

*Learning from a Chicago Grades 8/9 Algebra Teacher-Led Community*

Della R. Leavitt, PhD

Philadelphia, PA

November 2, 2016

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Regional Meeting

---

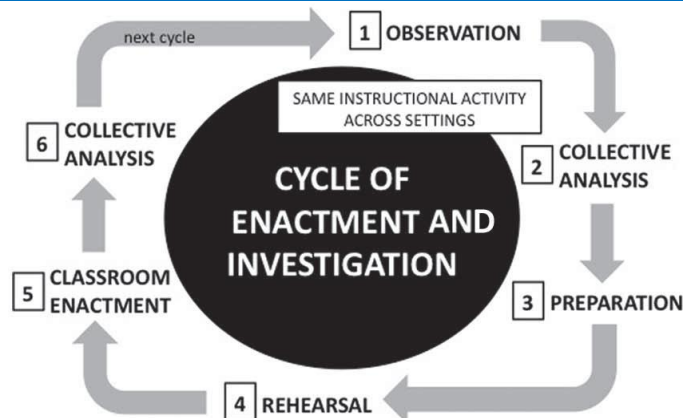
---

In 2014 2015, this participant/researcher led a group of neighborhood Grades 8/9 algebra teachers from nearby Chicago public schools with the goal to foster a community of teacher learner/leaders across grade levels and across schools. With the principals' approval, the goal of this group was for the teachers to take the lead to:

- select common lessons
- engage in collaborative after-school planning
- followed by mutual classroom observations
- post-lesson critiques

**Both the researcher and the teachers felt this project had mixed results.**

The approach to establish teacher community echoes the cycle of enactment and investigation described by Lampert, Franke, Kazemi, Ghousseni, Turrou, Beasley, Cunard & Crowe (2013) depicted in the model below:



During the first 10 minutes of this “research burst”, the researcher will describe this concept, activities and findings. She will answer questions about this experimental 2014-2015 Chicago grades 8/9 algebra teacher-led community across grade levels and neighboring schools.

The balance of this 30 minute session will be devoted to participants' responses to the strengths and limitations of this project. Participants will share their experiences as researchers and practitioners to refine this concept to see how it might be valuable in the future in Chicago and in their own districts.

### Questions

1. Are teacher-led collaborative groups are worthwhile?  
Why or why not?
2. How best to establish a teacher-led community toward practice improvements?
3. What are the benefits and limitations of mutual peer observations and critiques?
4. What are the barriers to trusting collaborations, locally, district-wide and nationally?
5. What role do formal teacher evaluation observations have in the establishment of trusting collaborative teacher-led groups?