

The Courage to Change the Things I Can...
Overcoming the Immunity to Change

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ABSTRACT

The year of action research pursued as a Cahn Fellow focused on leveraging adult learning and professional development as the chief means of increasing student learning outcomes in a K-12 public school setting. This is consistent with my belief that educational leadership requires a focus to decolonize education and center students as the subject rather than the object of our focus. Many times under the seemingly equalizing veneer of speaking of “closing the achievement gap” we are actually trained to objectify students as somehow historically deficient rather than truly holding a larger historical system responsible and making genuine change. It places centrality on test scores and achievement rather than research, writing, oral defense, and other critical thinking demonstrations. It blames students rather than acknowledging a gap in teacher practice.

Although our school had been founded on the premise that problem-based learning supported student empowerment as academic detectives exercising student choice, teachers had struggled with the effective implementation of the practices. The “courage to change the things I can” speaks to the sensibility that a school leader’s relationship to their faculty is like a classroom teacher’s relationship with their students. As such to be a good leader involves constantly using assessment to fine-tune the focus of instruction and constantly clarifying the learning objectives.

The action research found that a layered teacher leadership model using an Instructional Leadership Team empowered quick-paced changes through three Cs-- calibrating, collectively exploring, and coaching others. Through teacher leaders engaging in deep sensemaking around the core mission and vision documents, they are able to be evangelical about embracing new practices that transform classrooms and learning experiences. The recognition of diverse “ways of knowing” among adult learning opened the door to more empowered and self-directed teacher participation in meeting school mission and vision goals. Ultimately, this is core to embracing an abolitionist educational approach that looks for students to thrive rather than just survive. In recentering classroom practices from the adult end, student achievement increased.

INTRODUCTION

Our Cahn project focused on increasing student achievement by supporting adult learning around the implementation of culturally responsive and sustaining educational practices. As we will explore more fully later, we gravitated toward this approach as a means to

increase student achievement; as the action research began select faculty members were able to identify gaps in their own understanding of how to execute the school's problem-based learning model. We layered professional development activities that supported multiple ways of learning, knowing, and sense-making-- all centered on implementation of our teaching best practices with fidelity.

An important outcome of the project has been the refinement of an Instructional Learning Team (ILT) and their modeling of a schoolwide innovation model which centers on roll-outs that incorporate the four ways of knowing-- instrumental, socializing, self-authoring, and self-transformative. As such it honors adult neurodiversity and in turns models a format of education that empowers student learning in a similar way. The chief reason for undertaking this Cahn Project is the preservation of a unique instructional program that provides the working-class and working-poor students of the Bronx access to a model of education usually reserved for high-tuition progressive private schools or public schools with screening and waiting lists too vast to reasonably access. Founded in 2013, Bronx Collaborative High School (BxCHS) is a public school focused on embodying progressive educational principles as a means of engaging students to, "Solve a problem. Change the world!"

School Background

The school serves students from all school districts in the Bronx-- one of New York City's most diverse and geographically complex areas. As the only mainland portion of New York City, the Bronx was actually incorporated through merging the farmlands of Jonas Bronck and garnering land from Westchester county. The borough persistently remains a study in contradictions. It contains some of the nation's poorest Congressional tracts/districts while also containing some of the nation's most spectacular greenery -- a world class zoo and botanical gardens, two parks that dwarf Central Park many times over, and it's own beach and island facing the Long Island Sound. The Bronx was home to many large high schools that were slowly developed in the 1920s through the 1950s, with the last major campus built in the 1980s. By the 1990s, many of these large comprehensive high schools were entering a failure stage. During the early 2000s, the Bloomberg administration began closing these schools and using the sites to place multiple thematic smaller schools. Even though these schools were developed to provide more innovation and choice to the community, all of these schools were focused on standardized state Regents Exams. This focus meant that curricular content was fairly prescribed to ensure students would be able to answer the multiple-choice content-based questions on the exams. Specialized programs like music or dance themed schools were focused on auditions and schools like the Bronx High School of Science served students exclusively through citywide testing resulting in many non-Bronx residents attending the school. Metal detectors had become a feature of Bronx high schools furthering the school-to-prison pipeline by fostering negative climate and culture. The result across the Bronx has typically been a conservative approach to education that urges a "pragmatic" view and addresses historical inconsistencies in K-8 learning

across Bronx districts as a deficit of the actual students rather than a systemic inequity. Even progressive educators in New York City often stereotype “Bronx students” as somehow requiring different practices that minimize freedom and choice and maximize control and simplicity. The urge to “teach the basics,” has often infiltrated options in Bronx public education and limited students from accessing rigorous and personally meaningful content.

Bronx Collaborative on the other hand supports students to develop themselves academically as well as “find themselves.” We teach students to: establish their academic and intellectual passions, read the world as text, understand code-switching to empower communication across myriad environments, and define their beliefs and personal code of ethics. We embody our school defined “Habits of Work” — we challenge students to persevere and learn how to accept support as they become a champion who addresses social justice, applies media literacy, displays social and emotional strengths, commits to excellence, and embraces civic participation.

Student Body

Bronx Collaborative High School offers students in grades nine through twelve the opportunity to pursue a New York State Regents diploma by developing a portfolio of academic performance-based tasks. Students are drawn from all Bronx school districts and represent disparate neighborhoods at the geographic extremes of the borough and those throughout the center. Over 90% of the students receive free or reduced lunch with 75% of the student body receiving some form of assistance from New York’s Human Resources Administration. Approximately 92% of our school’s student population lives below the poverty line as designated by their free or reduced lunch status. Fourteen percent of the student body lives in some form of McKinney-Vento defined temporary housing.

Our student demographics are: Latino 64%; Black 28%; White 4%; ; Asian 3%; ; Other 1%. Of our total student population of approximately 555 students, 21% have IEPs and 19% are in an English as a New Language or Transitional Bilingual Education program.

Learning Philosophy

Bronx Collaborative was designed with three pillars:

Problem Based Learning (PBL) inspires students to become “academic detectives” who investigate challenging real world case studies and support their findings with critically evaluated evidence and nuanced analysis.

Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) builds self-awareness, social-awareness, resolving conflict, self-management, and relationship skills. We use weekly “community circles” as a centerpiece of our Advisory program; through 15-person groups that track across four years, students build emotional connections and engage in challenging intellectual discussion.

Restorative Practices are used to support holistic discipline.

New Media Literacy integrates a critical analysis of news, social media, and digital arts production. Students are challenged to become media producers, rather than consumers. Additionally, learn how to analyze and annotate sources, questioning their bias and the perspective from which they are written.

School Faculty

Bronx Collaborative faculty have been extensively interviewed and are hand-picked by a leadership team that looks for thoughtful intellectuals who are passionate about teaching as a radical act of student empowerment. Our teachers have completed undergraduate, masters, and/or doctoral degrees from a wide range of universities, including but not limited to: Bard College; Brandeis University; Brooklyn College; California State University schools; City University of New York schools; Columbia University, Teachers College; Cornell University; Fairleigh Dickinson University; Fashion Institute of Technology; Fordham University; Harvard University; Hofstra University; Iowa State University; Kansai University @ Osaka, Japan; Kenyon College; Marymount Manhattan College; Molloy College; Oberlin College; New York University; Penn State University; Pepperdine University; State University of New York (SUNY) schools; Syracuse University; University of California at Berkeley; UCLA- Westwood Campus; University of Delaware; University of Michigan; University of North Carolina @ Chapel Hill; University of Texas; Vassar College; and Williams College

Unique Curricular Features

Our school has several unique curricular features. At our school, courses are thematic and use Problem Based Learning to challenge students with real-world case studies; students exercise choice of topic and focus in many projects. To capture graduation readiness, we require students to develop capstone papers of approximately 10-15 pages; these papers are accompanied with Oral Defense panels which require an explanation of process, critical thinking, and on-demand question and answer work to establish the nuances of their understanding. Referred to as Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs) these are completed to demonstrate graduation readiness in English, Math, Science, and History in place of NYS Regents Exams and lead to students obtaining a state-approved diploma. The school has incorporated three College Board programs as part of our equity and access initiatives-- a Pre-AP for All approach to 9th grade content classes, an AP Capstone Seminar and Research sequence leading to potential certification for students, and an Advanced Placement course series. Students may additionally take actual college courses at the neighboring four-year City University of New York run Lehman College.

In addition to the above mentioned curricular elements, we also incorporate two other key practices-- experiential learning and social and emotional learning. Our experiential learning

encourages field trips and interactions with external communities of practice. This leads us to incorporate physical and digital interactions without outside professionals, government officials, community organizers, and activists. During pre-COVID periods this has involved annual off site experiential learning weeks that often involve out of city/out of state travel. These trips connect students to challenge-based outdoor learning and environmental education, visits to Albany and Washington D.C., and a range of colleges. Within our courses, our “homeroom” Advisories, and off-site trips we employ a skills-based approach to social and emotional learning which serves as a foundation for our restorative practices approach to holistic discipline. Social and emotional learning curriculum highlight the concrete skills involved in developing self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. As a result, our school has very low incidences of violence or bullying, instead having students rely on peer leaders and teacher leaders trained in restorative practices.

External Recognition

Bronx Collaborative has been recognized for excellence around social and emotional learning (SEL), student climate & culture, and social justice; we have been invited to present or showcase our work in prestigious programs:

- 2018-2021 NYCDOE Showcase School for Affirming Student Identities inc. LBGTQ ●
- 2017-2020 member school of the Mastery Collaborative
- 2016-2020 New York Performance Standards Consortium PD presentations ●
- 2016-2020 “Bronx 8” PD presentations
- 2015/16 NYC Chancellor’s and District Superintendent’s Conference facilitators ●
- 2014 and 2016 National CES Fall Forum Conference presenters
- 2013 NYC Courageous Schools Conference presenters

Our reputation within the community originated in the complexity of our great features being extolled while our existence was taken as challenging. The campus on which we opened had the rare situation of an original large comprehensive school shrinking rather than being closed. This was due to the tremendous alumni impact from that school’s rich history. The site placement of our school was deemed highly controversial and greeted with bad press and open hostility from the staff of the building and those supervisors in the DOE who held a place in their hearts for the turn-around of that school.

To support a growing recognition that we could succeed together as a campus without any sense of competition, much of our early focus was on being a great resident and contributing to the overall well-being of the building. Our successes with restorative practices helped cement a reputation for success with reaching a wide range of students. As a principal

leader on campus, service in many areas of campus operations helped cement an identity across schools that led those on campus to engage trust in our program.

Word of mouth regarding our unique instructional offerings led to a range of guidance counselors at schools across all Bronx districts reaching out. Many school families spoke to relatives and neighbors urging them to attend the school based on their own positive experiences. Despite only having operated for seven years, there are a number of families that have sent multiple siblings/cousins/etc. With little outreach effort we achieved a large-scale notoriety for our innovation. We were able to get to a point within five years where we were having 1,600 applicants for our 125 seats.

College Going Culture

As a school who has just graduated its 4th graduating class, we have distinguished ourselves in the development of a college-going culture. We do this through offering students multiple college discovery courses, using Title 1 funding to take students on overnight out of city/state college visits, and providing a full time college advisor and counselors.

Our last pre-COVID graduating class of 2019 was 89 graduating seniors who were accepted at 137 different colleges. Students received over \$2.2 million in financial support from these colleges. Our Class of 2020 had an 80% on-time graduation rate in the middle of a global pandemic.

Students from our first four graduating classes were accepted at a range of colleges and universities that demonstrate a commitment to supporting students in finding their ideal matches, rather than warehousing students to a limited set of colleges with whom the school has a direct relationship.

Private Colleges and Universities which have accepted our students include: Babson College; Canisius College; Cazenovia College; Carroll University; Champlain College; College of Mount Saint Vincent; College of New Rochelle; Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University; Florida Institute of Technology; Fordham University; Franklin Pierce College; Hartwick College; Hastings College; Hofstra University; Iona College; Jefferson University; Johnson & Wales; Le Moyne College; Lincoln University of Missouri; Long Island University; Manhattan College; Mercy College; Mount Saint Mary College; New England College; New York University; Nyack College; Pace University; Post University; Quinnipiac University; Randolph College; Rochester Institute of Technology; Sarah Lawrence College; St. Lawrence College; Seton Hall University; Siena College; Skidmore College; Smith; St. Francis College; St. John's University; Temple University; The George Washington University; The SAGE Colleges; Union College; University of Bridgeport; University of Richmond, Utica College; and Wentworth Institute of Technology

Students from our school have been accepted to several Historically Black Colleges and Universities, including: Howard University, Morgan State University; Spelman College; Tuskegee University; Virginia State University; and Virginia Union University.

We have a number of students accepted to state college systems outside of New York:

California- University of Southern California; Colorado- Boulder; Connecticut- Bridgeport; New Jersey- New Jersey City University; Rutgers New Brunswick; Pennsylvania- Pittsburgh; and Virginia- Virginia.

We have students accepted at a wide range of schools within the State University of New York (SUNY) system. We have students at the state universities: Albany; Binghamton; Buffalo; and Stony Brook. We also have students at the state colleges: Adirondack; Alfred; Brockport; Broome; Buffalo State; Canton; Cobleskill; Cortlandt; Delhi; Dutchess; Farmingdale State; Fingerlakes; Freedonia; Genesee; Geneseo; Jefferson; Monroe; Morrisville; New Paltz; Oneonta; Onondaga; Orange County; Oswego; Polytechnic Institute; Potsdam; Purchase, Schenectady; Sullivan; and Westchester.

Students have also been accepted to the range of schools within the City University of New York (CUNY) system. This includes the four year colleges: Baruch; Brooklyn College; City College (CCNY); College of Staten Island; Hunter College, John Jay College of Criminal Justice; Lehman College; New York City College of Technology; Queens College; York College. We also have students accepted at the two-year community college programs: Borough of Manhattan, Bronx Community, Guttman Community College; Hostos Community College; LaGuardia; Kingsborough; Medgar Evers College; and Queensborough.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Our Cahn project takes a central focus on the techniques school leadership can use to deepen adult learning so teachers can effectively support struggling students in completing rigorous work. This year of action research focused on building sustainable change among our faculty by activating our Instructional Leadership Team to calibrate departmental work with consistent instructional walkthroughs.

Background

As described earlier, this Cahn project is driving the action research and inquiry work through the question, ‘How can we align our Instructional Leadership Team’s work to be as culturally-responsive to adult learners’ needs to model culturally-responsive rigorous education for student learners?’

So why was this focus so urgent and central to our Cahn project? A notable difficulty our school community had faced before this Cahn work began was lower than expected 4-year graduation rates. From the school’s first graduating class forward, students who had entered the school community with middle school proficiency on their state exams had an 82% on time graduation rate. Our school operated without screening and made a conscious decision to support students and families for as long as they wanted to remain at our school. Maintaining large numbers of students who entered with middle school state exams that were below or far below proficiency had a significant impact on graduation rate. The requirement that students complete capstone papers and oral defense panels actually necessitated far more skills than

mere exam prep.

The initial four-year on time graduation rate that is the state's central metric was impacted by the gap in teachers' preparedness to immediately develop classroom practices that would help a student move from middle school non-proficiency in English Language Arts to proficiency with high school commencement standards. Early cohorts had large numbers of students needing to use the 5th year or 6th year to work towards completion. By the same token large jumps in our graduation rate demonstrated that our team was working at a quick pace to discover the set of instructional practices that could prepare all students more equally to meet our high school benchmarks. That first cohort's 51% on time graduation rate jumped to 61% for the next cohort, 70% for the third. The local department of education had recognized the core instructional and collegiate strengths of the school and its promise for ever increasing outcomes-- as we were nominated and served as Showcase School around our student climate and culture practices. This is a rarity for a school with the graduation situation that we were in. The power of our student choice, anti-racist practices, and culturally responsive and sustaining education approaches was seen and recognized as a core recipe for success as we worked on supporting our faculty to be attuned enough to the practices needed to meet students where they are at upon admission. Increased focus on iterative writing and revision in classes had been a key factor in supporting students' exposure to best practices around the ELA skills that would anchor the papers and panels.

Our target with the Cahn project work was to help ensure that we would meet the goal of equal outcomes for on-time graduation regardless of middle school proficiency levels. As part of a four-year plan to meet goals of meeting or exceeding a 90% on-time graduation school, cementing improved adult teaching practices is key.

Rationale

Our school has been successful with creating meaningful opportunities to access post-secondary education. These ultimate outcomes support students' access to a wide range of post-secondary options. To fulfill our school's vision of equity our approach to teacher preparation needs to be anchored in a way that empowers the faculty to empower students.

Our school's instructional model is premised around the idea that problem-based learning grounded in meaningful and relevant challenges outside the school doors engage all students to see their high school education as "essential." As the founder of the school, my educational philosophy had a key role in shaping our signposts. This philosophy is shaped heavily by John Dewey and Maria Montessori's beliefs about learning by doing and incorporating the questioning and creative spark as a means for learning by discovery. It is also deeply impacted by Ted Sizer's work on the Coalition of Essential Schools. Our school's founding was on the 10 Common Principles that Sizer found at play in all student-centered performance-based schools. These qualities of depth over breadth, teacher as coach, student as life-long learner, and democratic classrooms inform the model. If we adopt an abolitionist approach to education that

values students thriving and self-actualizing we must look beyond the status quo of a system that values biased standardized testing. Our school's state-approved alternative to Regents' examination provides an excellent recipe for such work as it prizes the instructional efforts that support students' substantive conversation, elaborated writing, independent research, and oral defense presentation skills. These skill sets are well aligned toward ongoing success in college and career. Part of this approach involves a radical rethinking of student readiness to learn. A tendency in recent years has been to speak of students as embodying a gap in learning and focused on preparing them to close that gap. A more radical notion is accepting that students are ready and able to learn, and asking ourselves the more profound professional development question of how we ready teachers to take immediate action in engaging and empowering student learning. Our work as part of this Cahn project focused on the premise that teachers can best find immediate connections with learners by making sure that classroom activities contain a mix of walking, talking, reading, and writing. Through this multi-modality, students are able to participate in activities that stimulate different parts of their brain. This diversity of activity also helps ensure that students find some activity which is more personally preferable and inspiring so that there is something to connect with during each class session.

The initial urge to see the school through the lens of Dr. Drago-Severson's work was key to exploring teachers' need to feel efficacious in their pedagogical skills. The action research and theory of action work led by Drs. Riehl and Young urged the engagement of a leadership growing edge as a lever for moving along other constituencies. Working with district level coaches helped us form action networks to inspire momentum amongst our leadership teams and educators. Seeing that we were tackling core issues was inspiring to parents and students.

The act of conceptualizing the school in these terms helped me recognize that simpler is better when it comes to school-level innovation. For much of the school's first six years my focus had been on a relatively Marxist notion that we could collectively run the school through constant dialogue. This process helped me realize that everyone experiences dialogue quite differently and that multimodal attention to adult learning involves offering adults the same respect of cognitively diverse learning experiences that we offer students.

Beyond learning that this might necessitate multimodality, the process also led to the "Aha!" moment of recognizing that the sustainability of instructional improvement had to be housed in multiple layers-- across teams of instructional leaders, across grade level teams, across subject teams, and across the administrative players on-site and off-site that support these teams. Those insights led to understanding that the Cahn project necessarily involved collaborating on long-term strategic planning grounded in action research.

The entire premise of the action research that anchors the Cahn Fellows work described in this report is that increased teacher practices for equitable teaching result in an increase in equitable student outcomes. To that end, we are speaking of practices that acknowledge that by stepping in the door and entering the classroom students are ready to learn. Given that there are many ways in which life outside the classroom may get in the way of students being able to

solely focus on their learning experience, it is of primary importance that that learning experience recognize students' own neurodiversity. This commitment to multimodal learning is consistent with our school's core work. The curriculum already centers student choice and systems for individualization because of the Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs) described earlier. Students spend the four years practicing independent research, critical analysis, peer-revision, elaborated research and writing, and oral defense. Through interim assessments and projects throughout the four years students are able to bring their own personal interests and academic passions into focus through their capstone work. Our curricular and extracurricular activities bring a mirror and window approach that creates space for students to see themselves in the school and also extend their view to experience people, places, and things that are completely unfamiliar to them. Any effort to leverage teacher practice as a means to supercharge student achievement with learning outcomes need sit on refining a theory in action.

METHODS

Challenge & Opportunity

As discussed in the last section, our school faced the challenge of meeting its improvement targets and reaching the goal of an on-time graduation rate of 80% with a multi-year goal of moving to 90%. Training from Dr. Ellie Drago-Severson around “ways of knowing” informed this Cahn Project deeply. Applying the cognitive developmental model of how people incorporate new knowledge and communicate their understandings inspired a new analysis of the situation described above.

A recent state visit to conduct on-site analysis and improvement suggests had literally prescribed removing instructional autonomy from teachers; it had diagnosed a larger issue of ensuring fidelity across classrooms. This need for fidelity mixed with Dr. Drago-Severson's paradigm for thinking about adult learning inspired a new gap analysis. Rather than seeing the existing struggle purely as a lack of collective ownership, it was becoming clearer that an alternate explanation was that staff were struggling with the ability to perform in ways consistent with the school model. When looked at through this lens, it became easier to see that adults who were recruited for their historical intelligence and innovation in the workplace might struggle to fulfill a mission that stretches their own practices into areas where they need more help.

The opportunity that became clear in all of this was a goal of making 2019-2020 the year of developing a future vision that shifted teacher instructional leadership into a cohesive model with layered support that activated the diverse “ways of knowing” so that the vast majority of faculty's needs were met as learners. The premise would be that if every faculty member experienced capacity-building around innovative problem-based learning practices, they would

best be able to activate students' mastery-based learning. The desired result would be that struggling students are held in just as tightly as thriving students.

In the preceding academic year, New York City's Department of Education had placed tremendous focus around the premise of an Instructional Leadership Team and presented an associated framework. At its heart the concept held that planning time is needed to support meaningful cycles of professional development. This vision aligns well with the Cahn project goal which seeks to inform instructional leadership planning by incorporating "multi-modal" learning as a parallel process-- first for faculty and then turn keyed to students through more instructionally sound classroom environments.

For students this "multi-modal" approach was built into the school's original design-- the vision that what should be observable in every class period is teachers engaging students to "walk, talk, read, and write." The application of Dr. Drago-Severson's methodology made it clear that a parallel process was needed to maximize the Instructional Leadership Team work as treating the adults' learning process as multi-modal; our focus became enhancing adult learning through opportunities to walk, talk, read, and write. The hoped outcome would be that the process builds increased receptiveness to PD, more trust of peers around collaborative learning, honest feedback systems, and collaboration on learning targets.

The Situation

In working with Drs. Carolyn Riehl and Jeff Young as part of our Cahn cohort study series, we dug into the intersections of research and community organizing. Their presentation of the applications of Theory of Action work in community-level change, inspired the rest of the direction of this Cahn project. As a result of this workshop, our school team defined an end goal: "Every student in the school is provided consistent Problem Based Learning experiences activating student mastery." Through a step-by-step mapping of the practices of student, teacher, and learner constituencies and their change effort needs, it became clearer what administrative practices needed to be incorporated to achieve this end goal. The theory of action is:

- If leaders are able to create clear communication around problem-based learning pedagogies and mastery grading expectations;
- then teachers will be able to co-construct operational meanings and internal fidelity around evaluation;
- which will help students to access project expectations and dialogue more with faculty about reaching the "next level";
- so that student achievement increases in the form of increased success around performance-based, city, and state metrics.

Following other guidance in their planning process, this theory in action approach also involved considering the roles, perceptions, and actions of persons other than these constituency members. Through efforts to strengthen the parent-teacher-student capacity we

reinvigorated our School Leadership Team to explore the intricacies that had led to our current instructional space. Parents became engaged around the question of how they could urge faculty to amplify the best elements of the school's student choice and problem based learning models as well as shift instruction back toward back-to-back periods that provided students blocked out instructional time.

To engage myself and faculty in learning processes that would address the goal directly, my work focused on bringing together a range of external professionals at district levels to align the needs of their roles with the developmental needs of our school. The access to these professionals was maximized by the agreed-to state-city need to ensure that all of our metrics for students made progress across all measured sub-groups. The only mandate from the outside was that these professionals engage in processes that would support teacher development through observation and coaching. To that end, several Academic Response Team members were enrolled in a planning process as well as directors of instructional support for multilingual learners and students with disabilities. The focus of this Cahn project became a powerful touchstone for bringing these experts together rather than having disparate initiatives. Through presenting these individuals with the research question and goal as context for our school's developmental work, they became enrolled in developing a singular set of processes that would have immediate impacts on the school.

Benchmark Data

Quantitative Analysis of Teacher Understanding and Student Learning

With the above research question in mind, one of our first challenges was to identify an opportunity or space within the proverbial "school house" where supporting student mastery and faculty implementation of the problem-based learning models were at odds. Given the previously espoused beliefs on equity and biases in testing-based standardized measures, we sought both quantitative and qualitative data to get a fuller picture. Our quantitative data drew from the perceptions of our school community members regarding the ways in which instruction meets students' learning needs. The qualitative data we explored looks at measures of teacher's practice as seen through direct observation applying the Charlotte Danielson and Fred Newmann frameworks to look at teacher practices. Our quantitative data showed some of the disconnects in classroom practices. The school's NYCDOE 2018-2019 School Quality Guide teacher perception surveys revealed some interesting concepts that speak to teachers' beliefs that impact our potential success in high quality student learning. Approximately 85-92 % of our faculty expressed the belief that we possess traits aligned to offering quality Cultural Awareness and Inclusive Classroom Instruction.

On average 73% of the faculty acknowledged traits that showed Innovation and Collective

Responsibility- with the lowest traits being teachers taking responsibility for improving the school (63%) and teacher eagerness to try new ideas (65%). This tells us that faculty have some concerns about the capacity we have to learn and grow together. We further see this when looking at peer collaboration and professional development teachers expressed the greatest concerns. On average 72% of the school feel that people collectively run the school efficiently, design units together, or make a conscious effort to coordinate with each other.

In critically reviewing leadership team decisions regarding supporting teachers in their professional growth we notice other 2018-2019 statistics that convey a problematic situation. Although 71% of the faculty feel they've been able to work with their peers during PD, the lowest levels of positive perception are in the area of Quality of Professional Development. Only 54% of the teachers express the feeling that their Professional Development series has been sustained and coherent; only 49% feel they've had enough time to think about, try, and evaluate new ideas, and only 54% have felt that they have worked productively with other schools. This is particularly concerning because the second half of that school year was focused on curricular alignment and professional learning communities.

Just as concerning is the impact this disjoint around instructional efficacy and fidelity has on students' learning experience. When we analyze student responses, it is of note that Students communicate high belief in the guidance and support services of the school (avg. 86%), yet feel that teachers do not necessarily notice struggling students' needs. Only 67% of students indicate that teachers help them catch up on assignments, and only 59% say teachers notice if they have trouble learning something. In addition, only 46% of students say their teachers support them when they are upset and only 63% say that teachers will try additional explanations when students struggle.

The challenging performance numbers with our first cohort (the Class of 2017) engaged an Every Student Succeeds Act review of the school with tight metrics set in place for improvement in all performance areas. A late spring 2019 on-site visit focused on providing a review of the school practices and suggestions of quick wins and strategic short and long term goals to move the school to high-performance and high-impact on standard metrics.

Qualitative Analysis of Teacher Practice

Our qualitative data consists of previously conducted observations at our site including those during a School Quality Review visit, a Spring 2019 assessment conducted by state level staff, and a Fall 2019 series of walkthroughs conducted by a joint team of district staff and in-house administration at our school. In a multi-year analysis of our school-based teacher observations stored in our online platform, we gained deep insight into individual teachers' strengths and challenges. A "heatmap" of competencies displayed from the Charlotte Danielson framework provided broad analysis of areas for extensive work-- like 3C- Engaging Students in learning in which deepening depth of knowledge had been a long-term common

improvement target and 3D- Using Assessment in Instruction in which providing students' meaningful exemplars and clear standards had been a central goal.

The Spring 2019 visiting Integrated Intervention Team (ITT) found three important details to be true:

- A diverse faculty had been hired with a focus on retention through opportunities to teach innovative curriculum and exercise autonomy to develop collegiate-style classrooms.
- The observation of teachers' classroom practices showed a lack of fidelity across departments and grade levels.
- The degree of choice and autonomy needed to be pulled back by leadership until increased cohesion was achieved to cultivate collective ownership of student success.

To ground the Cahn work, we conducted a fresh series of classroom “walkthroughs” during the Fall of 2019 to collect information on the practices currently in use across classrooms. We engaged district level academic intervention specialists to serve as coaches throughout the process. We also engaged this to create externally facilitated conversations on calibration to help ensure a more uniform understanding amongst the administrators at our school.

To anchor our walkthroughs in a manner consistent with research methodology, we sought to delineate a simple trackable model that was aligned to the school's founding instructional principles, but accessible for all of us to use in diagnosis and digging deeper. The instructional model shared with faculty during the early years of the school involved a goal of multimodal learning-- to kinesthetically walk or move through content with three-dimensional manipulatives, to incorporate accountable talk, to read multiple real-world sources as text, and to write routinely with revision and authorial intent. This “walk, talk, read, write” model was tested among all constituencies for its simplicity and clarity. Having achieved some commonality around this as a reasonable value goal the effort to incorporate it with any depth became the next layer of engaging in diagnosis and deeper understanding through action research.

To align this walkthrough process we developed a tool through which multiple educators could use at once to analyze:

- the presence or absence of multimodality
- “walking”/kinesthetic learning;
- talking/discussion;
- reading documents, mutli-media sources, and popular culture or “world as text”
- writing and writing process

As a way of adding another dimension to move the walkthrough beyond a binary analysis of “did we see it or not,” we had participants rate a 1,2, 3, or 4 to each dimension of the Walk, Talk, Read, and Write described above. We chose to align the 1-4 scale to each stage of Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) aligned to our school's problem-based learning model:

- Defining Level 1 as recall, documentation, and data notation
- Defining Level 2 as building inferences, organizing structures, and collection
- Defining Level 3 as strategically exploring Level 2 elements to build a model that best represents a possible solution to a real-world problem
- Defining Level 4 as melding previously completed level three elements through revision and collaborative development into a capstone paper, defense/presentation, and or authentic external audience

Cycles of Action and Research

Our method of action research involved a praxis based approach. Within this each cycle of action involved exploring a new approach to teaching practice and then pausing for a period of reflection which informed the next cycle of activity.

Our first cycle activated the administration of the school and district level staff to engage in a careful analysis of classroom practices consistent with the overall focus of this project. This Calibrating a Walkthrough cycle included a review of existing documentation at the school around teaching and learning. The practice of teacher observation was brought front and center and used at a more robust level when the entire admin and district team engaged in at once. The net effect of conducting instructional walkthroughs in this manner led to interacting with the practices of a third of teachers-- and provided many data points about the experiences that students were receiving and the direct observation of whether the approaches aligned to student engagement and stated learning outcomes.

Our second cycle focused on Departmental Standards and Mastery Learning Co-Construction. For this phase the plan involved faculty-wide engagement around professional development via co-construction activities. To anchor this cycle, we proposed an Annual PD Plan to our union-school collaborative PD team. They were able to consult on the format and topic matches-- maximizing a use of structure that empowered departments to spend time co-constructing practices around the concepts of standards in mastery-based grading. The process during the first 18 weeks of the year of faculty engaging in meaningful department-based work set the stage for departments to shift toward reflecting on their instructional practices.

The methodology of this action research relied on these first two phases as central to its plan because these two phases embody the theory of action described earlier. The first planned cycle was to allow administration to engage in the clarifying of best practices in teaching and evaluation of student mastery. The planned calibration activities aligned perfectly to the phase one goal of expressing a refined and simpler to implement statement of expectations. The methodological purposes of planning the second cycle as one of teacher co-construction

through department-based work was to set the stage for faculty members to engage in a parallel process to administration. These two cycles start off the entire research process with both entities moving towards increased awareness of what their current beliefs and practices are around classrooms. In turn, they also provide an additional baseline understanding of where the school's existing practices sit. The data expected from these two initial phases include: charting of classroom practices as seen in walkthroughs; defining existing popular classroom tasks by the mastery standard category they fulfill, and delineating different levels of student independence in task completion by an analysis of student work.

In this way, these initial two cycles embody the principles of Dr. Drago-Severson's focus on faculty being able to receive feedback and engage in substantive conversations when their current "ways of knowing" are met. The planned cycles each make a space for the development of instrumentation or written documentation on the school's practices. The cycles incorporate time enough for socializing conversations to occur through both scheduled meetings and informal conversations. The format of building classroom visitations into the process creates the space for self-authoring knowers on both the faculty and administration to showcase their understandings and definitions of best practices. The ongoing peer collaborative work among teacher leaders and among school leaders, creates a paradigm of self-transforming knowers being able to engage in critical pedagogical pairs and critical friends groups as they pursue a deeper understanding of strong instructional practices.

The national School Reform Initiative protocols of Looking at Teacher Work and Looking at Student Work were incorporated into the plan to offer a common thread to teachers exploring the standards required in the work and the techniques engaged to ready students for these standards. The later planned cycles of inquiry focused on anchoring and then deepening the school-wide implementation of Instructional Leadership Team practices to set the stage for capacity-building around fidelity in instructional model and pedagogical choices to achieve increased student outcomes. To this end, we outlined inquiry cycles that would refine the communication and implementation of instructional practices and move them along from administration to department coordinators to all teachers. Using cycles of inquiry with an intentional order was aimed at innovating practice differences by moving each layer of adults toward calibration of cohesive practices to result in eventual fidelity and coherence across all groups.

Cycle 1 Calibrating a Walkthrough Model

Cycle 2 Departmental Standards and Mastery Learning Co-Construction

Cycle 3 Using Formative Feedback for Instructional Leadership

Cycle 4 Turnkeying Administrative Supervision into Distributed ILT Action

Cycle 5 ILT- Norming, Storming, and Performing

Cycle 6 Connecting Classroom Performance to Departmental Standards

Cycle 7 Defining Learning Objectives

Cycle 8 Connecting Learning Objectives to Student Outcomes

Cycle 9 Constructing an Agenda for Improvement- Looking forward to PBL Refinement

With this methodology in hand, we entered into a yearlong journey that made its way through an academic year like no other.

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND FUTURE PLANS

The end goal of this first year of work (2019-2020) is to align faculty onto a single page on what high-quality multimodal instruction looks like. A concrete schedule of calibration from administration to department coordinators who serve as the center of our Instructional Leadership Team was prepared. The vision was that by year's end, the layers of inter-visitation, observation, and support would tie together. The theory in action was that if we clarify our vision of instruction and align professional learning activities with routine and timely feedback to teachers, we would stabilize and possibly improve our graduation rate, at least meeting the minimum state expectation of 70% for all students, 50% SWD, 50% ELL), improve college readiness rate and improve ENL achievement. By year's end we achieved and exceeded these goals with an 80% on time graduation rate and our ELL students moving in the highest tier of progress in the state.

How did our research process yield positive results? One way was the iterative process engaged in the school, as our learning professionals were able to build upon each other's work to engage the entire faculty in a more singular discussion of best practices. In this fashion our action research praxis began to quickly shape hyper awareness of teaching practice.

Inquiry Cycles 1-3

Our method of using the cycles of practice exploration and reflection quickly began to yield meaningful change. Within the first few weeks of the academic year, we had a clearly defined system that deepened classroom analysis through more frequent walkthroughs. The calibrated method described in the last section supported administrators in opening a dialogue about how much walking, talking, reading, and writing was actually embedded in classes in a manner that allowed students to iteratively develop the associated skills. The language of Webb's Depth of knowledge had long been a part of our school's discussion of teacher practice. With this tighter focus on the depth of knowledge of the tasks in relation to these areas, there was a sudden shift of dialogue.

Administration was able to send an aggregate email to the faculty to note some best practices that were seen to embody higher depth classroom practices. The administrators were also able to discuss these traits when looking at individual planning conferences with teachers, within

mentoring conversations, and within feedback. From September to December, faculty were receiving walkthroughs and then informal or formal observations which all focused on the degree to which students were engaged with high-depth walk (kinesthetic), talk (accountable discussion), read (close reading), and write (iterative writing) tasks. We were able to maintain our use of the Danielson and Newmann frameworks, and begin to explore where our “Walk.Talk.Read.Write” model sits within those spaces. We quickly found that faculty leaders became more interested and voiced faculty-wide questions about how to best implement this model.

The successful work during the first research cycle, buffered the second cycle by creating more robust interest among the joint school-union professional development planning team to delve into practical matters that impacted teacher success with high-depth classroom tasks. This became a natural selling point for the faculty meetings that anchored the second research cycle. The fact that teachers were getting feedback from administrators couched in the terminology of multi-modality and depth of knowledge at once spurred faculty interest in defining their existing classroom practices for each other and for us.

A good example of this was our social studies department exploring the role of routine types of classroom activities, such as chronologies, use of historical figures quotes from primary sources in discussions, or gallery walks. One of the PD sessions that focused on standards and mastery engaged the departments to label these common departmental tasks by depth of knowledge. A deep and spirited discussion arose as members of the department tried to place some of these activities, coming to a realization that the implementation and task requirements often made the difference between a given task being at Depth 1 or Depth 3. Several department members referred to the discussions as very rich and novel for the department--bringing into focus the question of what level of independent critical thinking was even possible with the task. A distinction was drawn between tasks that only allowed a student to identify and make a personal guess about meaning or context versus tasks that allowed them to actually make inferences that were grounded in processing multiple points of data. Through this discussion practices emerged on how to make minor changes in the structure of tasks for major gains of student engagement. With this we saw changes from a student being asked to role-play based on a decontextualized quote to students being engaged to share their primary source quotes to allow them to build a narrative about the arguments for or against a given historical advocacy.

Inquiry cycles 4-6

When cycles of inquiry three and four came into play the discussions around formative feedback became expanded when a reactivated Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) joined the process. Representing the department coordinators of math, english, science, history, and later special education, this committee started off its rebirth by participating in the same calibration exercise that administrators had used during inquiry cycle one.

Through weekly facilitated meetings, our ILT began to expand on these walkthroughs by conducting their own walkthrough of all teachers in their department. They quickly reported seeing patterns in teaching that had not naturally come up during previous year's departmental discussions. Their biggest reported realization was that departmental discussions on practice had tended to focus on what students allegedly "could not do" rather than exploring the meaningful learning activities that could be employed to engage students at all levels. Relatively quickly, the ILT members took on a role of bridging the gap between teachers' self-image of their practice and more objective understanding of where teaching and learning at the school trended.

As the ILT moved through its "forming, norming, storming, and performing" phases, its teacher leaders were gaining valuable strengths in describing, defending, and challenging classroom practices. This meant that they were quickly developing their skills to engage in critical pedagogy both in pairs and as a de facto critical friends group. During these ILT sessions we created the space for the members to introduce problems of practice they were encountering with partnerships within their department. Through modeling an approach to coaching and facilitating in the ILT, the members were in turn more able to take on that role within their department. For many it was this particular skill development that truly took the school into new territory. When the departmental coordinators were first recruited to participate in the revived ILT with weekly meetings, their espoused concern was hitting the same walls that had served as obstacles in the past. They all had reported that departmental debate and department members who were unwilling to look at practice changes had always undermined their sense that anything could be achieved as a department coordinator. The 2019 state visit to the school had found a number of staff anonymously stating to the visitors that they would like less democratic discussions during department meetings with an eye toward administrative directed statements that resolved internal debates about teaching methods.

The Cahn project cycles of inquiry were used to bring together disparate initiatives into a single focused theory in action. This new iteration of the ILT quickly took on a role to refine teaching practices and can serve as a self-sustaining entity that manages the intrastaff dialogue on great instruction. In addition, the ongoing departmental co-construction of mastery grading practices around classroom tasks would lead to a communal understanding of classroom expectations. The hope was that increased clarity would translate into clearer messages to parents and students about what they need to do to achieve academic growth to "next level." Given the increased graduation rate and shift to Google classroom content that labeled expectations more clearly, our school had an increased readiness for success that had immediate implications for the surprising need in March 2020 to transition to Remote Learning.

Inquiry cycles 7-9

The process of developing learning objectives in the ILT took the form of defining “benchmarks.” To do this, each of the ILT members was asked to engage their departments in sense-making around the rubrics we use for our graduation capstone papers and oral defense panels-- our PBATs. As they worked with their departments to deconstruct these, they were able to identify how the 5-7 rubric categories were developed over a four-year vertical sequence. As a result, the departments were able to delineate a cross-cutting thesis skill among all disciplines and a “+1 category” of a discipline-specific skill from the graduation rubric that was being centrally advanced through intentional instruction during that grade level. Through the development of these, as seen in APPENDIX F the ILT was able to engage a staff wide discussion in the end-of-year projects and provide a much clearer signpost for special education and English as second language teachers to ground their student progress goals.

Discussion and Sense Making of the Results

There were two major streams of results that developed from this action research project around high-quality real-world professional development. One stream was the establishment and capacity building of teacher leaders to shape and guide ongoing professional development. The other stream is the alignment of professional development goals and teacher development through concrete look-fors and evidence-based iterative phases.

The teacher capacity building stream flowed from the establishment of a functional Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) which brought together teacher leaders from the four core departments of the school-- Math, Science, English, History. This group met weekly throughout the school year including maintaining regular communication during the pandemic which closed schools to face-to-face meetings. At the end of this project, a focus group was conducted in which the teacher leaders were encouraged to reflect openly on their experiences and perceived benefits and challenges of the action research. They self described the ILT’s approach to teacher change as successful because it empowered them to have increased clarity and the space to explore the school’s core expectations. They also identified a parallel process through which they noted administrative leadership change filtering through them to the larger school. “As you changed, so did we,” one of the team members said.

The ILT team members were able to successfully adopt an “each one, teach one” approach through which they mentored a specific member of their department who had been struggling with meeting benchmark goals and tracking student progress. Through the definition of these benchmarks, we were even able to keep focus in discussions during the Remote Only period of the end of the school. In addition, the ILT became the development grounds for a new wave of teachers that were encouraged to apply for the Peer Collaborative Teacher and Model Teacher programs that exist as a teacher-leadership option through a collaboration of the New York City Department of Education and the United Federation of Teachers. The ILT experience demystified the process of teacher coaching, classroom visitations, vertical planning, and

calibration of learning objectives.

As the inquiry cycles reached their organic end-- the team was able to morph toward identifying year-two goals that capitalized on this first year's instructional cohesion. Whereas year one had focused on creating some common ground in the definition of multi-modal practice and backward mapped benchmarks, year two focused towards better linking teachers' understanding of problem-based learning and the intersection of practice, planning, and assessment.

The second stream discussed above focused on the implementation of written strategic planning that was at first grounded in the structure of the cycles of inquiry and the Cahn project, but then took on a life of its own. As seen in Appendix A, the Cahn Project Plan looked to develop a strategic plan for bringing faculty into greater levels of engagement around curricular development and teaching practices. Ironically, this early document was outpaced in many ways with both the staff as a whole and the ILT taking toward co-constructing and planning more fully as a "better use of PD" than what had come before. In this initial phase, the administrative staff and teacher leader pathway practitioners developed a singular language around teaching practice grounded in multi-modal learning. Department members were able to take an active hand in co-constructing meaning around standards, mastery, and common tasks and pedagogical moves employed in the department.

A highly-functional Instructional Leadership Team engaged in routine practices that amplify and clarify school-level instructional vision in day-to-day classroom lesson planning and department vertical planning. Working closely with our district's Academic Response Team , we charted layers of activity in three streams that would need to happen to support these goals: Exploring Logistical Concerns; Making Meaning for Teachers; and Making Meaning for Students and Families. Isolating these appropriate pre-requisites to adult learning in this diagnosis provided us an ongoing way to operationalize the teacher development. One of the ways we built capacity among school leaders and teacher leaders through this process was by a more intentional naming of evidence which could let us into more defined classroom practice and teacher development. Appendix B contains one of our Map of Adult Learning sessions in which we sought to define how a calibrated team of school leaders could branch out and engage classroom teachers and teacher leaders in a concrete way.

Appendix C contains our Instructional Improvement Goals chart which provided a more objective way to discuss what would evidence an accomplishment of learning outcomes. This becomes notable within our own school leadership development because it represents a turn toward operationalizing small interventions into objective outcomes. In the artifact you can see our turn toward speaking about how many classrooms, how many people, or how many documents would be part of a given phase of intervention.

Appendix D showcases one of the iterations of our Professional Development Plan which became an organic document that was collaboratively altered by discussions between the administration team and the union chapter professional development team which met regularly. This iteration of the document showcases the ways in which teacher-led discussions and

teacher-led protocols of Looking at Student Work and Looking at Teacher Work created the space for more ongoing department-led discussions that aligned toward the school's overarching vision.

Appendix E contains the Bronx Collaborative Core Pedagogy document which developed as part of our implementation of a distilled version of our instructional vision. The "Walk, Talk, Read, Write" elements that were central to the faculty's ongoing implementation of practices were named and shared so that instrumental learners and socializing learners alike could ground themselves in a discussion that lacked mystery. The presence of definitive documents on teacher practice empowered the self-authoring and self-transforming knowers to take more decisive action in connecting with others around their classroom practices using a common language

Appendix F showcases the work that teacher leaders stewarded to create a Vertical Plan that connected our graduation rubrics to a backwards mapping of benchmark skill development. Teacher leaders developed the charts by interviewing their department members and bringing the results into ILT meetings where we could craft the write up from the findings. In turn the existence of documents like this one in each of the core disciplines supported faculty in affirming or debating their understanding of learning objectives. The refinement that came from these discussions provided a grounding for future course planning.

The pragmatic result of the efforts of the action research was the development of these layered written plans and assessments, some of which have been included as appendices A-F of this paper. These documents showcase the professional development planning work and the ways in which it shifted toward creating spaces for multiple "ways of knowing." A noticing that can be seen in Appendix B and C is the incorporation of evidenced based analysis that looked toward how the work products from meetings and PD activities served to meet the ways of knowing.

As described earlier, the formats of staff engagement were deeply altered by this approach and the cycles of inquiry. Each cycle of inquiry took on the role of moving a new cohort of individuals through the ways of knowing. The early cycles strengthened administration in our understanding and collaborative process and faculty in their broad understanding of a clearer direction for discussions. The middle phases developed a teacher leader team who could initiate ongoing development by applying the ways of knowing to their own team formation and peer development. The later phases saw the teacher leaders walking members of their departments through similarly facilitated interactions that made sure to incorporate each phase. This phase also involved those teacher leaders creating the type of longitudinal documents to guide school practice, as seen in Appendix F which showcases their work to define benchmarks in our ELA department.

Instrumental learning was advanced through the creation of anchor documents as the grounded center of any professional development experience. Among the many items developed during the research were a revised Faculty Manual; Student Guidance Documents on PBATs, Stepping Up, etc.; Newsletter "Digests" on promising teacher practices; Instructional

Benchmarks Documents, Shared Common Instructional “How To” Documents- on teaching best practices, observations, student assessment, and mastery grading; and Communal Linked Faculty Meeting Artifacts. As a result of the development of these materials faculty who prized being able to sit with a clearly delineated set of rules or parameters were able to participate in much more ongoing professional development without losing interest or feeling that it was irrelevant.

Socializing learning was furthered by the creation of layers of Weekly meetings that all leaned toward discussing teacher practice and student learning. Collaborative planning time was incorporated into the school day and teachers were required to meet as “houses”, which were comparable to how grade level teams or small learning community teams function. In addition to meeting as houses, teachers were also able to have consistent faculty-led department meetings during which they had a goal orientation of sense-making discussions and production of charts to categorize and analyze their commonly employed discipline-specific instructional tasks. The weekly Instructional Leadership Team served to create a centered discussion for teacher leaders. One of the teacher leaders began a Lunch and Learn series right before we went fully remote that opened teachers up to learning more about each Danielson competency in the context of actual classroom practices that incorporate effective and highly effective approaches to engagement tasks, iterative assignments, and evaluation.

Self Authoring learners began to benefit more because they had active encouragement to take the lead on faculty presentations at faculty meetings and inter-school PD sessions (Election Day, January PD, June PD). Due to the frequency of department meetings, individual teachers were able to bring student work and promising practices to the meetings and present them for feedback. More faculty members engaging in facilitation within these smaller structures created more willingness to facilitate larger workshops for our school and off-site. The capacity building that came from people visiting our Peer Collaborative Teacher activities empowered them to get more comfortable with presenting their existing practices for communal feedback. Teachers had options to issue “visit me” requests and show off promising practices. The ILT implementation of the “each one, teach one” consultancy intervention also supported the mentees in the relationship to become increasingly comfortable in presenting their work.

Self-transforming knowers benefited from the presence of the calibration walkthrough activities we engaged as a primary form of collaboration and communication around instruction. In grounding peer-to-peer discourse among administrators, among teacher leaders, and finally among teachers, we were creating a critical pedagogical space that was less subjective. Rather than people feeling they needed to highlight their personal understanding of great teaching, they were drawn to a cohesive and easy-to-apply set of observable dimensions. After thirty minutes of shared activity, pairs or teams were read to go with robust debate from their observational notes.

The Impact of the Work

The last few pages have detailed seismic shifts among the faculty and administration as common ground in intellectual ideas and teacher practice were established. The capacity building in the ILT around consultancy also permeated to the larger staff body by modeling how self-transforming pairs can work together on instructional improvement. We were careful to structure the mentoring relationship as thought partnering rather than supervision. People benefited from the layers of Danielson observations, administration/instructional leadership team instructional walks, departmental peer-to-peer observations, instructional coaching sessions; and instructional leadership team consultancy share-outs.

The first five months of the process saw the successful implementation of several new highly public practices drawing from administrations roll-out of documents and processes exploring a unified understanding of teaching and learning:

- Administrative Walk-Throughs for Calibration (September/October)
- Development of a manual for staff on practices to support observation (October/November)
- A range of walkthrough visits (October/November) to inform observations (December/January)
- A second-semester calendar that alternates official teacher observations with walkthrough visits and specialized coaching visits (January)
- Creation of a model for faculty-wide newsletters on professional practice for use during the second semester (December-January)

The second five months of the process saw the successful roll-out of teacher led inquiry that maintained itself even through the pandemic. This phase involved:

- Calendering capacity-building coaching for the Instructional Leadership Team to support them through calibration with administration and independent efficacy as a team (January-February)
- Developing school-wide documentation linking our commencement requirement rubrics to a more granular Vertical Plan (February- May)
- Identifying curricular planning scaffolds that could be utilized as part of a Summer Institute series to create anchor documents for the year 2 goal of linking teacher curricular outcomes with planned iterative practices and interim assessments that are linked to complex real-world case studies (May-August)

The work became amazingly impactful given the sudden world-wide pandemic which appeared during mid-winter. The fall processes of faculty-wide department discussions had led teachers to shift toward more intentional and clearly named practices. Teacher-led PD sessions in the fall had begun a peer-to-peer urging to lean into tools like Google Classroom, Jamboard, Padlet, etc. Although the faculty were quickly scattered to myriad locations by the mid-March physical closure of all New York City schools, they had a common language with which to discuss instruction. During the one week of preparation we had to go fully remote, we were

able to replicate the teacher development practices we were using as part of the Cahn work. Teachers were engaged to identify how their existing high-leverage practices could go online. They were also able to engage in meaningful reflections during our weekly Faculty Gathering in this period and establish more defined student expectations that assisted students with understanding what core skills teachers needed demonstrated and through what tasks.

Although we struggled like all schools with teacher and student availability during this early phase of the pandemic closures many parents, students, and teachers commented that we appeared committed to supporting students through clearer and higher quality work than they had seen and sibling's schools or that they had heard about from their friends' experiences. That serves as evidence that we met our goal of people having a better understanding of where our instructional focus is headed.

An ongoing impact of the action research and practice changes is the meaningful launch of a two-year vision process intended to achieve one central goal-- building capacity among staff to feel both competent in their instructional practices and thereby open to reflective practice (praxis) around how they can better meet diverse student needs. The year one goal of naming core instructional practices succeeded wildly in the goal of creating common language, names, and expectations of teaching practice. Even though it's interrupted winter and spring period limited the ability to further observe and coach some faculty in executing these practices consistently, it provided a strong foundation and way to plan very differently for the 2020-2021 school year.

The first year's focus is to engage faculty in systemic inquiry around the practices we use as our basic instructional pedagogies. In general this took a formula of providing faculty with anchoring documentation for instrumental learners, structured discussion opportunities for socializing learners, the opportunity to demonstrate one's own practice for self-managing learners, and the ongoing critical pair/critical friends group structures for self-transforming learners.

We have taken a wide array of actions so far: developing a faculty manual and curriculum maps for our shared units of school-wide "Crew"; refined existing school "look fors" into a simple walkthrough tool; provided guidance documentation on how we define multimodal education with "Walk, Talk, Read, Write" practices; engaged in administration calibration of walkthroughs and observations as well as their follow-up reports; re-launched the school's Instructional Leadership Team around the same walkthrough process; and defined multiple cycles of inquiry with layered coaching from external district specialists, school based administrators, and department coordinators.

Our biggest challenges have been teachers' emotional reactions to the tightening of focus. Some teachers initially expressed fears of the multimodal system worrying about getting "dinged" for missing an element during a given class. We have addressed this by focusing in writing, in our supervisory meetings and staff meetings on providing supports, tips, and concrete pedagogical activity examples to serve as exemplar. We also honored this by providing a wider range of coaching and modeling-- like our Lunch and Learn series on teaching practice.

People's participation in this process has led to new wonderings about additional coaching models and push-in support that could be provided to teachers as another layer of development in between evaluative processes. In essence this wondering is about how to use the walkthroughs to more robustly bridge the evaluation process with more delineated coaching plans for teacher development at all teaching levels.

The year two work on this project will shift toward examining the many PBL works tools to support teachers in self and peer assessment of the quality of their problem-based learning projects. This deep exploration of teacher project/assessment design will be an important follow-up to the base of high-quality common classroom practices.

The long-term goals of this project are to support teachers in developing the challenging skill-set needed for executing student-centered work that has rigor and multiple access-points. In the past, teachers had shut down development processes in part because they reported that they did not necessarily feel being presented models of instruction gave them a personal investment in testing it out, or a sense of efficacy in the potential results of implementation. Through participation in more evidence-centered professional development many faculty shifted away from this complaint and began to look for even more departmental time to use this type of planning. Moving into a new school year rife with the need to jump between hybrid and remote learning, teachers could at least be more confident in their ability to have meaningful discussions about learning.

As mentioned earlier, 80% of our seniors achieved an on-time graduation which was a new high for the school. Data on many subgroups indicated lifts of deciles which speaks to our school's ongoing momentum to create clearer expectations for students and increased iterative opportunities to develop these skills in meaningful ways.

This Cahn project aimed at modeling a new approach to professional development that provides multimodal opportunities for adults to learn so that students benefit from their execution of the same practices-- a one size learning model for all that builds on a parallel process of exploring student learning, teacher learning, and administration learning.

The natural ongoing extension for our school will be to build on these achievements during the next two years of professional development. For the 2020-2021 school year our focus shifts to the courses written during Summer 2020 as part of our teacher-leader facilitated summer institutes. These sessions used the ILT Cross Cutting documents to help faculty identify the connection point between annual learning objective benchmarks and the design of iterative classroom activities that actually develop these skills. As part of this focus particular attention is being paid to the Interim Assessment process of using specific routinely spaced projects that sample evidence of student learning around each of these benchmarks so actual student progress can be noted. We see the goal of year two as developing common language around student progress which parallels the previous year's focus on common language around teacher practice. As we refine our ability to measure and discuss student learning in terms of progress, we will be more able to bring parents and students together as partners in the learning process by providing them formative feedback they can hear. Year two in essence furthers Dr.

Drago-Severson's work by integrating student and parent ways of knowing to help them make ideal use of teacher formative assessments and feedback.

The year three approach will seek to build on the common language of assessments and move toward refining our problem-based learning curricular design. Year three will seek to have teachers explore what real-world problems, off-site interactions, and complex case studies can be used to house the assessments they have developed in alignment with benchmarks. In this way our long-term goal toward developing teacher capacity around our core model is met through three years of practice-oriented professional development.

REFLECTIONS

When the project was first conceived over the summer of 2019, the vision of the new approach to adult development had much more of a traditional air of planning retreats, focus groups, and community circles. The original inspiration by Dr. Drago-Severson had focused our attention on the diverse ways of knowing that our faculty possessed. Our Fall Study session and retreat helped us apply a Theory of Action that looked more deeply at the way in which leadership moves connected to teacher development and student outcomes. A profound workshop on confronting resistance to change and the big assumptions made in leadership provided another key to exploring necessary leadership shifts.

The resultant changes have been a move toward developing a clear systemic approach to defining instructional success on our campus-- to provide faculty with a model that highlights the connection of adult practices and student success-- our "walk, talk, read, write."

Personal Growth: Shifting from Personal Problem Solving to Team Problem Solving

The program has had a tremendous impact on my own growth and development as a leader. One of the first things it forced me to look at was the commonalities of leadership challenges-- the complex ways in which teachers, parents, and students react to school vision and mission. Finding that many principals were facing similar challenges and similar highs/lows was very empowering.

This realization taught me that it is important to remove value judgements, hypotheticals, and shame from the process of critical self-reflection. My upbringing with its strong focus on immigrant tradition created a deep perfectionist streak. That my primary caretakers were depression era babies added a layer of the sensibility that is best exemplified by the litmus test given to me for taking a day off school or work. My grandmother always said, "Unless you're headed to the Emergency Room right now, you need to go in. Choose, ER or school." Some aspects of this upbringing did not contribute to the healthiest patterns in work/life balance. Some other aspects of early life contributed to the need to be part of

long-term recovery communities. Although this had enriched my capacity to understand student experiences and apply a restorative approach to leadership, it had not led to confidence in naming problems in the school spaces. Often the focus on developing the quality of discourse and interpersonal social and emotional learning was less accessible to people whose ways of knowing involved instrumental learning or a form that required consistent cycles of doing and reflecting. Based on some of my internalized assumptions, my school had a climate where things were simply too fast moving and too people centered. The result was that some of our professional development efforts were driven to distraction by the people-oriented focus. This paper and my previous Cahn presentation are named for the portion of the Serenity Prayer used in many recovery fellowships. “The courage to change the things I can,” is sandwiched between realization of the things we cannot change and the development of listening to wisdom that helps one discern the difference between what one person can impact. Participation in Cahn has helped me apply to myself and others a lens of reflecting on the ways in which past choices embodied a theory in use that may or may not align to the theory of action that would best effect change. Also participation in the Cahn program has made me aware of the “big assumption” that has gotten in the way of my successful change efforts in the past. This assumption, unearthed at the Fall retreat workshop, identified that I had a discomfort with speaking definitively to label collaboration as not working or inconsistent with values and philosophy. This trend comes both from my clinical social work training around processing an issue as well as from some childhood traumas.

Participation in the Cahn fellowship and its study sessions has helped me get to a more critical assessment of the unintentional consequences of not fully accepting the tasks of being the official arbiter of instructional practices when it comes to setting boundary settings defining what are indeed best practices and what is inconsistent. My work on this Cahn project has been entirely about exploring the way one can use a simple system as a tool to bring more distributed leaders into the process and engage faculty in redefining their own work in light of school models. It shifted me away from looking at what I had or had not done right in the planning of past roll-outs and implementations. Instead the attention became on the quality of collaborative planning and tools used at the start of a process. This focus helped to empower other professionals to go beyond buy-in to join-in. Watching a team of people invest in a professional development process in phases was deeply energizing. It also spurred on a profound amount of personal growth.

Participation in Cahn has led to me better understanding the ways in which I need to prepare for and continually evaluate change efforts. I have learned that although my past successes were heavily grounded in my skill-set as an effective change agent, my current growing edge is to examine how to stabilize change as sustainable and institutional. This is an important reflection as it leads to the realization that I have been expending too much energy on a routine level providing direct supervision on projects. In the past, I would sometimes struggle to figure out how much checking-in or autonomy was needed -- trying to find a balance between micromanagement and throwing someone “into the deep end to swim.” Participation in Cahn

has helped me to become more methodical in examining how to develop a common understanding among a range of supervisors (APs, department coordinators, volunteer leads) so that they too are involved in the change effort portion and therefore embody its values. Again, the focus switched from buy in to join in.

Developing Leadership Competencies

As a result of my participation in the program I have been able to focus on developing two core competencies that are central to the New York City principal leadership framework MPPR.

One competency area is Sustainability. A key part of program development is moving the work into a distributed phase in which others are able to take ownership and ongoing activities under their wings. Before Cahn, this was an area in which I needed further development; in the past I had often engaged people to make leadership decisions on a project without having fully on-boarded them for project leadership. My participation in the Cahn program and this project has led me to develop my capacity to pre-define the connection between a given initiative and the school's core philosophies as well as defining key elements of its roll-out in non-negotiable ways. This has empowered me to bring more people into the process of taking up the initiative as an ongoing school system and apply its practices through their own expression of the standards.

The other competency area is Communication of Instructional Program Vision. Having designed and opened my school from scratch, our mission to support high school students as "academic detectives" solving real world challenges is a challenging one. Serving as a public school with students feeding from districts with highly variable middle school offerings, our challenge is to model entirely new pedagogies that are student-centered and promote deep inquiry. From the school's opening we have focused on developing our faculty around project creation/design, student-centered teaching, experiential learning, technology integration, etc. Although our school has been highly recognized for the degree to which its culture and values are clear, a growth area of mine was to adjust our instructional program so that a focus was fidelity across classrooms.

My Cahn participation has helped me focus on this goal for all classrooms to exhibit the same best practices as a foundational core by encouraging me to see the development of adult learners as profoundly parallel to the learning process of students-- the high leverage move by which to bring up all achievement. The content of Prof. Drago-Severson's class sessions helped frame a cognitive developmental model through which to look at these adult staff. Her course content additionally empowered me to shift my own thinking regarding supervision to embody boundary-setting as a loving time-saving act for all involved.

Learning from Mentoring Just as Much as Being Mentored

The process of having a Cahn Fellows Ally has been great because it creates the space to do two distinct things:

- observe someone else tackling the challenges of educational leadership and study their choices
- share action research, concrete past experiences, and consultancy around issues facing the school.

Even though supervisors, consultants, and visiting observers provide formative feedback on the school's operations and some internal choices, our Cahn project has empowered my fellow and me to examine the school in a parallel way. Our discussions have allowed me to gain perspective on my own leadership-- hearing critical feedback and sharing the constraints that impact educational leadership in the context of inputs and outputs from municipal and union perspectives, as well as funding and community expectations.

My ally, stepping more deeply into the work of coordinating our vast special educational services, has been able to tackle her own leadership challenges. Watching someone other than myself walk through the parallel journey at our school has helped highlight the internal systems and structures that are in place or not in place. Engaging in consultative discussions with my ally has helped me to reflect more clearly on past ways that I attempted to solve such leadership challenges as well as offer this experience forward with the context of the ways that such choices had unintentional consequences.

This process has also supported succession planning as it has made me more intentional in delineating the ways that my founding vision of the school translates into a cohesive approach to educational leadership. Working with my ally (our special education services coordinator) has made me more hyper-aware of the structural dialogues and visioning work that need to occur on a parallel level with each AP.

A recent dialogue with my ally, for example, focused on exploring how a recent sub-part of the project she launched might be simplified to align with the overall project focus. She had voiced challenges with participants embracing the material she presented, so this dialogue was a workshopping session to address the overall PD goals of the activity. Although she was initially resistant to see how this connection could be made without sacrificing process, we were able to examine how her new design we had made for the overall project had much mutual content. This became a great opportunity to share past experiences in over-complicated roll outs and work with her on cohesive professional development.

Gaining comfortability with these kinds of explorations has helped me become more empowered in layering a succession plan and activating a range of teacher leaders as future administrators through such interactions.

My personal leadership goals at the start of the Cahn process focused on building my capacity to engage a large staff in mutual ownership of student success. This drew out of

previous challenges that developed at my school around teachers keeping struggling students connected.

Changing Leadership Goals

Over time in the Cahn fellows my personal leadership goals have changed. My current goal is to identify systems and structures that contain enough of the DNA of my core philosophies that they can be self-replicating and embody this vision over longer periods of time. Through Cahn I have come to better understand how this complements existing areas of my leadership strengths by providing others access to join as change agents and implementation leaders-- thereby extending the reach of the vision and providing peer-to-peer outlets for accessing and embodying these ideas.

The Cahn Fellows Program has supported me in reaching these goals by providing two parallel tracks for us to study: 1) personal growth and innovation and 2) refining personal vision into a theory in action.

By providing retreat and study session exercises in both areas of leadership development, the Cahn Fellows program has created a safe-space to percolate vexing leadership challenges. The judgement free zone and creative process-oriented workshops inspired me to recognize the ways in which our creative spark and emotional well-being contribute to our entire community's well-being. The program has taught me how to connect self-care and community care-- how to embody the metaphor of putting your oxygen mask on before trying to help others.

The Cahn Fellows program feels unique from other leadership opportunities and degree work because it values the parallels between our executive visions and practical decisions. Professors support Cahn fellows in developing the connective tissue to recognize how we can make powerful high-leverage shifts in our own school communities without the need of high-priced consultants or external agencies. Cahn empowers us to lead unabashedly with a community-improvement lens that recognizes public schooling excellence as a thing of value.

Overcoming The Impact of Microaggressions and Finding My Voice

The Cahn Fellows program has absolutely transformed me on another level that relates to public confidence and communication around leadership ideals. My teaching career with the New York City Department of Education began in 1996. With a quarter-century of classroom experience and over 15 years of formal administration experience, you would think that there was no discomfort with sharing educational vision. My current school started through my entry into a highly competitive process coordinated by the Office of New Schools that existed within the Department of Education at the time. Although my proposal had led to a successful site

opening and despite my early years of community outreach establishing the school as a school of choice, there was a certain kind of confidence that was lacking owing to the ways that my heart had hurt from the experience of microaggressions over the years-- especially upon entering a principal leadership role. Returning to the neighborhoods I grew up in to open a school was incredibly empowering.

That return though also meant confronting the multiple gaybashing experiences that had impacted me as a teen in the 1980s, and the experience of being disowned by part of my family and being barred from participating at the religious institution of my upbringing.

Although there were lots of exciting things about my return, it was unexpected how many of the adults would use my gender-fluid identity and my sexual orientation to explain why “someone like you” should not be running a school for students of color. This was not only a response of select parents, but of school safety, and school administrators. When speaking and appearing more feminine it was often my experience to be told to “calm down” and on at least 15 occasions, my directions about school safety were overridden by agents and supervisors alike often citing that they had a better understanding of safety needs. Using a phrase “that concept seems upsetting and disappointing” often led to being told “feelings have no role in the workplace” and to “keep it professional.” During a state visit it was suggested to “smile more.” Intellectual disagreements and public questions or challenges to think out of the box were deemed “aggressive” and “disrespectful.” It had been my experience to watch some of these same people actually be disrespected by other campus staff or school leaders, and notice that they placed no such labels on these individuals and in fact simply treated them as professionals with whose ideas they disagreed.

A small contingent of faculty members took any policy disagreement to open a discussion of whether “I understood anything about educating students in the Bronx.” It deeply hurt to experience other professionals devaluing my own experiences as a Bronx student, my clinical social work and education degrees, my doctoral studies of problem based learning, communities of practices, and online environments. It was deeply incongruent with my three decades of activism on civil rights, adolescent rights, around issues impacting black, indigineous, and people of color (BIPOC) as well as LGBTQ rights. It was difficult to accept the realities that staff were sharing with me about people who acted out in public spaces and downward spiral talked in private spaces about my identity. People have felt entitled to engage a question of whether someone who presents the way I do, even has a right to lead a school that they have designed from scratch and led to increasing success over the better part of a decade. Rather than choosing to depart the school initially, some of these staff engaged in public disparagement of my leadership, until multiple external visits named the teaching as the issue. Visit after visit encouraged me to be more firm and directive in leadership and manage discourse with less democracy and firmer communication to enforce expectations-- to ignore excuses for people not meeting our school model and insist on changed teacher practices.

To take my Cahn project to next levels-- our turn to Remote Learning as a school was led with a distributed leadership model in which I confidently and clearly laid out a vision and non-negotiable traits, then turning over to each department the design of a meaningful student-center, staff-sustainable program. Of 7 staffers out of 70 who had been a toxic pocket-- 4 have personally outreached to communicate how transformative the experience was in reconnecting to see the school's mission and my leadership for what it really is rather than their points of disconnection. One staffer sent me a card that had "Faith in Humanity Restored" on the cover. We go into next year's expansion of the Cahn work with a more cohesive staff-- a direct outgrowth of the steps and leadership growth tied to the Cahn work to address adult learning and faculty's ways of knowing in an effort to increase student achievement.

The cumulative impact of those experiences serves as microaggressions often do, to silence one's comfort with putting oneself out there in a public eye. The Cahn Project came at a vital moment-- one which restored a confidence in the strengths and skills and vision that had brought me to this point. It was that confidence that supported me in anchoring our school when we went remote, and keeping people connected to a sense of mission. Facilitating a team of staff who wouldn't let go of student support and instruction led to our being able to report an 80% on time graduation rate to our Superintendent in June and a predicted year five graduation rate in the mid 80s. We did this alongside moving our metrics radically--- our Multilingual Learner Progress metric went from a Level 1 (lowest 10%) to a Level 4 (top tier) through the power of the team work that was pulled from our Cahn project.

Repeating the Cahn Cycle through Developing a REC

The entire year of Cahn activities with other fellows and my on-site professional experiences with peers energized a confidence that great instructional changes were afoot at my school. The increased "join in" from staff expanded the core of teacher leaders who could in turn confidently express our school's vision. This change helped to bring more faculty into important instructional discussions and encourage faculty who did not believe in the model to consider looking to either grow their teacher practice or explore other schools.

One of the most profound time periods that showcased this leadership growth and personal growth was the period of the pandemic and the period during which the national dialogue on the Black Lives Matter movement became increasingly front and center. The Cahn experience made me more comfortable to trust my instincts and share my talents more vulnerably. When schools physically closed in mid-March 2020 for remote learning, the Department of Education put out an open call out for volunteers to help develop Regional Enrichment Centers (RECs) which could run school-like programs for the children of first responders, medical

professionals, and essential workers to keep the city functioning. My increased confidence from the Cahn project inspired me to immediately throw my hat in and express a vision of how to open a meaningful site at my regular campus. The Department of Education took me up on the offer, and I began volunteering which quickly turned into committing to twelve-hour per day shifts to establish a community program that embedded problem-based curriculum and community organizing to help students feel connected to a school-like experience. The need to create a site and on-board 40 substitute teachers and paras and a handful of volunteers in the early moments of a pandemic would have probably have made me incredibly nervous in the past and unable to offer the adult participants the serenity to ground their own fears.

Developing a REC site literally on the spot and building cohesion for adult participants and students represented the third time in my life that I was involved in school design. The Cahn project literally gave me an opportunity to practice the recently developed skills around “join in” by engaging the substitute teachers and paras to take a role in designing the activities, visiting each others’ classrooms, and participating in project-based activities that they could then turnkey to the student experience.

Along the way, the increased confidence and previous Cahn work on confronting the big assumption that got in our way, empowered me to do this work without the old bonds that held me back. Quickly into the REC process and sharing what we were doing, I was connected to a journalist at the New Yorker who was profiling 24 hours in the five boroughs as people began to adapt to pandemic emergencies.

The New Yorker included me in an interview about essential workers and the REC program this week. I can be found talking about the REC center vision and work at hour 19 in the 24 hour coverage:

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/05/04/twenty-four-hours-at-the-epicenter-of-the-coronavirus-pandemic>.

In connecting with the Department of Education media office, I was also able to express my willingness to volunteer my communications and journalism skills. I was taken up on an offer to conduct parent interviews. These interviews were incorporated in a Diane Sawyer special that aired shortly after- <https://t.co/PDLonodtHD>. The Department of Education also used them to develop internal materials about what role RECS were fulfilling. The confidence from the Cahn program made me less afraid to share the work with the Deputy Chancellor, media office, Superintendent team, etc.

Fighting to Decolonize Education and Adopt Abolitionist Teaching Practices

Being more vocal about organizing also meant being able to speak out and take action on the growing issues surrounding the national dialogue on the Black Lives Matter movement. This took several key forms.

The first involved working with teacher leaders at my school to define a meaningful way to open the door to ongoing discussions of race and equity. Just as we had with the Cahn project, my focus became to engage teacher leaders who were willing to lead inquiry in this area and thereby pave the way for other staff, students, and parents to join in. Inspired by the salon discussions of the Harlem Renaissance we created “The Collaborative” a daily Google Meets event which was open to any past or current members of our school community. The discussions created an open dialogue to make sense of current events like George Floyd’s murder, national protests, and the discussion over incorporating Juneteenth as a formal national holiday. This forum also allowed us to make each other familiar with historical and cultural checkpoints, viewing the “black Woodstock” through the documentary WATTSTAX and exploring the 1960s and 1970s era of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense through artifacts, interviews, and documentaries with their founders and leaders.

These daily dialogues in turn opened discussions with other principals and school sites to explore the changes in our systems and structures that needed to be made on behalf of students. I shared my disdain for white supremacy and systematic racism via social media and an open letter to my school community. Within that letter were commitments for ongoing practice changes that realigned school resources toward fighting to provide opportunities for increased student empowerment around direct activism and organizing-- connecting students to a range of ways to make what John Lewis would call “good trouble.”

Sharing Our Models for Change Via the Media

Developing this climate with others at my regular school also empowered me to build a team at our REC center to explore the implementation of social justice, community organizing, and problem-based learning units. The growth from the Cahn project also made me more comfortable sharing our efforts when asked with the larger Department of Education structures. Our work at the REC appears in:

<https://morningbellnyc.com/2020/finding-the-glue-that-binds-rec/>

Expanding on this, Columbia University engaged me in dialogue around the organizational leadership involved in considering the reopening of schools during the pandemic. Based on the REC experience, the dialogue with Columbia helped me to contextualize how the whole Cahn project and REC experience were reshaping my sense of how to reopen amidst the flux of the 2020-2021 school year. The dialogue can be seen here:

<https://www.tc.columbia.edu/articles/2020/august/dialogue-knowledge-flexibility/> An extended follow up from the Columbia U website appearance was the Economist wanting to interview me, the preparation from which piqued the DOE Press Office to work with me to organize a family engagement roundtable with the mayor and chancellor today on my

campus focused on how parents need schools to return to session with a press conference following on our field to highlight the outdoor space innovations idea (pre-event photo above). The Cahn process has prepared me for more complex leadership and readiness for bigger stages to communicate that leadership. The mayor and chancellor's visit enabled me to dialogue with them and my parents about the complexities of reopening-- and to ensure vital resources and attention came to my building to support the health of everyone in it for reopening. An excerpt of their visit can be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-Je0gONmWc>

To receive compliments from both the mayor and chancellor on my leadership at the Regional Enrollment Center project and with bringing the stakeholder groups in my school community into innovative reprogramming (our first 100% faculty vote ever), speaks to the growth that the Cahn Fellows program and its coordinators have pushed me to develop since the moment I was accepted.

I feel more confident to fight for equity and the decolonizing of the education system, because I am now more comfortable in naming the changes in public forums and advocating with a clearer, simpler message.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The School Crew

I would like to thank the Instructional Leadership team of 2019-2020 at my school-- Deborah Katz, Josue Cordones, Gabrielle Rose, and Jennifer Flores. Together we dug into instruction and lifted a school in the process. You are a brilliant and caring team who inspire students every day. You inspire me to see how a core of like minded educators can transform the world around them.

I would also like to thank the Academic Response Team that committed so much time to supporting our change initiative and modeling capacity building skills for me-- especially Deborah Sadok and Anna Zucker-Johnson.

I would particularly like to thank Gabrielle Rose, who was not formally a Cahn Ally but quickly took on such a capacity. She put in unnamed hours of dialogue and action to develop ongoing materials as the school's Peer Collaborative Teacher. Her commitment extended well beyond those expectations as she truly took on meaningful school leadership roles. The volume of change and the consistency in the efforts would not have been of as high quality without her involvement.

The Cahn Crew

Most of the personal growth and revelations described in the last section are owed to the collective Super 17- our 2019 cohort of Cahn Fellows. Their camaraderie and tendency to act as a think-tank was always front and center. And the joy of laughing, singing, playing table sports, was always inspiring. Boy was the Cahn fellows program right to refer to this group as distinguished principals. I would add that my cohort was composed of so many principals with principles-- a powerful commitment to social justice and change.

I would also like to thank all of the Cahn fellows who took the risk of speaking about their own intersectional experiences with race, gender, etc. Hearing other school leaders speak vulnerably about their own process and identity made me more confident to own my own.

I will also forever credit Dr. Barbara McKeon and Dr. Ellie Drago-Severson with changing the trajectory of my life and career.

The mind-blowing Resistance to Change exercise that Ellie ran for us which got me in touch with a false assumption rooted in childhood family matters that I was able to finally reach a breakthrough with this past year. Understanding more about people's ways of knowing and ways of hearing and interpreting has created powerful and lasting benefits in my evolution as a supervisor.

Barbara has been someone who has truly challenged me to be better-- both in self-care and in being less-reactive and more confident. Her interview process for fellows made me know the ways in which diversity was truly prized by the program as well as a commitment to public school students. Barbara's workshops and activism to push us to focus on our health and personal maintenance inspired me to tackle a life-long challenge with weight. Although I had hit an all time high of 250 pounds during our summer retreat, I ended the school year at 178 having dropped 10 waist sizes and reversed pre-diabetic metabolic trends.

The same process of self-care and finding my personal and professional voice, also helped lead me to the comfortability to formally use different non-binary preferred pronouns which now adorn my DOE email signature line and public self-representation. They is not the same person they used to be-- and I owe so much of the change to inspiring leaders within the Cahn program.

APPENDICES

Appendix A Cahn Project Plans

Project Description	Key Goals	Timeline
Develop a model curricular manual for our Crew program to provide for multiple types of learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Model curriculum maps ● Be responsive to a range of faculty learning needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Showcase the connection of learning targets and classroom practices 	August 2019
Engage in administration Classroom Walkthroughs to calibrate and document the school's interpretation of multi-modal learning,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Elaborate the "Walk, Talk, Read, Write" classroom expectations from the school's founding ● Create inter-rater reliability among administration's supervision of teachers 	September -October 2019
Collaborate with district-level support teams to create coaching relationships between groups of faculty and district support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define cycles of inquiry to support General Education, Special, Education, and ENL faculty ● Set overarching practice goals for coaching collaborations ● Define outcomes and practice models 	October November 2019
Incorporate the use of "Walk, Talk, Read, Write" school paradigm into all Observational Reporting and informal discussions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Align formal NYCDOE observations with the walkthrough feedback given to teachers <p>Calibrate observational work to coaching plans through administration discussions of the school-wide "heatmap" of Danielson competencies</p>	December 2019- January 2020
Re-activate the school Instructional Leadership Team around a parallel process of walkthroughs. Engage team in a protocol for action research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage department coordinators in a birds-eye view of teaching across the school ● Support ILT leaders in defining their own coaching projects with members of their department 	January 2020
Launch a long-term model of alternating official and walkthrough observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Delineate for faculty an ongoing cycle of formative feedback ● Incorporate faculty 	February-M arch 2020 April- May 2020

Perform quantitative and qualitative research on parent/student/teacher perception improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct focus group and survey-based research • Share information with faculty 	February-March 2020
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Document best practices observed and incorporate teacher coaching experiences into professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuild Professional Learning Community structures in PD activities • Engage teachers to document personal growth 	April 2020
Departments conduct self-inventories of their pedagogical approaches to further move all teachers to higher Depth of Knowledge activities within each modality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers conduct self-inventory of their growth around “Walk, Talk, Read, Write” • Departments chart the Webb’s DOK level of the work going on in each modality • Departments create ongoing development plans to vertically and horizontally align this work with department coordinator support 	May 2020
Connect faculty leaders to plan the year 2 exploration of the practices required to perform high-quality problem-based learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model faculty leadership of instructional initiatives • Create an agreed upon roll-out of 2020-2021 PD around executing high-quality PBL projects. 	June 2020

APPENDIX B MAP OF ADULT LEARNING

A LAYERED APPROACH TO ADULT LEARNING @ BRONX COLLABORATIVE

Given the complexity of implementing project-based, problem-based instruction, our focus during the 2019-2020 school year is to support Adult Learning by working toward co-constructing a **20/20 Vision** project where staff name and implement best practices.

Theory of Action:

If we clarify our vision of instruction and align professional learning activities with routine and timely feedback to teachers, we will improve our graduation rate (70% for all students, 50% SWD, 50% ELL), improve college readiness rate and improve ENL achievement.

Key Strategies of Instruction: “Walk, Talk, Read, Write” with purpose (aligned to grading policy)

Key Strategy for giving feedback on lessons: Weekly administrative team walkthroughs

Professional Learning at Bronx Collaborative:

- Timely High Quality Feedback
- Teacher Collaboration
- Whole Staff PD (1x per week)

Administration: (formal meeting weekly with Deb and Anna)

<p>Brett:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Serves on the PD committee ● Pulled for “technical support” and “vision support” in specific cases ● Surfs the major discourses in departments to identify alignment to school-wide goals and vision 	<p>Courtney:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supervises 9 & 12(all teachers and guidance) ● Also: Testing; Senior Activities Team; Recruitment Gr8, Special Education, Arts 	<p>Jessica:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supervises 10th and 11th grade teachers and guidance ● * ENL, PD, Crew, Staff-Facing Communications, Programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Will use a “pedagogy/purpose” matrix as a note-catcher for debriefing walkthroughs ● Will refer back to the tool when giving feedback to teachers and use feedback as a lens for additional observations or walkthroughs ● Will provide face to face feedback for rated observations, share trends via email, share shoutouts in weekly email to staff 		

Instructional Leads (ILT): Academic Steering Committee

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Math- Cordones ● Science- Katz ● ELA- Rose ● 		
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PD Committee (during OPW time 1x per month)

- UFT Delegate- Jake Ruiz (History)
- Nadia Osman (History)
- Anthony Roper (Special Education)
- Jessica Kelly (AP)

MOSL Committee (during OPW time 1x per month)

- Nick Klinovskuy (ENL)
- Samantha Adams (Science)

Department Meetings: (meet weekly on Mondays):

Math - Cordones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions: How will this work live in department meetings and professional learning activities they engage in? • How can we fold looking at student work into this cycle? • How will teachers be expected to use what they observed/feedback given in their future learning? • Is there a need for departments to use protocols to structure discussions in order to maintain equity, safety and integrity to the process? • Is there a place where they document their work in cycles?
Science - Adams?	
ELA - Rose	
SS - McMillan?	
FL -	

House Team (Adult Crew) Meetings: (1 period per day common planning block)

Hero House (9G): Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss recommended alterations/implementation aspects to crew • KidTalk Discussion Protocol • Share instructional challenges and best practices around differentiation for their common cohort • Plan special programs/events ex. off-site trip so that these are well coordinated across class needs •
House of Ninja: Period	
House of Xtravaganza Period	
Senior House Period 5	

Casa Bilingual Period 1	
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Whole Staff PD: (once a week)

Teacher Learning

September	Launch Skedula and new grading policy
October	10.28 - Roll out new grading categories and have departments assign example tasks
November	11.4 - Task analysis with protocol to explore where the DOK levels live in our tasks 11.18 - Deepening our understanding of DOK levels by looking at how students describe the tasks and how they reflected on their learning at each DOK 11.25 - Formulating criteria for the levels of mastery (1-5): need Marzano articles, examples (generic); levels of independence?
December	12.2 12.9 12.16
January	1.6 1.13
Student Learning	

Data tracking: (provide links to trackers and notes)

APPENDIX C Instructional Improvement Goals

Inquiry Cycle Goal	In what ways did we accomplish this?	What evidence do we have of impact on faculty and admin practices?	Which practices/ aspects did we not yet accomplish?	How do we intend to further this goal/initiative?	What resource s/ activities /ongoing supports will yield further success with this?
Increase in number of classrooms exhibiting Newmann Rubric-based Observable Teaching Patterns from week 2 to week 7	No longitudinal evidence yet to make analysis			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heatmap analysis for 1st and 2nd observation • Walkthrough tool 	

Weekly all staff emails with aggregate, objective feedback on look-fors observed during weekly admin team walkthrough	Broad faculty PD and Consultancy discussion about Walk/Talk/Read/Write	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty Observation Support Manual (UFT requested) • Request of a Walk/Talk/Read/Write PD Session 	Weekly or Monthly emails on teacher practice	Newsletters on a monthly basis-- aggregate to observation trends or walkthrough trends	
Development of a walkthrough tool, based on Newmann Rubric's Observable Teaching Patterns	Excel chart to capture teacher walkthroughs in four dimensions Implementation of DOK as a leveling (Marzano) reference point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporation of parallel PD process with Marzano Staff • co-constructing DOK levels of common classroom tasks 	Weekly consistent implementation	Thematic selection relevant to particular instructional goal: Ex. one department, one category of teachers (strugglers), or a grade level	
Development of a consistent practice of weekly admin walkthroughs to gather data on implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 out of 8 scheduled walkthroughs • 2 collaborative observations • 11 out of 37 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UFT consultancy request to clarify "Walk" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency with Weekly Walkthroughs 	Combo of: 1) On Months with block visitation	

<p>of practices, using walkthrough tool</p>	<p>core classroom teachers (Rami, Green, Spiegel Cordones, Catarra, Roper, Rose, Kinney, Peters, Stern, McMillan)</p>			<p>s to all faculty and newsletter follow up on aggregate trends 2) Disaggregated weekly visits to faculty that admin are coaching g as tool to connect walkthroughs and coaching g with ongoing teacher development</p>	
<p>Use of this data to plan for developing teachers' practices through professional development</p>	<p>• Laid out a 2019-2020 PD Plan with four main cycles-- using looking at teacher work and looking at student work and teacher practices through the lens of mastery grading • Map of adult learning</p>	<p>• Mind map of Mastery grading and teacher practices to share with UFT PD team • PD team workshoping of ongoing schedule with teacher driven modifications</p>	<p>We've met yearlong PD plan goal</p>	<p>Continue to share trends with UFT PD team to calibrate and edit annual plan</p>	

Structure and calibration of principal and admin team feedback to teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calibration Sessions (walkthroughs) • Collaborative Observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format for initial writing and second edits as an ongoing 	Sustainable plan for persistent walkthroughs	(as above) use two tiered system of aggregate and disaggregate	
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		calibration tool • Use of walkthrough tool		visits to inform “one voice” model of admin supervision and coaching	
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APPENDIX D Collaborative PD Plan

Date	Topic	Protocol or Structural Needs of Session	Faculty Work Product
Review of DOE & School Practices & Expectations			
9/9	SPED IEP SESIS access and best Practices Introduction to Team Playbook	<i>SEGIS access information</i>	SEGIS LOGINS/408s
9/16	ADVANCE MOTP 2019-2020 Mastery shifts	<i>Copies of ADVANCE Mastery Collaborative Shifts</i>	Individualized Planning Conferences (IPCs)
9/23	School Specific Walkthrough Evaluation Tool Grading Policy	<i>Walkthrough Evaluation Tool Criteria and Standards for Authentic Pedagogy and Student Work</i>	Departmental grade work
10/7	Skedula IOS Professional Development	<i>Computer access</i>	Faculty enter grades

10/21	Childhood Abuse & Neglect/De-Escalation CREW curriculum lesson reflection and revision	<i>IPads or iPhones</i>	Scary movie Trailer
Looking At Teacher Work Inquiry Cycle			
10/28	Crosswalking New Mastery Grading Categories to DOK	<i>Departments define typical tasks from recent weeks and chart them aligned to DOK/MG</i>	Math Science English History Arts PE
11/4	Task analysis with protocol to explore where the DOK levels live in our tasks	<i>Two members of each department present two pieces of meaningful student work (Tuning Protocol)</i>	Notes
11/18	REVIEWING 1ST MARKING PERIOD GRADES	<i>INDIVIDUAL REVIEW FOR ACCURACY</i>	Grade corrections 9on STARS

11/25	IDENTIFYING AND JUSTIFYING STUDENT PROGRESS- Defining what a 1 through 5 means	<i>Departments</i>	BxCHS adaptations of a Marzano scale
12/2	IDENTIFYING AND JUSTIFYING STUDENT PROGRESS- Examining student work samples to correlate and solidify mastery grading levels 1 through 5	<i>Departments</i>	Notes
12/9	Unpacking Beliefs & Biases Around Mastery: Capturing A Semester Grade Through Portfolio	<i>Canady Reading</i>	
12/16	WALKING.TALKING.READING. WRITING.- Examining Our Lessons for Multimodal	<i>Departments</i>	

	Learning		
1/6	Learning Objectives Analysis: Measuring our Own Effectiveness Through Student Self-Evaluation	House teams	
1/13	Putting It Together- Unpacking The Standards for Students In Our Mid-Year Grades	Departments	
1/20-1/25	INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM MAPPING TIME- Analyzing our Second Semester Plans for Rigor, Equity, and Access Points	Individual	

Looking At Student Work

1/27	Where Does Mastery Live During a Lesson: Exploring Student Work Product from a Single Class Session	Faculty bring work product from 7 students completed during the same recent class period	
2/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 Minute (Core Consortium Philosophy) • 60 minutes : Teachers pick a relevant workshop 		

	Choose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consortium Committee • Backward Design Workshop • <u>Using online presence to support student catchup</u> 		
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2/10	Major Assessment Maps: 2-3 Core Projects for the Course and the <i>Standards</i> Comprised		Maps delivered to Houses for House Crew Leaders Discussion
2/24			
	Learning Objective Analysis: Measuring Student Understanding Through Student Work Product & self evaluation	Departments	
	Sharing Purpose with Families: Delineating Common Levels of Mastery for Family Conversations	Department	
2/17	MIDWINTER RECESS	MIDWINTER RECESS	MIDWINTER RECESS
	Student work protocol	Departments	
3/2	Praxis - how does what we learned about mastery and our inquiry cycle fit into my curriculum	Departments	
3/9	PBAT NORMING:	Departments	
Faculty Refined- Preparing for Academic Year 2020-2021			
3/16	The More Things Change Surfacing Areas of Concern for Program Redesign	House Meeting Format	

3/23	The More They Stay The Same Celebrating Elements of Program Design that Work	House Meeting Format	
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3/30	Exploring School-Based Options & Proposals for a New Year	Full Staff	
4/6	Exploring a Fall Schedule and Coming to Consensus	Full Staff	
4/13	SPRING RECESS	SPRING RECESS	SPRING RECESS
Problem Based Learning & Common Practices			
4/20	Upping Your Game: Supercharging Your Classroom Around PBL	<i>PLC Teams</i>	
4/27	PLC Team Session 1: Increasing Authentic Assessment and External Linkages	<i>PLC Teams</i>	
5/4	PLC Team Session 2: Personal PBL Action Research	<i>PLC Teams</i>	
5/11	PLC Team Session 3: Student Engagement beyond the Classroom Action Research	<i>PLC Teams</i>	
5/18	PLC Team Session 4: Practicing With Portfolios for Evaluating Mastery	<i>PLC Teams</i>	
5/25	PLC Team Showcase	<i>PLC Teams</i>	
6/1	20/20 Fall Vision: Curricular Design Collaborative Planning Pt. 1	<i>Departments</i>	
6/8	20/20 Fall Vision: Curricular Design Collaborative Planning Pt. 2	<i>Departments</i>	
6/15	ASSESSMENT WEEK		
6/22	ASSESSMENT WEEK		

Appendix E Bronx Collaborative Core Pedagogy “Walk. Talk. Read. Write.”

Walk	Talk
<p>Students have the opportunity to move either their bodies or their minds through a range of unique tasks that call for intellectual diversity.</p> <p>The expanded definition of “walking” includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex tasks involving executive function and organizing materials • Switching between different conceptual work styles <p>1E, 3C</p>	<p>Students have the opportunity to engage in accountable talk that has a structure which allows for a sharing of inferences and noting of ideas.</p> <p>Students are vetting evidence, strategies, talking across texts; may be using protocols or structures to ensure high levels of engagement for most students</p> <p>3C, 3B</p>
Read	Write
<p>Students have the opportunity to anchor their discussions, writing, and creative work in meaningful excerpts, articles, books, or research.</p> <p>In meaningful reading exercises students are given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give students access to authentic texts of your discipline • Purposeful play with the concepts before reading • A chance to reflect and document their understanding after the reading <p>During a writing lesson, there are resources and scaffolds that make visible the reading comprehension and analysis.</p> <p>1A, 1E, 3C</p>	<p>Students have the opportunity to capture their understandings through iterative writing, procedural documentation, editing, and demarcated and keyed, captioned graphing or notation.</p> <p>Using multiple texts/sources; evaluating evidence and making explicit choices about the organization</p> <p>1E, 3C, 3D</p>

Putting Pedagogy into Practical Practices

Walk	Talk
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent use of multiple resources - Students are allowed to move appropriately about the room to access resources - Students are using multiple modalities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students are engaged in “mental moving.” For example, moving from looking at a map, to a graph, to long form writing. - Students engage in Carousel or Stations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Think-Pair-Share/Write-Pair-Share - Socratic Seminar - Interactive (Inner/Outer) Fishbowl - “World Cafe,” “Save the Last Word” and other talk protocols - Small group discussion with structures like roles, note-catchers and whole class presentations - Peer Feedback, Revision and Editing
Read	Write
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purposeful annotation that makes visible student understanding, questioning, and reflecting - Sustained, stamina building reading time - Make reading process visible by - Read aloud/think aloud (either teacher to students or students to students) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparing for text talk protocols like The Text Rendering Experience - Watching a primary source media broadcast while analytically noting quotables and visuals that connect to a theme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The writing process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generative writing - Drafting - Revision - Editing - Publishing a public product - Writing to prompts - Using graphic organizers and scaffolded materials as a bridge to formal writing - Peer-to-peer editing around a specific singular rubric element - Consultancy protocol to diagnose/problem solve around specific question the author has in mind

Appendix F Cross Cutting Benchmarks for ELA

Cross Cutting Skill:English Rubric- “Organization” Outstanding is

- Generates a clear thesis or central idea that makes a **compelling point**
- Uses relevant, convincing evidence and quotations that thoroughly support thesis or central idea
- **Makes explicit** and elegant **transitions** from one idea to next, **developing thesis or central idea effortlessly**

+1 Rubric Categories Sought Out in End of Year

Projects: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1q7Vw4wHsync7L0xc4T2LZ7bqMxZaXbdG_

	+ 1 Rubric Category	ALL PROJECTS IN THE COURSE LEAD TO DEVELOPING MASTERY AROUND:	This specific END OF YEAR PROJECT tasks:
9th Grade	Analysis & Interpretation [short essays]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students read and select specific passages as evidence in support or advancement of an idea asserted by the teacher. Students read and select variant evidence to support and develop a given idea asserted by a group, classmate, prediction. Students assert an idea advanced by a selection of evidence and compose written expression of support evidence provides for the idea. Students compose regular written tasks guided by rubric-bound structural models (paragraph & multi-paragraph practice). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students have multiple opportunities per marking period to unify these written 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize the expression of ideas in paragraph and essay form accurately and expressively. Identify the Theme/Central Idea as asserted by text and an original idea as asserted by student's original thinking (about text or author's work). Compose a basic level of analysis (HOW & WHY).

		products into essay or more perfect paragraph & multi-paragraph forms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students compose the WHAT and HOW of an analysis checking and revising this via analysis rubric. 	
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10th Grade	Style and Voice [whole papers]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and contextualize Multiple Perspectives reflected by different sets of evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students can read to locate and cite evidence and determine relevance of evidence. ○ Students can select and cite evidence relevant to a problem ○ and its possible solutions. ○ Students can collect sets of evidence that work to contextualize a problem and variant perspectives surrounding it. ○ Students can collect sets of evidence in support of a solution they deem best. ○ Students can compose written analysis of an author's argument, naming argumentative statement, supports and evidence accurately in their written work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Student can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An IWW paper reflects a real-world problem and identifies 2-4 authentic solutions rating their relevance according to other sources ● Student advocates for the best solution in paper and panel ● Students represent rhetorical accuracy in their survey of the literature
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		unify analysis of multiple arguments by describing how these work together to assert an idea or context.	
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<p>11th Grade + 1 Rubric Category</p>	<p>ADVANCED Analysis & Interpretation</p> <p>[whole papers]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students develop and assert original ideas (interpretations) about text and justify the relevance of these ideas as supported by evidence from text. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students explore their interpretations to extend or limit the meaning thereof based their understanding and inquiry of text. ○ Students identify and explore cohesive expression of ideas <i>via regular and continual iterative writing cycles around their original ideas supported by text evidence.</i> • Students make explicit connections between text asserted ideas, and their own interpretations thereof, as well as defend these connections via analysis. • Students develop and assert insightful expressions of their interpretation of texts; asserting the social, philosophical, cultural, aesthetic etc. relevance the work holds for them and their interpretations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literary passages from across the reading are cited with reference to the literary devices at play and commentary on authorial intent • A cohesive extended essay captures at least three assertions that logically capture and extend the overarching ideas • Assertions refer to specific passages as sources for a cohesive argument that extends the the interpretation into meaningful specifics
<p>12th Grade + 1 Rubric Category</p>	<p>Connections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may choose and read independent texts about which they explore and develop original ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “so what” of the literature is analyzed in relation to external context (another book, film, history, social issue, etc.)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students extend previous knowledge of specific literature, re-contextualizing the literary elements and devices in light of more complex lenses, issues, or arguments that they are exploring NOW • Students explore the work of literary, cultural, aesthetic, philosophical elements in establishing or supporting their original idea about text. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Students engage and apply research around elements impacting their original idea to generate the “So What” and social significance or issue of their interpretations of text. • Students compose iterative explorations of their literature in conjunction with their research and their growing interpretations. • Students’ final project comes through revision to represent the most evolved expression of their learning and thesis development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students include sections that refer to external literary criticism, historical documents, etc. in an effort to provide further context for their own arguments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students identify the real world “problem” or concern that is generated from their thesis and assertions • Students can cite during Panel defense the multiple iterations of their thesis language and substance as a result of their iterative work • (Honors papers include a section that refers to the existing popular discourse on this topic)
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