
student. The IC problem-solving process involves the student’s teacher and consultants working
collaboratively to improve student performance through a series of stages of the process. This
takes the focus off the student being the problem that needs to be fixed and examines all aspects
of instruction and curriculum. This part of the message was lost in that, due to deficit thinking,
some did not want to hear the actual communication that the “problem” may not only reside
within the student. Interviewees in both buildings voiced a desire to use the IC data to inform
their curriculum and instruction decisions through their school improvement processes. Although
this desire was voiced, an analysis of the data showed a disconnection between these words and
their actual expectations. RtI is to include universal screening; research-based, high-quality
differentiated instruction; scientific, research-based interventions of increasing intensity specific
to the students’ deficit needs; and continuous progress monitoring to guide further instruction
and interventions (Bradley et al., 2005). It is when students do not respond to high-quality
differentiated instruction and research-based interventions that then they may be considered at
risk for eligibility as a student with a specific learning disability.

Although both buildings spoke intensely about both RtI and IC, the buildings had slightly
different reasons identified for valuing an RtI framework. Building A saw it as a working partner
in engaging teachers in the IC process, which would affect implementation and engagement in a
slightly more positive way. Building B gave the perception that IC was a separate entity that was
not working for their building, and in order to have an RtI framework embedded, they believed they must move away from IC, therefore making RtI a detriment to the implementation and engagement of IC. The distortion in the message about RtI is in hearing that RtI is to include research-based interventions of increasing intensity specific to the students’ deficit needs. This would lead those who are of a deficit thinking frame of mind to hear that RtI is to fix the child, making RtI seem more desirable on its own, as IC looks at the match between the student, teacher, and instruction.

**Relationship to special education.** An analysis of the patterns emergent in the data from both buildings revealed the distortion in the message about special education was staff not having a significant understanding of the IC team process and/or RtI had an effect on staff knowledge of the process for identification of a specific learning disability. A large part of understanding the IC process is to understand its purpose, which is to create a match between the teacher, student, and instruction. In understanding its purpose staff should be able to discern that IC is not a direct link to a referral for or identification of a specific learning disability. In other words, the sole purpose of IC is not to collect data to refer a student for special education.

Analyzing the data, the researcher concluded most participants, both those who participated in IC and those who did not, perceived the distortion about the relationship to special education as having an effect on the implementation and engagement in IC.

In Building A, data indicated a form of distortion was some staff saw IC as a way of securing help with the paperwork and paper trail of documentation needed to obtain a referral for special education on a student, not as a way of obtaining a match between the student, teacher, and instruction, as IC intends. The researcher summarized although the building felt fairly confident with its team and facilitators, there remained the overall perception that some staff
seeking assistance were looking for a solution in the form of special education, which is not the overall goal of IC, and can affect staff engagement in the whole process of IC. Building B data also indicated teachers saw IC as a way of obtaining help with the paperwork documentation needed for a special education referral. The researcher also concluded a unique perspective from Building B. This building’s perception about the bridge to special education was based more on what they believed were connections to the Intermediate School District (ISD) and all of the ISD personnel involved in the IC process, such as the facilitator and itinerant staff, and staff believed IC was a new name for the old process CRT (Child Review Team) also connected to the ISD, as seen so clearly in this quote by Jennifer, School B:

I think people perceive it the way that I said, that it’s for the kids, it’s for helping, it’s to help kids. And I, in all honesty, it is viewed as a path to special ed. It is the new path to special ed. CRT was the old path to special ed. It’s still the way you got to get there, you know. It’s just more work.

This quote again highlights the deficit thinking frame of mind underlying the distortions in the messages that were being communicated to staff by facilitators and building administrators through professional development and leadership roles.

Why do we see these distortions? One reason is the frames or lenses we bring such as cognitive theory and RtI. Cognitive theory is the basic premise for discussions entailing eligibility for SLD, the process of RtI, and comprehensive evaluation of cognitive assessments. Processing competencies and deficits, coupled with learning failures that are unexpected, is in essence a specific learning disability (Kavale et al., 2005). Since 1977, significant numbers of validated neuropsychological measures are used to identify children with SLD. There must be a consistent pattern between cognitive and academic deficits, and a significant discrepancy must
be found between the students’ cognitive assets and deficits. Cognitive theory reinforces deficit thinking, and we are embedded in cognitive theory in education. Research shows there is overlap between students eligible as SLD and students who are low achievers, claiming the ability-achievement discrepancy model does not differentiate between them (Fuchs et al., 2003). Further, research finds that the discrepancy model is applied inconsistently in terms of measurement and interpretation of scores. It has been stated the discrepancy approach fails to meet the needs of students who are not identified and fails to provide successful interventions through differentiated instruction (Hale et al., 2006).

With the reauthorization of IDEA 2004 came a provision for districts to implement an RtI framework as an alternative form of identifying students with a specific learning disability. Literature on RtI suggested two models: the problem-solving model and the standard protocol model. The problem-solving model (Johnson et al., 2006) addresses the student’s specific needs with a specific, research-based intervention. Typically an intervention team defines the problem, plans the intervention, implements the intervention, and progress monitors the intervention (Fuchs et al., 2003). IC is one such problem-solving model and is clearly able to be a part of an RtI framework, as is indicated by the literature describing the two types of RtI models. This in itself could be the connection as to why staff indicated they saw IC as a bridge to special education.

In both buildings, axial codes showed staff statements such as, “I just know [they are special ed].” were the same, however, Building B also revealed an axial code related to special education with regard to a “relationship to the ISD.” In both buildings, the relationship to special education message was distorted by staff and administration using their past beliefs and underlying deficit thinking about struggling students (coupled with IC being implemented by the
ISD special education department) to make a connection that IC is the path to special education referral and eligibility. As the data show, there was a strong sense among participants from both buildings that some staff believed the ultimate goal of IC was to end at the doorstep of special education. Although that is not the true purpose and intent of IC, being it is a problem-solving model, that strong perception is empirical data showing a negative effect on the implementation and engagement of the IC process. For Building B, this had been most detrimental in that over time, the distortions of the messages and modes have affected implementation so much so that they “lost” their team and have not been able to recover since.

**Mode conclusions.**

_An administrative role._ An analysis of the administrator’s role in both buildings showed leadership style and leadership effect on IC were important points, while Building A also showed communication and turnover in administrators as other important factors in the effect on IC implementation. It is through this style and communication that distortions to the messages occurred in the buildings.

A further analysis of the patterns emergent in the data from Building A and Building B revealed that staff understanding what is perceived to be the building leadership style greatly affects the implementation and engagement of the IC team process. Staff indicated a negative perception of both past and present leadership having an effect on any type of communication within the building, which in turn affected the distortions in the messages regarding IC, RtI, and special education. As was revealed and recorded by interviewees (Appendix G), there was frustration with the different styles they had encountered over the years as administrators have come and gone. The view presented from staff was some administrators had been good with students but not with adults, and others worked well with adults but were not matched with the
age-level student they were in charge of. Most staff stated the teachers had taken on the “leadership” role in their building because the administrator was viewed as non-collaborative and non-communicative with a lack of follow-through on any initiative. They believed this “pits teachers against one another,” sometimes leading to less collaboration among staff. This type of communication or lack of communication from the administrator brought out the underlying deficit thinking of staff and an underlying assumption that “this too shall pass,” affecting the overall implementation of IC.

Data from Building B showed a feeling of respect for most of their administrators as a person in general. Staff stated the current leadership style, however, is one of laissez-faire, and the “I trust them to do what needs to get done as long as they make progress” style can be perceived as a lack of support for the implementation and engagement in the IC process. As seen in the following quote by George, ISD administrator, during their interview, the importance of the administrator’s role within the building in regard to IC cannot be emphasized enough:

Well, the roles are, are different in that the facilitator really is the true mover and shaker in the process. The administrator basically doesn’t get as much training and it’s not their role. Their role is the whole building. Uh, they, their, how they impact each other, I . . . the more involved and the more supportive the administrator is in the process, the easier I think it is for the facilitator to do their job. Uh it also im-, conveys the importance of the project to the building. And you can, you can be successful without administrative support, but it’s much more difficult. Uh, so I, I think that’s, you know, I think the, the, the key is the facilitator, but the administrator does play a, play a critical role. And the buildings that do the best, the building principal takes cases.
Data from both experts in IC revealed that although the facilitator had the most important role to IC being implemented and was the person clearly responsible for all of the meetings, agendas, team trainings, monitoring and managing of cases, among other IC management duties, the building leader had an almost equally important role. Their role was to have clear and consistent regular communications about the purpose of IC with the rest of the staff, not just during an occasional meeting, but in everyday conversations. Their role was to ensure they were aligning their building’s beliefs and improvement work with the beliefs of IC so there was full engagement and implementation of the process. In having clear and consistent communication about the purpose of IC in everyday conversations, participating in taking cases, and ensuring their building vision and improvement work incorporate the beliefs of IC, administrators can have a role in avoiding the distortions of messages. Their active engagement would show their strong support of IC.

Administrators who participated in the study cited a lack of time, other duties, and the understanding that the facilitator was to take the lead of the process in their building as reasons for a lack of participation. In this sense it seemed to be a misunderstanding on the administrators’ part as to the importance of their support and participation in the process for the facilitator and the team. Their deficit thinking and underlying belief that students going through the IC process would end up in special education kept them from seeing that they could be active participants in the process. This is yet another example of the metaphor of the telephone game in action as the commissions and omissions distort the messages and affect implementation.

Professional development. To see the distortion in the metaphor of the telephone game in the area of professional development, one needs to understand what the meaning of professional development is when referencing IC. Professional development is twofold. One, all staff needs
the professional development on the IC process itself to gain full understanding of IC and its purpose as it is intended by the IC model. This training, specifically on the IC process itself, is two days of training with the IC experts and developers, Ed Gickling and Todd Gravois. Staff, once they have the in-depth knowledge of IC that team members first receive, would then be more inclined to participate in IC. Two, this means staff would then receive the benefit of the specific intervention professional development by participation in the IC process, which is an ongoing type of professional development. PD while participating in the IC process comes from the team members, such as case managers, working directly with staff and/or at staff meetings.

Just as educators need to be cognizant of the variety of ways students learn, as referenced in Chapter 2, Kegan’s constructive-developmental theory explains the importance of understanding the different ways adults learn, which enables school leaders to provide rich environments in their buildings to promote adult learning and growth. Constructive-developmental theory focuses on the adult as a “meaning-maker” of experiences, taking into consideration cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal experiences (Drago-Severson, 2009). Key to the constructive-developmental theory is learning and understanding the adults’ current way of knowing, as it is what forms how a person interprets his or her experiences. As educators often describe “meeting the students where they are and moving them forward,” constructive-developmental theory applies this to adult learning and growth as well. It is here where we “see” the distortion or breakdown in the message. Typically we teach the way we were taught and we learn the way we were taught to learn. Most of our education has been teacher-directed learning rather than independent learning; therefore, most teachers have difficulty leaving the front of the classroom to model or learn collaborative instructional techniques, which is the backbone of IC shoulder-to-shoulder coaching. The transformational learning did not
happen during the first PD opportunity because those in charge did not meet and truly understand staff where they were in their learning. They did not understand IC themselves; therefore, they could not prepare their staff for this learning experience, which affected implementation from the start.

The data from Building A showed a belief that professional development specific to IC was needed for all staff to better understand IC as a working problem-solving approach, and PD within IC was needed to help teachers and students grow and expand their knowledge base. Data from Building B showed although some staff agreed professional development was important and needed, their specific concerns were concentrated on professional development specific to IC, for all staff to better understand IC as a working problem-solving approach to strengthen implementation in their building. Having a lack of in-depth knowledge and/or not participating in the IC process to receive the PD that teaches specific intervention strategies would clearly affect the implementation of or engagement in the IC process. Staff believing they had not received enough training, rather than thinking about how they could use the training they have had, inhibited the process from being more widely accepted and used. Their underlying deficit thinking and assumption that the child needed to be “fixed” and hearing that the IC process was not about fixing the student prevented them from growth for themselves and their students.

Understanding the IC process. Another instance of distortion is the knowledge of the IC process, which is derived from professional development opportunities. An analysis of the patterns emergent in the data from buildings A and B reveals it was important for team members, teachers, and administrators to have a significant understanding of the IC team process in order to have a positive effect on teacher engagement in the process. Each of the staff participants interviewed in Building A had very detailed descriptions of the IC process, as seen in quotes
contained in Appendix G. The administrator was unable to describe key components that are essential to understanding the process in order to support it in one’s building, as seen in Quote A5, Appendix G. The results in Building A showed staff had a pretty clear understanding of the process and team member roles and, according to staff, administration over the years had not. This lack of knowledge was verified during the interview process with the building administrator by their inability to describe the IC process in detail or generalities. This was interesting in that the process seemed to be implemented and working in this building, even without direct administration involvement.

In Building B, the results were not as clearly defined. The facilitator in Building B clearly understood the purpose, the role of the team members, and the effect this had on teacher engagement in the process. Although the administrator stated that she had participated in several trainings, her lack of detail in describing and discussing the process and teacher engagement did not support the idea that she supported the process for her building. Staff members and administrator alike discussed this concern of support as referenced in Appendix I quotes. The staff member who was very enthusiastic about IC presented a mixed interpretation in her description and discussion of the IC process, intertwining many RtI terms within her description of her understanding of the process. It was clear in Building B, a building that struggled to even have an IC team, that the lack of understanding of the IC process—by everyone except the facilitator—affected teacher engagement in the IC process.

**Understanding the IC team.** An analysis of the patterns emergent in the data from buildings A and B revealed another instance of distortion around IC team roles, such as case managers, who represented the majority of the team members.
In Building A, the researcher concluded participants believed staff knew the role of the facilitator more than that of the case managers. Participants cited lack of active administrative support and active engagement as the reason for staff not knowing this information. They believed if the administrator was actively involved and keeping IC in the forefront of the building beliefs, then staff would know the IC process and all team member roles. They also stated as administrators changed, new administrators should be afforded the opportunity to attend the two-day IC training to enhance their ability to support the facilitator and the IC model.

In Building B, the researcher concluded from the data that participants agreed there was little to no understanding of the roles of the facilitator or case managers, let alone the IC process itself. Many stated the lack of active administrative support for the facilitator and the IC model as reasons for the lack of understanding of IC and the roles of the facilitator and case managers. A lack of a process to update new staff on the IC process itself and lack of IC being in the forefront of building beliefs, discussions, and vocabulary—along with the addition of “interventions” provided by Title I (federally funded resources)—were other reasons stated by participants, as seen in Appendix I quotes. The effect of the knowledge of and understanding of the roles of the facilitator and case managers is integral to understanding the IC process. Without the understanding of the roles of key team members or the IC process itself, implementation and engagement of staff in the IC process difficult, if not impossible.

Facilitator role. The facilitator role contributed to the message distortion by the perception of the facilitator within the building. Building A data indicated staff recognized the large amount of work that goes into being a facilitator, and some identified what they believed were characteristics the facilitator must have to do it well (Appendix G). In this building there was an overwhelming feeling of respect and rapport with the facilitators. This was heard by the
researcher during the interview process as interviewees spoke about the co-facilitators and is seen in references in Appendix G, in response to various questions. Analyzing the data from building A, I summarized staff believed IC needs the support of a knowledgeable facilitator who has a clear understanding of IC as an integral part of making IC a strong problem-solving approach in the building. I also summarized staff believed administrative support and active involvement in getting staff on board would support the facilitators in making IC a working problem-solving model in the building.

Data from building B indicated some staff recognized the large amount of work that goes into being a facilitator and the amount of knowledge about the IC process that one must have to do it well. Analyzing the data from building B, I heard and summarized from among respondents that their facilitator was hampered by a variety of items (Appendix I), which obstructed promoting IC in such a way that IC became an integral part of a problem-solving model in the building. I also summarized staff, including the administrator, recognized administrative support with active involvement, as seen in quotes by B3 and B5 and more active teacher involvement, as seen in quotes by B1 and B4 (Appendix I), would greatly support the facilitator in making IC a problem-solving approach in the building. Not having this had been a large detriment to this building’s implementation and engagement in the IC process. I also summarized that unlike Building A, this building did not feel as confident with its team, facilitator, or process (see Appendix I). This lack of confidence was interwoven throughout all staff, including team members, administration, and staff in general.

The use of Instructional Consultation (IC) teams is a process that details systematic interventions and progress monitoring to collect required data. It varies from the traditional RtI problem-solving process in that it provides shoulder-to-shoulder consultation with the teacher to
improve and enhance teaching strategies affecting curriculum, which improves and enhances student achievement for many students, rather than direct service to one student (Gravois & Rosenfield, 2006).

The facilitator is a key role when an ISD or local school district decides to implement the use of IC teams as a delivery system of instructional consultation. Training in the use of the model is needed, and facilitators are important to providing this once initial training is completed with district building teams. As assistance is requested by teachers, the IC team begins the process of case managers taking cases and meeting with the teachers; case managers and teachers contracting, doing instructional assessments, setting goals, and designing strategies; teachers progress monitoring; and case managers assisting with strategies and progress monitoring and checking for progress all under the guidance of the facilitator, who has to be knowledgeable in every aspect.

One of IC’s delivery system variables is “active administration support and participation” (Gravois et al., 2007). It is a possibility from a constructive-developmental theory point of view that building principals operate under the same parameters as teachers concerning learning styles and may unknowingly bring this dimension into the mix of the building culture or teacher roles within their buildings. IC asks the building principals to participate in the IC process at the same level as their building teacher by going through the same training and taking an IC case, which is not a typical role of an administrator’s position in a building. This may make building principals uncomfortable and feel like they are relinquishing their authoritative or leadership position with teaching staff, also making them uncomfortable in supporting their facilitator in using IC as an integral problem-solving model within their building.
Although both buildings had distinct differences in why they felt the facilitator was an integral part of the IC model process within their buildings, the data were clear that both facilitator knowledge of all components of IC, and administrative engagement in and support for the facilitator, were important in the implementation and engagement in the IC model.

**Voluntary concept.** Although this “voluntary concept” may seem more like a distortion of the message and not a mode issue, it could truly be both. It is a distortion of the greater message about understanding the identification of a student with a specific learning disability, special education, RtI, and IC; however, it also falls under a mode “distortion” issue in how that distorted message was carried out to staff within the district. Analyzing the data from both buildings, the researcher concluded most staff believed since the inception of IC, the original concept of IC being a voluntary process had changed over the years. Staff remained unclear as to whether to participate in IC or not was actually a voluntary process. It was clear that staff believed these perceived change of positions by administrators and/or other staff was one reason staff questioned the voluntary status of IC. Most staff referred to information they more recently received, through their district representatives, from IC expert and creator Todd Gravois in a county meeting for all local districts participating in the IC process. Mr. Gravois reportedly stated that IC should no longer be a voluntary process and should now be systematic due to the length of time it had been the problem-solving model in the local buildings and districts.

As referenced in chapters 2 and 3, a key piece to the IC process is the word “voluntary.” To begin the IC process in a school, it is necessary for teachers to volunteer to become an IC team member and participate in many hours of training and practice skills learned during this training. Once an IC team is trained and ready for cases, teachers must voluntarily fill out a request-for-assistance form and turn it in to the facilitator. Teachers who have voluntarily filled
out the request-for-assistance form must then voluntarily meet with a case manager to review roles and responsibilities of the teacher and case manager and sign a contract agreeing to participate in the IC process. Facilitators and team members must attend and participate in training and practice many new skills. Teachers requesting assistance must learn and practice new teaching strategies and then use them in the classroom (Gravois et al., 2007).

If a teacher is in a culture of deficit thinking that resists change or believes oneself is already an adequate or proficient teacher and does not feel a need for additional support, the teacher will not volunteer to become an IC member or request help. Also, understanding the various types of leadership styles of building principals may help one to understand how these different styles affect the implementation of current or new programs, such as the IC process, when discussing the voluntary concept. One of the delivery system variables of IC is “active administration support and participation” (Gravois et al., 2007). If the principal is one of such leadership style that does not become supportive or active in the process, teachers may feel abandoned in the initial or ongoing implementation, resisting further use of the process. Research literature showed that buildings in which principals appeared to be more directly engaged with teachers and the implementation of new programs, the more apt teachers were to be in implementing and being consistent in using the program than in buildings in which principals seemed to be less involved (Rutherford et al., 1983).

Data from Building B showed this information from Mr. Gravois via building and district representatives whom attended the meeting was not clearly communicated to all other staff, as was seen in the interviewees’ varied responses.

This lack of clear communication on the perceived change of positions in regard to the voluntary status of IC, coupled with a lack of a solid team, facilitator, overall process, and
inconsistent administrative support, did not promote a strong urgency to make the IC process an integral part of Building B.

This unclear communication on the voluntary concept, caused by a mode issue in both buildings, could clearly have had an effect on the implementation of the IC process.

*Time-consuming process.* As with the voluntary concept, “time-consuming process” does not definitively fit into a message or a mode; however, as a “framing” assumption issue, it fits into the metaphor of the telephone game in that staff had an “underlying assumption” that using a process such as IC within an RtI framework, or even on the opposite end of the spectrum, thinking that students just need to be “fixed,” shouldn’t take “time away from teaching.” Data across both buildings, across all staff, showed staff believed IC is a very time-consuming process. Although individual reasons varied slightly, all staff indicated IC is time consuming in the length of the process from requesting assistance through closing of their case. Also, as indicated and recognized by most staff, it was time consuming for the team members with the additional training, meetings, and preparation to support the requested assistance by staff. Although both buildings readily agreed IC is time consuming, the effect it had on each building toward implementation and engagement was slightly different.

The researcher concluded Building B struggled with both the process and giving the amount of dedicated time it would take to use the process with integrity. The facilitator was the case manager of the majority of cases because there wasn’t a team to support her within the building. When the researcher posed the question as to why staff was not joining the team, one staff member indicated it was due to the “added workload.” Staff did not join the team because it involved extra time they believed they do not have to give. This in turn created a building
without a full team able to take on cases in a manageable timeframe. It left the perception that it was a vicious circle of the two concepts within this building.

Data from Building A showed a strong team willing to dedicate the time it would take to use the process with integrity. The perception of where Building A staff indicated there was an issue, with IC being time consuming, was the time it took to process a case from request for assistance to closing of their case. The researcher summarized, however, that although staff may have indicated this to be an issue, it did not have as negative of an effect on implementation or engagement as Building B, as evidenced by the strong team and staff who indicated having had cases with a team member. Based on the information gathered, the researcher believes teacher learning styles, leadership styles, and building climate may be underlying issues why “time consuming” became an emergent theme affecting the implementation and engagement in the IC process.

Addressing teacher learning styles through a constructive-developmental theory may help one understand how to approach the teaching staff in a variety of ways to enhance the rate of implementation and consistent use of the IC process within buildings—to address staff feeling the process is overwhelming and time consuming. For teachers to feel comfortable in addressing student learning difficulties in different ways, we must first make teachers comfortable in their own learning, whatever style that might be. Key to the constructive-developmental theory is learning and understanding the adults’ current way of knowing, as this is what forms how people interpret their experiences (Drago-Severson, 2009). We should also address how leadership style affects staff feelings about the implementation and engagement in a new process, such as IC. Research literature is scant in the area of leadership style as a change facilitator for school improvement. According to Hall, Rutherford, Hord, and Huling (1984), the reason for this is
being able to accurately describe the attributes such as style and behavior. Hall et al. state the
words have been used interchangeably even when there were no clear definitions of either
attribute.

In their research and review of other studies that produced somewhat similar results, Hall
et al. determined three operational definitions of three different leadership styles in regard to
school improvement. These three styles are the Initiator, the Manager, and the Responder. The
Initiators have clear, long-range goals that drive their school improvement process for their
building. A key difference between the Initiators and the Managers is just that: The Initiators
initiate, while the Managers tend to support whatever innovation is determined to be needed, but
they do not initiate the change. They need direction and guidance from other administrators, such
as curriculum directors.

Building B data supported the concept that staff saw their administrator as a manager
who was willing to support what initiatives other administration was supporting; however, with
continual change in administration that in itself was not always clear. Responders allow teachers
to take the lead on change and tend to believe their role is to do the traditional administrative
tasks of the principal. Responders also tend to think with short-term goals rather than long-term
school improvement goals (Hall et al., 1984). Building A data supported the concept that their
administrator was a responder and was very much in favor of the facilitator taking the lead on IC
implementation and use within the building.

An interesting implication presented from this study by Hall et al. (1984) pertained to the
“climate” of the building. The researchers wondered if leadership style affected the climate of
the building. Climate and culture is difficult to define and understand. According to Schein
(1990), any definable group, such as a district, can have a culture, and within that group there
can be many subcultures, such as the separate buildings and groups within those buildings. He also defined culture as a pattern of basic assumptions invented or developed as a group as the group works together through adaptations to problems that have worked well for the group and are then taught to new members as to how to think or feel toward those problems (Schein, 1990). The unit of analysis for this particular study is the implementation of the IC model; however, an underlying piece of the conceptual framework was the culture of the organization and/or the buildings. Throughout this study the researcher determined that perhaps a study should specifically address organizational culture and implementation of the IC model.

**Summary of Key Findings**

Using the results of the analysis, discussion, and summary information from Building A and Building B, the researcher summarizes the key findings of similarities and differences in IC implementation in the two buildings in Table 5 to support the selective code and sub-conclusions recently addressed and to support the Implications and Recommendations for Further Research sections to follow.
Table 5: Summary of Key Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question(s)</th>
<th>Conclusion and Sub-conclusions</th>
<th>Findings: School A</th>
<th>Findings: School B</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1. Communication (telephone game) Relates to sub-conclusions 2–6 and findings related to each</td>
<td>A1: Relationship to RtI a) framework w/IC process b) data=inform curriculum</td>
<td>B1: Relationship to RtI a) framework w/IC process b) data=inform curriculum</td>
<td>Theory-cognitive: Relates to conclusions 1–4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>2. Message: Understanding an RtI framework Relates to findings A1, A2, A6, B1, B2, B6</td>
<td>A2: Facilitator role a) needs admin. support b) driving force of IC</td>
<td>B2: Facilitator role a) needs admin. support</td>
<td>Theory-organizational: Relates to conclusions 1, 4, 5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>3. Message: Relationship to special education Relates to findings A1, A3, A5, A6, B1, B2</td>
<td>A3: Bridge to spec. education a) deficit thinking (just know) b) admin. directives c) documentation-CYA</td>
<td>B3: Bridge to spec. education a) deficit thinking (fix them) b) relation to ISD c) admin. directives</td>
<td>Theory-constructive-developmental: Relates to conclusions 1, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>4. Mode: Admin. role Relates to findings A2, A3, A5, A6, B2, B3, B5, B6</td>
<td>A4: Professional development a) about IC/process b) within IC/strategies, curriculum, &amp; data</td>
<td>B4: Time consuming a) actual workload b) time as team member, teacher, the process</td>
<td>Practice: Relates to conclusions 1, 4, 5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>5. Mode: Prof. development Relates to findings A1, A4, A5, A6, B6, B7</td>
<td>A5: Admin. role a) style b) turnover c) communication d) effect</td>
<td>B5: Voluntary a) perceived change</td>
<td>Personal growth: Relates to conclusions 1, 4, 5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>6. Distortions Relates to sub-conclusions 2–5 and findings related to each</td>
<td>A6: IC process a) staff understanding b) admin. understanding</td>
<td>B6: Admin. role a) style b) impact</td>
<td>Research: Relates to conclusions 1–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B7: Professional development a) Lack of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications

IC is the ability to 1) enhance teachers’ skills in and application of best practices of instructional assessment and delivery, 2) develop school-wide norms of collaboration and problem solving, and 3) utilize data for classroom and school decisions through a systematic support network (Gravois et al., 2002). It is ongoing professional development for teachers and building administrators in their classrooms and buildings.

The findings and conclusions helped to frame the following implications for theory, practice, and personal growth:

Theory.

*Cognitive theory.* Typically cognitive theory attempts to explain human behavior by understanding the thought processes. Piaget believed children progress through four key stages of cognitive development marked by shifts in how they might understand the world. He did not see their development as a quantitative type of development but rather as qualitative type of development, meaning they don’t just keep adding information, it is in how they think about the information and the world that “grows” or develops.

After my research, I realize it can be a dangerous path to follow if we do not dig deeper beyond the basic premise of cognitive theory, especially as we think about the adults, the teachers. They have underlying assumptions that distort the messages that are rooted in deficit thinking, which affects how they think about the information they receive. This may be related to the discrepancy model, in which teachers are still seeing students through the lens of IQ and achievement, based in the basic premise of cognitive theory, which frames their interpretation of the information. This means they are still focusing on the student and not on the match of instruction, student, and teacher.
Recently, Grandin and Panek (2013) wrote: “I’m certainly not saying we should lose sight of the need to work on deficits. But as we’ve seen, the focus on deficits is so intense and so automatic that people lose sight of strengths” (p. 180).

As educators, when we reference the word “cognitive,” we tend to think in deficits or deficit mode. As one references cognitive theory, which is the basic premise for discussions entailing eligibility for SLD and an RtI framework, it is important to remember that this could overshadow our thinking about RtI and IC. For those who have been in education prior to IDEA 2004, we need to keep in mind that the achievement-IQ discrepancy model was a reason for the over-identification of students with a specific learning disability (Berkeley et al., 2009), and our understanding of it is rooted in cognitive theory. This could possibly lead us to have a deficit bias when implementing IC and/or RtI; therefore, RtI needs to be grounded in multiple theories to prevent us from thinking in this deficit frame of mind.

**Organizational theory.** This theory is the sociological study of formal social organizations, such as businesses, and their interrelationship with the environment in which they operate. There are different perspectives of this theory, with one such being the neoclassical, better known in the Hawthorne study. This approach had an emphasis on affective aspects of social behaviors in their organizations. Furthermore, it concentrated on primary topics such as morale and leadership that focused around cooperation in organizational behaviors.

During my study I found morale was not optimal for staff or administration, and leadership was not concentrating on cooperation but on managing an overabundance of tasks. This can be seen in the area of the administrative role, style of leadership, and effect on IC, when analyzing the findings for both buildings and drawing conclusions.
Organizational theory can be seen as an underlying brick to this research or any research that involves a “unit” of organized people. When studying a particular model (IC) being implemented by people (administrators and teachers), one needs to understand the people. When looking at the people and resources as individuals or smaller groups (buildings) of one larger group (district), one begins to look at that organization. During this study it was revealed that the administrative role and many changes in administrators had a large effect not only on the group dynamics, but may also have had an unintended effect on the implementation process of IC and RtI.

Although this neoclassical perspective of organizational theory is the approach I referenced, and I believe it has a good underlying basis for the research at hand, it seems to fall short in the area of looking at the social-emotional component in the individual people of the unit being studied and how that affects the ability to have social relationships or interactions with others.

**Constructive-developmental theory.** Constructive-developmental theory focuses on the systems by which people make meaning and grow and change over time. It’s a person’s way of understanding themselves and the world and assumes an ongoing process of development over time. After my research I found that although there is much theory and research with the basic stages defined by Keegan, Kohlberg, Snell, and others, the research was not as robust in focusing on adults’ order of development and ways to engage them to move forward to the next order and/or how to explicitly work with those who are not in the same order as yourself, as a leader. The research was also scant in the leadership area in regard to whether any particular training or coaching on order development can have an effect.
Constructive-developmental theory explains the importance of understanding the different ways adults learn, much as how we as adults try to understand how our students learn so that we can improve student achievement. As I moved forward in my research and dug deeper in trying to uncover ways to engage adults who are not in the same order as the leader—or to find if it is even possible to train, coach, or change an adult’s order development—my literature research was not robust. Therefore, although in “theory” this theory should help educational administrators understand their staff to better prepare professional development in the areas of prior knowledge (to make sure all staff are able to learn at the transformational level), it falls short in deeper engagement. In other words, “meeting the teachers where they are and moving them forward,” as Kegan states, means understanding their tacit underlying assumptions (where they truly are). Based on this study’s research, this may not be explicit enough in Kegan’s theory. The research showed administrators may have assumed they knew where staff members were functioning in their learning, and therefore many staff only truly experienced informational learning because the distortions were not addressed.

**Practice.** Making the connections between what we know and what we have learned from the theories that grounded this study leaves us with a key finding for practice. Communication, although it started out as a theme, through analysis it became the larger selective code overall. Analyzing the metaphor of the telephone game, the distortions in messages and modes, and the deficit thinking that underlies staff thinking, the researcher believes the following in regard to implications for practice.

To help practitioners avoid the metaphor of the telephone game, Hall and Hord (1987), experts in the field of implementation and change using the concerns-based approach, stated:
One particularly important precondition in the concerns-based approach is that the effective change facilitator understands how his or her clients (e.g., teachers) perceive change and adjust what he or she does accordingly. In too many cases in the past, it appeared that change facilitators based their interventions (i.e., what they did) on their own needs and time lines rather than on their clients’ needs and change progress. As the first step, the concerns-based perspective places utmost importance upon understanding the clients” (p. 5).

Hall and Hord (2011) also reminded practitioners to study and use the “10 Principles of Change”: 1) Change is learning, it’s as simple and complicated as that, 2) change is a process, not an event, 3) the school is the primary unit for change, 4) organizations adopt change, individuals implement change, 5) interventions are the key to the success of the change process, 6) appropriate interventions reduce resistance to change, 7) administrator leadership is essential to long-term change success, 8) facilitating change is a team effort, 9) mandates can work, and 10) the context influences the process of learning and change. (pp. 5–15)

Before implementation of any new process and at any time there are major changes in group dynamics, key administrators, from the top down, need to revisit bringing the group together through team building so that staff may feel safe in their new learning and professional growth. Findings and conclusions from this study in both buildings, in the administrative role, showed that there was disconnect between staff and administrators. It was also eluded to that there was a disconnect between higher administration and building-level administrators. It was unclear as to whether the IC initiative was an initiative the higher-level administration formulated as a vision and was fully supportive of or if it was one that was disjointed from the beginning. This imbalance in vision can be a deterrent to any change process when the
compelling reason for change is not in the forefront of every decision and conversation being had. As practitioners in the role of leadership within buildings or districts, it is essential that those who play that important role should be knowledgeable and proficient in using an approach such as the concerns-based approach to change and implementation.

**Personal growth.** Through this process, the researcher learned perfection is not expected; it is acceptable to go back to the drawing board many times, as that is what makes you stronger. It does not mean that one is a failure; one learns from it and uses it to build strengths and transfer that strength to those around you.

During this study, the researcher analyzed her biases many times throughout and again at the end. At this time, she found that the three biases that she had put forth had some validation to them and not necessarily in both buildings. What surprised her, however, was the underlying reason why she had them. This in itself circled back to the selective code of the research itself: communication. Communication that was either said or not said, long before she arrived on the scene; the game of telephone that had already begun to occur.

As the story of the study unfolded, the researcher began to realize how much certain aspects of communication were apparent all around her in different circles of her life. This study, this process, helped her to think differently and start using different communication builders, decision-making models, and group-dynamic models to strengthen her purpose and the purpose of those around her.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Knowing there is plenty of phenomenal research available by Scott and Thompson in regard to organizations, by Hall and Hord in regard to implementation and change, and by Fuchs and Fuchs in regard to problem-solving processes and specific learning disabilities, the
researcher recommends further research in the areas of understanding communication as a common thread to implementation. Such research would be beneficial to many in understanding our own roles, the roles of others, and other possible factors in the implementation process.

As the era of high-stakes accountability in education continues to sail into uncharted waters, the concept of culture will also become an increasingly important piece of the puzzle for serious and aggressive school improvement within our school districts. Without a real understanding of the concept of organizational culture, we cannot understand the concept of change or the resistance to change when implementing new frameworks or processes. To study the culture of the building and/or organization could be a full-blown research study on its own to truly understand the complexities of the organizational system and how they affect the implementation of any new process.

One could further study communication within a school organization between staff and administrators before addressing any one of the implications for practice. The researcher would need to conduct a thorough literature review of communication and the various ways to communicate. The research could include a pre-survey instrument over time about specific communication practices and/or communication related to new initiatives within the district, specific team-building activities for that particular school organization based on pre-survey results, and then a post-survey research instrument to compare and contrast communication practices. Observational data could include collecting information on the types of communication used and compared to interview information of perceived communication practices by staff.

Further research could focus on RtI, more specifically in what it is, how various problem-solving models fit into it, and has any one model seen more positive results in student progress
than others. This would be done through a thorough literature review on RtI and the various problem-solving models and research studying the different models in a variety of settings.

Another area of research focus could center on the administrative role in the implementation of initiatives, more specifically in what is the administrator’s role, has that been defined, how has it been defined, and by whom (i.e., practitioners or lawmakers, for example). This would encompass a thorough literature review of the school administrative role, including the evolving changes in expectations of the role and the effect of other variables on the role (such as finances, school climate, community). Research would include a large-scale survey of school administrators and a smaller scale of onsite observational data collection.

Further research could focus in the area of professional development, specifically, the different types or models of professional development for school staff and its effect on improving teacher knowledge and skill level. This would be require a thorough literature review of the different modes of professional development for educational staff, and the research would include observational data collection of those various types of settings and most likely a pre/post-survey of school sites. For example, conduct a pre-survey about professional development; staff then receive a variety of the different types of professional development; and finish with a post-survey about teacher learning, comfort with the model, effect that comfort has on teacher learning, and other such variables.

Future research could also examine school districts that have implemented the IC model for which they believe they have been successful in implementing and sustaining the process at a high rate of fidelity. Specifically, the study could revolve around communication and/or deficit thinking issues, and if encountered, how they resolved it, or if not, what do they believe helped them prevent those issues from arising.
Further research in these areas would not only have an effect on the current research at hand; it would also have implications for the many challenges that the educational professionals continue to face daily.

**Closing**

What is implementation? What is effectiveness? How is it measured? In other words, how does one know whether the process that has been implemented is making a difference? According to Webster’s dictionary, to implement is to “carry into effect.” To have an effect is defined as a “result or consequence” (*Webster's New Compact Format Dictionary*, 1987).

In this study, the researcher studied the effectiveness of the implementation of the Instructional Consultation team model and why there was a divergence in the path that two buildings, with similar training, took as they implemented the problem-solving process.

As educators, we often believe “to implement” means to jump right in, often thinking we know enough to bypass any hurdles, and then find ourselves scratching our heads, wondering why the newly implemented model isn’t working. We forget to look to the experts for advice, such as Hall, Rutherford, Hord, and Hulling (1984), who teach us about being change facilitators, or Borko (2004) and Drago-Severson (2009), who remind us about how adults learn and what we should consider as we look to implement a new process.

The results of this study emphasize the need to have integral components established in order for effective implementation and engagement to take hold when instituting a new process or model. The key to having those integral components in place is in identifying those integral components and preparing for outcomes beyond what is expected. One example of those integral components from the study is preparing yourself, as the administrator, and preparing your staff with the immense information about the particular initiative before implementation begins.
Results showed not clearly understanding some of the major variables, such as RtI and the over-identification of specific learning disabilities, had an effect on the implementation of the IC model. Another example of an integral component is to offer a variety of modes of professional development for staff, as staff can and do learn information differently, and all staff must have the deeper understanding of the IC model, even if they are not going to be a direct team member. Understanding takes away the unknown of the process being implemented and the fears associated with it.

As this study began, the researcher hypothesized that the continual change in administrators in both buildings was the culprit for the less-than-effective rating IC obtained in both buildings. As the study concluded, although administrator turnover was a piece of the puzzle, it was, however, not the main component causing the implementation flaw. The researcher found the key integral components to the effective implementation and divergence of paths could be contributed in large part to communication, specifically, the effect of communication on such factors as the facilitator; lack of understanding key concepts, such as RtI and IC; professional development; administrative roles; and lack of understanding key changes in education, such as changes in eligibility for special education. In conclusion, effective implementation can be thwarted and/or abandoned by the many distortions in messages and modes, as seen in the metaphor of the telephone game.
References


Belding Area Schools. (2010). Staff directory for schools A and B (names withheld). Belding, MI.


Appendices

Appendix A: HSR Approval Letter

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Education First

February 13, 2012

To: Ms. Kathleen Senita
College of Education

Re: UHSRC #120113 Category: EXEMPT #1
Approval Date: February 13, 2012

Title: “An Inquiry into the Implementation of the Instructional Consultation Team Model”

The Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee (UHSRC) has completed their review of your project. I am pleased to advise you that your research has been deemed as exempt in accordance with federal regulations.

The UHSRC has found that your research project meets the criteria for exempt status and the criteria for the protection of human subjects in exempt research. Under our exempt policy the Principal Investigator assumes the responsibility for the protection of human subjects in this project as outlined in the assurance letter and exempt educational material.

Renewal: Exempt protocols do not need to be renewed. If the project is completed, please submit the Human Subjects Study Completion Form (found on the UHSRC website).

Revision: Exempt protocols do not require revisions. However, if changes are made to a protocol that may no longer meet the exempt criteria, a Human Subjects Minor Modification Form or new Human Subjects Approval Request Form (if major changes) will be required (see UHSRC website for forms).

Problems: If issues should arise during the conduct of the research, such as unanticipated problems, adverse events, or any problem that may increase the risk to human subjects and change the category of review, notify the UHSRC office within 24 hours. Any complaints from participants regarding the risk and benefits of the project must be reported to the UHSRC.

Follow up: If your exempt project is not completed and closed after three years, the UHSRC office will contact you regarding the status of the project and to verify that no changes have occurred that may affect exempt status.

Please use the UHSRC number listed above on any forms submitted that relate to this project, or on any correspondence with the UHSRC office.

Good luck in your research. If you can be of further assistance, please contact us at 734-487-0042 or via e-mail at human.subjects@emich.edu. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Deb de Laski-Smith, Ph.D.
Interim Dean
Graduate School
Administrative Co-Chair
University Human Subjects Review Committee
Appendix B: Consent to Participate Letter

Informed Consent

Project Title: An Inquiry into the Implementation of the Instructional Consultation Team Model

Investigator: Kathleen Senita, Eastern Michigan University

Co-Investigator: David Anderson, Faculty Advisor, Eastern Michigan University

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the proposed qualitative research study is to examine teacher and building leader understanding and perception of the IC team process as a means of understanding its implementation in a district. This study will help understand and inform how to effectively implement scientifically research-based intervention framework models to staff within districts so children are receiving the full benefits of the intervention model.

Procedure: The researcher will explain the study to you, answer any questions you may have, and obtain your signature on this consent form. Once consent is obtained, you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire about your demographic information, including your name, residence, number of years of teaching and/or administration, number of years in current district, number of years in current building, highest level of degree obtained and in what areas. A copy of the completed questionnaire and this signed consent form will be made for your records. The researcher will then ask you to set up a specific time to do a short interview about your understanding of and participation in the Instructional Consultation team model. The amount of time required for the interview will be determined by the length of your answers and clarification questions. The approximate amount of time for the first setting would be up to one hour in length, and follow-up sessions would depend on the amount of information needed to clarify previous answers or conversation. Once all interviews are held and data are compiled, the
researcher will bring the data back to you to review for any clarification of the information provided and its interpretation.

**Confidentiality:** Codes (in the form of a letter symbol) will be used to identify your responses. Any results will be stored separately from the consent forms, which includes your name. At no time will your name be associated with your responses to your interview questions. All related electronic data will be kept on a password-protected computer, also located in the researcher’s home research office. Paper copies of transcripts/analysis will be kept in a locked drawer in the researcher’s home office.

**Expected Risks:** There are no foreseeable risks to you by completing this set of interview questions.

**Expected Benefits:** There will be no direct benefits to you but your participation will contribute to our understanding of the implementation stages of educational processes.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you do decide to participate, you can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study without negative consequences.

**Use of Research Results:** Results will be aggregate form only. No names or individually identifying information will be revealed. Results may be presented at research meetings and conferences and as part of a doctoral dissertation being conducted by the principal investigator.

**Future Questions:** If you have any questions concerning your participation in this study now or in the future, you can contact the principal investigator, Kathleen Senita, at 517-668-3464 or 517-202-3778 or via e-mail at senitak@dewittschools.net or senita8694@sbcglobal.net.

This research protocol and informed consent document has been reviewed and approved by the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee for use from February 1, 2012,
to February 1, 2013. If you have questions about the approval process, please contact Dr. Deb de Laski-Smith (734-487-0042, Interim Dean of the Graduate School and Administrative Co-Chair of UHSCR; e-mail to: human.subjects@emich.edu). Public dissemination will occur by way of posting the dissertation electronically to Dissertation Abstracts/EMU Library, which will be Google searchable.

**Consent to Participate:** I have read or had read to me all of the above information about this research study, including the research procedures, possible risks, and possible benefits to me. The content and meaning of this information has been explained and I understand. All my questions, at this time, have been answered. I hereby consent and do voluntarily offer to follow the study requirements and take part in the study.

**Printed Name and Signatures:**

PARTICIPANT PRINTED NAME: ______________________________________________

Participant Signature: _______________________________________________________

Date: _______________________________________________________________________

Instructor: ___________________________________________________________________

Date: _______________________________________________________________________

Copy Made and Given to Participant on: _________________________________________
Appendix C: Interview Form A With Demographic Questionnaire

Interview Questions

1. Tell me what you know about the Instructional Consultation process.

2. Do you believe everyone in your building understands the role of each person (i.e., facilitator, case manager, requesting teacher, administrator) in the IC process? Please explain.

3. What do you believe is the purpose of the IC process?

4. Do you believe everyone in your building knows the true purpose of the IC process?

5. Having had the IC process in your building for the past five years or longer, please explain whether you feel IC has been effective for your building and why.

6. Explain the leadership style of your building administrator.

7. Do you believe the leadership style of your administrator (current or past) has an impact on the IC process in your building?

8. How do you think the leadership style affects your teaching methods and strategies?

9. Is there a need for professional development, and if so, explain the area of need in regard to IC (e.g., instructional strategies, differentiated instruction, methods of teaching, etc.)?

10. Please describe yourself by answering the following questions: (see demographic questionnaire)
Demographic Questionnaire

Name:

Residence:

Does this fall within the school district limits for Belding Area Schools? Y/N

Number of years of teaching:

Number of years of administration:

Number of years in current district:

Number of years in current building:

Highest level of degree:

In what areas are your degrees?
Appendix D: Interview Form B

Questions for Followup Interview

1. What are the differences in the roles of the facilitator and administrator in this process? How do these roles impact each other? How do they contribute to the success of the program, and which one has a greater direct impact?

2. Why would the building with a more positive view of the role of the administration be less successful with the process?

3. Interviewees talked about the need for a “marriage of IC and RtI thinking.” What does this mean specifically? If this happened, how might it impact the implementation process?

4. Collaboration and communication were two key components that came through from almost every interviewee, indicating that there are breakdowns in both in regard to the implementation of IC. What are the reasons for breakdown in collaboration? In communication? What is the impact of collaboration in IC? What is the impact of communication? What is the relationship between collaboration and communication?

5. How has administrative turnover impacted the IC process? How has a new administrator shifted how you talk about the process? Give me examples.

6. What specific knowledge does a person need to have to be an IC facilitator? What specific skills or skill set does a person need to have to be an IC facilitator? How are they matched to the local buildings?

7. Many interviewees spoke about “interventions”—specifically “IC used to be the norm, now it’s as if intervention is the norm.” Can you explain the difference between the two and what you know about how that process started in the buildings?
8. Explain the following concepts of IC: purpose of IC, facilitator’s role, teacher’s role, administrator’s role. When the process is first being implemented, whose role is it to inform the staff in the local building about the process?
### Appendix E: Demographic Chart, School A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building A</th>
<th>Lives in district</th>
<th>Years of teaching</th>
<th>Years of admin.</th>
<th>Years in current district</th>
<th>Years in current building</th>
<th>Highest degree</th>
<th>Areas of degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5 private sector</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Speech pathology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>MA+</td>
<td>BS, child development; MA, reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ed.S</td>
<td>School psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>BA+18</td>
<td>Group science/el. ed. (started MA in reading)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Art of ed., psychology, sociology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix F: Demographic Chart, School B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School B</th>
<th>Lives in district</th>
<th>Years of teaching</th>
<th>Years of admin.</th>
<th>Years in current district</th>
<th>Years in current building</th>
<th>Highest degree</th>
<th>Areas of degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>BA+18</td>
<td>El. ed. plus ZA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>B5+</td>
<td>Speech pathology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>MA+9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cl, EI, K–6 regular education, MA in PPI, MA sp. ed. supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2 MAs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary education psychology, SST (RX)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(left) 1 month in new district</td>
<td>(left) NA</td>
<td>ABD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G: Summary Chart of Quotes per Node, per Interview, School A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School A: Node Quotes</th>
<th>Node: Effectiveness of IC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>I’m comparing my first year in IC, on the IC team, to this year, and I think it is becoming more effective. The team, or Jessie and Janet, have been really good at just keeping it on the front line and letting the teachers know, “We are here. We want to help you. We want to give you strategies that are useful.” So I’m seeing that persistence starting to pay off. It seems like there’s just a little more buy-in. And I’m not sure if part of that comes down to performance-based evaluations. I think why is because of persistence. They’re just, they’re keeping it on the frontline; they’re sharing some success stories. The teachers have a little more pressure on them to do what it takes to be a good teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>One frustration I have with it is, you know, you may have a kindergartner who’s making progress. Their graph looks really great, you know, because they’re learning letter ID and they’re actually learning it and retaining it, which is fabulous, except it’s March. You know what I mean? So they’re still so far behind grade level. What do we do with this kid? I mean, he’s, you know, they’re making progress, but they’ve got to go to first grade. You know, so I feel like the gap gets bigger and bigger and bigger. Because here you are tracking them and so it’s going up, so therefore they wouldn’t come to you because, here we are, it’s going up, they’re learning. But then you have a first-grader in a fourth-grade classroom, you know. I feel like it’s been, I feel like it’s been effective in the sense that we’ve, we’ve gotten a lot of strategies out there to the teachers, you know, hoping that they’ll grasp on and use them and figure out that they can use them with, you know, with, with groups or, you know, kids that, in future years or whatever, but I think we still need to . . . you know, we just have . . . I mean our number of cases is unbelievable in comparison to the other districts and surrounding counties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>I think that it has been effective, just not as effective as I would like to see it be and not as effective as it could be. It’s been somewhat effective, because I think that the teachers that have opened their eyes to it and have been accepting of it, like I said, really have made a lot of progress with their kids. I think that it has helped to build some more collaboration in the building, but we definitely have a long ways to go. So, yes it’s been effective, just not as much as I would like it to be and not as much as it could be. And I think it could be more effective if again we had that administrative support and a better system in place that would facilitate more use of classroom interventions rather than parapro interventions and didn’t support sending them to the sp.ed. rather than keeping them in the room and some of those other things.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A4                    | Oh, this is a hard one to answer. It’s also hard because I love IC, and I don’t want to say anything bad about it. But I don’t think it’s, I don’t think that it is doing its job. We have too many kids who are in it for too long. We have kids who are still falling through the cracks. Even kids in IC are falling through the cracks. I mean I guess I don’t feel like any intervention system is effective when you have kids who get to third grade and the teacher can pull out the CA and see that they’ve been in IC since kindergarten. I mean if you’re doing an intervention in kindergarten—cuz, you know, I mean they don’t really even have super lofty goals really. That there’s something wrong with that. Or if it’s just, you know, across every academic area or, you know, kids with major behavior problems that they have had since they were in, you know, Jump Start. I, I just feel like we have certain components of IC that work very well; you know, we’re very organized, we meet, we have, I mean our team works together very well. But as far as making sure kids don’t fall through the cracks and that, you know, they’re meeting goals in a realistic amount of time, I don’t think we’re
there yet. I wouldn’t say we’re effective. And I really don’t, I mean you’d have to do a lot of peeling back the layers to figure out where we break down. It’s probably just a little bit everywhere, but it ends up being a lot everywhere.

I mean we’ve had to really kind of do IC on our own here. You know what I mean? Like we had those few years with NF. And she was struggling with some issues and kind of in and out of the building quite a bit, and so things just kind of fell apart. And, you know, J essentially had to come in and just kind of like rebuild our team. And it runs very smoothly now. But now, you know, we have all these teachers that we’re dealing with and trying to, you know, come up with times to meet with everybody and . . . I don’t know, I just, I feel like it could be more effective, I guess.

Absolutely, I believe it is effective, and let me tell you… One of the main reasons is because you have J who is a huge supporter of it, not only with the IC, but she is one of those huge supporters and will, it’s pretty much practice what you preach. She goes in, she supports you, she tells you she’s going to support it. I’ve also seen gains. I’ve seen...I’ve been on the other end with the General Ed piece of it. And what ends up happening there is that a school psychologist is, they will, we will have a team of teachers, myself and a school psychologist, we sit around the room. We talk about different strategies. Teachers go back and they try it. The caseload is so full for the school psychologist to get in to talk to anybody to provide any type of support. Teachers come back and they say, “I tried it, I tried it.” All we’re doing is just testing kids and putting them back into Special Ed. And for them to get out is too difficult. Whereas ICT what’s interesting is, it’s kind of slowed down the process to kind of take time to actually go in and look at what’s happening within the classroom and provide support and so forth, that piece to, and providing support to the teacher, that it kind of slows it down, so not that many kids get into the special ed.

I think, this is just my opinion. But I think for most of the pro-..., the cases in our building, it has the potential to be effective when the follow-through and the strategies and the data are collected are used for that child. It is not effective when we try and we try and we try and use strategies and Day 87 comes and then there’s finally a referral for a child that we knew Day 1 needed something different. But because of the way the process goes it was, Because of the way the process goes, and how it has to be substantiated by the data, that is a frustration for many. And they don’t want to have to jump through those hoops. It has been a frustration for me as well knowing how many strategies I’ve tried in a given time, knowing that I would have to try each strategy for six weeks. OK. And knowing full well that this child’s learning style isn’t conducive to a classroom full of 26 children who are moving at a different rate and who are able to follow directions and focus and not be disruptive and become a behavior issue. So when Day 87 finally comes, I think some people look at that and go, “Well then why do I even bother?” So and being a teacher for 14 years, I would hope that my experience and my desire to serve all children would show the IC team that OK, possibly this is somebody that is not going to make up things, first of all. And number two, do any harm to a child that’s long term. And that if any of these strategies would work, they would work in an environment, in a smaller environment or it would work in our environment. And they’re not working in either place. So that means that we have to do something different. And we have to think outside of the box for this particular child. And so I think because of that happening six weeks at a time, in six-weeks bundles, that has turned off a lot of people.

The ICT process begins with the teacher. The teacher knows that this team is available to help them find teaching strategies that help their students succeed in the classroom. There’s, it’s a, it’s a general education, I don’t want to say the word “process,” program. Yeah, it’s not a Special Education Program. And there’s several steps, there are several steps to the process. You first begin with contracting, and you give the teacher some idea of what this process looks like, and
you get their agreement to participate in that. So once they understand the process and agree to it, then you can begin your assessment piece. And it’s uh, could either be for reading or writing, math or behavior. And oftentimes it’s in that early stages of your meeting with the teacher that you’ve decided which one of those you’re going to work to pick up or pick to work on. In the beginning, after contracting, you meet to do the assessment, so you’re getting together with the student. And it’s an assessment process that should be done together so you can have that shared perspective. And you follow a bit of a protocol for the assessment so that you can gather the data that you need to set your goals. So after you’ve identified the problem . . . Well, you might identify several problems, but you put them in order of priority. “OK, well which one do we want to work on first?” Then you can set your goals based on the problems you’ve selected. Once you’ve set your goals, you decide, “How are we going to meet these goals? What intervention strategies are we going to use to accomplish this?” And the strategies that we choose are all research-based

A2 OK. Um, what it’s supposed to look like is if a teacher’s gone through their, you know, bag of tricks and they need some help with a current student, the student is behind grade level or whatever, then you fill out your Request for Assistance form. And then the team chooses a case manager, and the case manager gets with the teacher and they work shoulder to shoulder to come up with some stra-, you know, well they try and figure out what the problem is by doing instructional assessments. And they have problem, you know, problem I.D. and interviews with the case manager and teacher. And they discuss what they want to hit first and come up with strategies. And it’s, they track it on the documentation form. If the strategy’s not working, they redesign. If it is working, then they can close out the case and start something new or not. [Laughs] Depends on what the teacher wants to do. If they’re really having difficulties, then the case might be brought back to the team for suggestions. I don’t know, may have a group case.

A3 Um, well the Instructional Consultation Process for me is a process that is collaborative that you work with teachers on, and you go in and you work shoulder to shoulder with the teacher to help find strengths and weaknesses of students and help the teacher decide how they can make an instructional match for the student within their classroom. It’s really a problem-solving process for the teacher to walk through so that they can learn more about their student and learn some specific interventions to help that student and hopefully apply them to other students as well within their classroom and even in the years to come to kind of build their toolbox and show them how they can use progress-monitoring data to decide whether or not those interventions are working for the student. And then if it’s not working, they can change that instruction. If it is working, then you have evidence that the student’s making progress.

A4 Everything I know. OK. I know it is a process in our school where when teachers have anything like from like the first glimmer of “There’s something wrong with this child” to “Holy cow I’ve tried everything.” I mean anything that falls in between there. The teacher fills out a Request for Assistance form. It goes to the instructional consultation team. The team who meets once a week gets the form, and someone volunteers to be the case manager. The case manager then meets, hopefully quickly, with that teacher and goes through certain steps outlined, you know, through Instructional Consultation. So it starts out with contracting where you kind of establish…. You tell them about instructional consultation, specifically that you’re trying to find a match between the instruction, the teacher, and the task. It’s where you talk about, you know, time constraints. You’re talking to them about how they’re still the main source of contact with the parents. You know, above all else, you’re just, you’re gaining agreement that this is a process that, you know, they understand it will take some time. There will be, you know, some loss of planning time involved perhaps, before school, after school type meetings. And you gain their agreement. And then after that, you would go through problem ID, where you sit down and use
those wonderful questioning techniques, communication skills, to kind of narrow down what the exact problem is within the class, or problems, because sometimes it’s more than one. At that time, you know, the teacher and the case manager kind of prioritize and decide on which one they’ll tackle first. Sometimes it’s two, but prioritize. And then the next meeting would involve, you know, the teacher and the student, where some instructional assessment is done to kind of, you know, that way the case manager can get an idea of, can actually see for herself the issues going on with the student. I mean that, depending on what the case is for, I mean those instructional assessment will look different. Then after that, teachers get back together, the teacher and the case manager kind of get back together, talk about the results of that. They start kind of setting goals, collecting baseline data, you know, I’m kind of simplifying. I mean, should I really elaborate?

A5 Here’s, here’s what I, here’s my understanding of it. And that is that it is a making teachers become better teachers, making other teachers, including the team providing support to that teacher on each individual student that they bring up and providing that support to them, but on the skills that make them become better teachers.

A6 The ICT process for me starts with a concern in the classroom. And I know that I can call upon my peers and my colleagues to kind of assist with a certain area that a child needs a little more structure or an activity or something that I can call on that. So I call upon someone, and they meet as a team and then send me somebody to work as my case manager. And they really take care of all of the data collection. And I appreciate that very much, because I might be able to do the data in the classroom but to actually compile it and put it all in a format that I can use later on [laughs] was a great thing. Jessie has always been my case manager, so she’s been excellent at coming to the room to just say, “OK give me the stuff that you have currently on this case or this case.” Or she’s pulled a child at a time and said, “Can I go ahead and take another, you know, look at what it is that we’re doing?” Then the strategies that we use to get the results have varied from very simple to pretty involved. And those cases at some points of the time worked and sometimes didn’t. But it was good to see that there were so many different strategies that we could work on for each individual child. The best part about it is having the IC team look at certain things. We can kind of group kids together and say, “You know, this really works for this type of learner.” And use that as a whole-group stuff, not just for the individual child. So it doesn’t isolate anyone. That’s part of the, the part that I like about IC is that I could incorporate into more than just that one child on the case.

Node: Understanding Purpose of IC

A1 Yes, hmm hmm. Seems like adding more tools into their tool box. Kind of what I just said. To give the teacher the tools they need to connect with that student that’s struggling, to give them strategies that might be more effective than what they’re already using to catch up wherever they’re lagging behind. And then to take those strategies and not to apply it just to that individual student but to use it for the whole class. Sometimes that would be appropriate.

A2 I mean I think the purpose of it for me as a classroom teacher would be to learn more strategies, you know, to use with, you know, other students in my classroom either that year or, you know, in future years so that you could solve a problem on your own. I think the ultimate goal is, you know, you kind of work together with the case manager to kind of just, I don’t know, get more in your bag of tricks so you don’t have to refer or request assistance so many times, you know, so many different times.

A3 I think the true purpose of the ICT process is to help teachers be able to build their toolbox and see the importance and the purpose of using progress monitoring for their students. Knowing that my base curriculum, core curriculum, is not going to work for everybody. So how do I adjust
the curriculum for these students? And how do I make that match in my classroom? Using progress monitoring data, and what does that data mean? Because that’s when I’ve seen... The reason I say that is because teachers who have glommed onto that and then really seen the benefit of it and they’re collecting the data themselves, they’re seeing the graph, they’re the ones that really get it and their kids are shooting up. They’re making a lot of progress. But for the teachers that aren’t collecting the data themselves, they don’t really care to see the SDF, they don’t want to be a big part of it, it’s just like, “Oh yeah, they’re in ICT” as if it’s a place to go. They aren’t making as much progress, because they’re not involved and they’re not really doing this. So I think the true purpose of it is to improve the teaching skills of the teacher and teach them how to make the match for those individual kids and use that data to improve their instruction.

A4 Hmm. Let me think about that one. I mean I think, and it sounds like I’m reading this right out of the manual, but I’ve been a part of IC since like it first started. Before J and J, you know. C and I went to like Livingston County to get trained. It is to find the match between the teacher, the task, and the student. I mean we keep going back to that. And you know how it goes. When you sit down with a teacher and even sometimes I’m guilty of this, and you’re like “OK, tell me what’s wrong?” “Everything,” you know, like. “Everything’s wrong, everything’s wrong.” And then they start talking about their home life and how big brother or big sister were in class and all of these things that we can’t control. I think for me the purpose is to kind of like sympathize with them, pat their shoulder a little bit, and then narrow it down to “What can you do as the teacher to help this kid in your classroom get this task done? We cannot change the fact that Mom, you know, is a meth user. But we can change his day for him. And you can change how you teach.” And then I think the second thing is that those strategies that we’re learning as we bring kids through instructional consultation, we keep doing them with other kids within the same class or next year’s class. So it’s kind of like we’re slowly building our repertoire of strategies that we know, you know, that are research-based and we know how to do.

A5 It’s to make, to make, well, the sole purpose I think is two things: one to make the child to become a better student, but it’s designed to help the teacher find ways to help with student achievement, help with student behavior. No, no, let me go back, no. I think they understand the piece about making them better teachers, meaning if we provide you these skills. I shouldn’t even say that. I think it’s more of, we’re going to provide you these skills, but I don’t think they understand the purpose of making them better teachers and how that impacts student achievement, how that impacts that student.

A6 So that no child is left behind, so to speak. But so that we’re making gains for every child with their strengths and their weaknesses. So that we can find... You know, I mean back years ago when I was teaching with the multiple learning intelligences, we kind of could group kids by, you know, how they would learn the best, you know, and that’s kind of gone by the wayside. But I think the ICT process or the IC process could still be some of that. Like this group of kids are still going to learn best if they’re actively moving, especially in a K-2 building. Yeah, we want them to succeed; we want them to be successful. And we know that there are gaps and we have to fill those gaps. And how can we fill those gaps? And this is a way that we can actually get instructional purposes or instructional things geared towards them.

Node: Leadership Style

A1 I think from what I can tell that he has some ideas without any follow through. And also it seems he at times has no idea, and so he’s having everybody else do his work for him. Right. But then the few ideas that he does seem to have, it’s all talk, and there’s no follow through.

A2 Hmm. There isn’t really one. [Laughs] I feel like that’s terrible. I feel like we’ve had so many different leadership styles. We’ve had, within the last few years, leaders that are not really great with the kids that age, but they’re better with, you know, dealing with adults and managing
adults. But then we’ve had some principals that seem to be better, I don’t know, I want to say “less fake,” but, you know, better, just more natural with the kids and not good management with, with the adults. So what kind of has happened is you have, you know, certain teachers that they can say, you know, they’ll say something to the administrator, and the administrator goes along with what they think and maybe not what somebody else thinks. And then that kind of creates a, you know, a, a mess between staff. You know, I feel like that’s kind of how our building has gotten, I feel like, I mean I like the sense that some of our leaders have, you know, given the teachers the opportunity to speak up and say what we’d like to do, but then I sometimes thinks that kind of spirals out of control too, because then, you know, we have so many meetings now in our building where we just sit there and blah comes out. And then we leave and nothing’s solved. Because, you know, everyone has their own opinion and no one makes a decision. You know, so it’s like, it’s great to be able to have your opinion, but someone just needs to say, “This is the direction we’re going.”

Um, I, oh my gosh. Leadership style. I think that I guess his leadership style would be delegation. I don’t know if that’s a leadership style. But, I don’t know how to say this, I guess. He over relies on other people. There isn’t a lot of leadership. I guess that’s the best way to say it. He will, I don’t know, yeah, there’s not very much decision making. There isn’t, there just isn’t a lot of leadership. He relies on the staff and other people to make decisions for him, and it’s not productive, because the staff don’t, not everybody agrees on everything. And there needs to be someone that does lead, that does have education and research backing their decisions, and we don’t have that.

I, let me think, I think a lot of, I really don’t even know how to describe, I’m just going to start throwing things out. Learning as I go. Recognizing the most important parts of what needs to be done but having to learn about them before he can give direction. Relying very heavily on experts on his staff, which sometimes works well and sometimes is a colossal failure. I’m trying to not like just zone in on things I wish were better.

I mean I’m, I tend to be very Pollyanna, so I recognize work. He’s doing work. He’s trying to learn a lot of things. The problem is he just has so much to learn. When the oldest kid in your building is 8 years old and essentially what that means is everybody within this district who’s learning how to read is in our school, you have to know how to teach kids to read. Step by step, phonics, mnemonic awareness, and he didn’t. And so I think that that, you know, learning as I go, he couldn’t really come into a classroom and help a teacher move forward who maybe also was struggling with a particular part of that continuum, cuz he didn’t know. So learning as he went type. Trying to be very organized. I mean I think he was making some good attempts, trying to be a good communicator. I think he thinks maybe in either teeny tiny pictures or too big of pictures. It’s the all that in between area. You know, how it’s very easy to think like, “This is what I want for my building.” Then maybe get started on a teeny tiny part of it but then that’s all that would happen. So...

My leadership style is pretty much that you listen to, before you make a decision. That doesn’t mean that I’m not going to make a decision. But one thing I’ve learned interesting in this building, in this district is that I’m, people, I don’t think that my leadership style with the building really fits, it doesn’t mold itself well in this district. I’m one of those individuals that I want to make sure that everybody has input, that everyone has collaboration, that we bring things before the school improvement team, that everyone has a hand in that piece of it. I think that people say yes, yes, but in the bottom, at the end, they just want a decision. But then they’re never happy with that decision. So mine is pretty much a collaborative. Or at least that’s the goal that I try to do.
A6 There’s a lack of leadership, lack of communication. I’m such a positive person that it’s really hard for me to say all these negative things. But in looking at what we need to fill this void, because he has definitely checked out, is that we need someone who can look outside of the box and find resources that are out of the norm possibly. We also need to look for someone who can be a communicator in a positive, upbeat manner. It is time for this building to have some collaboration and so someone who can bring collaborative efforts and strategies to our teachers as well.

Node: PD for Instruction

A1 And then as far as the differentiated instructions and strategies, I think they’ll be more open to receiving those. They won’t see it as, “Oh, you’re trying to tell me how to my job.” Or, “I don’t want to come to you because I’m afraid you’ll think I don’t know what I’m doing.” They’ll actually come to us searching for those strategies or ways to teach if they had a good, clear understanding of really what the ICT team does.

A2 I feel like as a team it’s great, because we get together and go over stuff as a team, you know J teaches us our....You know what I mean? She has a handful of strategies she’ll give us or look through the book. We’ll look at this one or look at this one or... But unless a person puts in a request for assistance and has a person, a kid, that really needs that particular strategy, they may never know about it, you know.

A3 No, a lot of times, the experience that I’ve had, they’ve not, often they have not. When I went through ICT training, conversations during training were like, “Well, you know, once you go through the instructional assessment, then that opens the windows for the teacher and they say, ‘Oh, OK, this is where the student is stuck and this is the things that they can do. These are the things they need. Now I know what to do.’” We don’t necessarily have that experience where you do the IA and then the teacher’s like, “Oh, I have strategies for that.” A lot of times I’ll do the IA, and they’re like “OK, so now we have our knows (?), we have our needs, we have some questions still, but they look at you deer in the headlights, like “What do I do?” And I think that just shows that they need a lot more of professional development than even the teachers realize on different intervention strategies and how to implement them with fidelity. Because it’s not just sending them in the hall with a para. And again, that goes back to a systems thing.

A4 *na

A5 The unfortunate thing is trying to find the time to devote to professional development under IC. Because you’ve got all these different. Under the school improvement plan, if you’re failing in this in reading or if you’re failing in math, well your priority is not IC, your priority is professional development under math for everyone, professional development under reading for everyone, professional development under writing for everyone. So what does that mean for the piece that really is one we should be focusing in on, which is IC, because you’re giving teachers professional development to become better for their students. The problem is they don’t see that. They see this bigger picture, which is “We’re failing in math; we’re failing in reading. We need to get our scores up there. And what are we going to do to give ourself professional development training in that?” Does that make sense?

A6 We definitely need to have a curriculum here at [School A]. There isn’t one for math, science, language arts. And in the next couple of months, we are actually building a curriculum, so it is yeah. And that is a piece that’s missing. And if you don’t have that foundation, then obviously you don’t exactly know what it is that your children are lacking in. Because you don’t have assessments that correctly match and you have the things that you’re teaching. And therefore how do we start IC cases when we really don’t truly know what they’re lacking in? So we have to build that foundation. And that’s happening this summer. And that’s simply not saying that we
haven’t ever had one here. It’s just saying that as we’ve transitioned to the common core, we don’t have a current curriculum for any of those subject matters. The professional development that has gone along with transitioning to the common core has incorporated a lot of the RTI process in the curriculum-based learning and a hands-on approach to, you know, all of that kind of stuff. But have we focused on what are we going to do when kids don’t know the skills? And I think we have not done that a service at this time. Do I think a lot of teachers have a lot of tools in their toolboxes? Yes. And they’re using them for more than just a couple of students. I do feel that some of our PD days this year have given teachers permission to go back to teaching the way that they know kids can learn it the best instead of, you know, here’s your work sheet and here’s your booklet and here’s this and here’s that. Now with all the technology, I think we need to get even more into that because that’s what kids are knowing now, you know, and that’s what they are more comfortable with. So some of our PD this year have given permission to the teachers back to, you know, open your mind again, open your creative spirit again, open your, you know, let’s teach math this way. And that was phenomenal. Do I think we can do more? Yes. [Laughs] I know we can do more. And I think we’re a staff that’s ready to do more with some direction and some leadership that would support and guide. Absolutely.

Node: Relationship to RtI

A1 Well, I can see that if you had that perfect RTI framework, that ICT is an integral of that third tier, that it would make sense to use it if you got into that tier, you know, I mean it’s just part of the system that you have access to. So it would almost seem automatic, “All right, well, we’re at this tier, let’s do IC.” Though it’s not necessarily still mandatory, but it’s just this natural consequence. But I don’t think that framework exists here. It’s just ICT all by itself without the framework, but it still is optional.

A2 *na

A3 And that’s what I’ve been trying to say for a few years now is that ICT is part of RTI. People say, “Well we have ICT,” so we can’t do RTI.” And that is not true. That is just a confusion; it’s a misconception. The RTI piece, ICT just fits into it. And so it would be wonderful if we get that happening so that we had tiered interventions and ICT, because I think then we could really be productive in both systems.

A4 Well, it’s the best of both worlds. It’s the freedom in choice and collegiality of IC marinating with the structure and the...you don’t, you know, if this, then this, almost like the rigidity of, and I don’t mean that as a negative, but of RTI. RTI is a process. I mean it outlines steps by step, lots of if/then statements. And IC is more like, “Hey, let’s get together and talk about this kid.” And so I think when you marry both of them, you still get the benefits of that shoulder to shoulder, I won’t leave you, but I’m also not the boss. I’m just going to help you manage this process. But then you also have kind of like the catching points for those kids so they don’t fall through the cracks as much. You know, those kids who kind of keep going up, up, up, you know. Everybody should know about them. I think RTI helps that.

A5 So where do I see RTI? Where do I see MiBLSi? I think MiBLSi is one of those, and having been a part of it, is a way to improve behavior by putting in support systems and focusing in on the positive and reinforcing that positive and moving kids in that direction. And hopefully what that does is when you have these kids that are coming up before IC for behavior, that if you reinforce the positive, that you’re going to see less kids come up for that piece of it. Plus it gives, what it does is, I’ve seen it as a drop in the discipline. Does that make RTI to me is, is a way of taking all of our students and providing them, it doesn’t matter if they’re low end or the high end, and providing them 30 minutes of intervention. And they could be intense intervention from the very bottom to the very top where you’re doing extensions. So, I think that that’s an in addition to language arts. So if you have two hours of language arts, then we should be putting in this 30
minutes of intervention, that all students receive it, whether they be Special Ed, bilingual, whatever. But the question is what are we going to use as the criteria to put those kids into? And that’s kind of the, the, all right so you have these kids and you’ve built this criteria, what’s the entry and what’s the exit criteria? And that’s kind of what we’ve been working on right now.

A6 And I really understand that we need an RTI, you know, framework to be able to show our parents and to show our kids and to show our interventionists and to do all of those kinds of things. And especially to allow our teachers to say, “I did teach this level. I am teaching this level. And guess what I’ve tried in this level? But now I need somebody else to come in and IC to come in and those other situations to come in and help build this for this child.” And then we have that small, and some of us have larger handfuls of those students that we feel, and that’s why I know that this classroom has a lot of IC cases, because this is where the kids get put. And I understand that. But then help me work through the process a little faster so we’re not in frustration mode for the kids. You know, that’s just my thing. But and that, I think that has a lot to do with our leadership too.

Node: CYA Concept
A1  *na
A2  Or, you know, “Just so there’s documentation when they go over to School B, you know, that you’ve been doing something” kind of thing. So I think people felt a little bit forced into it.
A3  OK, but the other thing is I think is that the system that we have in our district and in our building doesn’t support the use of ICT properly—too much emphasis is put on you have to have data and you have to have evidence and, but there’s not that discussion of why. It’s more pressure of you have to have these things or your job is in jeopardy. And so they look at this as a covering my butt kind of thing rather than I’m really going to learn something and my students are going to benefit and I’m going to benefit from this.
A4  *na
A5  *na
A6  *na

Node: Understanding Roles of IC
A1  My guess is that they don’t. I would think it’s just the people on the team. I mean I think they probably have a good idea who heads up the team, that it’s J and J, but I don’t they understand that they’re the facilitators or this person’s the case manager—those labels, those titles, uh huh. They see it as just one group of people led by J and J. Well, I think they probably have a general sense.... I would say no, my guess is they probably don’t. They might have a general sense that we are all on the IC team and.... But I don’t think they have a clear idea of who does what.

A2  So I don’t know if they really.... I think they maybe understood what the, who the people were and what they were supposed to do. But I’m not sure they exactly, I don’t know if it was like agreed with it or they weren’t on board or they didn’t want to learn much about it or, you know. But I think they do. I think they realize. I think also some teachers thought well, if it was some of their faults. You know, so they didn’t really want someone else coming in just tell them what to do.

A3  I don’t, no. And that’s something that we are continuing to work on. I think that is a continuous work in progress. And, as far as the county that I’m in, that’s pretty typical of all of the teams. There are some people in the building that have been on the IC team since the beginning, which is I think is eight years now, seven or eight years now. And some of those people have a really strong understanding of it, but there are definitely still teachers and administrators that don’t have a good understanding of what the facilitator’s supposed to do, what the case manager’s
supposed to do, what the teachers’ roles are. We’ve gone so far as to write up a document that the teacher signs in the beginning of it that does explain case manager and teacher roles. But as far as a real solid understanding, I would say maybe, I’d say maybe thirty-three percent, a third of our staff really has a good understanding of each role within the ICT process.

A4  Well, first of all, I feel like we’ve gotten a lot better on that over the last couple of years. J and J have been like such a driving force in our building for IC. It’s been awesome. I feel like with anything else, there are probably still a few teachers who aren’t, who still want that, even though they don’t really want it, they feel like they just have to have that ambulance style, like just come, rescue, pull the kid out, take him away and fix him and then bring him back when he’s healthy. I feel like that’s something we still need to overcome in this building. I feel like our teachers maybe don’t quite understand that this is a time commitment. These are students who are significantly behind sometimes. And it is going to eat up a lot of their planning time. The time commitment thing, I don’t think maybe everybody’s fully on board with. I do think that we’re at a place now where our teachers do understand the role of the case manager. You know, for the most part. As far as understanding what our facilitator’s jobs are, I don’t really know if they do. Cuz our facilitators have so many other jobs. You know. I would say our hugest problem in this building is administrative support. I think our administrator knows a lot about IC on paper but doesn’t really know the inter-workings and is just kind of very comfortable with letting our facilitators take over and not being, you know, a driving force behind it and in it. I mean we need him on the boat too.

A5  I’m hesitating, so that means no-
Two, I think two things. One I think lack of understanding because they haven’t had the formal training. And two, because they choose not to want to be, because they don’t support it.

A6  I don’t think so, no
Well, first of all the administrator hasn’t taken an active role in part of any of our, none of my cases. And I’ve probably had fifteen cases since I’ve been here for the last four years. And I’ve never had an administrator…. That’s not to say this administrator, that has been...
And I think our case managers work very, very hard. And so I’m not so sure that some of our teachers realize that their job is also to work just as hard as the case manager. And then to have a facilitator who pulls all kinds of data and finds resources and does all that has been a huge asset to us.

Node: Data Usage From IC

A1  *na
A2  *na
A3  *na
A4  And they should be collecting the data. I mean they’re the ones doing the strategies with the kids. There should be that, you know, “It’s Tuesday. It’s my day to actually do the official assessment.” I think that when we go in and start pulling kids out to collect that data ourselves, even if it’s just once a week, it makes IC seems like we’re the ambulance
So I have a question for you then. When you have these meetings, let’s say you’re showing your behavior data. What happens after? Is that where you make decisions on, “OK, well, this is what the data is showing, so here’s what we’re going to do to fix?” I mean…It’s something we never get to. We look at data all day long, Kathy and we never get to say, “OK, so what are we going to do about it?”
See, now what we keep doing is we will like “OK well we’ve got this data and here’s the problem, and so let’s make this team, make a team of people. And it’ll be their job to come up with this
whatever to fix it.” Well, first of all, that team can hardly ever find time to meet. So we’re talking a month later, they finally get a chance to meet, come up with stuff, “Oh well we’re not quite done yet. We’ll have to meet again next week.” And nothing ever gets done. Or it doesn’t get done in a fashion that matches the need. You know what I mean?

A5 *na

A6 IC, no. We’re pulling Dibbles data now and we’re pulling, you know, but not IC information.

**Node: Voluntary Concept of IC**

A1 I think it’s still an option. It has not been made mandatory

A2 *na

A3 *na

A4 It has been a huge pendulum, hasn’t it? It was like…. At first, it was like, “Well, just when you feel like it, put your kids in IC.” And then it was, “You have to put your kids in IC.”

A5 I don’t think that ICT should be a choice. In listening to Todd, what’s interesting is he even kind of cleared that up and said that is not really a choice.

Yeah, Todd no, he cleared that up, and he pretty much said that it wasn’t. And what he said was, “How can it be a choice when in the end, if you are meeting and you are holding people accountable, then how can that be a choice? How can you say, ‘Tell me what you are going to do?’ Cuz it doesn’t matter if you’re going to go that route or if you are going to go ICT. It’s really not a choice.”

A6 *na

**Node: Leadership Impact on Teaching**

A1 Well, maybe I should go back to adding one more thing to his leadership style. And this is all, this is secondhand information, but I have heard this same information from more than one teacher. In that he is more like a dictator, and he is downright mean and nasty. And it affects their whole entire day. I’ve seen them sitting in the break room crying—many, many of them have been crying because of his leadership style. And I think if he had solutions and he was a team player and he had the ability to problem solve, he would be…. I don’t think they’d be crying. He would be providing what they needed, instead of just saying, “You’re not doing it right.” “Well, tell me how I’m not doing it right. What should I be doing differently? What do you want from me? What methods and strategies do you think I’m not using that I should be using?” But he doesn’t have that information from what I gather. So, I think his leadership style affects how they teach, because he does not have the methods and strategies to give to them.

A2 I don’t know. I kind of feel like if we had someone that ca-, I mean I feel like anything that would be better than what we’ve had would probably ultimately make me better [laughs], just because if they came in and said to us, “Well, we’re going to implement RTI, and we’re going to use ICT and this is how the…cuz see, my problem is logistics. I’ve never been good in my head at saying, “OK well this group’s going to be here, and this group’s going to go here. You know, and this para’s going to come here and this one’s going to come here, and we’re going to do this.”

A3 I think from my perspective as IC facilitator at school site, I think it goes back to instead of it being a teaching style that embraces collaboration and learning from each other, it’s a teaching style where I feel like I have to just to create a paper trail for any kids that may have needs down the road to cover my butt.

A4 Um, again, I wouldn’t say it stalls anything, but I don’t think it pushes me I mean I want somebody to come in and evaluate me and say, “This is what I liked. This is what I think you could do better, and here are three things I think you could try.” I think we have got to start getting into each other’s classrooms and seeing…. I mean some of the most fun I ever had
being a teacher is when we did the Lucy Calkins professional development. It was a whole half of the school year where we had to take turns visiting each other’s classrooms and watching each other teach writing. Even if it was just sitting there and looking at things that they had hanging on their walls and then asking them about it later. We’re so trapped in our boxes, little boxes, all day, and you don’t get to see some of the awesome things that other teachers are doing. But I think that starts from an administrator who clears the table and makes people feel comfortable with strengths and weaknesses, and just says, you know, “Here’s how it goes. Here’s how it is. K, you had 23 out of 25 of your kids get a 1 on the writing prompt. J, you only had 15. I want you to go in two times next week and watch K teach.” I’d be so OK with that. You know, cuz chances are you’re going to see that, you know, most of my kids passed the addition fluency assessment. And then maybe you’ll come watch me teach addition a couple times. I think we just have to have an environment where somebody comes in and makes all of that collegial learning acceptable.

Node: Teachers Accepting Feedback

A1  *na

A2  So I don’t know if they really.... I think they maybe understood what the, who the people were and what they were supposed to do. But I’m not sure they exactly, I don’t know if it was like agreed with it or they weren’t on board or they didn’t want to learn much about it or, you know. But I think they do. I think they realize. I think also some teachers thought well, if it was some of their faults. You know, so they didn’t really want someone else coming in just tell them what to do.

I think it’s coming along. I think if we could get over the hump of don’t feel bad, you know, that you’re requesting assistance, you know, don’t.... You know, and be able to take advice from other people. That’s, that’s a big thing with a few people in our building. I don’t know if they’re extra-sensitive, that’s their personality or whatever....

A3  I think there are staff, like I said, if they have that personality or teaching style of “Yes, come in, help teach me,” and they really see the benefit of it, but so many of them, again I think goes back to administrators, I can’t tell you for sure, but they have this guard up of, “If you have to come teach me something, it looks bad on my part, because I don’t know something.”

A4  Well, I mean I’ve been case manager for teachers where I’ve, you know, through the questioning that you do, you know, you’re trying to come up with a goal, you know, like an observable, measureable, and then you get into start talking about strategies. And it’s almost like this wall goes up. A fellow teacher telling me what I should be doing. And so you have to be very careful to say like, “Listen, I’m not an expert on this. I just have this big thick binder of, you know.... Let’s just go through.” But it’s like, “No, I’ve already tried that. I’ve already done that.” But you’re right, it’s almost like people just need like a mind warp. Like a starting over point. Bottom line is if I’m too, and let’s just be honest, it’s pride. If I’m too prideful to listen to you as my colleague give me strategies to try with my kids who are struggling, I’m not moving forward and neither are you. Cuz you also need me. You know what I mean? Like, you don’t have it all figured out either. You might have it figured out in this area, but not everything. So it’s like nobody moves forward, when even just a few people won’t move forward.
Node: Administrative Changeover

A1 And with the different administrators that they’ve had. They’ve have three principals in the past three years or four years, four years; and each one had a different belief system. It’s like one principal thought it was mandatory. One principal thought it was optional. One principal didn’t care.

You know, it just makes it hard for the teachers, I guess, to really clearly know, “Well, what is it?” “Are we supposed to? Are we not supposed to?”

A2 I think for some of them, I think they understood the process but they weren’t comfortable participating in it, because they weren’t comfortable with, you know, the strategies. They didn’t know what to do. You know, they couldn’t come up with the strategies, cuz they had never taught Lower L or, you know, they had never heard about, you know, they’d never taught reading or, you know, math at that level, whatever. And then some of the other administrators we’ve had, I think just they had too many other responsibilities. You know what I mean? They had too many other responsibilities. They couldn’t..... It was just too much, or they just didn’t want to take part in it or yeah.... So we’ve had some that come to all the meetings, that they just weren’t comfortable doing the actual working with kids part and some that wouldn’t come to any of the meetings and some that were kind of half and half. [Laughs]

I don’t think we’ve had any of our administrators actually take on cases.

Node: Population Impact

A1 I’m hoping, hoping we can figure it out. I think for a district like B, well I don’t know, you would know, I feel like this can’t be the only thing. We have too many, we have too many kids with too many needs, you know.

A2 Here’s the biggest, the biggest problem I think that we have in education right now. And it’s, it’s no different than this building. And I think the biggest problem that we have is that Belding is just going through this, and it’s not the same Belding student that you had five, ten years ago. And I think that teachers need to become, need to put excuses aside. And we need to look at differentiated instruction. But they can’t get a handle on.... What I keep hearing are all these excuses, and I shouldn’t even say excuses, but all these kids that are coming with all these different backgrounds. And not only that when they’re coming to school, you have a caseload of say 27 kids in your classroom, of which they are all at different levels. And it’s a whole management piece that they’re trying to, trying to get their, to wrap themselves on. And then at
the same time you have the state coming in, saying, “You will improve these scores or you’re going to lose your job.” And you have teachers that are panicking in some respects and trying to do the best that they can, given what they, given the clientele that they have and so forth. But those are also excuses. Because even the schools that have a different clientele that are in far off than Belding is, still continue to make progress. So I think it’s that whole thing of changing the mind-set, of saying, “These are our kids. Parents aren’t hiding any good kids in the closet. These are the kids that they’re bringing us. We just have to wrap ourselves around how are we going to do this to get differentiated instruction so we’re meeting the needs of all of our students?” But at the same time you have kids that are coming in that aren’t prepared so it comes back to that piece of the mind-set of the teacher. It’s not the same B student that we need to focus....

Node: Teacher Accountability

A1 So I’m seeing that persistence starting to pay off. It seems like there’s just a little more buy-in. And I’m not sure if part of that comes down to performance-based evaluations.

A2 *na

A3 *na

A4 Well, I mean a big part of our school year this year was evaluation. I mean that’s a part of our, that’s a part of the whole process now is being evaluated. And so how do you know when you walk into my classroom, how effective I am if you don’t know the parts? And, you know, or how do I know that you reading at a level G in second grade in March is a problem? You know, I mean just And there are just still so many teachers though who say “yeah but,” my name is tied to his MEAP score. It doesn’t mention the whole second-grade team who got together and rallied behind this kid. My name is hooked to that kid. And so they’re, you know, people still just generally have that fear. I mean I can tell you that when my mom first heard about our, you know, tenure, losing our, you know, like losing the whole tenure thing and the evaluation and things tied into student growth, she asked me what I thought about it. And I stand firm on what I said at the beginning of the school year, which is if you are doing things with integrity, if you see a need and you are with integrity doing strategies that are research-based, at the end of the year I that kid hasn’t made a whole ton of progress, you know, you’ve done everything you can. I mean hopefully you can have everything in place to prove like “Yes, he’s not at grade level in reading, but look how far he’s come.” Or “Look what we’ve done with him.”

A5 Here’s, here’s the choice. The choice is in most cases they are bringing the child up before ICT, but it’s a case of an accountability of “I don’t want to be held accountable for the child moving on, not having done anything.” That doesn’t mean they support it. Does that make sense? And it’s no different than LLI in this building. I can walk up to a teacher and say, “Let’s talk about this student. Let’s talk about the scores.” And in some cases I’ll hear, “Oh, I don’t, we go down and ask the LLI teacher.” “No, no, no, you are the classroom teacher, you are supposed to....” So we have to go through this process. We have to have an understanding of you being accountable, you are the classroom teacher.

What I see down the road is not only in our school district, but in other school districts, is that I think as much as we want to, we talk about collaboration, I think this whole piece of “You have to improve your students,” when the research says that we need to make sure that we collaborate with everybody to, to get the best ideas, to try to find efficient ways to manage our students, to organize them, to teach them. The problem is going to be that, here’s this tool that you’re going to judge teachers on and you’re going to start seeing more closed doors, because,
“These are my kids, and I need to make sure that I improve on them. I’m not going to send my kid over to you, because I don’t know whether they’re going to make improvements or not.”

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**Node: Culture**

A1 It has been really hard for me to feel comfortable on this team. Because you start thinking that OK, now you have to remember, “I am the expert in this process.” I’m not the expert in teaching or teaching strategies that I’m asking the teacher to use. I’m just an expert in this process, and I just have to keep growing and learning about the strategies that are available. So that is hard for me. It’s a little bit uncomfortable feeling like, “Do they think I’m telling them what to do when they know clearly I don’t know what you know, would not be the first person to tell them what to do. So I just keep telling myself, “You’re the expert in this process.” You know, “They are the expert in the classroom. You’re just helping them work through the process.” So that’s kind of been a hurdle for me to get over is just understanding…. “Don’t be worried; they’ll be fine.”

A2 I think if we could just get over that and have people just think of it as let’s work together and get through it, you know, I mean everybody on the team I feel like is learning right along with everybody else, you know. There’s always new strategies out there. And sometimes just bouncing, just having a conversation makes you think of something that you already knew, that you’d forgotten about.

A3 I think where the breakdown happens is the clear communication of expectations and goals for the building, how those are communicated to that team of “leaders,” quote, unquote. And then the transfer of that information back to grade levels and the rest of the staff. Because this year, and I don’t know that this has anything to do with ICT, but just as far as our building functioning, that communication has completely broken down and even just the communication of like school improvement goals, if that grade-level person takes it back to their grade level, they often are cut down for feeling like…. Other people are saying, “Well, you’re trying to run everything” and “You’re trying to tell us what we have to do” instead of it being team work and, “OK, you were at this meeting. Tell us what you learned and help us to be able to work toward the school goals.” We don’t have that system.

A4 I think it comes back to, now I’ve only been here two years, but I keep coming back to this piece of teachers not wanting that ownership of, “We’ve got all these kids, especially in this building, the K-1-2, kids. We should be able to catch these kids early enough.” And it’s that whole philosophical thinking of “I’ve done everything I can for ‘em, Special Ed is the answer. I can’t manage them in my classroom.” Reading, they’re having an issue with reading, let’s send them off to LLI. It’s that whole shift in how we go, believing that we as teachers can make a difference with every student, not just sending them off.

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**Node: Leadership Impact on IC**

A1 I do. I see it impacting it. Because just like his leadership ability, I mean, that’s how he participates in the ICT program. He might say, “I love it, I support it, I understand it now,” but there’s nothing that comes after that. He never says, “What can I do for you to help you get this up and running? Where, where are your obstacles? What can I do to kind of help you get over those?” It’s just, “Oh yeah, great idea,” but no follow through.

A2 I think for some of them, I think they understood the process but they weren’t comfortable participating in it, because they weren’t comfortable with, you know, the stra-. They didn’t know what to do. You know, they couldn’t come up with the strategies, cuz they had never taught Lower L or, you know, they had never heard about, you know, they’d never taught reading or,
you know, math at that level, whatever. And then some of the other administrators we’ve had, I think just they had too many other responsibilities. You know what I mean? They had too many other responsibilities. They couldn’t..... It was just too much, or they just didn’t want to take part in it or yeah.... So we’ve had some that come to all the meetings, that they just weren’t comfortable doing the actual working with kids part and some that wouldn’t come to any of the meetings and some that were kind of half and half.

Yeah, L. R’s one that I saw at every single IC meeting we ever or training that we ever went to. You know, she always was there. So she’s one, it would be interesting to see how it works in her building. Is it more effective? Is it not? You know what I mean? Because she’s there. I think she had always said before, and I don’t know, I don’t want to put words in her mouth, but we were talking about it the other day, “If I expect my teachers to do this and be on board, then I have to, you know, do it too.” So I don’t know, but yeah, so we, I know that she had done it, but ours, not so much.

Well, I feel like it, just like we kind of talked about before with, I mean I know J, at numerous meetings with each administrator, you know, trying to get them to go to the trainings, you know, come to the weekly meetings, you know, take a case, do this with us so you understand the process, blah blah blah. And yet, and yet none of them seemed to have been all that comfortable with it. I mean they’d kind of jump on board and go to the trainings at first. But then, and then they’ll come to the meetings at first, but then it kind of dwindles off, you know, into their last priority. Like I said before, is it because they’re not comfortable with it? Is it because they have too many other things to do? Is it...? I don’t know. But I feel like if, if you have an administrator that’s really truly on board, and you can see that they feel it’s working, or they’re helping you to get to where it should be, your staff is going to be a little bit more on board, I think.

A3 Yeah, I absolutely think it does. I think that if the principal was really involved and wanted to learn how to actually implement the process as a case manager and how to take a case, that it would have, I mean, almost immeasurable impacts on the staff and on the building. So, yes, I definitely do. I think better conversations and it would provide the staff with a better understanding of the purpose and why am I doing it and that it’s not evaluative. It’s not because I have to do this because I have to make sure that I have a paper trail. It would be because I need to make sure that I’m meeting the needs of my students right now. Yes, but I think that if they were in that role and taking on cases and being a really big part of it, then the staff would feel a lot more comfortable collaborating with not only each other, but also with that administrator and seeing them as more of a team player. And we absolutely need that. We don’t have that at all right now. So I think it would make a huge difference.

A4 You know. I would say our hugest problem in this building is administrative support. I think our administrator knows a lot about IC on paper but doesn’t really know the inter-workings and is just kind of very comfortable with letting our facilitators take over and not being, you know, a driving force behind it and in it. I mean we need him on the boat too.

I mean you put a person in a building and you say, “OK, now you’re the boss. And you have all of this stuff to manage.” And it’s like, especially if you have somebody who doesn’t understand literacy or early literacy or he has to learn all of that, you know, all these are other responsibilities. You know, I mean I see how it happens. I really do. I guess the way I see it is, there are so many things in education that can be different. You can do it your way. I do it my way within our classrooms. Like, I might do this intervention with a kid, and you might do something different. But IC should be that, that, that you know, that seed that every one of us pour through eventually. It’s that one thing in our building that we expect all teachers, you know, should do when they’re having trouble with a student. I mean we understand that some
teachers just aren’t comfortable with it and they’re not going to. But for the most part, it’s that one thing that like “OK, this is my next logical step.” And so the administrator needs to be there to understand all of those steps and ask the teacher and the case manager, “What step are you on? How can I help you get your contracting done?” Or “I see that this case has been going for nine weeks now. What can I do to, you know, what do we need to do? Do we need to evaluate? Do we need to close, a referral?”

I don’t think it stalled it, and I don’t think it moved it forward. I think it, I don’t think he ever gained the respect from the staff as a person who knew and understood the process well enough that they even bought into what he was saying. Because he did make some attempts to talk about IC. And he let us do some presentations during staff meetings to kind of talk to people about it. But again, because his style was to kind of let everybody around him assume those positions, when he stands up in front of the staff to say like, you know, “This is IC, and this is what we should be doing,” I don’t really think…. It just almost seemed disingenuous. I mean I don’t think people really bought into him as the mover.

A5 I think it does. And therein lies the other big piece which I believe that I’ve not given a hundred percent to this, I really haven’t.

I just think that it’s also a vision. It’s a vision. And I don’t think that, I think it’s that piece to what have we, what is the vision for this school district? So I think it starts from the top. And are we really being supportive of ICT? So, because if that vision is on top and we say that this is what we are going to do, then we make that a priority. But I don’t feel as though that’s, that’s really a priority. Not only just for that vision, but I think that because of all these different mandates also that are put on us.

I just wi-, my personal thing is I wish that I would have devoted more, I think the other piece why I think it’s not as strong in this building is, and I think I’ve alluded to that, but that I would blame myself for it. I really would, because I haven’t been in it a hundred percent. And for personal reasons and shame on me for that.

A6 Absolutely. Absolutely. If you don’t buy into it and you don’t believe that it can affect kids and you’re not there to support the teachers when things are tried, then it’s not going to be a successful program. And that goes for any program. That goes for any assembly. That goes for any new person coming into the building. That goes for a new teacher. That goes for any process that we’re starting to…. If you don’t believe in it and make it a priority, then you’re not going to have everybody else on board.

It really needs follow-through and ownership. I mean really, truly this is your thing. This whole, and everything it encompasses and everything that’s, you know, trying to be had by our students and our teachers and our staff, you know, the whole process has to be adopted by the leadership. And you have to be an effective communicator, because all of this is about communication. Communicating it to the parents, communicating it to the staff, communicating it to, you know. And when I have something that really worked, why not give me the opportunity to share it with somebody else? And there isn’t that time. There isn’t the time for collaboration or any of those kinds of things.

Node: Facilitator

A1 I think J and J have done a great job at chipping away at making it an effective program, and that’s why they have a lot of cases. But I think they had, it was a uphill climb, because it wasn’t set within that RTI framework, you know. They might not have felt like they had such a big uphill climb had it been laid out differently.

A2 Yeah, and J tried so many things too. She’s tried staff meetings, she’s tried bulletin boards, you know, outside of the office, with all that stuff on it, you know. And it’s just been a, yeah, it was
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hard for a while to get everybody on board, but I feel like, I don’t know, talking to J and J, I feel like we don’t really have it so bad. She knows everything, I always tell her. All in all, I think it’s a valuable process. I just think we need something else with it, you know, something else.

A3 Yeah, last year was very rough, because she was out for about half the year, I think, and so there were other facilitators trying to come in and cover for that, which was a rough year, and that may be this year’s aftermath I guess, because they haven’t had very many cases and people.... Again it goes back to the belief that, “Well I just needed to get them into Special Education.” And so they’re trying to just go around ICT and just get them into Special Education. And so they’re having that battle, which we’re not having. But again, I think maybe it’s part of the facilitator, because I have set and consistently set since I’ve been the facilitator that we don’t just go to Special Education. And maybe it’s because I have the dual role, and I’m also the school psychologist that I can set some of the standards of saying, “I’m not going to sign off on a report and an evaluation if there’s not good data supporting that. I’m not doing that.” And so there might be some of that inconsistency happening there.

A4 J and J have been like such a driving force in our building for IC. It’s been awesome. Now if J got up there you know, J was the mover and the motivator of ICT, and people obviously listened to what she had to say.

A5 Absolutely, I believe it is effective, and let me tell you... One of the main reasons is because you have J who is a huge supporter of it, not only with the ICT, but she is one of those huge supporters and will, it’s pretty much practice what you preach. She goes in, she supports you, she tells you she’s going to support it. J does a wonderful job of facilitating, she does a wonderful job of documenting the information and so forth.

A6 And then to have a facilitator who pulls all kinds of data and finds resources and does all that has been a huge asset to us.

Node: Road/Bridge to Sp.Ed. Concept

A1 Instead of thinking, “Well that is a program that can help me as a teacher reach my student or reach my class,” they might see it as something else—a bridge to Special Education or.... Right, exactly. No, it, that, that, they see that as “helping me.” “Oh, so you can help me get this person to Special Ed if I go through ICT?”

K: OK, OK, but not helping them in particular [Y: Professionally] professionally?
Right, yes. [Laughs]

K: OK, that’s an interesting twist on it. You are still helping them.
“So you’re who I go to for the help to get this child out of my classroom and into the resource room?” No, not really.

A2 It just was hard to have everybody on board in the beginning just because of.... I think with certain administrators we’ve had, it was supposed to be, you know, “You better put them in there because that’s the way to track them to get to Special Ed referral.” You know what I mean?

A3 I think a lot of them truly believe that the IC purpose is to get them into Special Education or to cover their butt. And that is so opposite of the purpose of ICT. We have some that really get it, and they do phenomenally. I mean their kids make so much progress, but the ones that don’t get it, they don’t make as much progress.

A4 I feel like with anything else, there are probably still a few teachers who aren’t, who still want that, even though they don’t really want it, they feel like they just have to have that ambulance
style, like just come, rescue, pull the kid out, take him away and fix him and then bring him back when he’s healthy. I feel like that’s something we still need to overcome in this building.

A5 But therein lies the other piece, which is, I think that our General Ed teachers believe that if we take this student and we give them this Special Ed, they’re going to be the be-all, end-all, the fixer.

A6 *na

Node: Teachers (Attitudes Toward IC)

A1 But what we tell them the role of ICT is, isn’t always what they want to hear. They might have their own idea of what the program should be used for.

A2 *na

A3 There are differences between the building. And that’s one thing to say about the building that I’m in. We have unique difficulties, because… I don’t think we’re the highest in the county any more, but we have a ton of teacher “buy in” quote unquote in [unclear] cases. We have high numbers of cases every year, which is great. We have a lot of people that are asking for that support, and we get to get to a lot of kids. So that’s good. Whereas the other building I think may have 10 or 12 cases, and they just don’t have that buy-in. And so I’m not sure if their team has changed multiple times so they don’t have a very strong team. Where again that’s a really great benefit that we have in our building. We have a consistent team and people that are pretty much, pretty dedicated to ICT.

A4 I feel like our teachers maybe don’t quite understand that this is a time commitment. These are students who are significantly behind sometimes. And it is going to eat up a lot of their planning time. It might eat up some before school and after school times. The time commitment thing, I don’t think maybe everybody’s fully on board with

A5 And I don’t think it’s so much as, again it’s a lack of understanding, but also it’s because I think that they…I’m sure you’ll ask me this question, but I think it’s a lack of….they believe that they know it all.

And I think in this building we have probably four or five but I think there are others that “I’m just going to go along with this process because there’s nothing else and I don’t want to be held accountable for a child that’s failing, and so I’m going to bring that child up before the ICT.”

A6 *na

Node: Time Consuming Concept

A1 *na

A2 *na

A3 *na

A4 *na

A5 *na

A6 Yes. It is a lot of work, it is a lot of work, but you know what? Why wouldn’t we give that much work to our kids? You know, I mean it is a lot of work for a purpose. It’s a lot of work so that we can, you know, have those things happen for all of our kids. And so no I don’t think, I think they do know, but they’re not using it for fear of....

Node: PD and IC

A1 And it’s really hard to impart all of that information and all your excitement, cuz when you leave that day-long training, you’re like “Yes! This is going to be great. I can see how this could help our school.” They don’t get that. And I think they need that introduction to ICT to help them feel more comfortable and come to us for the right reasons, not seeing it as the bridge.

A2 I feel like as a team it’s great, because we get together and go over stuff as a team, you know Jessie teaches us our...You know what I mean? She has a handful of strategies she’ll give us or
look through the book. We’ll look at this one or look at this one or... But unless a person puts in a request for assistance and has a person, a kid, that really needs that particular strategy, they may never know about it, you know.

...and we’ve had a couple of teachers that are not joining the team but wanted more information, we’ve had them go to the first two days, I think. They’ve changed it from three days to two days. We have had a couple people go to that, and they liked it. One of our administrators countywide has been pushing for more people to just get trained. He’s like they don’t have to join the team, just get the knowledge, go to the first three days. We’ll pay for it.

I, as far as teachers who decide to do the Gen Ed process of, you know, like , which I’m actually doing with just one of my students who has just kind of like a, just kind of piqued my interest. And because I’m an IC case manager, I’m essentially just being my own case manager and I’m practicing this. As far as getting stuff that you need, it’s still you’re on your own. You know, you either go and ask people for help or you just keep doing what you’ve been doing the whole time, which is try something new. Nobody is there to say to you.... Although part of the process is having a meeting with the principal, so at that time hopefully, you know, our future principal will say something like, “Tell me what you’ve already tried, and give me the next three things you’re going to try.” I mean I do think that should be thought of ahead of time. And I totally agree with you in the sense that we are, we come in with these strategies, we’re empowering the teachers with, you know, like tools, and, you know, giving them this, you know, like “Great I’ll put this in my ELA toolbox, and this in my math toolbox,” but I do think where we fall short is teaching them how, how can I incorporate this, like how can I make it a part of my daily routine? How am I going to make sure that, you know, this becomes a part of who I am rather than just this thing that [unclear] gave me. You know, how do I own it? Make it mine? I do think over the last, especially this last year, but even the year before, we started working this into like getting people to understand we’re about group cases. And how like you can really just refer that kid who just seems “holy cow” for a strategy. But in your mind if you’re thinking there’s five or six other kids who are just like kind of [unclear], you don’t have to put them in IC, cuz the point is not just to have everything documented; it’s to move kids forward. So if you feel like you can learn the strategy through that “holy cow” kid and apply it to these five other kids, you know, don’t worry about having to document those five other kids, just push them forward, you know. And I do think we’ve made some gains in that.

You know what? If we need to get people trained, let’s get them trained. And whatever you need, you let me know.” My unfortunate thing is that I’ve only been in this district two years. And I’ll be very honest with you, I just.... It’s not that I’m backing off, it’s just that, I just, right now, I don’t feel like that support is there right now. So I’m not going to go full board on something that I don’t know if it’s going to be supported from a different level or even from the staff. And internally there are things happening that I just don’t, I just am being cautious about, so....

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I think that with myself and my co-facilitators, as long as we’re there, it stays consistent. So if the administrator leaves, we’ve had some team members switch on and off, and that’s fine. But my concern is if myself or my co-facilitator left, I have no idea what would happen, because we’ve not been able to build sustainability outside of ourselves. I think that’s what you’re saying too, that if we left, it wouldn’t matter who else was there. I really don’t know what would happen.
A3  We want to build that sustainability. And I think that’s key. Because I’m not Todd. Todd is phenomenal. And I, the thing, I think they hear it from us so much, I was just talking to my team about this, that I think that if I get up there and talk about ICT some more, people like la la la. They put in some ear plugs in, and it just goes right through. In one ear and out the other one. And, just because I’ve been doing it, I’ve been saying the same thing because they needed to hear it, but they’re not listening any more.

Well, and you bring up a good point, because at that meeting, it was a wonderful meeting. All of our district administrators were there, and there was a great discussion, a really good meeting. And since that meeting, I’ve been trying, I’ve been contacting all of them and saying, “Here are your logins. I’d love to come train you on ICAT tools so you can see where each building is.” I heard from one of them, and that is the one person who’s leaving. And the other two, another person is leaving, but I didn’t ever hear from anybody else. I got them all of their logins and said, you know, “This is how you get in.” But nobody else asked to see any more about it. But it makes me nervous because I think that as administrators leave or really county administrators leave, I think that it could get dismissed by districts, but they have no idea what to bring in. And that’s my concern is that one, you’re never going to find a system that pleases everybody, ever. Two, I don’t think you’re ever going to find a system that finds as much sustainability and PD built into it as ICT does. And I think if that was, that were to happen, where they let go of it, they’d be just floundering for a couple of years trying to get something in place.

A4  Well, I’ll give you another reason why I really believe it’s still going. Because the ISD has said, “We are going to support you by throwing monies at you for professional development training so you can send teachers to that, so you can.” Imagine if that money wasn’t there.

And because you have a person who’s a visionary there in Scott who still believes in IC and, and this is what we’re going to do. But what’s going to happen when he leaves? What’s going to happen when? Will they support that through monies?

A3  There isn’t, there just isn’t a lot of leadership. He relies on the staff and other people to make decisions for him, and it’s not productive, because the staff don’t, not everybody agrees on
everything. And there needs to be someone that does lead, that does have education and research backing their decisions, and we don’t have that.

A4 I, let me think, I think a lot of, I really don’t even know how to describe, I’m just going to start throwing things out. Learning as I go. Recognizing the most important parts of what needs to be done but having to learn about them before he can give direction. Relying very heavily on experts on his staff, which sometimes works well and sometimes is a colossal failure. I’m trying to not like just zone in on things I wish were better.

I mean I’m, I tend to be very Pollyanna, so I recognize work. He’s doing work. He’s trying to learn a lot of things. The problem is he just has so much to learn. When the oldest kid in your building is 8 years old and essentially what that means is everybody within this district who’s learning how to read is in our school, you have to know how to teach kids to read. Step by step, phonics, mnemonic awareness, and he didn’t. And so I think that that, you know, learning as I go, he couldn’t really come into a classroom and help a teacher move forward who maybe also was struggling with a particular part of that continuum, cuz he didn’t know. So learning as he went type. Trying to be very organized. I mean I think he was making some good attempts, trying to be a good communicator. I think he thinks maybe in either teeny tiny pictures or too big of pictures. It’s the all that in between area. You know, how it’s very easy to think like, “This is what I want for my building.” Then maybe get started on a teeny tiny part of it but then that’s all that would happen. So...

A5 *na

A6 He might know about the process, but he doesn’t know the ins and outs of the...you have to be really educated about some things, and I think he’s just squeaked by. And ownership, you know, we need somebody to take ownership of this building and ownership of our kids and ownership of our teachers and ownership of the quality of education that we have going on here, so there’s a lack of ownership here.
Appendix H: Building A Quote Analysis Chart

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Appendix I: Summary Chart of Quotes per Node, per Interview, School B

**School B: Node Quotes**

**Node: Effectiveness of IC**

**B1** I think it has. I think it’s improved some teaching in general. And it’s made us more aware. I mean you have to be pretty specific when you fill out a request. It’s not like a real elaborate form, but you have to be specific why, why, what problem is this child having and why do they need, what do they need help with? And it gets even more specific when you do the contracting. I mean we look at, even just saying someone’s reading below grade level is not specific enough. Is it a comprehension issue, is it an accuracy issue, is it a fluency issue? It’s very specific. So I think that’s helpful in the identification process, problem Id, we call it. And that’s helpful to your instruction. I think as a whole, yeah. And it has, it’s just made everyone more thoughtful. I think by giving us more work to go through, it has made us more thoughtful. I mean you don’t have teachers dumping kids on the Special Ed staff without really making an effort to figure out what’s wrong, what can we try, what worked and what didn’t work? And go through that process. So yeah, I don’t think we’re where we should be yet. And I think that having General Ed teachers on the team is part of that. Yeah. But I think it has made things better.

**B2** I think for the most part it works, yeah. I’m, I’m, yeah [Sighs] Cases I have been involved in, we’ve gotten to the point of not fixing the problem but getting the child to the next step. Identifying the problem and then going on from there. But I have seen cases that it hasn’t. And then it’s like what then? What do you do? Is it an actual referral? Or is it just that it wasn’t dealt with the way it should have been, I guess? No, I don’t think that it’s not effective, no, no. Because if that child, if there really is a problem, then that child should be identified.

**B3** Yeah, and I’ll admit right now I’m struggling with ICT in the sense that I still get the sense that people see it as about fixing the child and not about fixing the instruction. And although the way it’s perceived is that it’s, it’s not RTI, but at the same time with the new RTI model, RTI is about making sure that there is strong instruction first. And so I think I just struggle that ICT isn’t perceived or it’s not being projected the way it’s intended. Philosophy I understand. I’m not seeing the philosophy in practice. And I’m struggling with that personally right now.

**B4** I think it has been effective. This year I probably feel less effective than I ever have before. Because it’s almost like intervention has replaced ICT. And a lot of that is just the way that intervention has been rolled out. I think that’s very unfortunate. If I had a choice to go back to the old method, the CRT, I could never do that. Because I’ve learned too much with ICT to ever go back to that. Do I do pure ICT? No. We have different needs in this building.

**B5** I think it was totally case dependent, teacher dependent. Do I think it was effective? Boy, overall I really would have to say no. No, I think there’s a better way to do business. I don’t think that…. I think that in theory IC’s wonderful. I don’t think it’s the answer and the end-all/be-all to addressing needs in a comprehensive manner.

**Node: IC Process**

**B1** I know I know that it’s a process used to help regular classroom teachers support students that are having problems or issues or need extra help beyond what we are already doing, which can be in a content area like reading, writing, math. Or it can be behavior or more than one; although I think we’ve been encouraged to choose the one that needs the most help when we apply for an ICT intervention. I know that we base our interventions on a tiered model like I’ve seen it shaped like a pyramid. I think this is part of ICT unless it’s part of something else that we put together.
with ICT. I want to say RTI, response to intervention. The bottom tier being the quality classroom instruction that we’re already giving to all of the students. The next tier being and this is where ICT can come in, is something additional that we’re doing in the regular classroom for that student. So when we apply, when we put a student in for ICT, the building consultant, which for us is JB usually, gets back with us, and we do some things like taking some baseline data on how the student is doing in that area. That can be artifacts that I already have, that I’ll give or it can be JB or someone else coming in and working with the student just a little bit, like a snapshot, for instance, a snapshot of their reading. She does one a lot where we use a grade-level text. Like for a third grader, one of mine, it would be a piece, that, you know, like our basal. Which we don’t use regularly anymore, but we’ll pull that out because those pieces are written at grade level.

And then we’ll take another piece that’s also written at the student’s current reading level based on the information I already have and see how they do with words per minute, comprehension of that passage, things like that. And she’ll take that information down. And then from there, we contract together what are we going to do for this kid? And usually we just take a small piece, something... I don’t remember ever trying to implement more than one or two things. We do something different than what I’m already doing that I can do for this student on top of what I’m already doing, or in place of what I’m already doing. Sometimes I’ll slip it into reading groups instead of what I was doing because honestly I’m already maxed out on time. And without a pullout intervention, which is the next tier, there isn’t a lot of room to be doing something more with any given student. And then sometimes if we come up with a strategy that seems really to work really well, I’ll use it with other students too either formally or informally. There might be other students that I have also put in for ICT, and then we realize “Hey, this would work for all three of them. Let’s put them together in a group and do this.” Or it might be “Wow, this is working great with this kid on fluency, or whatever it might be, I’m going to try it with this other kid who isn’t necessarily in ICT, but it’s killing multiple birds with one stone.” Which we need to do because we have, we’re so short of time. So then the next tier in that model, I believe, is the pullout intervention which for us here is the LLI program. We do Fountas and Pinnell’s Level Literacy Intervention program. I do think in those groups though they do some other things besides just the Fountas and Pinnell materials. And that is strictly for reading, which is one of our areas where we have the most kids that need intervention. We have dabbled in some math intervention groups too. And, you know, I shouldn’t say dabbled. We are running, we are running math intervention groups right now too but not as fully as we’re running the reading groups. And so that’s the level intervention where they’re actually missing something else during class. This year we structured it so that kids that are pulled for reading don’t miss any reading or writing, which is very tricky. They’re pulled from the math classroom because we team. So like my kids that I have in my homeroom that have Language Arts with me in the morning don’t get pulled for LLI until they’re in with Shari in the afternoon. And she’s teaching Math, Science, and Social Studies. She starts with Math and then during that Science/Social Studies kind of flex time, they’re missing part of that time. So they are sometimes missing part of Science and Social Studies. But she tries to make it the review work or the independent practice or she’s intervening with kids for Math and other things during that time. So we try to minimize what they’re missing, but they are missing class at that point, but they’re not missing reading. Because that level is supposed to be in addition to or beyond the regular classroom instruction. So at that point, if a student is going to LLI, they’re getting, if they’ve gone through ICT and they’re going to LLI, they’re getting my regular instruction plus whatever my coach, so to speak, has shown me or helped me do in addition for that child, plus they’re getting pulled from the math classroom to do reading intervention too. And then I believe the top of the tier is those kids that end up going, being labeled Special Ed students and getting Special Ed intervention. But they can get, they can
get the other levels and get the Special Ed intervention. Although I believe right now none of the Special Ed kids get LLI. I think we’ve excluded them from that because they’re getting that. Yeah, so then there’s a lot of data that you keep when you’re doing an intervention. I’m not sure what the timeline is. I had one student I did this year that went very, very quickly. And I think we actually stopped before the normal timeline. I want to say six weeks or twelve weeks where you check in. Judy actually graphs the data sometimes if it’s something simple, like words per minute or levels in the benchmark. And then we see how it’s going. And we reevaluate. And we decide if we want to discontinue that case or if we want to keep going or if we need to try something different. And ICT does not carry over from one year to the next.

**B2** The process is that if a teacher has a concern with a certain student, then they come to us and we take, a person takes a case and goes and works with the teacher, shoulder to shoulder with them, to try to solve the problem. What we do is explain the process first to them and then see if they want to do it or not, and then if they agree, which I don’t know why they wouldn’t agree, if they had the concern and they came anyway. But anyway, some of them don’t want to do the paperwork or whatever. We start out doing problem identification, three snapshots, no matter what the concern is. Even if it’s not reading, if it’s math or writing, three snapshots of reading to find out if, how the reading is going, and then basically go from there as to identifying setting the goal and working with the teacher on having them follow through on the goal.

**B3** Yep. I’ve been through the training several times. And the intent is to help teachers provide that instructional match between their instruction and the student. And when they are, when they have a student who is struggling, not making progress, then ICT is meant as an avenue for that teacher to find, to seek out resources on how to help make that instructional match for that student. It isn’t necessarily about fixing the child as it about helping the teacher come up with new strategies. So there is a, you know, obviously a facilitator, you have case managers who are classroom teachers, social workers, speech therapists. The building principal sits in as a part of the team. Strategies can be anywhere from reading strategies to behavior strategies. Data, there’s data that’s collected throughout. Usually it should be one goal that’s set for the child, but sometimes you can have more than one goal. Let me think, I don’t know what else to give you.

**B4** The ICT process, the goal is to improve, enhance, and increase student and staff performance. It’s a collaborative process, problem-solving process, where the case manager works shoulder to shoulder with the teacher. Where you sit down, it’s not the medical model; it’s not the broken child. It’s looking at the match between the task that’s being presented, what the child’s asked to do, and then the prior knowledge piece with it. We’re trying to find where that breakdown is. And that doesn’t necessarily mean that it’s the fault of the child or even the fault of the teacher. It’s just that we have to make that educational match. So by going through the problem-solving process, it’s a lot of steps where first we contract, explain the entire process to the person, explain that it’s not evaluative in nature, that it’s voluntary, that it is a time commitment, that the teacher remains the primary contact with the parent. That’s huge. Because we want the teacher to be fully engaged. They’re not sending the child out the door to get fixed and come back in. It’s a lot of ownership with the teacher. But also it’s a support network for the teacher so that she has someone that she can confide in. But it also offers a fresh set of eyes. Teachers are usually so busy in instruction that they don’t always get to sit back and look at a child—what they can do and a fresh set of eyes. I always say that when we do the snapshot with the child, that that’s a gift to the teacher. And many, many times, the teacher will say, “Gee, I didn’t know they could do that.” Or it gives them a fresh set of perspectives. So we do the problem-solving process through discussions and through a number of snapshots, usually about three, but it could be as few as one. And it could be as many as six or seven. It’s just when you finally, if you don’t know what you need to work on, then you need to do more snapshots. Because a lot of times, the
problem correctly identified is almost always half solved. A lot of times teachers will say, “Gee, I really know what I need to work on. And I’m good to go now.” And sometimes they even choose not to continue the process then, because they think they’ve got it. But most times they’ll agree to set that as a goal and, you know, prioritize that. And then we’ll collect data to make sure that we make that match. It is a big time commitment on the part of the teacher. And that is probably the hardest part about IC for teachers is that it can be a big time commitment. But recently we’ve been trying to compact that where we take a half a day and do the contracting, the problem ID, snapshot, do strategy, intervention design and even get to the point of collecting some baseline so that we’ve got most of the work done right up front, so that it isn’t as a time-consuming process and we can get the ball rolling right away. We check back every week and collect the data. And then we have to always evaluate to see if it’s working. If it’s not working, we tweak it. If it’s working just great, we keep it as is. And our goals are usually short—four to six weeks, six- to eight-week goals. It doesn’t have to be done then if it’s a goal, if that’s just one goal. But there’s multiple areas of concern, we can just go on then to another one. Sometimes teachers don’t. They think they’ve got it from there. And that’s their decision. I think that’s kind of it in a nutshell.

But, in essence, my understanding of ICT is all about instructional match. And it’s, instead of looking at the child as the child needing to do something different, we need to look at ourselves as educators needing to something differently with our instruction and how we’re delivering content to make sure it matches individual student differences and needs. And it was presented, I’m drawing a blank on the pyramid, but there are three points to consider on that pyramid on making the instructional match. But again, it’s all about Tier 1 instruction. It’s about providing a guaranteed, viable not only curriculum but instructional model and varying those strategies to match the wide variety of students we encounter in the work we do and building capacity in that Tier 1.

**Node: Understanding Purpose of IC**

I think it has more than one purpose. Do I have to narrow it down? I think it’s to help kids. It’s to help kids be successful. It’s to find ways that maybe the only person or if in a team situation, the only two people that are working with that student haven’t found yet. And there are all sorts of avenues where that can end up. It could be just getting a tip from someone about how to instruct that student in a more effective way. Or it could result in something like LLI, where someone else is actually taking part of the load and giving instruction to that student. Eventually Special Education is another version of someone else giving you help with the instruction. But I think that’s the main idea is to help kids be more successful when they’re, something’s obviously not working.

I think, well I think by helping students, you’re helping teachers. But it also helps teachers accumulate more effective strategies that they might not already have. We talk about the fact that we don’t get enough time together, we don’t communicate together. As much as we’re given the opportunities on a limited basis, we still are back in our rooms with our doors shut sometimes, teaching a group of kids. And someone else can have a great idea that you’ve just never, you’ve just never come across that idea before, you know. And all it takes is for someone to sit shoulder to shoulder with you, and say, “Well, I’ve tried this, try this with this kid.”

Working with the teacher to give them a different set of eyes or ears as to what is going on. Not fixing the child but working with the teacher so that they can work through the problem. Really, it’s supposed to be working with the teacher, yes, working with the teacher to, from what I understand of it all, working with the teacher. I mean you’re working with the child also, but you’re working with the teacher to try to find the match for the students.
Yes, and one of the things I realize, I as a person on the team, I don’t understand why we just don’t share with everybody, you know, this is what we do, what we do…. I don’t understand that part, but…..

B3 I really believe it’s meant as an avenue for teachers when they are having a hard time finding instructional practice to reach that kid who just doesn’t seem to be getting it. This is a place for them to go and figure out what’s the true concern, what’s the true issue, and then what can they as the classroom teacher do? Not pawn it off on somebody else. What can they, the classroom teacher, do to fix it? And if they can’t, if those new strategies aren’t working, if the data doesn’t show improvement, then what’s the next step?

B4 The purpose is to improve, enhance, and increase student and staff performance. And that’s not saying that the child is broken or that it’s a bad teacher. It’s just making that match. Sometimes it’s just reinvigorating the teacher to remind them of tricks or bags or tricks in their bags that they haven’t really thought of. It’s a support network. And it’s just getting back to that foundation of good instruction. So I think it’s a win win for everyone. But it is time-consuming, but anything worth doing is always time-consuming.

B5 In theory, it’s, the purpose I think is, is clear that we’re going to develop a very solid Tier 1 instructional program. And I would almost go so far as to say a guaranteed model for Tier 1 instruction, where we’re going to build capacity and develop strategies within our organization or building that we’re going to be able to guarantee we can match learner with instruction. I think that’s the purpose. In practice, I think it’s two different things. I think teachers are inherently, I just think inherently struggle with accepting feedback. People are, and again, this is from my experience. Teachers are definitely protective and defensive of what they do and why they do it. And feedback is almost like a, outside of the culture of the profession right now. And the whole model’s dependent on feedback.

Node: Leadership Style

B1 She’s very collaborative. She’s very easy to relate to. I know that she believes in buy-in very strongly, because whenever she presents something to us that involves us trying something new or doing better at something than we’ve been doing, she’s very, she focuses a lot on convincing us why it needs to be done. She’s not dictatorial. She’s not…. She’s very, “OK, guys, this is why we need to be doing this.” And she’s not forceful about it either, but she’s very passionate about certain things. And you can tell which things those are, because she, it’s just very clear. And she also asks for help, you know, if she needs it or apologizes if she missed something, cuz this is only her second year in the building now. And she’s made a huge leap from last year. I mean she was really just getting her feet wet last year. But I like that about her that she believes in buy-in, and she’ll give us some rationale for something when she wants us to try something or to work harder on something, you know. And I do feel with a lot of things that the buck stops at her and she accepts that responsibility. But other things, she’ll say, “This is all you,” you know. And I like that about her. She doesn’t make me nervous when she comes in to observe me. She’s very, she’s not mysterious. She’s very open about, you know, whatever.

B2 [Pause] Good listening. I mean she does listen. And suggestions, she’s very open to suggestions. Very willing to try different things. Sometimes the carryover is not always there, but

B3 My leadership style is if you have, if you trust the people you have in place, you let them do their jobs. And the results will show that they’re doing their jobs, you know. I don’t have all the answers and so I go to those people who I think have the answers and I ask for their advice. And I give them that, that power. I give them that flexibility. We have certain curriculum requirements that we say, yes you’re going to use this for reading. You’re going to use this for writing. You’re going to use this for math. Do I have people that are, that have gone rogue and are doing their
own thing? Sure I do. But you want to know something? They’re still getting results. And so, yeah, as a whole, I’m saying, yeah, we’re going to do this, this, and this. But there are those people who are bending the rules. And as long as they’re getting results, I’m not going to put up a big stink. So, yeah, I think most of the time, I let my staff decide what’s best. There are a few decisions I have to make and say, “No it needs to be done like this,” because they may not have the big picture. So, I’m not a, I’m certainly not a leader of “It’s my way or the highway.” I can be a bit of marshmallow, and there are times when I need to step up and say “Knock it off.”

**B4** I think the current administration is really curriculum driven. And there’s a real emphasis on improving data. I do feel that there’s some inexperience and maybe some defensiveness that makes it difficult to…. I’m trying to be diplomatic, because I adore the person, but I think it’s difficult to be all things to all people. And no one person can be that, but so you’ve got to be able to depend on other people’s expertise and tap other people as resources. And I don’t think that has happened as much as it could have. But energetic and enthusiastic are words that I would use to describe but also maybe overwhelmed with the needs and the accountability.

**B5** I think our, and I think, boy, this is one of my earliest books. I go back to The 80/20 Principle. And I was up front with my staff, day one, walking into that building in that 80 percent of the decisions we can make can be done collaboratively. We can involve stakeholders, and we can work through our process in trying to reach consensus. Twenty percent of the decisions that need to be made are going to be done by me. And you may not like that. There are going to be times I might not like that. But there’s, at the end of the day, the buck needs to stop somewhere on a certain portion, a certain ratio of the decisions in this building, and that’s person is me. So I would hope they would think “Mike’s collaborative, but at the end of the day he can make a decision that needs to be done.” And I would say it’s more situational leader. Depending on the situation is on the style I need to take in leadership. Situational leadership is how I would define it.

I think I spent more time in the leadership paradigm. I mean I think I was visionary and constantly talking about a better way of doing business. They probably got sick of me picking apart things that have been in place for a long time, trying to redesign. So I think in that sense I think I spent a lot of time in the leadership paradigm. I tried to get out of the manager, quite frankly.

**Node: PD for Instruction**

**B1** I mean we do PD, we do PD that involves, we’ve definitely come a long way from having that outside person come in and talk at us. Budget is part of the reason, but I think it’s a good thing. Because we in-service ourselves a lot. Like the ladies that went to the Fountas and Pinnell training in Toronto, they came back knowing how to do LLI, but also knowing a lot about how to administer the benchmark assessment. And they taught that to us. And we’re, all the Language Arts teachers are doing that

**B2** I think here in our building just over the past years, the professional development like say we brought in a new reading program, and people get trained a little bit, but there’s no carryover, there’s no follow-through on that. And then if people do switch positions or come in from another building, then they’re just kind of left to just fend for themselves or ask questions from the others. There’s no informing those people of what’s going on. But that’s more of a district problem than it is an IC problem. But I guess the questions that I have is, is like I said, if this is a strategy or if this is “why don’t we try this?”—why don’t we just have the whole building know what those are? That’s the part of IC I don’t understand. I understand and I have seen it happen. I understand that sometimes the teacher or a person…. I mean we even do this at speech therapy. What does somebody? I have this problem. It’s not working. I can’t get the kid to get that R out. Does anybody have any tricks to do? I don’t understand why we just don’t share all that stuff like we do in those situations. But, like I was saying, I have seen that going in and doing
a problem ID or doing whatever and saying, “Well, they’re doing this with this but they’re not doing that.” And the teacher goes, “Oh, I didn’t even realize that.” You know, a different set of eyes or ears to listen. But I just don’t understand the whole why we don’t just say it.

B3 I guess if I thought IC was really doing what it was meant to do I mean if it really were strong in place, then I would really push for teachers to go through the IC process. I just don’t see it doing that right now. And so unfortunately I am letting teachers go off and find what works for them, to the best that I can. I mean obviously that’s a financial... I think what makes me sad with teachers is that for the most part I don't need to send them out for training. Most of the expertise is in the building, but they won’t listen to each other.

B4 And that’s been one frustrating thing that through the years you can see a trend. And you can see curriculum weaknesses. And you can see professional development needs. But when you’re, when you share that data and nothing is done with that, that’s extremely frustrating. Because we’re constantly trying to have teachers meet that need that maybe should have been fulfilled with good instruction in previous years. And that really is one of the most frustrating things, because education, it's stair steps. We have a lot of third -graders that have a very difficult time reading. And it’s painfully obvious to me as an ICT facilitator and as an educator that our kids need a strong phonics instruction at an earlier level. And that’s been addressed year after year after year. And that just hasn’t been done. And so that’s frustrating that we’re still trying to put band aids and fixing kids that don’t just develop that normally. Or that it just doesn’t sink into them by osmosis, that they need the direct-instruction piece of that. So, so that’s the part if ICT, if the data was used to help make curriculum changes, that would be very beneficial. Same as would the people doing the intervention. When you have to completely, when you have to remediate the same issue year after year after year, that should tell you that there’s something missing professional development wise where your teachers aren’t strong in or curriculum wise. And you can also although ICT is not evaluative in nature, we see to have, we see trends of what teacher needs more assistance with this, and that is an opportunity to provide that teacher more professional development through the ICT facilitator. But also say, “You might benefit from this type of training or this type of training.” And I don’t know that that always has happened either.

B5 *na

Node: Relationship to RtI

B1 **see IC process quote-interweaves RTI throughout

B2 *na

B3 Well, especially because if you look at Tier 1, it’s all about instruction. IC can help it. IC can help with Tier 2 when you have that classroom intervention, pull out with classroom intervention. It just, and you’re right, I like how you said that. RTI’s the framework; IC is the process to help move through the framework. At least, that’s how I see it. There’s just still, it’s a, RTI is a four-letter word, three-letter word in relation to IC unfortunately.

But I really think it needs to be a marry between the two. And that was the term that J and I talked yesterday. And actually we didn’t talk about marrying IC and RTI; we talked about marrying IC and intervention. But, in my mind, intervention’s a part of R----. It is a part of RTI obviously. If you read the new RTI 2 book, I think that’s been the biggest adjustment for the RTI gurus in that they said, “We forgot that instructional piece. We did response to intervention, but what about a response to instruction?” And I think that they’ve, they’ve stepped up and said “Oops, we missed this. We’re going to talk about it now. We’re going to make it a part of it.” OK, finally. So maybe now we can start taking the strategies of IC, blending it with the RTI framework, RTI 2 framework. And maybe we do get something that really is in place.

B4 *na
Guaranteed interventions. And again, Todd has kind of backed up in recent months to explain how this fits into an RTI model, but I think we owe it to all kids that if you’re displaying this need, we have a guaranteed intervention to provide you. And if you still continue to develop or display needs, we have another guaranteed, more intense intervention to provide you. It’s completely lacking that oh DeFore’s line of thought with Professional Learning Communities in that what do we want to kids know? How are they going to know when they’ve learned it? And what are we going to do when they don’t know it? [K: Right] I mean it’s missing that third piece of Professional Learning Communities. It’s not guaranteed; it’s not systematic.

Node: CYA Concept
B1 *na
B2 *na
B3 *na

A lot of times now with the whole era of accountability, I’m hearing teachers saying they want to have their butts covered. And that’s unfortunate. But hopefully it’s, the end result will be the same, that the child is getting a better educational experience and the teacher’s learning something and making that match for not just that child but more children.

Node: Understanding Roles of IC
B1 I think we’re all pretty clear at this point. I think the only area where there might still be a little bit of misunderstanding is “How much am I expected to do as the regular classroom teacher?” Because honestly for years and years, I mean you know this, the Special-Education referral process was once you dump a kid on the Special Ed people, it’s not your problem anymore. I hate to say it that way. But that was definitely our mentality. It was like, “Oh OK, give me some help with this kid.” And once you referred that kid or put in, what did we used to do? CRT? CRT, Child Review, once you did CRT, you had this mind-set that now the Special Ed people are going to take over for me, or at least the teacher consultant or the person doing the testing. And maybe they’d come back and say, “No, this kid’s still your problem.” But I hate to put it that way, but that’s the gist of it. ICT is much different in that they use the term shoulder to shoulder a lot, that you’ve got this person shoulder to shoulder with you. They’re not stepping in and taking…. I mean for LLI, the child does leave the regular classroom, but they’re not as far as ICT process, they’re not stepping in and taking anything off your hands. They’re actually adding to your, to your workload. But the idea is that you’re going to be working smarter not harder with that child and possibly, you know, other children too. Some people have actually done, in fact when I was teaming with AS at fourth grade, I believe it was, we did a whole class.

B2 Good question. Yes and no. Yes, I think people understand the process. I don’t think they all buy in to it for a lack of better wording. I think people understand that what, yes, what the roles are—the facilitator, like the case-manager people, what the teacher is supposed to do. But, as I said, I don’t think everybody buys into it.

B3 You know, J said that I don’t acknowledge the IC members. It’s just, it’s not on the forefront of our minds. Not everybody buys into it anymore, so it’s not being utilized. We’ve had turnover with administrators. We’ve had turnover with staff, but there’s never been a process in place to get them up to speed on the purpose of IC. So, that’s something we’ve got to do. I mean if we’re going to, if we truly believe in this and want to sustain it, then what are we going to do to bring it back to life? So, no, people don’t know the rules of everybody. They don’t even know who’s on the team. They don’t know what it means. I don’t think they understand what it means to get
help. I think time, of course, is a huge factor. And I’m hearing in some schools, teachers are given release time; and in other schools, they’re not: “Figure it out on your own.” And that inconsistency makes it tough.

B4 And that’s kind of a difficult question to answer. I know that several years ago everybody was really comfortable. They knew the process; they knew that that was expected. We have had some changeover of staff. And as staff comes in and they refer a case, or if they, if it’s, if there’s a discussion of a child, I meet with that teacher, and I tell them this is our process, this is what we do. We’ve added intervention the last two years and especially this year. It’s a pull-out model where kids are being pulled out of the classroom for 50 minutes. And in all, for all intents and purposes, it’s kind of cut ICT off at the knees and so people are confused, I think.

B5 I think people understood the facilitator’s defined role. I think our facilitator may have stepped outside of what her role should be per ICT. I think she had a problem getting back into that case-study mode where we’re going to talk about children’s problems, children’s issues, rather than identify student need, and then let’s spend the majority of our time talking about what are we going to do as adults to address those needs? So I thought our facilitator.... People understood what her role was. She was certainly clearly the leader of the group. But whether she was, whether she was carrying out her role as facilitator, how Todd Gravois would understand that, two different things. And as far as a member on the team, I think people understood that eventually the role of a case manager is to take cases and work shoulder to shoulder with teachers requesting assistance. But in terms of I start the year as a team member and when I’m supposed to take a case, I don’t think that was clearly understood. There was no timeline laid out that, “You’re going to join us in September, and we’re going to build capacity so that by January, you’re taking cases, and you can function independently.” And I think those, so to answer your question, I don’t think roles were necessarily clearly defined with some of those elements.

Node: Data Usage From IC

B1 I think that gets done informally and spontaneously at staff meetings. I don’t think that we put aside enough time to do that. We do data analysis on our MEAP scores and our local assessments, but we don’t, when we’re doing that, it’s more of a corrective model like why are we not doing well in this area? Why are we not doing well in this particular area of reasoning in mathematics? [K: OK] Why are we not? The chance to share positives with IC process and strategies we’ve tried, that’s not built in. And that would probably, we’d probably be doing better at it if it was. I mean JM grabs those opportunities to share those kinds of things at staff meeting or over an e-mail to the whole staff, but not enough. It’s not built-in. Well, and another thing we have going here, and it’s just the way life is right now is that you have pockets of people working on different things. Like we have a couple of Regular Ed teachers who are, just work really hard on the school improvement process, because they’re the ones that are on that team. And so they’re more invested in all of that and they’re more knowledge on all that than the rest of us. And they’ll bring it back to us and present at a staff meeting or something like that. But the rest of us don’t have that level of, you know. And then you’ll get a group....like when we started Daily Five, it came from a group that did a book study on the book. Well, then they came to the rest of us and said, “Let’s do this.” But underneath that was “We are doing this,” so hopefully you buy in, because we are doing this. You know how that works. I mean I like the way it was done. It was, we really bought into the fact that these other teachers who are our peers bought in. But, you know, then we all started doing it. But it seems like we’re so busy that we have all these pockets of people that get trained on this and this. Like I’m on the district grading and assessment committee. And we’ve been to see Ken O’Connor and someone from the Marzano Institute. And we’re all fired up about changing our grading policies. Well, then, like especially the high school people who are on the district committee, they go back their building
and they’re frustrated. Because these high school teachers are like uh huh, you know, it’s been like pulling teeth. So you get these poc-, and I guess it’s always been that way, cuz you can’t train everyone on everything. But we have these pockets of people getting excited about trying these new things and then they have to bring it back to the building. And that’s where sometimes it falls apart. And, of course, the people most invested in the IC process are the people on the team, you know,

And I have, that has been the one area that, I do share my data. And I tell everyone that will listen to me. But it hasn’t hit on the right ears yet. Like right now I’m seeing a huge increase in kids that cannot add or subtract. But they can multiply. Well, multiplying, that is, they’re logging that into long-term memory. That’s a rote-memory skill. Adding, subtracting, you used to, years ago, you used to have to memorize your addition and subtraction facts. That apparently isn’t the case anymore, but we’re seeing lacking in number sense. And so that is like a curriculum need that I see as what’s going on with instruction now? And I have shared that this year. And I was just told “I don’t believe that.” Well, I have cases to prove that I have kids that can’t add and subtract.

That is the issue. And that is the frustrating part when we have the data. And I started a lot of data collection in this building. And I used to share that all the time with the previous administrator. And he was well aware, and he would want to make some of those curriculum changes. But as of yet there’s been a lot of turnover. And that is the one thing that hurts ICT—the sustainability is if there is always a changeover of administration.

I’m on my fourth principal since ICT has been started in this building. They’ve had three and looking for a fourth. And so you just start building a rapport and then you have to start all over again. And you say those things over and over again. Like the phonics piece really looked like it was going to get fixed. But then that administrator left and someone else came. And so now you’ve got to build that relationship and that trust again instead of letting the data speak for itself. So I do think ICT and the data needs to be looked at with an open mind and that it could be a benefit to help change curriculum. We’re in this whole mode of accountability, and you’re looking at what can we do better? What can we do better? ICT is a piece of that answer.

And, for instance, and this got changed because I think the logistics were just kind of sticky, and we were just trying to find the best way to do it, to run LLI. But like I said, initially with LLI, we were told if they’re in LLI, you have to do the ICT paperwork on them. And it was almost like a formality, because the intervention was going to be the LLI. But we had to have that documentation. And now we have changed that so that LLI happens automatically to kids that are two years behind grade level based on their spring scores. And then we make adjustments. And then ICT also comes in with kids. But I know, my understanding is that I can refuse ICT if I look at what we found with a child and I don’t think I need help, which I don’t know why I would ever refuse it. I mean someone’s like, “OK I can help you,” why would you say no? But my understanding is that I do have that option but also that that’s a liability for me later when someone is saying, “How come this kid isn’t succeeding and what have you done or not done?”

Well, here’s what’s interesting is that we saw Todd Gravois in the fall, and now he’s changing his tune that it is mandatory.
We were involved in a meeting this winter that Todd Gravois had at the ISD, and he actually for the very first time presented that maybe ICT shouldn’t be voluntary, you know, that you kind of nudge teachers along. And that’s, that’s kind of how it was presented in this district. We were told, we were offered, “There’s ICT or there’s an alternative method, which is really ICT without a case manager. Do you want that presented?” And at the time, my administrator said, “No. The expectation is that everyone does ICT.” I full-heartedly supported that. I still think that’s the best way to go, that’s there’s an expectation. But he, Todd in this meeting also said that the entire staff should have the first two days of ICT training. And I agree. And I’ve been through that training so many times that they wouldn’t have to pay to have somebody do that; I could do that. And I’ve offered to do that. And I’ve also offered to do full staff-wide presentation of the strategies. And when that’s been offered it’s, “Yeah, but they need this and this too.” So again it’s a time frame; time is always the enemy. Because when you only have five professional-development days, and we have the common core rolling out or we have this and we have that, can you spend it on training the entire team in IC when you’ve got a team already trained? You know, do you train the entire staff? The answer’s yes if you really want everyone to have buy in. But it’s, you have to prioritize. And I think that’s been difficult for administration. I’ve offered to do lots of training with the staff as far as strategies. I think next year we have a plan where some of that’s going to be incorporated, where we’re going to have all staff bring a best practice and share with different strategies and that type of thing, so it doesn’t just have to be ICT strategies. Our strategies are ICT strategies. They’re research-based strategies. And so I’m hoping that that will open the door. You know, our interventionists have some wonderful strategies.

In terms of cases, anyone can bring a request for assistance to the table. It’s an open-door policy. I think the thing we struggled with was that element of choice in that, it wasn’t the expected model, but if you needed help, please come to IC.

You know, I guess I probably broke away from Todd’s advice, and come to find out I was OK and do something, in doing something like this two years later. And I told our staff, “IC is the only option you have. You need to use this process if you have kids that have concerns.” It wasn’t an option. And again I think I was breaking the rules in saying that. Because I explained my understanding of Special Ed law is if you have students with concerns, you have to be trying research-based strategies and monitor progress over oh an 8-12 week period, a reasonable time frame. That’s expected from even Special Ed legislation as it is. Again, my understanding, I would certainly want to clarify some of that with you. But I told them, “I don’t think you want to go through this whole process on your own. So team up with someone who can help you through that process.” So I didn’t, I didn’t really give them an out, K. And come to find out, Todd now says you can take that stance in the IC process. He just told that like two months, he told us that like two months ago.

I think just what I said about her being open to change and just being very supportive. You don’t feel nervous when she comes in. I think I would take fewer risks if I was afraid of her criticism when she came in to observe me or just in general. So, I mean that’s what a lot of us need is to take more risks. So I think that that’s where that comes in. I mean I’m not a real risk-taker. But I stick with some things that I know work, and then I try. My rule is to try something new every year. And half the year’s it’s been a new grade level that I’m trying, because they move me around so much.

I mean I’ve had administrators before in the past say, “I don’t know what you do.” I mean until you started evaluating if the principal wasn’t evaluating me, they had no idea what I was doing. They would come in and just...I remember R sitting there going, “I don’t know what you’re doing.” I can tell when you’re working on certain sounds for, with certain kids but he said, “I
don’t know what you do.” So think I’m just, those of us who are in different things than a classroom, a regular classroom teacher, I don’t think that they

B3 I have come to the conclusion that a kit and a program aren’t going to fix it. It needs to be the kids and the teachers need to know.... I really believe in that model of what do you want kids to know and be able to do? And then you truly find the best practice for your teaching style and for your kids that works. I think when you have not had an aligned curriculum where we set, “These are the standards, these are the practices we’re going to use, or these are the standards we’re going to meet, this is kind of when we’re going do them.” We don’t have common assessments. I think that’s the problem. I don’t think the fact that we do or don’t use Daily Five or that we do or don’t use the Battle Creek Science kits is the answer. Those are...

And so, and I think there’s just, and so I’m not about more change and more stuff. I’m about let’s go back to the basics. And then let the teachers decide. You know what? I have a teacher who the Daily Five works beautifully for her. She does the whole thing, and she gets results. I have another teacher who, yeah they’re all required to do Daily Five; she doesn’t do it the way it’s intended. She kind of has made it her, done it different, and she’s getting results. Now if I have a teacher who’s not doing Daily Five and is doing something else and the kids aren’t doing well, those are the teachers I’m going to go to and say uh uh, not going to happen. So I’m allow-, you know, I want teachers to have that flexibility. You’re going to teach, this is our process for making sure we know what the kids are expected to do and how you’re going to know they did it and what’s going to happen when they aren’t getting it. And that’s where I think where IC comes. When we, when kids aren’t getting it, what’s our process? What are you going to do when kids don’t get it?

B4 I think it really aff-, impacts teachers because depending on the style, it either gives a teacher confidence or it intimidates the teacher. If a teacher doesn’t feel free to make mistakes or to be innovative or to really stick with the things that are tried and true, if they feel like they’ve always got to jump into the next hoop, and that’s the expectation, and if they’re worried about that review and now having to show growth and that type of thing, I think that really makes it more difficult for a teacher to really be able to be the best that they can be if they’re always being afraid of being judged

B5 I think it is absolutely imperative. I think there’s a direct correlation there. If you have a leader who is bureaucratic in nature and very top-down, old school for a lack of a better word, how does that inspire innovation and creativity and taking chances? It doesn’t. Your staff needs to know it’s OK to take a risk, it’s OK to go out on a limb and make mistakes, cuz that’s the only way you’re going to learn. Quite frankly, if you’re not taking chances and trying different things, we’re not going to get better either. So they need to feel comfortable in doing that and feel supported. And if us as leaders are communicating that consistently, they’re not going to do it. So absolutely there’s a direct tie there.

Node: Teachers Accepting Feedback

B1 So I feel like it’s a shared, it gives me support and a shared responsibility. But I don’t think everyone probably sees it that way. I think people do, some people probably do see it as more trouble than it’s worth, more work than they’re willing to do. Or maybe they see it as a criticism of their teaching if someone’s going to tell them to try something new.

B2 *na

B3 *na

B4 *na

B5 I think teachers are inherently, I just think inherently struggle with accepting feedback. People are, and again, this is from my experience. Teachers are definitely protective and defensive of
what they do and why they do it. And feedback is almost like a, outside of the culture of the profession right now. And the whole model is dependent on feedback. Well, in an era that’s high stakes and evaluation, you know, tenure’s basically out the door. And now your standing as an employee is based on performance. And if you go out asking for help, is that going to be reflected on your performance as an educator?

Node: Administrative Changeover

B1 *na
B2 *na
B3 I did tell my staff recently that if we’re not willing to make some substantial changes, I mean really kind of think outside the box and shake things up, then they’re probably not going to see me for very long. And the reason I said that is that there are a lot of things that are broken. And just for my own personal sanity, I’m not going to keep doing stuff. There used to be a definition of insanity. I will not sit in that office and be out in that building seeing things done the same way when we know they’re not working. And if they’re not willing to make that change and they’re not willing to get on board and take some ownership of that, then I’m not going to be the leader for them. Cuz I won’t stand…cuz my butt’s on the line now.]You know, I don’t get to just sit in my office and things appear rosy. No, I’ve got to have proof too.

B4 But as of yet there’s been a lot of turnover. And that is the one thing that hurts ICT—the sustainability is if there is always a changeover of administration.

Node: Population Impact

B1 *na
B2 *na
B3 And can it be blended with something else? That’s what I want to address. I think it doesn’t need to go away, but I think it needs to have its purpose. And we need to find something that can help those really high needs kids that have multiple issues, whether they’re a curriculum casualty, whether they come from a background of such limited education that we’re not going to fix them with just looking at one or two goals and it’s going to be a quick fix, six, twelve weeks we’re done. We’re talking kids who have years of, of deficits.

B4 We have different needs in this building. We really do have a high, high needs district. We have a transient population. We have extremely high needs. Our kids are coming to us not really prepared for school, maybe not with the best support mechanism at home. So they need all that we can give them. I do think our needs are way greater than most ICT buildings. Our trainer, Todd, would talk.... “We’re not talking about the armless, legless, headless kids.” And that used to really frustrate me, because sometimes it feels like we have a lot of those kids. And in IC, the cases that we get are the kids, and I always equate it to....IC may be meant for a kid that has a little cut. And you can go right in and put a Band-Aid on that and you can put a little bit of anesthetic, or antiseptic, on that and life is good. And they’ll pick right up where they left off. And so if a kid has a problem with borrowing or carrying or place value or maybe needs some help with short-term memory with sight words, that’s a quick fix. And everybody would like to have a case like that. We don’t have cases like that. And that is why our cases take a lot longer where we don’t maybe meet the model of the four weeks and you’re out type thing. Because our kids have multiple needs. So I think it can work in our district. I think we have to have more leeway with the amount of time that it takes. But a lot of our ICT cases I always equate it to, “Are you going to help the kid that’s got a scratch? Or are you going to help the kid that’s hemorrhaging?” And most of our, a lot of
our kids are hemorrhaging, and for various reasons. You know, there is the background; there is. 
But I think a lot of it also is the core curriculum piece. So I think it just makes a more difficult in a 
building like ours, but I still think it’s a process that’s very worthy, and I think when done with 
integrity and when allowed to be done with the integrity that it needs, not worrying about the 
time frames and not worrying about what your level of implementation scales look like. You 
know, I have more probably referrals than other districts. But that’s always been the case. When 
it was CRT, there were more cases than anybody else. And instead of trying to sugarcoat it and 
not be honest about it, you have to deal with the type of situations that you have.

B5  *na

Node: Teacher Accountability

B1  And I do think the shortcutting process to LLI, like for instance this year being told, “OK, we’re 
just taking spring scores and the interventionists are starting working with these kids on Day 2 of 
school.” If we went through the whole IC process with those kids, it would take forever to get 
those kids placed in those groups. So I can see the advantage to it, but yes there is that danger 
when you skip that step that the classroom teacher is no longer taking ownership of the child’s 
instruction.

B2  *na

B3  *na

B4  *na

B5  So there weren’t clear definitions of “If we have this level on our Fountas and Pinnell reading 
assessment, you have to bring a case for support.” There was none of that. There weren’t clear 
expectations. “It’s an open- 
doors policy. We’re here to help.” And in the day and age of 
accountability, I don’t know if that matched up with current realities.

Node: Culture

B1  *na

B2  *na

B3  Most of the expertise is in the building, but they won’t listen to each other. There isn’t that 
collaborative respect. There isn’t that collegial respect that says “Hey, C.. has extensive 
background with the national writing project, national writing project.” They won’t use it. But it’s 
like, it’s even with the building administrator. I have been trained by Rick Stiggins in classroom 
assessment for student learning. I’ve literally have stolen his stuff, sorry Rick. I’ve stolen his stuff 
and presented it to my staff; they won’t listen to me. But Rick could get up there with the exact 
same information, and they’d be all like, “Yeah, OK!” OK, really? And that’s, I think, what’s 
frustrating for me is what is it about the, they call it the 50-mile radius that teachers will listen to 
someone fifty miles away, but not somebody right in their own building. And that’s unfortunate.

B4  *na

B5  *na

Node: Leadership Impact on IC

B1  Yeah, I mean, I think, now she wasn’t my administrator when the IC process got started. And we 
honestly haven’t talked about it specifically in our PD this year or anything, you know. It’s just an 
ongoing thing. But it’s clear that she believes in the process and so yeah, I think that the fact that 
she is the way she is and that she’s very open to things like, if it’s not working, let’s do something 
else. And so that’s very supportive of IC process because you may come to something where you 
have to change what you’re doing. Even something with the whole class sometimes. And she is 
always supportive of that kind of thing. She’s never “Oh no, you can’t, you can’t change.” She 
doesn’t make you nervous about changing. She’s very supportive of trying something, especially 
if what you were doing before wasn’t working, you know. And she’s even taken some of the
things that were pretty much dictated to us at one point or another, like Writing Workshop and Daily Five and Words Their Way, I mean programs that we’ve implemented K through 5 that we were told, “You are implementing this program.” Even things like that, when it becomes absolutely insane for whatever reason, because of your schedule, your teaming situation, even with those things, I mean she won’t say, “OK you don’t have to do it.” But she’ll say, “Let’s look at this. We can tweak this.” I mean if you look at this building right now, almost everyone is teaming, and almost everyone has a different schedule. It has not been dictated, “You teach this. You teach this this many minutes, this many minutes.” I mean actually that was dictated at one point, the number of minutes. But she’s been very open about, “OK, these teachers have this that’s working, and that works for them. And these teachers are doing this. And let’s try this. If this isn’t working, let’s try this.” So that makes you feel very comfortable to make changes if you need to.

B2 Yeah. Depending on the administrator, very strong. The administrator is on board and understands and wants to be a part of it, then yes, the process works a lot better than if there are questions or concerns.

Right, yeah, even to attend the weekly meetings that we have. I mean they’re being pulled everywhere. If something is going on, they have to leave. Or for trainings if the, if Judy’s doing a training, like we have, sometimes we have half-day trainings on different things, because we’ve had several people, new people on the team. And, you know, the principal’s getting pulled for, because of incidents going on. But if the administrator truly believes in the system and truly is trying to make it go, then yeah there is a big difference, big difference.

B3 Well, I think that’s been part of the problem with our process, at least in our building is the high amount of turnover. The staff has remained fairly consistent. There’s been movement, you know, of teachers from grade level to grade level, but not a lot of in and out. This year we’ll have three retirees, so that’s, you know, we’ll have three new staff in the building next year. But one of them, I think, may be coming back from another building. But as I told, as I told our facilitator yesterday, I will fully support IC, but I won’t support it the way it’s going now. But it’s not going to be about me fixing it. I’m not going to come in and be the one that fixes it. It’s got to be, it’s got to be a team effort. And I need, I need her to lead the way. If this is her proj-, this is her baby, [K: Right] she’s the IC facilitator, she has more knowledge than anybody. I’m a team player, and I can push things along because of my role in the building. And I will give her my full support, but it’s not going to be about me fixing it. I’m not going to come in and be the one that fixes it. It’s got to be, it’s got to be a team effort. And I need, I need her to lead the way. If this is her proj-, this is her baby, [K: Right] she’s the IC facilitator, she has more knowledge than anybody. I’m a team player, and I can push things along because of my role in the building. And I will give her my full support, but it’s not going to be just me fixing it. I’m not going to dictate to that staff, “You will use IC.” I’ll push towards it if I see that it’s going to be effective and a good use of their time. But I’m not going to.... Teachers are way too busy and too stressed out to be forced through a process that isn’t very strong and clear.

I haven’t taken a case yet. I’m in every meeting. I sit in on every meeting. If staff come to me personally and say, “Hey I’m really struggling with this kid,” I ask if they’ve tried IC first. I’ll admit that with one particular teacher this year, I circumvented IC, and I got nailed for not doing it that way, you know. Do I feel I was wrong? Not necessarily. I know this teacher well enough that I just didn’t think that IC was the....

B4 Definitely. Because before when it was a stated expectation and administration lived and breathed it as much as the ICT facilitator, although it was a change in the building, it quickly became the norm. Now it’s as if the norm is intervention. And it’s, it feels like it’s a one-man show now with the ICT facilitator trying to say, “Hey, I’m still here. Hey, I’m still here.” And with attempts with e-mails and things like that to the staff. But if it isn’t, if it isn’t encouraged and expected by administration, it dies in the building.

B5 I think, you know, I always wanted to take a case; didn’t. I participated side by side with a few of the case managers in cases, but I never took one independently. I think my primary role is people
needed to know that their leader was in support of this team and this model of providing support to our kids. So it was perception more than anything for the others to see that I had, I had invested my time and my energies into this group and their efforts. Certainly there's clarifying things that come up within the realm of those meetings where they did need an answer from me. They did need to know, “Can we have subs for this activity or have subs to do this?” And they need an answer, and I needed to be there to provide one in several instances. Absolutely. I mean if, and it goes back to common sense in that regard. If they don’t see you invested in anything you’re doing, who’s going to follow? So it’s just, I think it’s common sense. So yeah it’s absolutely leadership dependent. You can go all the way to the top. Did we have a superintendent who could talk about the IC process at the time? I don’t think so.

Did we have at the time a director of curriculum and instruction that could talk about the IC process? I don’t think so. So again I think a lot of that fell on the weight of building leaders or managers depending on who that may have been. Yeah, I think it played a big role.

Node: Facilitator

B1 I think one thing we’re lacking in our building is that JB, I know JB’s not the only case manager, but she, I think she bears a lot more of the load than she probably should because we don’t have enough Regular Ed teachers. And I’m guilty of this. I did not volunteer to sit on the ICT team as a case manager. We’re capable. We just, there aren’t enough of us. Because I could be getting instead of JB, who’s worked with kids a lot, but I could be getting another ELA teacher at my grade level or an ELA teacher from fourth grade or an ELA teacher from fifth grade sitting with me and sharing something with me that…. So I think if we had more people, we could match teachers more effectively with someone else. And that benefits teachers which benefit kids.

B2 *na

B3 I really think that if you have a fulltime facilitator in your building, and it’s in effect their job, then it needs to be their baby. To say that that’s the building principal’s responsibility, the building principal has to allow that time at a staff meeting, to provide her resources if she wants to put visuals out there, be a support. But if you’ve got a person in the building who that’s their fulltime responsibility, then I do think that it’s their job to keep it going with support from the building administrator. But, I, you know, I told our IC facilitator yesterday, “I have a gazillion things on my plate. If I’ve got somebody in a fulltime position for this task, that’s your job.” I’m not, they’re the ones with the training, the background knowledge. It’s their job. They have to do that. And if they’re not getting the support they need, then they need to come to me and say, “Hey, I need this and this and this.” OK.

B4 But in all reality and this goes back to one of the previous questions, this district is such high needs that I am full-time ICT facilitator. Most districts only have half-time. In the other elementary for all intents and purposes, there’s an ICT facilitator full-time cuz there’s two people. But that really means is that I take the majority of the cases, because there is such a huge time commitment with ICT cases that teachers can only take one case at a time. And there is kind of a false impression that you get your speech therapist on board and you get your social worker on board and you get your school psych on board, because they have discretionary time. And that’s kind of an insult to those people.

B5 I think our facilitator may have stepped outside of what her role should be per ICT. I think she had a problem getting back into that case-study mode where we’re going to talk about children’s problems, children’s issues, rather than identify student need, and then let’s spend the majority of our time talking about what are we going to do as adults to address those needs? So I thought our facilitator…. People understood what her role was. She was certainly clearly the leader of the group. But whether she was, whether she was carrying out her role as facilitator, how Todd Gravois would understand that, two different things
I think it’s more of that our facilitator really took pride in…. I don’t want to, I don’t know how to say this accurately, but really took pride in being the expert of that model. And people looked to her as being the expert rather than, you know, really making a conscious effort to extend trust and share that information and build capacity. It was almost like…
I also think the phenomenon was this person’s very nurturing and caring and had that fixing mentality, and a fixer and a facilitator are definitely two different things.
...unfortunately we had a facilitator that at times played into that and did want to take them off their hands and did want to try to help them and fix them, instead of really confronting the teacher to say, “You own this child, and you own their learning. Let me help you better serve their needs.” We had a facilitator that I don’t think was confrontational whatsoever, so those conversations I don’t think took place. And that may have been some of the breakdown.

**Node: Road/Bridge to Sp.Ed. Concept**

**B1** I think people perceive it the way that I said, that it’s for the kids, it’s for helping, it’s to help kids. And I, in all honesty, it is viewed as a path to Special Ed. It is the new path to Special Ed. CRT was the old path to Special Ed. It’s still the way you got to get there, you know. I mean sometimes you have a kid where you’re like, “I just know in my gut that this kid needs Special Ed.” And you’re going through the motions with ICT. And it’s not that you don’t try, but you just know.
Well, and the other thing—going back to the Special Ed referral issue—I distinctly remember being told when we implemented ICT that one of the reasons was because our number of Special Ed referrals was out of control. So that brought us right into it from the beginning with the mentality of associating it with Special Ed. Do you know what I mean? Like our referrals are out of control, we need a different process here that leads up to Special Ed.

**B2** *na

**B3** But it’s not a gateway to Special Education, which is a lot of times what it’s viewed as. I mean when you became, when you became Judy’s evaluator, unfortunately that blurred the lines as to is IC meant for Special Ed or is it meant for General ED? I mean, and it, there are cases that may go to Special Ed. And they don’t. But people just saw this kid has this issue. He needs to go to Special Ed. We’re going to go through… No, it’s not CRT anymore.

**B4** A lot of research supports that the CRT model didn’t work. Because suggestions weren’t ever really done with fidelity. And the documentation piece of this requires that. And the new models for Special Ed eligibility requires that. So...Probably one of the biggest misconceptions though that people have—and I know part of that is because I am funded by the ISD and we went from one day being CRT to the very next day being ICT—and so people see it as a gateway.... To Special Ed. And I don’t know that that’s anything that we’re ever really going to be able to really stop because kids aren’t being considered for Special Ed unless we’ve got data. A lot of times we’re able to make that match. And I am seeing teachers really understanding that Special Ed isn’t the answer. When you have 16 to 18 kids in a resource room, there’s nothing about, it’s not individualized then. And their needs aren’t being met in that setting any better than they could be in a classroom. So I think there’s a little bit of an eye-opener in that respect. But I really do think that that is part of the problem is, and I know there’s been some frustration that, “Why do they see that as a gateway to Special Ed?” Well, it’s funded by the ISD. The facilitator’s an ISD person. It happens to be in this building, it isn’t always that case but most often, because it’s the school psych or a teacher consultant or speech therapist or something like that. And, and they have to go through that process to be considered for Special Ed. But we still try to say loud and clear, that’s not what we anticipate happening is that a child gets qualified. We want to anticipate that we’ve made that match and life is good and that student’s going to
be successful in the Regular Ed with maybe a few accommodations or just meeting their need because

B5 I think they know that, in theory again, but in practice, they want the kid fixed. It’s the old-school handoff model, where I can’t…. You know, and I don’t want to be cynical but I can’t devote the extra time and energy to this kid, because I have 29 other learners in here that require a lot of my attention. I’ve given all I have, so someone else deal with them. I think it’s that handoff mentality.

Node: Teachers (Attitudes Toward IC)
B1 *na
B2 *na
B3 And maybe they do on a surface level that they can probably say, “Oh, it’s meant to help me with my instruction.” But they don’t get, I don’t think they really buy into it. It’s like when you have a mission statement in your building. You can have it posted, people can memorize it, and they can spit it out, “….with the community….” But if they don’t really, if they don’t really believe it, it’s just words. So, and I think that’s what’s happened. I think IC has just kind of been put on the back burner.

B4 *na
B5 *na

Node: Time Consuming Concept
B1 We do get…. This may be a question you have later, but we do get backed up quite a bit with ICT sometimes, where JB’s trying to get through all the cases. Because it is a time-consuming process, the contracting. You know, you give up probably a whole prep time initially just to get through that. And then she has to be able to meet with the student. And I’ve sat in with her on those when she does the baseline snapshot, because I want to see what she’s doing. And, you know, it takes.... I think the problem is in the attitude of the classroom teacher if they think, if they write the kid off to, “Oh they’re getting LLI, I don’t need to do anything else.” That’s where, because putting, the ICT process is labor-intensive enough for the regular classroom teacher that it really makes you think, “Do I want to do this? Does this kid need this? How much am I willing to do with this kid?” And it makes you very thoughtful about which kids you want to do with ICT. I mean not that you’re not going to do it because it’s too much work for you. Although we’re given that option, “Do you want to do ICT or not? And if you don’t, you’re on your own. And if this kid fails, the kid fails because you didn’t do.” I mean it’s not put to us that way. But we have that option. And I believe there are a few teachers that have taken that option. I can’t say for sure, cuz I really don’t know. But if the ICT just didn’t work for your schedule or you came up with something on your own and you said, “No thank you,” you remain solely responsible for that kid’s success or failure. ICT in a way gives you support so that you have help, you know, with the kid, but…. And then it’s something to fall back on if the progress isn’t being made. We’ve documented, “Well we did this. This is what we did in class. I’m working one-on-one with him. He’s also getting LLI. And we’re seeing really not a lot of progress.” And I do think the shortcutting process to LLI, like for instance this year being told, “OK, we’re just taking spring scores and the interventionists are starting working with these kids on Day 2 of school.” If we went through the whole IC process with those kids, it would take forever to get those kids placed in those groups. So I can see the advantage to it, but yes there is that danger when you skip that step that the classroom teacher is no longer taking ownership of the child’s instruction.
It is a big time commitment on the part of the teacher. And that is probably the hardest part about IC for teachers is that it can be a big time commitment. But recently we’ve been trying to compact that where we take a half a day and do the contracting, the problem ID, snapshot, do strategy, intervention design and even get to the point of collecting some baseline so that we’ve got most of the work done right up front, so that it isn’t as a time-consuming process and we can get the ball rolling right away.

In terms of it taking too long. It was too lengthy of a process. Poor follow up. They would request assistance and not hear back for weeks, sometimes months.

**Node: PD and IC**

I mean we do PD, we do PD that involves, we’ve definitely come a long way from having that outside person come in and talk at us. Budget is part of the reason, but I think it’s a good thing. Because we in-service ourselves a lot. Like the ladies that went to the Fountas and Pinnell training in Toronto, they came back knowing how to do LLI, but also knowing a lot about how to administer the benchmark assessment. And they taught that to us. And we’re, all the Language Arts teachers are doing that. So we are getting PD, even the people that never do an IC case. They’re getting PD in different ways. They’re not getting that shoulder to shoulder so much. But I think we need to revisit the IC process as a PD, half day or something with the whole staff, because it’s been implemented and it’s rolling, but it is kind of limping along, like you say, in some ways. And think we need to go back to it. I mean I remember pretty intensive PD on it at the beginning.

And I think, like I said, philosophically I understand ICT, I mean I understand its purpose, I get the way it’s set up, the questioning techniques. But if it’s not done with fidelity, it’s not going to work. And so we’re in, we’re kind of in that sustainability stage. And I’m having a hard time saying, “Yeah, I’m willing to sustain this.” If people aren’t willing to take a hard look at what is working and what’s not and fix the things that aren’t working. Because it’s not going to work to, with its intent if we don’t make some changes.

And so that there’s been no collaboration. And that’s the piece that has to be able to be changed. Because if people can’t communicate, if everyone’s operating as if they’re their own island, it affects everybody. So that’s the biggest thing is that it’s got to be.... For IC to continue to be effective and to be more effective. Because it’s been effective, but it could be way more effective if given the right time and given the support. You know, basically the ISD supports ICT. And in order for it to be sustainable, the district has to take that over. All the money comes from the ISD. And that’s what’s got to change. Cuz I don’t know how long that’s going to happen. You know, like I’m told, “Well, we can have this.” But, you know, I want it in writing that the ISD will provide this and this and this. And it comes to the point in time that the district has to support it. And that hasn’t happened.
But as of yet there’s been a lot of turnover. And that is the one thing that hurts ICT—the sustainability is if there is always a changeover of administration. I do think it’s readily apparent, especially to me, but I hope to administration too that it can’t be business as usual like this next year. That if ICT is going to be sustainable that it has to be promoted. And that it has to be in the forefront and it has to be talked about and it has to be an expectation. Prior administration when teacher would come to them with a concern, it was, “Well, get a request for assistance.” If that’s never said now, that expectation goes away for teachers.

Again, I think in theory IC is outstanding. I think we can all agree with that. But in practice it’s just, it’s different.
Appendix J: Building B Quote Analysis Chart

N=5 Participants

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>#/% Optimistic</th>
<th>#/% Discouraged</th>
<th>#/% Neutral</th>
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<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of IC</td>
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<td>2/40%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC Process</td>
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<td>1/20%</td>
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Appendix K: T-Chart of Similarity and Differences per Node Between Buildings
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<th>Node</th>
<th>School A Perspective</th>
<th>School B Perspective</th>
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<td>Effectiveness of IC</td>
<td>This building sees it as mainly effective—some of the main, original team members are frustrated, thinking it could be better, meaning more people should be using it in their building (citing lack of admin. support). However, they have found across the county that their building in particular is one of the ones that have more participation than others. Quote from recent administrator: “I just wish I would have devoted more, I think the other piece why I think it’s not too strong in this building is, and I think I have alluded to that, but that I would blame myself for it. I really would, because I haven’t been in it a hundred percent. And for personal reasons and shame on me for that.”</td>
<td>There seems to be a lot of frustration and/or confusion with the addition of the “intervention” piece. Not to be confused with the interventions that come out of the IC process, however, an additional process being implemented in the building labeled “intervention,” which most alluded to as a “pullout” service model—where a student goes to the “expert” and then returns to class. There is a general underlying tone that most see IC as not being very effective and questioning whether “intervention,” lack of clear administrative support, and lack of use of the data gathered in IC as reasons why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC Process</td>
<td>It is interesting that the staff have a pretty clear understanding of the process, and administration, according to staff, over the years has not understood it—yet the process seems to be working for the most part in the building—leaving one to wonder if there was administrative support would there be 100% usage? Each of the staff members interviewed had very detailed descriptions of the process, and the administrator was unable to describe the three main parts of the triangle, which is essential in understanding of the process in order to support it in your building.</td>
<td>The facilitator gets it—gets what it is, what it is supposed to do, who’s involved; the administrator has difficulty explaining it in detail even though she has stated that she has had the training “several times”; and the teacher seems to be combining language from the Rti frameworks with ICT language. A previous administrator also has a very broad view of the process, which leaves one with the impression that the administrators rely heavily on the facilitator for the process implementation?</td>
</tr>
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Understanding Purpose of IC

Perspective from the staff interviewed:
Administrators from the beginning linked it to special education, and the only way that a student may eventually get a referral; they weren’t telling staff that it was to make the match between the student, teacher, and instruction to try and solve the issue without special education. Team members understand that the purpose is to make the match between teacher, student, and instruction but sometimes feel that other staff have that underlying goal of the “road to Sp.Ed.” when they request IC or a way to CYA in terms of teacher evaluation.

It is clear in this building that staff does not truly understand the purpose of IC; there were many references that staff see it as a gateway to special education. They see the “purpose” of IC as the only way to get a child to the point of special education and out of their classroom—they do not seem to see it as improving instruction for all. The administrator states: “We’ve had turnover with staff, but there’s never been a process in place to get them up to speed on the purpose of IC. So, that’s something we’ve got to do. I mean if we’re going to, if we truly believe in this and want to sustain it, then what are we going to do to bring it back to life? So, no, people don’t know the roles of everybody. They don’t even know who’s on the team. They don’t know what it [IC] means. I don’t think they understand what it means to get help.”

Leadership Style

Quote, A1: “Hmmm- There isn’t really one.” This sort of sums it up for this building. There is a total sense of frustration with administration and the different styles that they have had over the years. They stated that some leaders have been great with kids but not with adults, some are better with the adults and not with such young students. Most feel that the teachers have had to take on most of the “leadership” role in the building, which “pits each other against each other.” Staff state current administrator doesn’t collaborate nor communicate well with a lack of follow through.

The tone of this building is a feeling of respect for the administration for what the administrator is trying to do overall to lead the building per district initiatives, yet there is still a sense of a lack of true collaboration in regard to the IC process. The administrator states: “I trust them—give them flexibility—let them do what needs to be done as long as they are showing progress—“some of this is perceived as lack of support for the IC process by some staff.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PD for Instruction</strong></th>
<th>This building is at the level of being focused on digging deeper—moving from just learning discrete skills/strategies each time a teacher requests assistance to teaching teachers how to incorporate these strategies into their everyday routines and teaching from year to year. They are focused on “how do we make this a great case?” How do we have the teachers “own” IC and the strategies that they learn?</th>
<th>This building is still at the level of focusing on PD to believe in the IC process—to learn what the process really is and what it can do for teachers and students and the core curriculum. Not one of the participants mentioned digging deeper. They need to focus on building a great team.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DIFFERENT</strong></td>
<td>This building has the perspective that IC could/should be a part of something “bigger,” more “structured,” such as an RtI framework. They believe in the idea of IC and the “shoulder to shoulder” building of strategies but feel it lacks a systems approach to catching all students who struggle because teachers need to request assistance and requesting is voluntary—meaning those students who are struggling who have teachers who don’t request assistance stay behind. They believe having IC as a part of an RtI framework would be a way to use the data to inform curriculum changes.</td>
<td>Most of this building seems to be fixated on the concept that IC is weak and not working and that RtI will “fix the instruction” if the framework is put into place. It is almost as though they recognize, through the data they are collecting from IC cases, that the curriculum has gaps but struggle with the idea that IC can be a part of the answer and are looking at just an RtI framework to solve the curriculum weakness issue. One interviewee talked about IC and “that triangle” I’ve seen—a disconnect from the other building interviewees or a misunderstanding of what is really happening in her building?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship to RtI</strong></td>
<td>For this building, they seem to have more concerns of CYA in using IC—not only in regard to student growth on the new teacher evaluation process and job security—but also in sending students up to the next building; they quite often stated that they felt they needed to do IC to “prove” that they did interventions of some sort for the student and had documentation before they sent them on.</td>
<td>Why does this building not worry about all of the documenting or CYA feelings in regard to the MS? Is it because the MS doesn’t do IC? Is it because a minimum number of people participated in the study from this building? Is it that there is such a lack of participation in the process of IC that there is no one to worry about the use of IC? Only one interviewee referenced worrying about CYA in relation to moving students on to another grade level.</td>
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<td><strong>DIFFERENT</strong></td>
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Understanding Roles of IC

Most in this building believe staff has some understanding of the basic roles of the IC team but that there still needs to be work done. For some, they believe the resistance to using the process was a lack of comfortableness, or that in understanding the roles and the process leads to the realization that it is a lot of work and a time commitment. Many also think the lack of administrative support led to staff not being as fully committed to understanding roles and the process.

This building is interesting: There is always an outlier with almost every node. Most agree that there is little to no understanding of the various roles of IC team members, let alone the IC process itself. Some blame the fact that it is not in the forefront of everyone’s vocabulary anymore, administrative changeover, and lack of a process to update new staff about the process, along with the addition of “interventions” as to why staff does not understand the roles. However, one interviewee thought they were “all pretty clear at this point” but lacked an understanding of how much time would be expected of them as a classroom teacher.

Data Usage From IC

Frustration: “It’s something we never get to. We look at data all day long, K, and we never get to say ‘OK, so what are we going to do about it?’”

“OK but the other thing is I think that the system that we have in our district and in our building doesn’t support the use of ICT properly; too much emphasis is put on you have to have the data and you have to have evidence and, but there is no discussion why. It’s more pressure of you have to have these things or your job is in jeopardy.” (A4)

They share data with each other but also recognize that there is no data review system that is productive toward producing changes. Does this come down to a leadership issue? Does the leadership know the data? Own the data? Participate in the discussions at team meetings? Set deadlines?

There seems to be more difficulty sharing data in this building than the first building, “But when you share that data and nothing is done with that data, that’s extremely frustrating.”

It seems as though administrative changeover affects data sharing and the use of that data to make curriculum changes.
Voluntary Concept of IC

“They choose IC over choosing to do it on their own with a general education intervention piece,” meaning they do not choose it because they necessarily want to do it for its true purpose, but rather if they are going to have to collect data and show they did interventions they might as well get help with it.

Some believe that the option of it being “voluntary” is no longer an option because the district has had it in place for so long, and that was what was alluded to by Gravois; however, other staff do believe that it is still voluntary: Who makes that decision? Is that a building decision? A district decision? An ISD decision? And who enforces it?

Again—an outlier! Most rely on the recent information from Todd Gravois stating that at this point, IC should no longer be voluntary because it should be systematic. Even within that, some take the stance that IC needs to “prove itself” or it wouldn’t be around at all. From a teacher perspective: “my understanding is that I can refuse to use ICT if I look at what we found with a child and I don’t think I need help, which I don’t know why I would ever refuse it. Why would you say no?” (B1)

Leadership Impact on Teaching

“I wouldn’t say it stalls anything, but I don’t think it pushes me.” (A4) “We’re so trapped in our boxes, our little boxes, all day and you don’t get to see some of the awesome things that other teachers are doing. But I think that starts from an administrator who clears the table and makes people feel comfortable with strengths and weaknesses...” (A4) This building is begging for leadership that makes this happen; there has not only been a high rate of turnover in administration, there is also evidence from interviewees that administrators are seemingly trying to find their own path and not always concentrating on a path or vision for the building.

Some of the staff recognize that there is no trust among the staff, however, even fewer recognize that it is just not the leadership’s role.

This building gave a lot of general answers, nothing specific to their particular leadership.

One person described many items that related to intimidation, another person gave the general answer “what’s best for kids,” and one spoke of it in a global sense that yes, there should be a direct correlation and that administrators should be coming from the sense of communicating consistently that it is OK to take risks and try different things or there isn’t growth. So the overall general sense, with the outlier “intimidation” piece, is the belief that the administrator should encourage flexible teaching strategies and methods to encourage growth and be consistent in communicating this to teachers (to avoid the feeling of intimidation?).

This building recognizes that administration uses IC as an accountability piece for evaluations rather than for its purpose of making students and teachers more successful—actually making the impact on teaching somewhat detrimental.
Teachers Accepting Feedback

Staff at this building themselves question why some teachers have difficulty either asking for help (“I don’t know if they are extra sensitive, that’s their personality or what…”) or resist ideas and strategies, to the point that they feel pitted against each other (“And it’s almost like this wall goes up.”). Members of the IC team mentioned that they believe the PD should come from those outside of the team—almost as if they have tried many different ways to have teachers participate and teachers still resist.

This building is focused more on the bigger-picture concept that teachers, perhaps as part of their nature, struggle to accept feedback and/or PD from within their own group.

B5: “In practice, I think it’s two different things. I think teachers are inherently, I think just inherently struggle with accepting feedback. Teachers are definitely protective and defensive of what they do and why they do it. And feedback is almost like a, outside of the culture of the profession right now. And the whole model (IC) is dependent on feedback.”

Administrative Changeover

Overall consensus is that turnover in building administration is a key piece in keeping IC viable and functioning strongly in a building. “This is the IC process. But it’s like telephone. It trickles down to one person who kind of flips it and turns it and then another person and another. And all of a sudden it kind of turned into something else. We have to stick to a process. So when you have that much turnover in principals, it’s just kind of like you get the essence of IC with a side of my own philosophy, you know. And then, when you have, when you’ve had three different bosses with three different philosophies, all of a sudden IC is just kind of I what?” (A4)

“And really none of them have glommed onto ICT in a really strong way. They may talk positively about it, but they don’t have a really good understanding of it, so it’s hard for them to then direct staff on their expectations and those roles are.” (A3)

There is also a sense that even with the administrative turnover, the process may weaken or change it a little; however, the bigger concern is if the facilitator leaves, meaning most believe that the facilitator is the key person in holding the process together in making and sustaining it as a building-wide system.

There is not as clear a sense from all interviewees in this building about administrative turnover.

The facilitator had the following to state: “And so you just start building a rapport and then you have to start all over again. And you say those things (data) over and over again. Like the phonics piece that looked like it was going to get fixed. But the administrator left and someone else came. And so now you’ve got to build that relationship and that trust again instead of letting the data speak for itself.”

The current administrator somewhat avoided the question and placed more emphasis on the history of other administrators, which was interesting.
### Population Impact

**DIFFERENT**

Staff who were interviewed and administration both recognize that there have been population changes over the years, and they are trying to educate students with multiple layers of concerns.

“So I think it’s that whole thing of changing the mind-set, of saying, ‘These are our kids. Parents aren’t hiding any good kids in the closets. These are the kids that they’re bringing us. We just have to wrap ourselves around how are we going to do this to get differentiated instruction so we’re meeting the needs of all of our students?’” (A5)

Even so, this building of interviewees believes IC is the process to use.

Some in this building question the use of IC: “Is it the right process for our needs. Can it work to our capacity?” Is this a valid question since this building does not have a fully functioning team?

Other thoughts from this building:

“IC may be meant for a kid that has a little cut. And you can go right in and put a Band-Aid on that and you can put on a little bit of antiseptic, and life is good. And they’ll pick right up where they left off and life is good. And everybody would love to have cases like that. We don’t have cases like that, and that is why our cases take a lot longer and where we don’t meet the model of the four weeks and you’re out type of thing. Our kids have multiple needs. So I think it can work in our district. I think we have to have more leeway with the amount of time it takes. I always equate a lot of our cases to ‘Are you going to help the kid that’s got a scratch or the one that’s hemorrhaging?’ And most of our kids are hemorrhaging, for various reasons.” (B4)

Again: If there was a fully functioning team, would students really seem as if they were hemorrhaging?
Teacher Accountability

Even though most of the interviewees did not seem as concerned about accountability (in the fact that they felt confident in their abilities to have students make growth and be successful), they did speak to staff being concerned with the new evaluation process and using IC process more as a CYA piece due to what/how administrators are presenting the use of IC.

The heightened emphasis on teacher accountability is taking the emphasis away from genuine ownership of the student’s progress by the teachers and placing it on the teachers’ concern for their own evaluation process. This misguided emphasis on teacher evaluation in the light of the IC process takes away the importance of the purpose of finding the match between the teacher, student, and instruction so that everyone is successful.

Due to teacher evaluation changes, teachers are more concerned about their individual accountability and evaluation, therefore questioning collaboration, team teaching, and trust in fellow teachers. Will this shut down IC?

Also in this building is an emphasis in regard to teacher accountability due to the new teacher evaluation system being used.

It seems to go a step further in that current and past administrators are truly believing that IC in some way can be used in that evaluation system.

“I don’t know if it is insecurity that teachers struggle going to their own colleagues (for IC). Not everybody but a teacher who’s struggling, one, doesn’t want to admit that they’re struggling, and two, they don’t want to admit it to somebody they work with. And they don’t want their building administrator to get wind of that either.” (B3)

Is IC really about struggling teachers or is it about students who are not at grade level and struggling? And, is the district using IC to “fix” the teachers, like teachers try to “fix” the students? Is staff being told that IC is an evaluation means? Is this why this building has a defunct team?
"I think where the breakdown happens is the clear communication of expectations and goals for the building, how those are communicated to that team of ‘leaders,’ quote, unquote. And then the transfer of that information back to grade levels and the rest of the staff. Because this year, and I don’t know that it has anything to do with ICT, but just as far as our building functioning, that communication has completely broken down, and even just the communication of like school improvement goals, if that grade-level person takes it back to their grade level, they often are cut down for feeling like... Other people are saying, ‘Well, you’re trying to run everything’ and ‘You’re trying to tell us what we have to do’ instead of it being teamwork and, ‘OK, you were at this meeting. Tell us what you learned and help us be able to work toward the school goals.’ We don’t have that system.” (A3)

This sentiment is explicit in almost every interviewee’s questions and answers in this building. It presents as a culture of suffocation and little to no growth as a staff “family,” no inspiration to grow in knowledge, skills, or collaboration, no trust, no promotion to learn from one another—mainly in tribute to leadership or lack of.

The communication, collaboration, and morale of this building is dying and/or nearly dead.

This building does not present as dire of an overall feeling of despair as the other building, although there are a few core threads in relation to “trust,” which leads one to believe that there may be an underlying issue with trust in the building. As was made evident in the Administrative Turnover node, the fact that administrators change so often means building a rapport and trust; if it changes every two years or so, is there time to truly build this trust? And how does this affect trust among teaching staff?
Leadership Impact on IC

**DIFFERENT**

“But then we’ve had some principals that seem to be better, I don’t know, I want to say ‘less fake’ but, you know, better just more natural with the kids and not good management with the adults. So what kind of has happened is you have, you know, certain teachers that they can say, they’ll say something to the administrator, and the administrator goes along with what they think and maybe not what somebody else thinks. And then, that kind of creates a, you know, mess between staff. I kind of feel like that’s kind of how our building has gotten...”

(A2)

Different leadership styles are confusing to staff and seem to put them on guard or cause tension between staff members; if teachers are already tense amongst themselves it most likely does not lend itself to working collaboratively, which is such an integral part of ICT.

If leaders are not great with kids, are staff unconsciously trying to “protect” students from leadership by not asking for help through the ICT process?

In doing interviews in this building there is a feeling of “passion” for the IC process, more so from teachers and other staff than administrators. Does this impact the IC process?

“I think that if the principal was really involved and wanted to learn how to actually implement the process as a case manager and how to take a case, that it would have, I mean, almost immeasurable impacts on the staff and on the building.” (A3)

“I think that if they were in that role and taking on cases and being a really big part of it, then the staff would feel a lot more comfortable collaborating with not only each other, but also with that administrator and seeing them more as a team player. And we absolutely need that. We don’t have

There is definitely disconnect in this building with administration, facilitator, staff, and the IC process.

There is a strong sense in reviewing transcripts under many nodes that there is an underlying tension between the facilitator and administrator. Personality? Difference of opinion? Knowledge of ICT? “Interventions” were added and has caused confusion among staff?

[Do you believe the leadership style of your administrator has an impact on the IC process in your building?] “Definitely. Because before when it was a stated expectation and administration lived and breathed it as much as the ICT facilitator, although it was a change in the building, it quickly became the norm. Now it’s as if the norm is ‘intervention.’ And it’s, it feels like a one-man show now with the ICT facilitator trying to say, ‘Hey, I’m still here. I’m still here.’ And with attempts with e-mails and things like that to the staff. But if it isn’t, if it isn’t encouraged and expected by administration, it dies in the building.” (B4)

The ironic part is that “interventions” and ICT are supposedly being done for the same end result—helping students. It is how it is done that is the difference, and “interventions” seems to be a mirror image of the old CRT model where the student gets pulled out of the room for 50 minutes, interventionist works with them, teacher doesn’t have to do any work or have any responsibility in progress. Is this perhaps why “interventions” seem to be supported more: It is easier for the teachers so there is less resistance to the administrator in implementing it?

“Teachers are way too busy and too stressed out to be forced through a process that isn’t very strong or clear.” (B3)

Why isn’t the process too strong or clear? Lack of administrative support? As a leader, do you support your IC facilitator? The building facilitator could use the
In this building there is an overwhelming feeling of respect and repertoire with the facilitator(s).

“[They] have been such a driving force in this building.” They recognize that the facilitators are both part-time at being facilitators and that they both have other parts to their jobs. Staff feel administration needs to also be responsible for being a part of that driving force. It seems there is more teacher “buy-in” or involvement due to the facilitators’ deep involvement and commitment to the IC process. It seems that the team has stayed pretty consistent because of the facilitators’ abilities to be out front with the IC process—even with the lack of administrator support. Staff feel there is a “practice what you preach” attitude that is working.

In this building there is not as much confidence in the full-time facilitator. “I think our facilitator may have stepped outside of what her role should be per ICT. I think she had a problem getting back into that case-study mode where we’re going to talk about children’s problems, children’s issues, rather than identify a child’s needs and then spend the rest of our time talking about what we are going to do as adults to address those needs.”

(B5)

There are some negative connotations toward the abilities of the facilitator to facilitate a team and keep the idea of IC in the forefront of this building’s minds. And a sense that the administrator doesn’t believe the facilitator is doing what needs to be done to promote the ICT process. Does this “sense” permeate from the administrator into the rest of the staff by actions and/or words?

On the other hand there is a facilitator who is frustrated with and not feeling supported by the administrator or staff. The facilitator is not only being the facilitator but also the “case manager” due to a lack of team members.” But Judy does do a lot of the work. And it would be more effective if it was spread around more.”

(B1) Staff see the need and know what needs to be done. Why aren’t they stepping forward?
Although this building feels fairly confident with its team and facilitators, there is still the overall perception that staff seeking a request for assistance are looking for a “fix the child” solution in the form of special education. Some of this perception seems to come straight from the administrators in how they present the use of the IC process. “I think with certain administrators we’ve had, it was supposed to be, you know, ‘You better put them in there [IC] because that’s the way to track them to get to a special ed referral.’” (A2)

“I think a lot of them truly believe that the IC purpose is to get them into special education or to cover their butt. And that is so opposite of the purpose of ICT. We have some that really get it, and they do phenomenally. I mean their kids make so much progress, but the ones that don’t get it, they don’t make as much progress.” (A3)

“Probably one of the biggest misconceptions that people have—and I know part of it is because I am funded by the ISD and we went from one day being CRT to the next being ICT—so people see it as a gateway to special education.” (B4)

[Why do they see it as a gateway to sp.ed.?] “Well, it’s funded by the ISD. The facilitator is an ISD person, not always but most often it or the team is school psychs, teacher consultants, or speech therapists or something like that. And they have to go through that process [ICT] to get to a referral because we need the data.” (B4)

This building’s perception about the road to special education concept is based more on the connections to the ISD itself and all of the ISD personnel connected to the ICT process. It was also perceived that teachers believe that it is just a different name for an existing system.

“I think that some people perceive the way I said—that it’s for the kids, it’s for helping, it’s to help kids. And I, in all honesty, it is viewed as a path to special ed. It is the new path to special ed. CRT was the old path, ICT is the new. It’s still the way you’ve got to get there. It’s just more work. Well, and another thing—I distinctly remember being told when we implemented ICT that one of the reasons was because our number of special ed referrals was out of control. So that brought us right into it from the beginning with the mentality of associating it with special ed. Do you know what I mean? Like our referrals are out of control, we need a different process here that leads up to sp.ed.” (B1)

Both buildings seem to know the theory of IC, however, some feel it is the same old CRT model just packaged differently, hopefully resulting in the same (sp.ed. referral) with the added insurance that they have CYA’d themselves for accountability purposes for their evaluations with the data collection.
Interviewees in this building are passionate about the IC process and in keeping it alive and going beyond just learning discrete skills (strategies)—about really “owning” the process and making it a true system that the whole building would eventually use and there wouldn’t be a need to “buy in”: It would just “be the way we do things.” They presented the genuine feeling of wanting to help each other become better teachers for their students and to make it work despite the setbacks.

**DIFFERENT**

Interviewees in this building show no sense of passion about the process or even toward trying to make it a system’s change. The perception in this building is one of finger-pointing as to why the IC process seems to never have really progressed passed the initial state of forming the team. There is a lot of talk about “not enough time.” It was difficult to even get the minimum number of interviewees.

**Time Consuming Concept**

“I feel like our teachers maybe don’t quite understand that this is a time commitment. These are students who are significantly behind sometimes. And it is going to eat up a lot of their planning time. It might eat up some before and after school times. The time commitment thing, I don’t think maybe everybody’s fully on board.” (A4)

“I think our case managers work very, very hard. And so I’m not so sure that some of our teachers realize that their job is also to work just as hard as the case manager.”

Yes, it is a lot of work, it is a lot of work, but you know what? Why wouldn’t we give that much work to our kids? You know, I mean it is a lot of work for a purpose. It’s a lot of work so that we can, you know, have those things happen for all of our kids.” (A6)

There is a perception among them that they know it is a lot of work—interviewees get that, and again, you can hear that understanding and passion in their “voice”; their concern is for those teachers who are having a difficult time switching paradigms from sending a student away to be “fixed” (labeled) to keeping the student and changing their teaching strategies to make an instructional match because that is what the student needs.

[Why did staff not use IC?]

“In terms of it taking too long. It was too lengthy of a process. Poor followup. They would request assistance and not hear back for weeks, sometimes months.” (B5)

“We do get backed up quite a bit sometimes with the facilitator trying to get through all of the cases. Because it is a time-consuming process, the contracting.”

This is the building where the facilitator is doing the majority of the cases due to there being a lack of team members: This is truly an issue in that there is no team in this building, and the facilitator is not to be the case manager for all of the cases.

[Why do you think people don’t join the team?]“Just because of the added workload. I mean, that’s for me, I’ll be honest, it’s hard enough for me to keep up with what I’m doing in the classroom, the ICT cases I have requested; volunteering to, I mean I feel bad to say it, but volunteering to sit in on that team, it’s an extra meeting every week, and then to also support other teachers.”

There is a mixed perception of there being too much work to be a team member and a lack of a process (lack of team) causing a backlog in cases: It is like a vicious circle in this building.
“Well, as far as professional development goes, I think it would be totally great if every teacher could go to that two-day training, that tells them the history of ICT, this is what it is, this is what it does, this is its purpose, this is what we’d like to accomplish. It is a huge eye-opening experience. And then as far as differentiated instruction and strategies, I think they’ll be more open to receiving those. They won’t see it as ‘Oh, you’re trying to tell me how to do my job.’ They’ll actually come searching for those strategies or ways to teach if they had a good, clear understanding of what the ICT team does.” (A1)

This is the main perception of this building—that PD needs to be twofold. Staff need PD on the ICT process itself, to understand it and its purpose (from the ICT gurus) and also, they would be getting “PD” on strategies from their case managers and facilitator in a “shoulder to shoulder” fashion specifically for their students’ needs from using the IC process.

The perception in this building is that they get a variety of PD on a variety of things—mainly by each other but not necessarily through the ICT process.

“We in-service ourselves a lot. Like the ladies that went to the Fountas and Pinnell training in Toronto, they came back knowing how to do LLI but also knowing a lot about how to administer the benchmark assessment. And they taught that to us. So we are getting PD, even those that don’t do an IC case. They’re getting PD in a different way—not shoulder to shoulder so much. But I think we need to revisit the IC process as PD, a half day or something with the whole staff, because it has been implemented and it’s rolling, but it’s kind of limping along right now.” (B1)

At this point, do you think this will really help get the IC process out of “limp mode”?
Beyond Implementation

DIFFERENT

“I just feel like we have certain components of IC that work very well. We’re very organized, we meet, I mean our team works really well together. But as far as making sure kids don’t fall through the cracks, or meeting goals in a realistic time, I don’t think we’re there yet. I mean, you’d have to do a lot of peeling back the layers to figure out where we break down. It’s probably just a little bit everywhere but it ends up being a lot everywhere.” (A4)

This seems to be the overall perception of the interviewees for this building. They believe that there are parts that are going really well, some students are making good progress, more teachers are requesting assistance yet they still question if they can sustain ICT in their building with time constraints, lack of administrative support, and lack of teacher understanding of the purpose of IC.

“And time is an enemy, but this year a lot of our problem has been the Title Review. And they were afraid of the guy that was coming. And you have to dot your I’s and cross your T’s. And so that there’s been no collaboration. And that’s the piece that has to be able to be changed. Because if people can’t communicate, if everyone’s operating as if they’re their own island, it affects everybody. So that’s the biggest thing that it’s got to be... For IC to continue to be effective, and to be more effective. It could be way more effective if given the right time and given the right support.” (B4)

Not everyone interviewed believes that IC has been effective, however, many do state that “time is an enemy” and there needs to be more emphasis on it for it to move beyond implementation.
Sustainability  

“I think that with myself and my co-facilitator, as long as we’re there, it stays consistent. So if the administrator leaves, we have had some team members switch on and off, and that’s been fine. But my concern is if myself or my co-facilitator left, I have no idea what would happen, because we have not been able to build sustainability outside of ourselves.” (A3)

“As of yet, there has been a lot of turnover. And that is one thing that hurts ICT—the sustainability—If there is always a changeover of administration.” (B4)

“I don’t think you’re ever going to find a system that finds as much sustainability and PD built into it as ICT does. And I think if that was, that were to happen, where they let go of it (ICT), they’d just be floundering for a couple of years trying to get something in place.” (A2)

Time and collaboration seem to be two key items that this building references in relation to sustainability. All interviewees intertwine time as a reason there isn’t a strong team, there isn’t any emphasis placed on support for ICT, why it isn’t in the forefront of teachers/the building’s operating system or for collaboration. (Building B is struggling to even get a strong team together; they aren’t even able to think about sustainability at this point.)

This building is in the position of: How will this affect the building?
Effectiveness of Leadership

SAME CONCEPT (effectiveness of leadership can have a negative effect) however DIFFERENT types of administrators in each building

No respect for leaders in building A; more respect for leader of building B (it’s more where the leader places priorities that the staff have their differences)

“I know that J, at numerous meetings with each administrator, trying to get them to go to trainings, to come to the weekly meetings, take a case, do this with us so you understand the process, blah, blah, blah. And yet, and yet none of us seemed to have been all that comfortable with it. I mean they’d kind of jump on board and go to the trainings at first. But then, and they’ll come to the meetings at first, and then it kind of dwindles off, into their last priority. Like I said before, is it because they aren’t comfortable with it? Is it because they have too many other things to do? I don’t know. But, I feel like if, if you have an administrator that’s truly on board, and you can see that they feel it’s working, or they’re helping you to get where it should be, staff is going to be a little bit more on board, I think.” (A2)

Consensus in this building is that without effective leadership skills in your administrator, it is difficult to make ICT an effective part of your systematic way of making students successful. Interviewees in this building are in agreement that current and past administrators had a negative effect or no effect (it didn’t hurt it but it also didn’t do anything to move forward on the ICT process.

“I think that if they were in that role and taking on cases and being a really big part of it, then the staff would feel a lot more comfortable collaborating with not only each other but also with that administrator and seeing them more as a team player. And we absolutely need that. We don’t have that at all right now. So I think it would make a huge difference [on the ICT process].” (A3)

“I guess if I thought IC was really doing what it was meant to do, I mean if it really were strong in place, then I would really push for teachers to go through the IC process. I just don’t see it doing that right now. And so unfortunately, I am letting teachers go off and find what works for them, to the best that I can. I think what makes me said with teachers is that for the most part I don’t need to send them out for training. Most of the expertise is right in the building but they won’t listen to each other. There isn’t that collaborative respect. There isn’t that collegial respect.” (B3)

There is the sense from the interviewees that they are given the opportunity to “go off and find what works best for them”—as the quote states from the building administrator—and this seems to be negatively impacting the success of the ICT process from getting started into a strong team that can effectively and efficiently service this building. There is a strong sense that the administrator is effective with data and assessments, however, it is not connected to using the ICT process to make systematic changes in curriculum or instruction.
Appendix L: Research Bias

From information presented by Burrell and Morgan (1982), the researcher framed her research tradition and concern for bias under each of the following four concepts: ontology, epistemology, causality, and methodology.

**Ontology.** The reality or ontology was the relationship between building administrators and building staff, the building culture, and the roles of both the building administrator and teachers in implementing the IC process in two elementary buildings within the same district. Following are a few of the assumptions the researcher operated under. The actual implementation of the IC process was real in the sense that people were referring students, asking for help, working together, and collecting data. The researcher’s perception of the reality was that the relationship between the building administrator and building staff and/or the building administrators’ style of leadership may have contributed to the divergence of the IC process between the two buildings. Also among these assumptions was that teachers and building administrators equally contributed to the divergence. The reality being researched was most definitely a subjective piece, however a small portion of it was objective. Understanding the reality relies on the perceptions that staff had of building administrators and building administrators had of staff. It also relied on data collected by the facilitator on the progress of the IC process.

**Epistemology.** How does the researcher know about the reality? In other words, how does the researcher know or gather information about the relationship between building administrators and building staff, the building culture, and the roles of each in implementing the IC process? It is a subjective reality. Information about these relationships was gathered by the researcher, having been a former staff member involved in the IC process in the district. Based
on being an observer, the researcher formulated assumptions of these relationships through conversations between staff, between staff and the researcher, between administrators, and between building administrators and the researcher. Following are assumptions formed through this process: Teachers tended to remain alert and cautious with each new building administrator. Staff tended to feel in constant commotion and survival mode as the new administrator became familiar with the building and district. Staff members formulated their own perceptions of the importance of the IC process based on the willingness of the new administrator to become trained and an active participant in the process for their building. Building administrators formed relationships with staff based on information presented from a variety of veteran staff and/or other administrators and through first impressions. Building administrators new to the district brought initiatives that they were comfortable with from their previous district and tried to implement them before learning what was in place. The researcher was cognizant of these assumptions or biases about this reality during research.

**Causality.** What causes the reality? What caused the relationship between the staff and the building administrators to go one way or another in influencing staff to become active participants in the IC process? Since it is human nature to perceive causal relationships, the relationships were built on perceptions of meanings constructed in staff and building administrators’ heads and the response they had to those meanings. These meanings could be constructed from actions, words, relationships with previous staff and administrators, or a variety of reasons. The phrase “actions speak louder than words” may help summarize how relationships affect implementing any new program such as the IC process.

**Methodology.** In researching the relationship between school staff and building administrators, the building culture, and each of their roles in relation to implementing the IC
process and its divergence in the two buildings, the researcher’s methodology tradition was of the idiographic tendency. Although the information may provide some insight for others and be useful, the researcher was not looking to generalize the information to other school districts at this point. The researcher wanted to understand if the relationships held between staff and building administrators was a key factor in implementation divergence between the two buildings, one of many other factors, or not a factor. The researcher studied this reality to find information that would help students be more successful, help teachers feel more confident in asking for and using assistance in their teaching, help building administrators understand and see the importance of their role in the IC process, and reduce the number of special education referrals. It is for the larger institutional organization purpose.

Researching the relationship between staff and building administrators, the role of the building administrator, the role of the teacher, and the building culture on the implementation of the IC process is a constructivism research tradition. When putting it on a horizontal spectrum from left to right, my research tradition assumptions of ontology, epistemology, causality, and methodology all tend to fall to that of being of a subjective nature. Relationships are, by nature, perceptions in peoples’ heads, therefore making the researcher even more aware of the concern for assumptions and bias in this research.