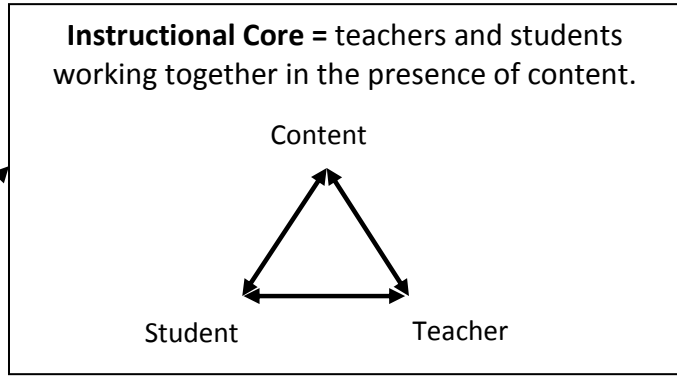
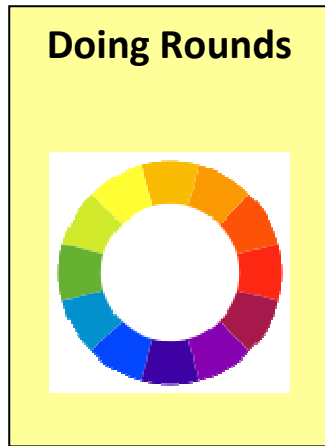
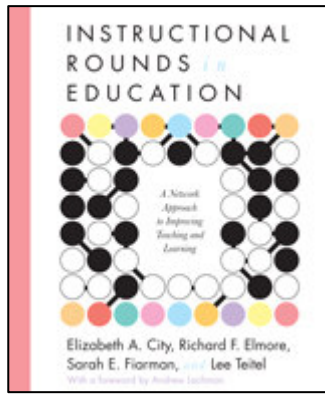


# Overview of 'Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning'



- Seven Principles of the Instructional Core**
- Increases in student learning occur only as a consequence of improvements in the level of content, teachers' knowledge and skill, and student engagement.
  - If you change any single element of the instructional core, you have to change the other two.
  - If you can't see it in the core, it's not there.
  - Task predicts performance.
  - The real accountability system is in the tasks that students are asked to do.
  - We learn to do the work *by doing the work*, *not* by telling other people to do the work, *not* by having done the work at some time in the past, and *not* by hiring experts who can act as proxies for our knowledge about how to do the work.
  - Description before analysis, analysis before prediction, prediction before evaluation.

- Theory of Action = "if we do X activity or approach, then we are likely to get Y outcome".**
- A theory of action is a set of causal connections, usually in the if-then form that serves as a story line that connects broad visions with the more specific strategies used to improve the instructional core.
- Key points:**
- A well-worked strategy in one domain may not work equally well in another.
  - In Rounds the development of theories of action should be modelled as a process of serial learning over time.
  - A simple and incomplete theory is better than no theory at all.
  - Strong norms of confidentiality and candour make collegial discussion of theories of action more powerful.
  - The theory of action can cut through the clutter to the instructional core.
  - Share your theory of action inside and outside your organisation.

- Three main requirements of a Theory of Action**
- It must begin with a *statement of causal relationship* between what I do – in my role as a Regional Network Leader, principal, teacher, coach etc. – and what constitutes a good result in the classroom.
  - It must be *empirically falsifiable*; that is, I must be able to disqualify all or parts of the theory as a useful guide to action that is based on evidence of what occurs as a consequence of my actions.
  - It must be *open ended*; that is, it must prompt me to further revise and specify the causal relationships I initially identified as I learn more about the consequences of my actions.

- Rounds** is a special kind of 'walkthrough', a special kind of 'network', and a special kind of 'improvement strategy' integrated into one practice.
- The Four Elements of Rounds:**
- Identifying a problem of practice.
  - Observing.
  - Debriefing.
  - Focusing on the next level of work.

- A picture of Rounds:**
- A network convenes in a school for Rounds visit hosted by a member or members of the network.
  - The network divides into smaller groups and visits a rotation of four or five classrooms for approximately 20 minutes each.
  - Network participants write down what they see and hear, gathering descriptive evidence related to the problem of practice.
  - After observations, the entire group assembles in a common location for a debriefing.
  - In the debriefing, participants work through a process of description, analysis and prediction.
  - Share observations in groups, capturing a body of evidence on the problem of practice, analysing the evidence for patterns.
  - Finally the network discusses the next level of work, recommendations for the school and system to make progress on the problem of practice.
- \*At the heart of Rounds is dialogue*

- The Whole Process of Rounds**
- Launching a network.
  - Learning to see, unlearning to judge.
  - Doing Rounds:
    - Problem of practice and observing.
    - Debriefing and the next level of work.
  - Facilitating Rounds.

## Description of Rounds Process

- 1. Launching Rounds:**
- Convene the network.
  - Muster and manage the resources.
  - Develop initial expectations and norms.
- Key Points:**
- Think about how you will design the mechanisms that facilitate continuous learning.
  - Encourage public learners.
  - Network functioning and learning needs to be tuned to improvement efforts.
  - It's not what you do, but how you do it that matters.
  - Allow the network to do the work.

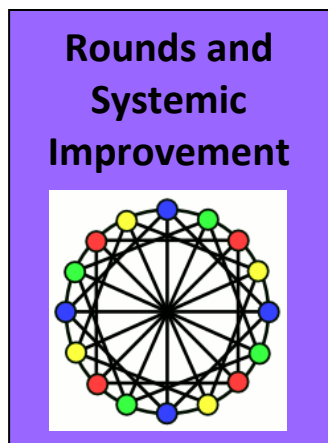
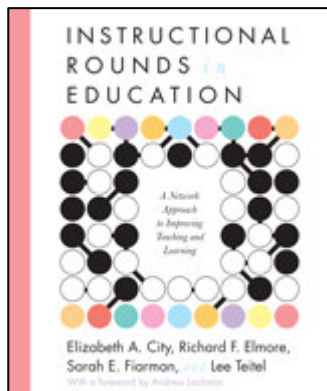
- 2. Learning to See, Unlearning to Judge**
- Key Points**
- Deciding in advance *what* to observe, *how* to observe, and most importantly, *how to talk about what is seen*.
  - Emphasis on being descriptive and collecting "judgement-free" evidence (the *Ladder of Inference* is very helpful).
  - Judgement words are conversation stoppers (e.g. good, great, weak, bad).
  - Three key questions rooted in the instructional core:**
    - What are teachers doing and saying?
    - What are students doing and saying?
    - What is the task?

- 3. Doing Rounds:**
- a. Problem of Practice and Observing**
- The Problem of Practice:**
- Focuses on instructional core.
  - Is directly observable.
  - Is actionable.
  - Connects to a broader strategy of improvement.
  - Is high-leverage.
- Observations should be:**
- Descriptive not evaluative.
  - Specific.
  - About the instructional core.
  - Related to the problem of practice.
- \*Focus on what the students are actually doing.*  
*\*\*Task predicts performance.*

- 3. Doing Rounds:**
- b. Debriefing and the Next Level of Work**
- Observation Debrief in teams discuss data:**
- Describe what you saw.
  - Analyse the descriptive evidence.
  - Predict what students are learning.
- The next level of work:**
- Share regional level theory of action.
  - Share resources, professional development and current initiatives.
  - Brainstorm the next level of work by week/month/end of year.
- \*Link description, analysis, prediction and the next level of work.*  
*\*\*Talk about what follow-up happens outside the network.*

- 4. Facilitating Rounds:**
- Facilitators:**
- Maximize network learning through careful planning and targeted professional development.
  - Focus on the four elements of Rounds.
  - Listen and guide learning.
  - Cultivate the network (set norms).
  - Model the work and are explicit.
  - Acknowledge individuals have different needs and preferences.
  - Guide through questions not answers.
  - Focus network on descriptive evidence.
- \*Co-facilitation works well (facilitators can be internal or external depending on network).*  
*\*\*Less is more.*

# Overview of 'Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning'



**Learning from Rounds =** bridging the practice of "Doing Rounds" to Systemic Improvement.

**Key Strategies:**

- Move learning in schools and school systems from individual to collective.
- Focus on descriptive voice to separate people and practice.
- Develop a common language and set norms to cultivate trust.
- Build efficacy through repeated practice of instructional Rounds.
- Encourage the network to question.

**The Five Principles of Learning from Rounds**

1. We learn to do the work by doing the work, reflecting on the work and critiquing the work.
2. Separate the person from the practice.
3. Learning is an individual and a collective activity.
4. Trust enhances individual and collective learning.
5. Learning enhances individual collective efficacy.

*\*the learning theory of Rounds allows networks to link the practice of Rounds, including the theory of action to how Rounds lead to systemic improvement.*

**Moving from Rounds to Large-Scale Improvements in Practice =** ideas and experiences of Rounds – the focus on the instructional core; the building of a collaborative learning culture; and the use of ideas like a theory of action to strategically focus improvement efforts – all have to become central to the core work of the school, network, region and system.

**Key Points:**

- Problems of practice are drawn from improvement strategies.
- The Rounds process focuses on those problems of practice.
- Evidence analysis and dialogue from the Rounds process inform both short- and longer- term plans for improvement at scale.
- Encourage the network to question.

**Bringing instructional improvement to scale through:**

- Developing a clearly articulated and collective understanding of what high-quality teaching and learning looks like.
- Building a collaborative learning culture.
- Developing and implementing coherent system wide strategies that support high-quality instructional practice in all classrooms.

**Preconditions for achieving large-scale instructional improvement:**

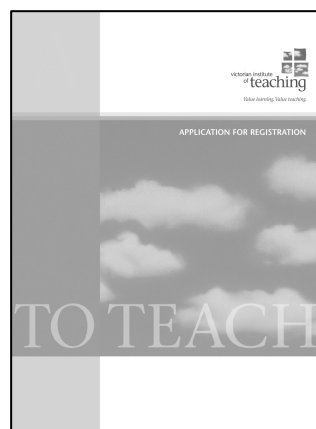
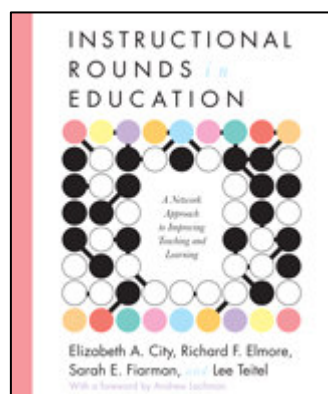
- The instructional core must become *the* work of educators.
- Involve the right people initially and recruit more and more people over time.
- Provide explicit expectations for individual, group and system learning and follow-up applications.
- Expect the network to learn over time.
- Expect new forms of accountability to develop.

**Instructional Rounds is most effective** as an accelerant to systemic improvement **when it moves** from being an additional activity **to being the work.**

Instructional Rounds is a means of moving education from a collection of more or less independent practitioners to a profession with:

- A shared set of practices.
- A body of collective knowledge.
- A set of mutual commitments that define professional accountability.

## A Profession with a Practice



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