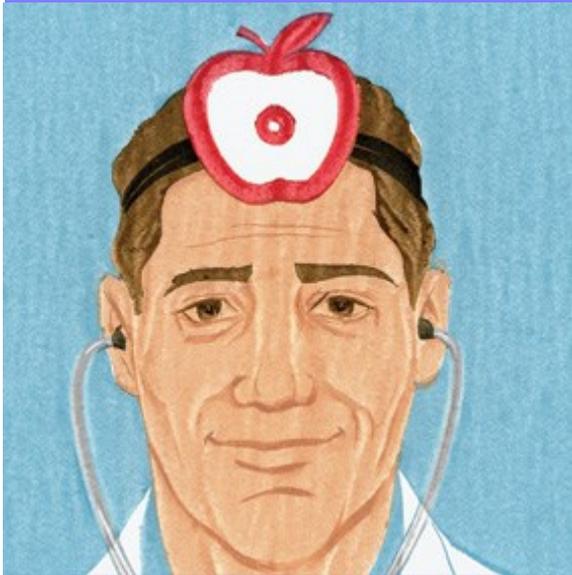


# Instructional Networking @ Los AI

2012—2013 School Year



**A Guide To Professional Development  
For Teachers Of All Content**



## Essential Elements Of Instructional Networking:

- CHOOSE A FOCUS AREA
- IDENTIFY TEACHERS INTERESTED IN BEING OBSERVED
- COMPLETE EACH ROUND IN GROUPS OF 4-8
- IMMEDIATELY DEBRIEF
  - ① DISCUSS
  - ② REFLECT
  - ③ EVOLVE
- IMPLEMENT A NEW PRACTICE OR VALIDATE A CURRENT METHODOLOGY

## Why Can't Teachers Be Like Doctors?

The Answer Is "We Can." Teachers At Los Al Are Encouraged To Go On *Rounds* To Observe Each Other Teach Regularly...

Just as doctors make medical rounds in a hospital and employ a system of consultation, one of the major components of Instructional Networking is making Instructional *Rounds*, wherein teachers develop a shared practice of observing, discussing, and analyzing teaching and learning. The basic premise of Instructional Networking is that people best learn about the meaning of high quality instruction by observing teachers, students, and the work students are asked to do, followed by meaningful conversation and analysis.

By sharing rather than critiquing, teachers can reconsider their own instructional practices to validate what they do well, to observe new ideas they can incorporate into their classrooms, and to develop more effective strategies for delivering content to their students.

In the end, Instructional Networking @ Los Al is a culture. It's predicated on the belief that there's so much to learn when we all open our doors.

## What Rounds Is And Is Not...

Instructional Networking At Los Alamitos High School Relies On A Shared Understanding Of What *Rounds* Should Be Used For...

### Instructional Rounds Is:

- Always professional. We talk about *practices* not *people*.
- A way to accelerate large-scale instructional improvement.
- Non-judgmental.
- A complement to other professional development initiatives and supports all improvement strategies in the classroom.
- A mindset – believing that colleagues can learn from you, and that you can learn from your colleagues.
- Collegial and inclusive.

### Instructional Rounds Is Not:

- Punitive. We come together to learn and grow, never to be evaluated.
- Isolated pockets of good teaching.
- Just for new teachers... it's for everyone!
- The only way to evolve one's teaching practice.
- About identifying one particular strategy or method of teaching.



# Here's How We Made Rounds In 2013

In The First Year Of Instructional Networking, LAHS Teachers Utilized Three Types Of *Rounds*.: Formal, Informal, And One Specialized School-Wide *Round* We Called "An Aquarium"

## Formal Instructional Rounds

In the 2012-2013 school year, there were twelve (formal) Instructional Rounds opportunities that existed for teachers over the course of 10 months. Each Round was followed by a separate debriefing discussion session. These Rounds also had a clearly stated focus established before the Round began, e.g., *Student Engagement, Technology In The Classroom, Gradual Release Of Responsibility (or the "I Do," "We Do," "You Do" framework)*. In the first year of Instructional Networking, there were 48 teachers who volunteered their classrooms and/or time to participate in making formal Rounds.

## Informal Instructional Rounds

27 teachers at Los Al volunteered to open their doors for colleagues to visit their classrooms throughout the year. A list of participating teachers was sent to all members of the staff and many teachers took advantage of opportunities to make visits based on their own identified area of interest. Last year alone, there were over 200 visitations!

## Information & Statistics

- Over 200 classroom observations made either by formal or informal visits.
- 39 different teachers were observed.
- 48 different teachers observed.
- **Total Participation** (either giving or observing a lesson) 75 different teachers, or 66% of the staff.

### First Set of Rounds

Date: November 14, 2012  
 Focus: Student Engagement  
 Set #1 w/Mossy Kennedy (5 teachers)  
 Set #2 w/Mossy Kennedy (6 teachers)  
 Set #3 w/Mossy Kennedy (6 teachers)

### Second Set of Rounds

Date: December 14, 2012  
 Focus: Student Engagement  
 Set #1 w/Kathy Currie (7 teachers)  
 Set #2 w/Kathy Currie (4 teachers)  
 Set #3 w/Kathy Currie (7 teachers)

### Third Set of Rounds

Date: February 12, 2013  
 Focus: "I do, we do, you do" instruction  
 Set #1 w/Mossy Kennedy (5 teachers)  
 Set #2 w/Eric Anderson (4 teachers)  
 Set #3 w/Kelly Rofe (4 teachers)

### Fourth Set of Rounds

Date: April 25, 2013  
 Focus: Technology in the Classroom  
 Set #1 w/Brandon Hart, Chromebooks (5 teachers)  
 Set #2 w/Dan Bennett, iPads (8 teachers)  
 Set #3 w/Debbie Brosius, Paperless Class (7 teachers)



## “The Aquarium” – February 15, 2013

Bigger Than A “Fishbowl,” Los Al’s Common Core Aquarium Was A Schoolwide Effort To Participate In Instructional Rounds

The Common Core Aquarium, conducted on a whole-school Staff Development Day in February, featured thirty students situated in the front of a college-style Lecture Hall (Room 153/154). In front of them (and also alongside of them and among them) was former Garden Grove English teacher Crystal Jerabek, who delivered a lesson on “Media Analysis.” The task for students was to “imagine they have been hired by a company to analyze the effectiveness of an ad campaign.” Behind the students, in a U-shaped seating gallery, were over 200 Los Al teachers, counselors, administrators, and district personnel watching and taking notes on the lesson. Meant to simulate an “aquarium,” in which observers watch a natural environment without disrupting or changing it, Los Al teachers studied the dynamics of teaching and learning during the lesson’s delivery and jotted down thoughts and reflections to bring up during the debriefing sessions that immediately followed.

### **The Power Is Always In The Debrief...**

Lead by Instructional Networking Coordinator Kathy Currie and School Principal Dr. Arnold, two simultaneous debriefing sessions took place that split half the Los Al staff with the students that had just been taught, and the other half with the instructor who designed and delivered the lesson. The idea was for the two groups to separately focus their discussions on “teaching” or “learning,” and then switch who they debriefed with after 25 minutes so that they could experience both perspectives.

In a follow-up survey of the participants, 74% of responding staff members would like to have more “Aquarium-like” opportunities to exist throughout the school year.

### **Using *Networking* For Common Core...**

Throughout the school year, we came to see a clear relationship between the way we were using Instructional Networking as a professional development model and the upcoming implementation of Common Core State Standards in 2014. Here’s what we noticed:

- Instructional Networking is an effective way to get feedback and share ideas when it comes to implementing Common Core lessons in the classroom.
- Collaborating across content areas is facilitated by Instructional Networking, as well as expected in the Common Core State Standards.
- Tips and tools regarding technology implementation are easily observed through Networking – a requisite skill under Common Core.

### *On The Aquarium...*

“The idea for the ‘aquarium’ came about because of two things. First, we’ve built a culture of sharing and reflecting as a result of our *Instructional Networking* protocol. And, second, we want the opportunity to define what Common Core teaching will be for ourselves. We believe our teachers have tons of knowledge about what works in the classroom, and providing the opportunity to observe a lesson and consider specific strategies across every content area goes a long way towards tapping into our collective experience.”

– Principal Arnold

## STUDENT

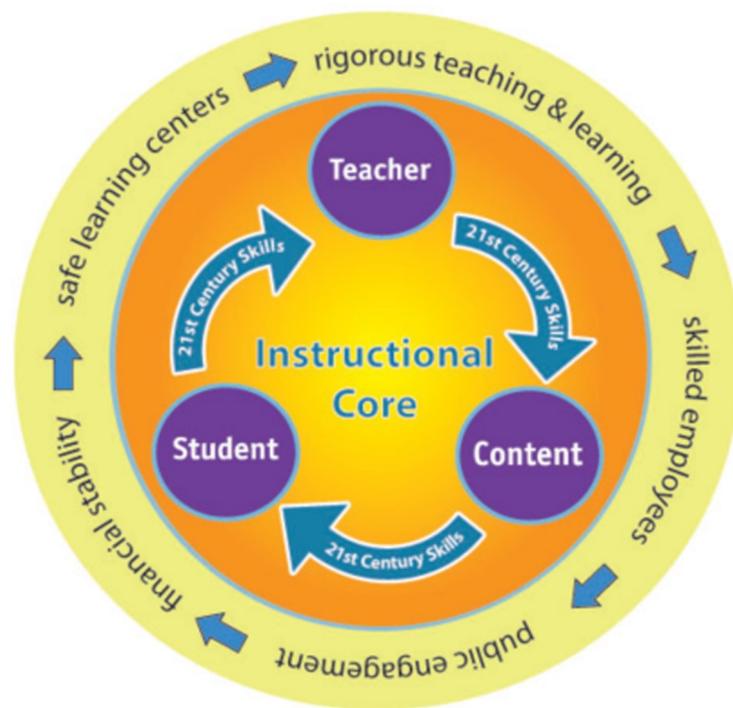
Instructional Networking works first and foremost to serve each of our Griffins so that we can provide them with the highest quality education possible over their four years at Los Alamitos High School.

## TEACHER

Teachers benefit from Instructional Networking, not only by way of their own personal and professional growth, but because of the interpersonal relationships they form with colleagues throughout each cycle of *Rounds*.

## CONTENT

Across content areas, Instructional Networking highlights the best teaching practices – with each strategy able to be applied in multiple contexts and a wide range of disciplines. Teachers grow their own content knowledge as well by spending time in a colleague's classroom.



## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE INSTRUCTIONAL CORE

What we discovered throughout the year as a result of Instructional Networking was powerful. Perhaps nothing was more affirming about the process than our validation that at the heart of everything we do is "The Instructional Core." That is, there is nothing more important at our school than the relationship between our teachers, our students, and whatever piece of content they are in the midst of. From athletic coaches to Visual and Performing Arts teachers, focusing on "The Instructional Core" is critical to each teacher's ability to be effective for their students. As a result, we focus our people, resources, and energy on cultivating and supporting these relationships, and continue to build a culture of love and excellence so as to maximize our students' outputs and learning goals.

### Here's what else we learned:

- Classroom Environment is an important part of building relationships between students and teachers.
- Content is made more meaningful when depth, complexity, and rigor are components of the learning process.
- Classroom Management is essential – expectations, routines, and procedures maximize the time teachers teach and student's learn.
- Collaboration is a necessary part of professional growth; we learn as much from each other as we do anywhere else.



## Where Do We Go From Here?

In 2013-2014, The Link Between Instructional Networking And Common Core Will Get Even Stronger

Common Core State Standards are sequential and spiraling, building on prior knowledge to deepen rigor. Compared to current classroom skills, students will be engaged in more technical reading, in-depth writing, defending and offering evidence to support answers on papers and in class. Our Griffins will develop more projects, perform more research, and participate in more debates than ever before. And all of this is good! It just means parts of our teaching practice are going to have to evolve.

Because of the emphasis on less breadth of content and more depth, the greatest challenge in changing our teacher practice to reflect Common Core goals will be developing strategies to take students deeper into the content than we ever have before. And because of our school culture – one in which collaborative inquiry and the sharing of best practices is the norm – classroom instruction will be strengthened by an increase in the frequency of Instructional Networking. By observing more and more colleagues implement Common Core-focused lessons, teachers can restructure their practices so that students will learn in deeper, more authentic ways.

Instructional Networking in 2013-2014 will be the vehicle for implementing this change at Los Alamitos High School.

### Depth, Complexity, And Rigor For All

One of the key challenges of Common Core State Standards implementation is to create the kind of classroom instruction that successfully prepares students for new levels of rigor. The Instructional Networking Program has allowed teachers the opportunity to have deep professional dialogue with colleagues as part of a structured learning process. As a result, teachers have increased their skills in creating effective and engaging lessons.

As we move forward into the next school year, Instructional Networking will continue to grow and flourish. Here's what you can do to ensure "Making The Rounds" is a part of your own personal and professional development:

- Observe somebody teach. Even if it's informal, or just for a few minutes... it's impact is powerful.
- Get feedback on one of your lesson's from a friend. (Teaching can be isolating at times, so it's crucial to get some perspective from someone you trust.)
- Go on a *Round!* Remember, Instructional Networking is a culture; you can support it by opening your door

### Some Quotes...

Regarding the Aquarium... "The real staying power, for me, was in the debrief."

– Dan Bennett, Science Teacher

"I have to say that day (formal rounds) and others I observed this year have truly taught this old dog some new tricks too."

– Eileen Smith, English Teacher

"It was a pleasure having you come by and I feel so lucky to be surrounded by teachers that encourage and challenge me at the same time! I have really enjoyed visiting classrooms and seeing how I can use practices in my own class."

– Wendy Harvey, Math Teacher

"Thank you for the opportunity to go out into the 'world out there' beyond my World Language micro-cosm! I enjoyed Eric's class; it has definitely made me more aware of my teaching and presentation."

– Maria Ezcurra, Spanish Teacher

## IT'S ABOUT STUDENT LEARNING

We believe that in order for instruction to be meaningful for our students, we need to continuously evolve and adapt our practices to meet the needs of the 21st Century Learner. At Los Al, we've focused our efforts on Instructional Networking as a way to identify, spread, and cultivate best practices in the era of Common Core.

Teaching is, both, an art and a science. And since there isn't just one "way" of delivering rigorous content with high quality strategies, we look to our colleagues for ideas, inspiration, innovation and more.

The bottom line is, when we try something new, or get feedback on a lesson from a friend, we know at the center of it all is a drive to be the best we can be for our students.



# Instructional Networking

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