2022-11-22_77_The Flywheel Part 2_FINAL audio

Last episode we looked at the flywheel through the lens of formative or group professional development. Remember, the flywheel refers to a set of practices that when executed over and over again, bill positive momentum that improves the organization and leads to fulfillment of the purpose. In a school, this translates to supporting teacher growth by providing professional development, following up with targeted observations. Collecting data and then using that data to work with teachers to plan subsequent rounds of professional development. Today, we'll look at how the flywheel changes when we focus on a specific teacher's growth as opposed to developing a group of teachers.

Hello colleagues and welcome to the Assistant Principal Podcast I'm your host, Frederick Busky. The goal of this podcast is to improve life and leadership for assistant principals. This is a content focused episode and this content stands on its own, but will also take a deeper dive into the topic and an upcoming issue of Quadrant 2. Members of our apex community can also expect to get support in implementing these ideas and adapting them to their own unique contexts.

You can learn more about Apex and Quadrant 2 at frederickbuskey.com backslash the assistant principal. I always begin with celebrations and the celebration is a little bit different than the one I had planned. I'm thankful for resiliency because I just wrapped up recording this 30 minute episode and noticed at the end that I actually didn't record it because I didn't hit the record button. So 10 minutes of reframing my mind and eating lots of chocolate, I'm back here doing it again. So let's all celebrate resiliency because we all have those moments. Remember in last week's flywheel example, we were supporting a group of early career teachers in implementing a beginning of class procedure.

We taught the teachers the components of good procedure and how to teach and reinforce them to their students. And then we followed up that professional development by collecting normative data. Remember, normative data is focused on a group of teachers, and that data will remain aggregated. We won't break it out per individual teacher and we'll share that data with the group and have them then make sense of that. And in our particular example of the beginning class procedure, there were three steps to that procedure, storing, sitting and writing.

We also wanted to collect data on the number of reinforcement statements that each teacher was making and the quality of those reinforcement statements. So were they just general or were they specific? We also looked at the types of prompts that were being used to redirect students who were struggling with the procedure, and then we took some generalized notes about just overall what was happening. After delivering that, perfect the initial professional development and in that normative phase, we did three classroom observations for each teacher, which gave us a total of nine classroom observations.

We aggregated that data and noticed that the writing prompts were a weak spot. And in talking with the teachers, we learned that there was a lack of clarity on what a good prompt looked like and then how to write that. So that would be the next round of professional development that we did with the group. But what about the flywheel used for an individual teacher? If you remember when we looked at our normative data as an ILT, when we broke that down into the disaggregated piece, we noticed that mister Gale's numbers were a lot different than what was happening with his peers. And this was especially true when we looked at the store step of the procedure and the number of reinforcement statements.

So while Miss Perrin and Miss Bishop had a 99 % success rate in students executing the store part of the procedure effectively, mister Galey's numbers were at 40 %. And when we looked at reinforcement. Out of the 9 observations, there were a total of 118 reinforcement statements, but of those 118 only six were from were from the three observations of mister Gale. So now we can pull this data out, just mister Galey's data, and we can sit down and have that conversation with him. Hey, still looks like the store step.

That first step is really a struggle. Let's talk about what do you think might be able to happen? Let's look at the data and see what's happening here. And in fact, at this point, we might compare mister Gale not with the individual teachers, but with the aggregated data from this parent and Miss Bishop. So in that mister Gale would see they were having a 99 % success rate where he was having 40 %, but then we'd really see that that reinforcement number of six out of 118 And so that could be the focus, right? Thinking what if we reinforce this? Let's talk through what do reinforcement statements look like specifically for that step on storing your stuff? What are the specific words that you might say to help students along to recognize when they're doing it correctly? And so we work through that and essentially then that is the coaching session.

As we resume review that data and have the conversation, that becomes the coaching session. And so Mr Gale agrees, yes, I'm going to focus on reinforcement and I'm going to focus specifically on doing more reinforcement during the store part of my procedure. So then we follow up with a formative observation. Now, this formative observation is actually using the same tool that we used in our normative observations, because it's the same focus. It's still that entering class procedure. So we go and we do our first observation a day or two days after having this coaching session with mister Gale. And we noticed that at this point, 16 out of the 23 kids effectively execute that first stage of the procedure storing.

Now previously. Mister Galey's total had been around 40 % and now he's hitting 66 %. So this is actually a really good improvement in terms of reinforcement statements, he gave 9. Well, he was averaging 2 previously. So 9 is a big improvement. But we also note the kind of the quality or tenor of these reinforcement statements are very general. So thank you, Aaron. Good, Rebecca. And so the next cycle of coaching is looking at this data and absolutely celebrating the successes and. Then thinking about, OK, what's our next step? How can we get what's happening that we can get this number 16.

How do we get that up to 23 Because that makes life better for your kids, but it also takes some stress off of you and gives you more instructional time. So what do we need to do? Maybe mister Gale can come up with some of that himself. Maybe not. He's probably going to say, well, I'm really struggling with Jason. This one kid is taking a lot of my attention and he's really slow. And in fact, we look and it took three minutes and 15 seconds for for everybody to get engaged and doing what they were supposed to be doing.

And Jason was the one that probably took an extra minute all by himself. So yes, we need to think about what we're going to do with Jason, but also what about these other six kids that are struggling? Still struggling with the store part. Would if you really amped U your reinforcement right? Let's exaggerate it. Let's just go over the top. So instead of nine, let's double that. Let's do 18 reinforcement statements.

Let's focus them on this store step. But let's also change the quality. So focus on from being general and just saying thank you, we're good. Let's focus on the specifics of the performance. And exactly what you want them to do. So good job storing your books under the desk. Or wherever they're supposed to store their stuff. Be very specific about it. Thank you for hanging up your coat or. Whatever it is. And so. Out of that, then we wait a day or two for mister Gale to practice that and we

go back and now we do a second formative observation.

And here's what we find. 22 out of 23 kids did the store step appropriately and in good time. And mister Gale gave 35 reinforcement statements, and those reinforcement statements were indeed specific. The total time went from three fifteen drop to two thirty five, so he's saving and the class is saving 40 seconds per period. We also noticed that there was lots of reinforcement with mister Gale actually smiling at students and that he had pulled away from the front of the classroom, so he was increasing his proximity.

So again, as we debrief the data, we really want to emphasize that, like, look what happened. You got away from your board, you're interacting with kids, you're smiling more, they're smiling more. That's a huge win. Let's celebrate that. And mister Gale is going to say, yeah, I really felt good. I feel happy where this is going, but what am I going to do with Jason? As we still have that one outlier now, we probably know at this point Jason is probably going to struggle with this the entire year.

He's a kid that's just not that dialed in. He's got all kinds of other things on his mind and getting into class and moving through the procedure quickly is not his priority. So we want to have the conversation with mister Gale about what are the specific supports that we can give to Jason and how do we prompt Jason and keep him moving through in a way that's not antagonistic because Jason's probably also the kind of kid that's. Getting pressured in every other class for not following procedures. And so we want to make sure that this is not negative or antagonistic. So we talk about the strategies for asking questions and asking prompts and using nonverbal communication just to help Jason move through the process, as well as being proximal.

And then absolutely, positively providing positive reinforcement and praise every time Jason gets anything right. So we we brainstorm these strategies and we list out maybe. Three different strategies that we want to focus on. We come back and we do a third round of formative observation. 23 out of 23 students are doing the store step effectively. Reinforcement is down from 35 statements to 21 statements. But that's OK, because kids don't need as much reinforcement because they now are getting in the habit of executing properly.

And we notice the kinds of prompts and support that mister Gale is giving Jason. And those are indeed being effective. It's still taking effort from mister Gale, but these things are being effective and it's keeping a positive climate and positive atmosphere. And we move from. Two minutes and 35 seconds down to one minute and 12 seconds. Everybody's in the classroom has their stuff stored, sitting down and writing to the prompt. So that effectively ends that coaching cycle and that takes us out of them that formative part of the flywheel with this individual teacher with mister Gale. I hope that's helpful.

There are some other things to think about. I think some of the bigger picture things that I want to emphasize as we begin to closeout this episode. First of all, implementing the flywheel, whether it's normative or formative. Implementing the flywheel is dependent on an infrastructure. And there are at least four things that you must have in place to be able to execute with any kind of consistency. The first is that you have to have a scheduled ILT meeting. It has to happen the same time every week and everybody needs to be there. Secondly, you need to have a structured agenda that's focused on teacher development. 3rd it really helps to have a teacher tracking document so that we can document what the focus areas are for each teacher when we're having that instructional leadership team meeting.

I actually did a whole episode on the teacher tracking document back in episode 14. You can go to my website and find the link to that and also a sample teacher tracking document there. That teacher tracking document is critical because it allows us to be consistent with feedback and with planning professional development. So let's just imagine for a minute that I'm the assistant principal

and I'm doing this coaching cycle with mister Gale. During that time, hopefully other members of leadership of the instructional leadership team are out in classrooms doing observations.

And so at some point, the principal and instructional coach may come through mister Galey's classroom and observe. During the time that I'm doing this coaching cycle and what happens if the principal comes in and leaves a follow up for mister Gale and says I want you to think about your questioning strategies and then the instructional coach comes through and says hmm. How was your lesson related to the teaching standard? Now both of those might be areas where mister Gale could improve.

But we're in the middle of a coaching cycle with mister Gale, just trying to get him to focus on that opening class procedure and we're close to a win. In fact, we know we can wrap that up in a week or two and then move on to the next thing. But when two other instructional leadership team members come in and offer differing feedback, now what's happening with mister Gale? Is he supposed to focus on the coaching session or now? Is he supposed to dig in and figure out how to use different questioning techniques? Or is he supposed to be going back and double checking? Standards my ideal.

He's doing all those three things. But to improve in three things at one time. That's dissipating our efforts and we're going to have much lower success. So by having that teacher tracking document, we all know, we all know that we're focusing on that beginning class routine for mister Gale. And so if I'm not coaching him through that and I find myself in that classroom either, I'm going to try to get in there at the beginning of class and just use the same observation form and collect that data so that I can be part of the support as well. Or if I'm in there during a different part of class, I do not want to leave any kind of critical corrective feedback.

I don't want to leave statements of. You know, I wonder statements because we want clarity that mister Gale is focusing on that beginning class procedure. Once that's done, hey, then we can have conversations about what comes next. But that teacher dragging document helps us all stay on the same page, which makes it much easier for our teachers. And then the fourth piece of infrastructure is that we have a system and a calendar for scheduling our observations so that we make commitments at the end of every ILT about which classrooms we're going to get in and when we're going to do those observations.

Another thing that's required in the flywheels is skills. We need to be able to either adapt or create our own instruments to do those targeted observations. We need to be able to record data accurately in multiple forms. Then we need to be able to lead conversations around that data with teachers. Another important element of the flywheel is that we need to trust our teachers. We need to trust them to take that data that we're collecting for them.

And for them to be able to lead that process. Remember that we can use the flywheel for supporting groups of teachers, but we also can use it for supporting teachers individually. And those individual elements will look dramatically different. If I'm working with an early career teacher that's struggling as mister Gale was, that's going to look very different than if I have a high performing veteran teacher who has identified a very specific questioning strategy that she wants to try out and learn.

So the individualized, formative parts of a flywheel are going to have to be adapted to the specific needs of teachers. So the vision is that everyone in the school is growing all the time. It would be almost impossible, I think, for a team to go out and just implement this in this school and do it for every single teacher. That's a recipe for disaster. Remember, we want to keep things simple. We want to decrease effort and therefore increase motivation. And we want to step, we want to move A to B. So if you don't have your flywheel in place.

The first step is to schedule your IO ILT meeting and begin meeting. The second step is to develop a structured agenda. The third step is to start tracking teacher progress and in that I would start with one teacher. Just pick one teacher that you'll want to focus on and support and start tracking that individual teachers progress and. Once you get that system in place around one teacher. Then add a couple more. And again, I would suggest starting with your early career teachers. Because those are the people that investing the time and support in now is going to pay the longest term dividends. So a lot of content.

This was a very nuts and bolts focused episode. I hope it's helpful. If you're already into elements of those flywheel, I hope there was some clarity for you. Even if you're not doing a flywheel, I hope there's some support for you in just how we breakdown the observation tool and how we can have those conversations with teachers. But I really hope that. You either have it or you're considering implementing the flywheel. So a couple questions to close this out, reflective questions for you. Where are you in this journey of flywheel implementation? What's holding you back? Or if you haven't started, what's holding you back if you're into it? What are the what's the next hurdle? What's the next step for you? And then I guess this 40.000 thousand foot question.

How can your school get better? If you don't have a system. For consistently growing your teachers. Ok, that wraps up today's content focused episode. We'll be back next week with Doctor David Franklin, who has founded and overseas a wonderful Facebook community for school leaders. I'm not a huge fan of Facebook, but David's provided a really nice safe space for school leaders to interact. That group is called the principal's desk, and if you want to join, you'll need to request access. If you do decide to ask to join the principal's desk on Facebook, please mention that you heard about the group on the podcast.

That would encourage both he and myself. And if you enjoyed today's show, please subscribe and rate this podcast. You can ask questions, make requests, and give us feedback at frederickfrederickhusky.com In fact, I'd really love to hear some comments about the flywheel. The challenge of doing a podcast is the lack of feedback so. I can look and see that our downloads are increasing, but I don't know exactly what aspects of the show are resonating with you.

So I would love it if you would drop me a line at frederick@frederickhusky.com and just tell me was this it? Was this good for you? How could I have changed this to serve you better? And what would be the next steps that you'd like to take listening to the podcast or maybe with me in some other way? We will be releasing an upcoming issue of our micro journal Quadrant 2 that's focused on the flywheel O. If you aren't already subscribed, you can go to Frederick Buskey com backslash quadrant two.

That wraps up today's show. I'm Frederick Buskey, and I hope you'll join me next time for the Assistant Principal podcast cheers.