

## **Donahue Elementary School**

### **The Case of Vivian**

#### **PART A – READ THIS SIDE FIRST**

The principal of Donahue Elementary had decided to implement the EL Education’s Language Arts modules in the fall of the 2016-2017 school year. In June, the principal made photocopies of the modules and made them available to all teachers. She placed a purchase order for the corresponding books for the modules as well. The principal then sent an email out to all staff to let them know that the module copies were ready to be picked up before leaving for the summer. Vivian, a veteran and highly influential teacher at the school, did not know what a module was, and therefore did not pick up the materials.

Vivian spent a good part of her summer energetically planning her first unit of instruction for the fall. She felt she had aligned her instruction to the Common Core standards during her planning. Her unit included a variety of texts for students to read, strong writing instruction, and engaging topics. She thought it included everything the Common Core requires. It did not, however, include the modules.

When Vivian returned at the end of the summer, she was surprised to learn that she could not use her curriculum, and she had many questions about the “curriculum modules.” The principal had done her research about the modules and was ready with answers about why implementing the modules was an important initiative and why she felt Donahue was ready for it.

Vivian was quite insistent that she needed “to see” what this would look like down the road and why this curriculum resource was the best choice for the students at their school. It felt very foreign to her, and she couldn’t really imagine how this would all play out. Vivian has a strong influence on staff culture, and making sure she could help lead this work was important to the principal.

#### **Talk about these questions with your triad:**

- Which component or components of Knoster’s Model are missing from this case study? Why do you think that?
- Is there one missing component that might ‘trump’ the others?
- What action steps could the principal take to help her move forward?

**PLEASE DISCUSS YOUR IDEAS BEFORE LOOKING AT PART B →→**

## Donahue Elementary School

### The Case of Vivian

#### **PART B – PLEASE READ ‘PART A’ FIRST -- ON OTHER SIDE**

There is a missing component here that ‘trumps’ the others. Vivian and others are confused. Her needs are clear—to see the vision from the principal about why using this curriculum is the best decision for the students. The principal did her own research and built a lot of her own knowledge, gathered all the necessary materials for teachers, yet did not seem to engage teachers in her vision for how and why the curriculum change was needed.

The principal and assistant principal worked together to construct a staff meeting agenda that included a look at current student performance data, examples of videos of module instructional practices, samples of student work from the modules, and space for teachers to ask leaders about their vision for the curriculum as a long-term solution to the school’s specific needs.

They shared the videos and student work samples with everyone at the next professional development session, and it was clear that this experience helped not just Vivian, but everyone to gain a deeper sense of the value of this initiative for students and they developed a shared vision together as a staff. Seeing the teaching practices in action also helped the staff generate good questions to further the dialogue. The leaders also came to realize through the questions that everyone needed to understand what the implementation plan was going to be, and they committed to being more transparent about not only *why* they adopted the modules, but *how* they would be adopted and how implementation would be supported in an ongoing manner.

#### **Talk about these questions with your triad:**

- How were your ideas similar or different to what actually happened?
- How do you think the approach described above will move the school’s work forward?

## Fields Arts Academy Elementary School

### **PART A – READ THIS SIDE FIRST**

In 2016-2017, the school principal, Ms. Xavier, a group of teachers leaders, and district leaders explored a variety of opportunities, curriculum resources, and professional development options to determine which would be best address the needs for the students and teachers in their school and district. Despite attempts at implementing the CCSS and the instructional shifts, students consistently demonstrated needs in ELA, and all teachers agreed something needed to be changed to specifically address student achievement gaps. The group decided that the EL Education ELA Curriculum was in alignment with the district and school's values and long-term goals.

At the end of the school year, Ms. Xavier had the team present to the entire faculty about their decision to adopt the EL Education Language Arts Curriculum. Almost everyone became excited to try the new curriculum after the presentation. The school is now planning to fully implement the curriculum during the upcoming 2016- 2017 school year. Ms. Xavier has provided the module materials and books to teachers and arranged for grade levels to have time to read through the materials together. Leaders have also adjusted the master schedule to allow for teachers to collaborate more frequently with each other to support adopting this new curriculum. Teachers are additionally excited to learn that there has been an on-site coach added to the school's team to provide on-going PD and coaching.

Lorraine can see the possibility of improvement in her students and is excited to push her teaching practices in a new direction. But as she starts to use the curriculum, she feels clumsy in her teaching, and she is having a challenging time figuring out how to make it all happen in her class. She isn't the only one who feels this way. There is talk in the faculty room that many people are feeling overwhelmed and have lots of questions about preparing materials, the time it takes to plan each night, how to store students' papers, how to prepare the graphic organizers, and how to organize all of the books from the recommended reading lists.

#### **Talk about these questions with your triad:**

- Which component or components of Knoster's Model are missing from this case study? Why do you think that?
- What action steps could the principal take to help her teachers move forward?

**PLEASE DISCUSS YOUR IDEAS BEFORE LOOKING AT PART B →→**

## Fields Arts Academy Elementary School

### **PART B – PLEASE READ ‘PART A’ FIRST -- ON OTHER SIDE**

Lorraine and others are feeling anxiety. This curriculum and the pedagogy is new to them and the teachers are feeling worried that they aren’t skilled yet in executing the lessons or preparing to teach the modules.

Ms. Xavier realizes Lorraine might not be the only teacher who could benefit from support in this area, so she asks one of the teachers who has done well with planning and delivering the lessons if she could construct an optional professional development session for her colleagues. This teacher prepares a think aloud about her preparation process for the module lessons and provides the session inside her own classroom. The session includes a description of how she keeps herself and her students organized before, during, and after a lesson. She points out key areas in the room, describes the purpose and routine for each, and gives her colleagues time to ask many questions. Following the demonstration, teachers are given a chance to brainstorm with each other what changes and modifications they would make to their own planning process and classroom routines. Some teachers decide to “divide and conquer” the student materials preparation for their grade levels for each unit and share that load amongst each other. Others share electronic planning tools and iPad apps they have fallen in love with that help ease the management of teaching materials in general.

During this time, Lorraine and her colleagues had an opportunity to voice where they felt like they struggled the most with delivery of the lesson plans. Through these conversations, the principal and on-site coach were able to reassure the teachers that they expected to see some struggle, because everyone is learning. And they assured teachers that they would provide explicit PD opportunities to build capacity in places where teachers feel they need the most support.

Lorraine and others left the optional session excited to get into their rooms and set up their own routines and systems for the year.

#### **Talk about these questions with your triad:**

- How were your ideas similar or different to what actually happened?
- How do you think the approach described above will move the school’s initiative forward?

## PS 33 Elementary School

### The Case of Anthony

#### **PART A – READ THIS SIDE FIRST**

PS 33 implemented EL Education ELA Curriculum for the 2016-2017 school year. Before school ended, in Spring of 2017 the faculty received professional development about close reading, writing from sources, vocabulary development, and the content of the modules themselves. Teachers felt inspired by the PD and were eager to begin implementing in the fall.

They received all the materials they needed for module 1 and spent the summer preparing. When it came time to wrap up module 1 and launch module 2, teachers were wondering when and how they would do the preparation they needed to, so they could be confident in launching module 2 with their students. Because it was during the school year, they didn't have the space the summer provides. The same pattern repeated each marking period with modules 3 and 4. Teachers were getting together on weekends and over holidays to do planning, but this was starting to feel unsustainable.

Coming to the end of the 2016-17 school year, Anthony and his colleagues approached their principal, Mr. Jackson, to say it just isn't possible for them to spend the next year doing so much planning and preparation outside of the school day.

#### **Talk about these questions with a partner:**

- What do you think is going on for Anthony? What is the missing component or components, and why do you think that?
- What would you do as a member of the Leadership Team or as an administrator?

**PLEASE DISCUSS YOUR IDEAS BEFORE LOOKING AT PART B →→**

## PS 33 Elementary School

### The Case of Anthony

#### **PART B – PLEASE READ ‘PART A’ FIRST -- ON OTHER SIDE**

Anthony and his colleagues are feeling frustrated. He is lacking the time to plan and collaborate with his colleagues to actually implement the curriculum with confidence and skill. He and his colleagues have approached Mr. Jackson with a ‘something’s gotta give’ kind of feeling. They need help.

Mr. Jackson first affirmed the teachers for the heavy lift they have taken this year in implementing new curriculum. Then, he set up a time for them to talk more specifically about in what ways he could create opportunities and remove some barriers that would support them with planning. In advance of the meeting, he asked them to review the Preparing to Teach a Module document that provides an outline of the recommended steps for teachers teams to be well-prepared to teach the modules, and to do some thinking about where they might be more efficient in their planning. He promised them that he would also read the document and do some thinking about what he could do to better support the teachers in carrying out the steps recommended. In reviewing the document, Mr. Jackson identified a few places where he might think about the master schedule a little differently, use substitutes during assessments, and examined his budget for some very small stipend funds for those teachers who might take on above and beyond roles in implementation.

When the teachers returned for their meeting with Mr. Jackson, they had found some places where they recognized they were not planning as efficiently as possible and felt that they would be somewhat more effective than the past year, because they had gained some experience. When they heard Mr. Jackson’s offers for the tweaks to the master schedule, some sub coverage for co-planning time, and stipends for some who take on a heavier load, they were appreciative and felt confident these small changes would make a huge difference in the coming year.

#### **Talk about these questions with your partner:**

- How were your ideas similar or different to what actually happened?
- How do you think the approach described above will move the Anthony and the school’s implementation forward?