



Principal Implementation Networks: Leveraging the Power of Collaboration

Citation

Williams, Jamaal Lee. 2021. Principal Implementation Networks: Leveraging the Power of Collaboration. Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

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Principal Implementation Networks:
Leveraging the Power of Collaboration

Doctor of Education Leadership (Ed.L.D.)
Capstone

Submitted by

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To the Harvard Graduate School of Education
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education Leadership.

May 2021

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Dedications

To my family, Aarin Williams, Moriah Williams, future Williamses, Kookie Williams, Tremain Williams, Jade Williams, T'keyah Williams, and Adriane Ables. My journey from poverty to first-generation college graduate, and Dr. Williams was inspired by you all. Thank you for your love and support.

Acknowledgments

I am eternally grateful to the many people who contributed to this accomplishment. Although this will not be comprehensive or do them justice, I would like to acknowledge the following people.

My family – specifically my wife, Aarin, and mother-in-law, Adriane, who sacrificed a great deal of time, money, and personal comfort over the past three years so that I could pursue my dream of going away to college and earning my doctorate.

My cohort 9 friends and colleagues – especially Tim Moriarty and Eric Becerra with whom I formed life-long connections.

My Capstone committee – Elizabeth City, Drew Echelson, and Denise Wren who offered feedback and support to help me grow my leadership capabilities throughout my residency.

The AVID Center team – including but not limited to Sandy Husk, Thuan Nguyen, Robert Logan, Jessica Thayer, Brett Bowers, Allen Johnson, and Mira Gobel for being my teachers throughout my residency year.

The Ed.L.D. faculty – Monica Higgins, Jal Mehta, Deborah Jewell-Sherman, Kathryn Boudett, Irvin Scott, Lisa Lahey, Adria Goodson, Martin West, Paul Reville, and Robert Goodman, and Marshall Ganz. Your insights greatly expanded my view of the education sector and how to create meaningful change.

Ann and Paul Chen for making it possible for me to pursue my dreams and further my impact with the Chen Fellowship.

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Abstract

As a leader in the College and Career space, AVID reaches more than 2 million students nationwide by supporting schools and districts in removing barriers to student success. With more than 7000 principals striving to integrate the AVID College and Career Readiness Framework into their school's systems, it makes sense for them to collaborate to develop collective knowledge and improve impact

In July of 2020, I began my residency with AVID Center during a global COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this challenging context, I aspired to create principals' implementation networks at new AVID sites. The goal was to determine if a cohort of new principals with support from veteran AVID principals could collaborate and share knowledge to accelerate the successful integration of AVID systems at their schools.

I modeled the New Site Principal Network loosely after knowledge networks, and I relied on the ongoing support of the Professional Learning and Leadership team and Leadership Steering Committee. Using Design Thinking to empathize with principal needs, I created a product that provided principals value. It justified the time commitment and elevated another option for how AVID can support its partners with integrating AVID systems at their school.

Despite some success, the project also demonstrated how difficult change could be, especially during times of uncertainty. It also left some unanswered questions about the viability of this network model. For example, will principals commit to long-term collaboration? This capstone documents what I learned during the design and early implementation phase of this project.

Introduction

I am a first-generation college graduate who came from a family and community where generational poverty was all too common. Despite our circumstances, my peers and I all had hope for our future. Not knowing what to expect, we enrolled in our local community college, hoping to create a better life. I struggled through college, and when I graduated, I was alone. My seven siblings and all my friends did not make it. This sense of loneliness has stayed with me and inspires my work as an educator. It inspires me to break down barriers so that more students have the opportunity to pursue their hopes and dreams.

As a third-year teacher, I had the opportunity to become a high school AVID elective teacher and District Director when our new principal chose me to take over the program. The experience was the best of my career in education thus far. I recruited and inspired middle school students, expanding the number of AVID students from 120 to over 200. I used AVID resources, curriculum, and support services to ensure over 90 percent of the school's AVID seniors were accepted into a 4-year college. After a successful year, I was excited about the future. My excitement was dashed when my principal, who had allowed me to lead the AVID program, called me in his office to inform me that he was developing a master schedule where I would no longer be the only AVID elective teacher. He identified four additional teachers who would go to AVID's Summer Institute to be trained and join me on the AVID Site Leadership Team. I did not understand what he was doing. I was the best teacher for the job, and I had proven it. But my principal had bigger plans for AVID. He realized that if he wanted AVID's culture and instructional practices to permeate the campus, we needed a team of AVID

proponents. His plan worked, and AVID grew and continues to flourish at my former school ten years later. His leadership not only made a difference for the students who were at the school when he was, but it also continues to impact students today. My sister was an AVID student at the school, and in 2020 she became the second person in my family to graduate college. I am no longer alone!

Because I experienced the difference a principal's vision and execution can make in students' lives, I was drawn to how AVID Center can support principals in their leadership development and what principals can learn from their peers. Specifically, how can principals lead the successful integration of the AVID College and Career Readiness (CCR) framework systems at their site to accelerate student learning, and what role can a peer network play in the process? This capstone will explore the possibility of using a principal implementation network to accelerate learning and improve AVID implementation at scale.

AVID Center

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to close the opportunity gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. AVID was founded in San Diego, California, in 1980 by Mary Catherine Swanson, a high school English teacher. Swanson started the program with the belief that if students from disadvantaged areas of San Diego were willing to work hard, she could teach them the skills they needed to be prepared for college.

Although Mary started with just 32 students at one school in 1980, AVID's success led the California Department of Education to fund program expansion in 1986, and 40

years after the first 32 students enrolled in the program, AVID now serves over 2 million students in 47 states. AVID was able to increase the number of students it reaches by expanding its program offerings. For example, AVID was originally only available as an elective course at the high school level but has since been expanded to serve students in elementary and middle schools. AVID also introduced the schoolwide initiative to get all teachers at a site trained in AVID strategies impacting all students.

However, as is familiar with many education reforms, there was variance in schools' success in implementing the CCR framework systems when AVID was scaled up. Starting in 1989 to support schools in executing the program's vision, AVID began hosting Summer Institutes where educators from schools that adopted the AVID program came for professional learning and prepared for the upcoming school year. Key to planning and execution was AVID's establishment of a Site Team and Leadership Team model to collaborate and drive the implementation with fidelity. AVID also began offering professional learning opportunities and site coaching throughout the school year. The professional learning for principals focuses on the CCR framework and building capacity in four schoolwide domains that are key for successful integration of AVID systems: (1) Instruction; (2) Leadership; (3) Culture; and (4) Systems. Professional learning became the primary lever by which AVID supported sites with implementation, and over time AVID has expanded its support options. Now AVID offers professional learning during the summer, throughout the school year, site coaching, and networking events where leaders can connect and discuss common challenges.

Operations

AVID Center has regional offices in San Diego, California, and Dallas, Texas. The executive team resides in California, creating AVID's high-level strategic direction. The executive team is also responsible for strategic relationships, cultivating the brand, and executing the growth strategy endorsed by the board. The Professional Learning and Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Business Services, and Research divisions operate out of the San Diego office and develop strategic initiatives to execute its vision. They develop materials and provide support to three regional geographic teams. The Western, Central, and Eastern regions support more than 7,000 schools within AVID. Regional leadership consists of directors, associate directors, program managers, and support staff. The regions utilize the resources and materials created by the Teaching and Learning and Professional Learning and Leadership teams to support schools with implementation. AVID also employs on-call part-time employees (OCPTE) to facilitate professional learning.

Assets and Constraints

AVID has considerable assets, all of which are, and can be, leveraged to support improvement and growth. It has been successfully operating in the field for 40 years and has built strong connections to local, state, and national education leaders. Thousands of students have graduated from college because of the support that AVID provides. These students and countless teachers, administrators, and parents form a palpable community that champions the impact of AVID. This impact includes first-generation low-income AVID students graduating from college within six years at a rate of 42 percent compared to just 11 percent for their non-AVID peers (AVID Center, 2021). AVID also boasts a

strong organizational culture that prizes supporting one another internally and externally, resulting in AVID staff working collaboratively alongside partners to ensure success.

AVID has also amassed an experienced and talented group of educators to execute the work. Every arm of the organization has former superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, teachers, instructional coaches, private sector leaders, entrepreneurs, and other diverse stakeholders. The rich professional experiences and ethnic diversity making up AVID's team support different ideas and approaches to the work.

One constraint to the AVID model is efficiently supporting more than 7,000 unique schools with implementation while growing. AVID plans to scale to reach 5 million students by 2025. The board and the executive leadership team recognize that given AVID's successful track record and resources available to expand, they would be remiss not to impact as many students as possible. In the last two years, AVID has added nearly 1,200 new schools that are all in need of differentiated support with implementation. Some schools join AVID as part of a district-supported initiative, others are entering as part of a district with well-established AVID schools, and some are the only school in their district with AVID. An aggressive growth strategy, differentiated needs, and the schools' geographic dispersion make travel and support challenging.

The COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to be another constraint because it disrupts AVID's core business model of in-person support and relationships. AVID has turned this into an opportunity to accelerate its move to becoming a significant source of virtual support for educators through video coaching and professional learning opportunities facilitated using an online platform. While disruptive in the short term, AVID is building systems that will allow the organization to provide virtual support to partner

schools and districts. Since virtual support is less time and cost-intensive, it will enable the organization to meet partner sites' implementation demands better.

Personal Connection

In high school, I aspired to attend college, but I did not know how to do it or a network that could support me through the process. My school had an AVID elective course, but I was not approached as a candidate, and neither were any of my friends. I did not know how to advocate for myself. I internalized not being selected as an AVID student to mean my teachers and administrators did not believe I was college material. I slipped through the cracks, as did many of my peers. Some students at my school were benefitting from AVID, but many were not. My struggle to get to and through college factors deeply into why I am an educator. AVID's mission to close the opportunity gap directly aligns with my mission to break down barriers and provide every student with the opportunity to pursue their dreams. I believe that principals can set a vision and implement AVID systems that motivate and help teachers remove barriers to student success. It is not good enough to just have the AVID elective. There must be a culture shift at the school to ensure AVID is implemented with fidelity and all students succeed. This is not easy work to lead, and principals can learn from those who continue to do it.

As a former principal and aspiring systems leader, one of my strengths is my ability to bring people together to serve a shared vision or goal. My professional experiences have taught me that working on problems collaboratively is the most effective route to success. My affinity for collaborative problem solving was aroused when I was introduced to networked improvement communities (NICs) during my first semester in the Education Leadership doctoral program. I was intrigued by how the

Carnegie Foundation and Anthony Bryk's work on NICs could be adapted to accelerate learning, continuous improvement, and implementation of proven AVID strategies and systems. How can principals who are trying to solve common implementation problems of practice learn from each other's successes and failures and use the group's collective intelligence to accelerate the improvement of systems that support college and career readiness for all students?

Strategic Project

My strategic project with AVID Center is an opportunity for me to learn how to lead school improvement at scale by focusing on supporting school leaders in leveraging their collective learning regarding AVID implementation. The project had two phases: a design phase where I focused on building a product that met organizational and principal needs and an implementation phase where I collected data and sought to improve the NSPN. Using Design Thinking and the support of many AVID leaders, I created a New Site Principal Network (NSPN) that was loosely based on networked improvement communities NICs (Bryk, 2017) and knowledge networks (Prusak, 2013). My target audience for the NSPN was 1046 principals at sites in the 1st and 2nd year of implementation. In this capstone, I explore the process of designing and implementing this network to support principals at sites that are new to AVID implementation. The high-level goal of the NSPN was for principals to attack common problems of practice (PoP) related to AVID performance utilizing quick Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycles and a peer network to accelerate learning and improvement. In discussing the process of network design, I will highlight navigating inter-organizational dynamics to establish influence and buy-in and managing change in the way AVID supports principals and the

way principals collaborate with peers. My long-term vision for the New Site Principal Network (NSPN) was that, upon completing the pilot, AVID would scale the NSPN to include all new AVID partner schools. The principals at these 500 or so new schools each year would become part of a team of peer principals who share a similar context and have a common goal of improving the college and career readiness of students at their school by collaborating on integrating AVID systems.

Macro-Context

Under normal circumstances, the school principalship demands make it difficult to set aside urgent day-to-day responsibilities to focus on collaboration for improvement. In 2020 this challenge was acutely magnified by a pandemic, social unrest, economic crisis, and political division that required the principal's consistent attention. I entered residency at a challenging time for the education sector. The Coronavirus pandemic was transforming the way that education was delivered for students while at the same time changing how AVID served its partners. Both schools and service providers such as AVID had to pivot to a virtual support model, and it was unclear when or if things would return to normal. Adding to the uncertainty in the way services were provided, AVID was under immense budgetary pressure due to lost revenue from in-person summer training events. Some employees were laid off, and the future was unclear because of the financial constraints that states could soon be facing due to the pandemic. As a result, quality customer service and the return on investment partners experienced was vital heading into the 2020-2021 school year. This unprecedented level of change is the context in which my strategic project was developed.

Review of Knowledge for Action

My strategic project's successful execution required expertise in two areas of research: leading change and network design. Leading change was key to the process I took to gain the support needed to launch an improvement network during a global pandemic successfully. I needed to answer the following questions: *How do I lead a strategic project during a time of great uncertainty? How do I communicate its value, influence others to support the project, and convince them that it is important enough to focus on despite the uncertainty and urgency of the moment?*

Network design was the second research area needed to create a service that offered substantial value to clients. I wanted to use the research to understand better: *How do I design a network that encourages continuous participation, supports the successful implementation of AVID systems and is sustainable?* I researched networked improvement communities, implementation science, design-based performance, knowledge networks, and human-centered processes to advise the network's content.

Process Research: Leading Change

The Coronavirus pandemic brings a lot of uncertainty to the education sector, and the work to manage this pandemic has drained many principals who shoulder a great deal of responsibility. My first obstacle was to convince principals that they should spend their time engaging in an improvement network despite other urgent priorities. This context required me to understand how to develop and communicate a compelling value proposition. The key was to create a sense of urgency around what is important. Creating a sense of urgency is the first step in Kotter's 8 Step Change Process (Kotter, 1995). I needed to influence the principal's thinking. They had a sense of urgency around

addressing the learning loss that students were experiencing due to the pandemic. It was my job to connect the potential of AVID to accelerate learning on their campus through participation in the NSPN. In framing it this way, participation in the NSPN became urgent and important and belonged in quadrant 1 of Eisenhower's Matrix below.



Figure 1. Eisenhower Matrix (Oppong, 2017, 4)

Another critical challenge in leading this work was that while the individual district and school leaders that AVID supports were facing challenges, AVID dealt with its pandemic-related struggles. To effectively implement the AVID New Site Principal Network (NSPN) pilot, I needed a strategy for answering these questions:

1. How do I pilot a change in how AVID currently handles networking amid uncertain times?

2. How can I effectively influence leaders across the organization to gain their support for the NSPN project despite other pressing concerns?
3. How do I operate in an uncertain, ambiguous environment and build a coalition of people to carry out the work?
4. How do I design a network that provides principals with a positive return on their investment of time despite other urgent concerns?

Despite entering my residency site during great uncertainty, I sought to find answers to these questions and successfully implement my strategic project. I began my research with frameworks and tools from Ronald Heifetz's book *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* to give me some direction. He outlines four stages for leading in times of ambiguity. According to Heifetz, the first stage is diagnosing the system from a balcony perspective. It is easier for me to do this because I am not immersed in the whirlwind the same way that most employees are. Heifetz suggests that while on the balcony, many will recognize a status quo that protects itself by limiting reflection (Heifetz, 2009). In *Teaching Smart People How to Learn*, Chris Argyris presents a way to mitigate this through the lens of double-loop learning. Double-loop learning requires leaders to get on the balcony and reflect on their behavior and how it may be contributing to a problem the organization is facing (Argyris, 1991). As I began my strategic project, I reflected on two questions from a systems perspective: 1. Why were some schools able to successfully implement AVID while others were not, and 2. Given the pandemic, how can my strategic project provide timely value for our Partners?

The 2nd Stage of the Heifetz model was discerning the type of challenge I was facing. Was I addressing a technical challenge, an adaptive challenge, or both? According

to Heifetz, determining this is vital because a leading cause of failure is neglecting to do this (Heifetz, 2010). Heifetz defines these challenges as, “...technical challenges may be very complex and critically important (like replacing a faulty heart valve during cardiac surgery). They have known solutions that are implemented using current know-how. Adaptive challenges can only be addressed through changes in people’s priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties” (Heifetz, 2009, 19). The diagram below is a tool that can be used to determine what type of challenge you have.

KIND OF WORK	PROBLEM DEFINITION	SOLUTIONS & IMPLEMENTATION	PRIMARY LOCUS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WORK
TECHNICAL	CLEAR	CLEAR	AUTHORITY
TECHNICAL & ADAPTIVE	CLEAR	REQUIRES LEARNING	AUTHORITY & STAKEHOLDER
ADAPTIVE	REQUIRES LEARNING	REQUIRES LEARNING	STAKEHOLDER AUTHORITY

Figure 2. Technical Problems and Adaptive Challenges (Heifetz, 2009, 20).

The third stage involves designing an effective intervention and acting on it despite the reservations inherent in a change that lacks certainty. Deciding upon and implementing an intervention requires prioritization and courageous actions that are even more difficult as a resident trying to implement during a pandemic. Organizational change will require engaging in a situation where the intervention has strengths and weaknesses and is an iterative process (Heifetz, 2010, 42).

“The fourth stage entails sustaining a safe, structured environment where enough conflict is present to energize a congregation without overwhelming it” (Heifetz, 42). Figure 2.4 below shows that the aim is to operate within the productive range of distress. There is enough disruption to facilitate learning but not so much disequilibrium that it cannot be tolerated.

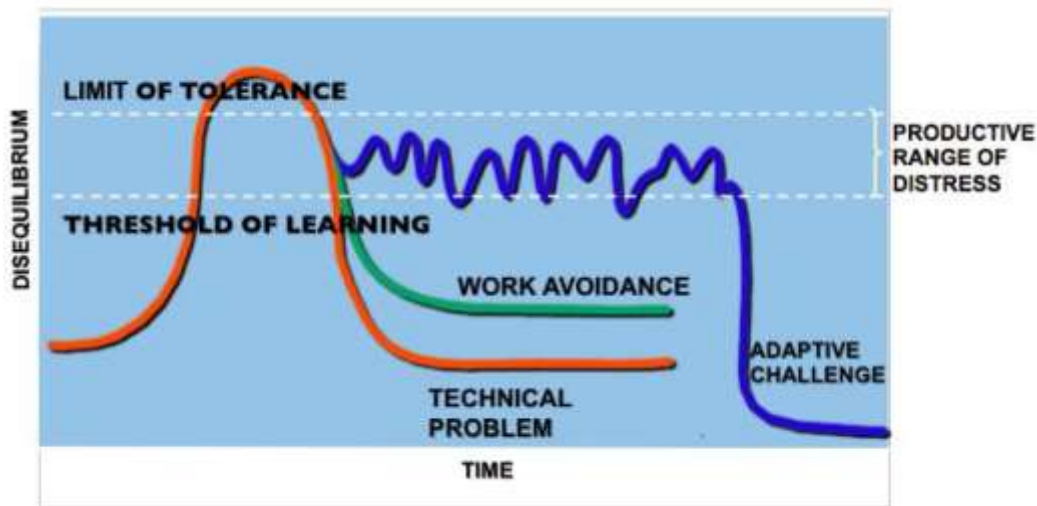


Figure 3. (Heifetz, 2010, 30)

Using the problem, solution, and responsibility matrix definitions in figure 2, I determined that implementing a network to support new AVID implementers is an adaptive challenge. The problem had layers and would require some analysis to understand the root causes. I would need to uncover why principals are not participating in networking and professional learning events in more significant numbers. The solution was not clear either. We would have to learn what network design would best prepare principals to implement AVID more effectively.

Furthermore, I would need to consider if networks were the suitable mode of support and if principals were the most efficient target audience given their time constraints. I was responsible for the outcomes of the NSPN, and my authority depended

on building a coalition of stakeholders. I needed to understand how to leverage informal power to lead change before moving on to the next stage in the Heifetz framework and designing an intervention. In *Harnessing the Science of Persuasion*, Robert B. Cialdini provided insight into how I could leverage influence in a situation where I had no formal authority. I needed to understand how to build a coalition of the willing to help with the design of the NSPN. I also needed to influence principals to participate in the network despite competing interests. In his article, Cialdini suggests six concrete ways to influence people based on behavioral science (2001):

1. “Liking: People like those who like them. The application: uncover real similarities and offer praise.”
2. “Reciprocity: People repay in kind. The application: Give what you want to receive.”
3. “Social Proof: People follow the lead of similar others. The application: Use peer power whenever it is available.”
4. “Consistency: People align with their clear commitments. The application: Make their commitments active, public, and voluntary.”
5. “Authority: People defer to experts. Expose your expertise. The Application: Expose your expertise. Don’t assume it is self-evident.”
6. “Scarcity: People want more of what they have less of. The application: Highlight unique benefits and exclusive information” (Cialdini, 4-8).

These strategies had merit for gaining support from my colleagues at AVID and designing a networking opportunity that resonated with new AVID site principals. For example, I could use liking, reciprocity, and social proof to form connections with and

support other projects so that when I needed support to launch the NSPN, I was more likely to get it. Consistency, authority, and scarcity were better applied to marketing the principal network and getting principals to commit to join the first meeting and participate in subsequent sessions.

Consistent with Heifetz's model of adaptive leadership and managing disequilibrium, the research I conducted on leading change during the pandemic made it clear I would need to address uncertainty if I could successfully launch my project. To understand what was happening with people cognitively during the pandemic, I looked at David Rock's research on social neuroscience. In *SCARF: A Brain-based Model for Collaborating with and Influencing Others*, Rock proposes five social neuroscience domains that leaders need to be aware of when interacting with and seeking to influence others. He captures them with the Acronym SCARF, which stands for: status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness (Rock 2001). As a resident entering an organization during the pandemic, I was aware of how my actions would impact my colleagues. I needed to fit in with the culture already established at AVID and create a space conducive to collaboration in the meetings that I led. I did this by starting with positive framing to prime participants for effective collaboration. Research shows that how we frame a situation — as a threat or as an opportunity — impacts how we respond (Roberto, 2016).” “When people encounter a significant threat, a response called “threat rigidity” sets in. They cease being flexible, double down on well-established routines, and rely on hierarchical command-and-control decision-making (Arnette, 39).”

Effective crisis communication was essential to frame the challenge of launching a new network design during the pandemic in a positive light. In *Navigating Change*:

Employee Communication in Times of Instability, Debbie D. DuFrene and Carol M.

Lehman present insight into communicating positivity during uncertain times. One example they gave was to reframe danger or uncertainty as an opportunity (DuFrene, 443). I used this framing for the NSPN network. We had a chance to try to organize our networks differently during the pandemic to best live out our organizational value of service and meet our partners' needs. As I worked towards getting the NSPN project launched, I was aware of potential SCARF threats and took care to set a positive tone for meetings and collaborate with those threats in mind. It was also crucial that I communicated clearly and frequently with my team members and my supervisor so that there were no surprises and we remained aligned.

Since I led this project during a pandemic, the certainty and relatedness SCARF threats were of particular interest to me because they appeared to be most at risk. Rock (2001) provided research-based strategies for reducing the certainty and relatedness threats directly applicable to my work. To increase certainty, he suggested clear communication of expectations and intended outcomes and broke complex projects down into simple parts (Rock, 2008). “In the absence of safe social interactions, the body generates a threat response, also known as feeling lonely (Rock, 10).” He also suggests that meeting someone new generates a threat response. He suggested time be allocated for simple introductions to combat the relatedness threat, such as exchanging names, uncovering things in common, and sharing personal stories (Rock, 2001). I implemented these suggestions by trying to break my project into small pieces and ensuring there was time for people to get to know each other in meetings that I facilitated.

Content

After researching the change process needed to lead this work, I needed to understand principals' needs and design an improvement network to serve them best. Central to establishing a successful Principal support network was adhering to AVID's core values of Service, Authenticity, Excellence, Ownership, and Potential. The value of service was of particular importance during this time. AVID explains the core value of service using five key levers that were directly integrated into the network design.

- “Actively seek and develop positive professional relationships.
- Be courageous and clear in your communication.
- Think from the partner's perspective.
- Be timely and responsive.
- Show gratitude to others” (AVID Center Core Values 2020).

These values led the design team to take a human-centered approach to design the principals' network experience. Specifically, I wanted to be timely and responsive, seek to build positive professional relationships, and think from our partners' perspectives when designing the network. The Hasso Plattner Institute for Design at Stanford offers a process guide for using Design Thinking to ensure that users are at the center of an offering. It consists of five steps: (1) Empathize; (2) Define; (3) Ideate; (4) Prototype; and (5) Test.

The empathize mode is the first and arguably the most critical step of this process. As an implementer of this process, I took the time to consider what principals wanted and needed from a peer network by conducting interviews. Another resource for taking a human-centered approach comes from Clayton Christensen's *Know Your Customers*:

Jobs to be Done. Christensen argues that we have come to rely on correlation data too much and need to talk to customers to understand what they really want from a product or service. “What they really need to home in on is the progress that the customer is trying to make in a given circumstance—what the customer hopes to accomplish. This is what we’ve come to call the job to be done” (Christensen, 1, 2020).

Successful Reform

Cohen and Mehta’s (2017) work in *Why Reform Sometimes Succeeds: Understanding the Conditions that Produce Reforms that Last* gave me insight into what strengths AVID had that I could build on with my strategic project. Their research posits that successful reform efforts have one or more of five distinguishing characteristics. I will highlight the characteristics that I believe relate to the AVID College and Career Readiness system and to my strategic project. The first kind of reform offers a solution to a problem that educators were aware of and wanted to solve. Other reforms highlighted a problem that was not apparent or for which there was no known solution and offered a compelling intervention. The fourth characteristic of a successful reform came as a system with practical tools, guidance, and materials needed for implementation. My strategic project fits into the category of a problem that principals either are aware of but do not know how to solve or are not aware they have. The NSPN leverages improvement science and the power of peer networks so that principals can create a collective knowledge base for successfully implementing school reform in diverse contexts. AVID also meets the fourth characteristic of successful reforms because it is a school improvement system. It comes complete with professional learning and the tools and resources to support implementation. To successfully implement AVID’s systems,

schools must take stock of the infrastructure in place. For example, AVID provides professional learning resources that help teachers increase rigor using writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading (WICOR) strategies. However, if a school does not create time in the master schedule for teachers to learn about these strategies and plan to implement them, they are useless. To take advantage of AVID systems, schools must prioritize AVID, identify what systems are already in place and can be modified, and what infrastructure must be created. Many schools have an instructional leadership team (ILT). An example of aligning AVID systems would be to merge your AVID Site Team and ILT so the team can execute the vision for rigorous instruction using WICOR strategies more seamlessly. Principals can learn what infrastructure they need for successful implementation and how to create or align current systems.

Understanding what qualities successful reforms have and what AVID offers, I needed to know how these reforms are implemented and why some fail. Two failures I need to be aware of while planning the NSPN are:

1. “Insensitivity to Context: Educational interventions are commonly designed as one-size-fits interventions without taking context into account. In their paper, O’Day and Smith remind us that varying cultures, conditions, and structures across organizations and systems can influence how local actors interpret and act on any given intervention.
2. Inattention to social capital: O’Day and Smith argue that reform efforts have traditionally discounted the importance of the relationships between educators and have perpetuated the field’s tendency to practice in isolation, with little sharing between classrooms, schools, and districts (Meyer, 2).”

During the design phase, these common pitfalls will need to be mitigated. Fortunately, NICs are an ideal vehicle for addressing these implementation failures.

Networked Improvement Communities

In *Learning to Improve: How Schools Can Get Better at Getting Better*, the authors propose a networked improvement community (NIC) for improving the success of reform. A NIC is a community of practitioners and researchers convened by an organization that acts as a hub for communication and learning. The NIC unites the power of a diverse network with the discipline of improvement science to learn and innovate together around a common problem of practice (Bryk, 7). This model is of particular interest because it does not rely on practitioners knowing the answer to their problems but instead uses quick continuous improvement cycles of Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) to learn as they go and share the knowledge that they gain with network peers. The network improvement community approach has four essential characteristics:

- “Focused on a well-specified, common aim
- Guided by a deep understanding of the problem, the system that produces it, and a shared working theory of how to improve it
- Disciplined by the rigor of improvement research
- Coordinated as networks to accelerate the development, testing, and refinement of interventions, their rapid diffusion out into the field, and their effective integration into varied educational contexts” (McKay, 2).

The chart below shows how the six principles of improvement research align with the PDSA cycle steps already used at AVID.

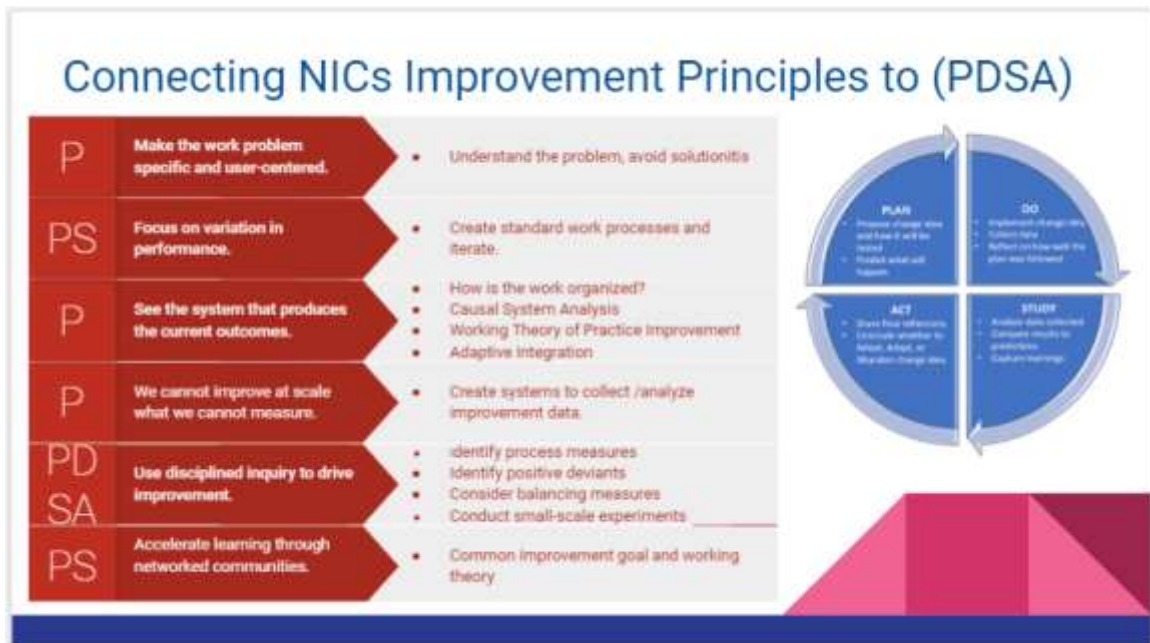


Figure 4. Networked Improvement Community Improvement Principles (Bryk, 2017)

Improvement science provides a framework for how the NIC work is carried out, but for people to work together effectively and scale improvement, what else is necessary?

Network Hub

The Network Hub plays a central role in organizing and supporting the NIC activities. The hub details the problem to be solved, guides participants' efforts, and maintains the work's coherence. The hub provides the following to the NIC:

1. Establishes norms and processes governing how groups work together and collect evidence.
2. Provides communication channels across the network to accelerate learning.
3. Provides technical support for sharing resources, what is learned, and best practices (Bryk, 12).

The Network plays a vital role in the ongoing work of the network. It allows what is learned in one context to be shared with others, thus accelerating the network's improvement.

Social Interaction

An equally important aspect of NICs is its members' social interactions and how the design either promotes positive interactions or allows for a negative social climate to form. In her blog “How Ideas Spread in and Between Groups: Lessons from Social-Physics,” Sarah McKay outlines aspects of creating a network where group members thrive. In his keynote address at the Carnegie Foundation Summit on Improvement in Education, Alex “Sandy” Pentland focused more on people and relationships than numbers and statistics. “Pentland’s research shows that learning does not happen in isolation, but rather in the interplay between people and groups” (McKay, 2). For example, in his research, Pentland found that groups where everyone participated and contributed to the group equally performed better. Social intelligence, or group members' ability to read others in the group and acknowledge their ideas by building upon them with short iterative comments, was also beneficial (McKay, 2016). Pentland also surfaced the concept of “charismatic connectors,” or people who go from person to person in a group and collect ideas before passing them on to others. He observed that groups working on business plans where charismatic connectors spread many ideas produced a better product at the end of the course (McKay 2016). While charismatic connectors contributed to success in Pentland's research, NIC events' design is specifically designed for individuals to share ideas and collaborate, which should garner similar positive results. Pentland suggests that informal or “water cooler” interactions between individuals and teams where ideas are shared help prevent the hoarding of ideas (McKay, 2016). Identifying a virtual platform for users to have informal interactions can present opportunities for these informal interactions.

Two challenges were highlighted with regards to NICs and networks more generally. These challenges would have to be managed for the AVID New Site Principal Network to succeed. The first challenge is that they take time to build (Kawar, 3). It is critical to ensure that the proper communication and learning structures are in place at launch to prevent the network from stagnating and becoming ineffective (Kawar, 3). The second challenge is in building an effective network hub. “There should be significant focus and resources dedicated to ensuring people are connected and engaged around solving important problems and scaling promising practices” (Kawar, 4). If these challenges are appropriately mitigated, NICs can accelerate change by:

- “Bringing together a diverse community that is focused on both a common goal and a common approach (i.e., theory of improvement).
- Utilizing a data infrastructure that informs the community early on whether something is or isn’t working.
- Breaking down the norm of improving in isolation.
- Adding an element of discipline to powerful, but what can otherwise be incoherent, collaborative efforts.
- Making varied contexts available for testing, in order to learn what it takes to get ideas to work well everywhere. These varied contexts also allow for detecting helpful patterns, including bright spots and trouble areas. Collectively, they offer the most significant potential for learning ‘what works, for whom, and under what conditions’” (Kawar 3,4).

Other Network Designs

In addition to NICs, there were other models for improvement and networks that advised my strategic project's design. The first model referred to as Knowledge Networks by Pugh and Prusak (2013), had four distinct goals. Depending on the context and purpose of a network, one or all these goals may apply.



Four knowledge network goals. Adapted from Pugh and Prusak (2013).

Figure 5. Knowledge Network Goals

The coordination goal aligns with NICs' goal of accelerating learning by organizing educators to address a common problem. The Learning/Innovation goal is aligned with the function of a Network Hub for NICs. Translation and Local Adaptation is how knowledge networks attend to the variation that NICs identify as a key to improvement. Support of individual members would be a necessary aspect of the NSPN because while collective improvement at scale is the organization's goal, individual network members need to adapt knowledge to their context for continuous improvement.

Design-based Implementation Research (DBIR) is an approach that looks to merge research and practice via iterative cycles of design and testing similar to NICs. Below are the four principles of DBIR:

- “A focus on persistent problems of practice from multiple stakeholders’ perspectives;
- A commitment to iterative, collaborative design;

- A concern with developing theory and knowledge related to both classroom learning and implementation through systematic inquiry;
- A concern with developing capacity for sustaining change in systems” (Fishman, 142-143).

DBIR is strikingly like the NICs approach and has a common goal of looking for what works and in what context so that innovation can be scaled (Fishman, 146). DBIR research studies have produced insights into the certainty of local adaptation and the need to support local implementation (e.g., Berman & McLaughlin, 1975; Datnow, Hubbard, & Mehan, 1998; Means, Padilla, DeBarger, & Bakia, 2009). The need for local adaptation to sustain innovation is supported by Implementation Science. Maintaining an innovation is complex because implementation strategies are multicomponent and adapt to local contexts where there is variation in each setting (Bauer, 2015). Given the diversity of AVID partner schools, the network model must account for variance. Networked Improvement Communities (NICs), Knowledge Networks, and Design-based Implementation Research have overlapping components of learning and iteration, attention to variance, and local adaptation. These similarities provided a common basis for my research and anchored the New Site Principal Network's design at AVID.

Networked Improvement Communities in Action

A report detailing NICs' use to improve student learning at schools in Michigan and Minnesota (Proger, 2017) outlined the process of establishing NICs and critical tasks essential to their success. Using regular meetings, conversations with NIC participants, and debrief conversations, the REL Midwest project team identified five components necessary for establishing a successful NIC. “(1) Building a cohesive team with

participants representing different types of expertise, (2) Reducing uncertainty by clarifying what participation entails, (3) Building engagement by aligning work with ongoing efforts. (4) Using tools and resources from improvement science to identify a problem that is important and specific enough to act on, and (5) Embedding capacity building to develop additional expertise for using continuous improvement research to address problems of practice” (Proger, 4). These success components are consistent with research in the preceding sections. Still, the network design that I proposed to support New AVID principals would not consist of different expertise types. How might it work despite this difference?

I looked to the field for an example. I wanted to talk to someone who had established NICs to support a homogenous group of participants implementing an intervention. I interviewed the CEO of a nonprofit to understand how he was implementing NICs in his work with a county department of education. My goal for the interview was to understand his design and any challenges he had encountered thus far. The NICs' purpose was to support principals in implementing a county-funded Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) at schools. The design for this was to create cohorts of five principals who would meet monthly for 90 minutes to discuss implementation progress, share insights, and engage in shared learning. Between meetings, principals had homework that consisted of 60 minutes of asynchronous learning using Google Classrooms. The key to the design was the cohort model. Principals needed to attend the synchronous meetings and complete homework assignments to have a common anchor understanding of the continuous improvement process and MTSS. The CEO indicated that principal attendance and completion of tasks were going well. He attributed this to

support from the county office of education. They ensured they protected time for principals and signaled the work's importance by providing resources. Since this project was in the beginning stages, the CEO posited what he anticipated as being the most significant challenge. The process of establishing an effective MTSS system would span years, and the organization would need to plan for how to maintain engagement and how to address principal turnover. My takeaways from this interview were that it would be necessary for principals to have a common baseline of knowledge and some common language to collaborate more effectively, and long-term success of a network would require planning for principal turnover in AVID schools.

The process knowledge I gained regarding change management, influence, and adaptive leadership and the content knowledge on networked improvement communities, knowledge networks, and Design-Based Implementation Research positioned me to lead my strategic project at AVID Center. Aligning the findings in the research helped me identify the core themes I focused on as I facilitated designing and launching the New Site Principal Network.

Process Themes
• Help principals schedule time to focus on Important and urgent work. • Get on the balcony to diagnose the system and use double-loop learning. • Identify technical aspects and learn how to address the adaptive challenge. • Mind SCARF threats related to the context of the pandemic. • Mind uncertainty and manage a productive range of distress due to change. • Frame the strategic project as an opportunity and not a threat. • Leverage influence: liking, reciprocity, social proof, consistency, authority, and scarcity to get things done.
Content Themes
• Identify new AVID site principal needs and design the network to address them. • Build a community to promote a positive work environment. • Identify a common problem, see the system that produces it, then take action. • Ensure a shared working theory of change. • Identify, analyze, and tend to variation in implementation. • Provide opportunities for network members to share resources. • Create structures to organize learning and facilitate open communication. • Support network members in adapting knowledge to fit their context. • Provide structures for continuous improvement.

Figure 6. Summary of Research of Knowledge for Action

I outline my theory of action (TOA) for designing and implementing the NSPN at AVID in the table below. The process and content themes are encompassed in the TOA, and the logic model that follows it provides additional details, including resources and activities.

Theory of Action

<i>If I...</i>	<i>Then...</i>
Gain support from AVID staff, Use design thinking to understand principals' current needs and design the network to support those needs, Simplify the process and make it more convenient to collaborate and share, Target high-leverage problems of practice common to network principals, Provide structures to build community, collaborate, and engage with the PoP, Set a clear purpose for the NSPN that is embedded in AVID's current strategic goals, Utilize AVID Staff and "high flier" principals to share expert experience and resources to support problem-solving, Provide easy to use PDSA resources to address the common PoP,	Fifty percent of targeted principals will participate in NSPN events. New site AVID Principals will report building rapport with network peers and collaborate asynchronously. AVID principals will indicate that NSPN events support their ability to lead implementation at their site by enhancing their leadership capacity. AVID will leverage network members' existing knowledge by coordinating the sharing of peer strategies to address common problems of practice PoP. Principals will use the NSPN to launch strategic action on the common PoP and use continuous improvement (PDSA cycles) to make progress towards resolving the PoP at their site.

Figure 7. Theory of Action for the New Site Principal Network

Logic Model			
Context for the Program: This program exists because there is variation in the success new principals have integrating AVID systems at their site. Internal data demonstrates that schools where the principal is engaged with the change process have a high success rate. The NSPN will bring together novice and experienced AVID principals to work on common problems of practice related to integrating AVID instructional systems to support student learning.			
Resources	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
To accomplish our set of activities, we will need the following:	To achieve our outcomes, we will do the following activities:	Once the activities are completed, they will produce the following evidence:	Accomplishing the activities will lead to the following changes:
support from AVID staff, support from AVID regional Principal Network support from AVID resident time allocated for the AVID resident to build structures to support the NSPN time allocated to gather feedback from the Leadership Steering Committee Collaboration time between the AVID resident and Program Specialist for the Professional Learning and Leadership (PL&L) team. Authorization from all three regions, PL&L, and the executive team.	Set a clear purpose for the NSPN that is embedded in AVID's current strategic goals Break the project into small chunks and communicate steps clearly and consistently with all stakeholders Design NSPN to meet current principal needs using design thinking Advertise the NSPN opportunity to all principals at sites in the 1 st and 2 nd year of AVID integration. Create a survey to identify common high leverage problems of practice Create infrastructure for the NSPN that enables convenient sharing of resources and synchronous/asynchronous collaboration.	Fifty percent of targeted principals will participate in NSPN events. Seventy-five percent of AVID principals will continue to collaborate with their PoP team synchronously and asynchronously through April 2021. New site AVID Principals will report building rapport with network peers and collaborate asynchronously. AVID principals will indicate that NSPN events support their ability to lead implementation at their site by enhancing their leadership capacity. Principals will use the NSPN to launch strategic action on the common PoP and use continuous improvement (PDSA cycles) to make	Principals at new AVID sites who participated in the NSPN will demonstrate improved AVID integration at their site using as evidenced by: • AVID Coaching and Certification Instrument (CCI) • Post-Survey Responses

	Host synchronous meetings where principals: • build community • Set a clear purpose for the NSPN aligned to site goals • collaborate on the PoP • learn from the experiences of expert principals • receive resources to assist with AVID integration, e.g., PDSA template	progress towards resolving the PoP at their site.	
Assumptions: The success of our program relies on the following assumptions... • Principals will make the time to collaborate with peers despite the ongoing disruption of the pandemic. • Principals will find value in collaborating with peers regarding common problems of practice. • Regional Network Principals will find intrinsic value in supporting their peers and not require compensation.			

Adapted from W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (2004). *Logic model development guide*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2006/02/wk-kellogg-foundation-logic-model-development-guide>

Figure 8. Logic Model for the New Site Principal Network

Given that this project was taking place during the pandemic's height, successfully engaging principals would be exceptionally challenging. The TOA requires principals to commit to ongoing participation as a basis for continuous improvement. If principal participation did not allow for testing the cohort model of implementation support, other network design elements could be assessed. For example, principals who participated would have opportunities to learn from peers by sharing resources, giving and receiving feedback on implementation, and taking concrete action to integrate AVID systems at their schools. I could then learn if the network's content supports resonated with principals and use this information to advise future network offerings.

Description

At a high level, the New Site Principal Network intended to use the power of networks to connect new principals so they could leverage a team approach to solving common challenges while integrating AVID systems at their sites. AVID's internal data identifies the principal as key to successfully implementing its College and Career Readiness systems and thus an ideal target for support. To some extent, the variance observed in the quality of implementation across AVID's more than 7000 partner schools is attributable to the principal's level of engagement and leadership of AVID integration.

Before my arrival, AVID had begun to think about how they might improve principal engagement. For the past year, AVID had been offering networking events where principals can opt to come together, build community, and discuss topics of interest. In addition to these principal networking events, AVID also offered a yearlong community of practice opportunity to site leaders (principals, assistant principals, AVID coordinators, teachers) to keep them engaged. Despite these efforts, it remained a challenge to engage principals in professional learning and network activities consistently.

New Site Principal Network Overview

The long-term goal of the NSPN design was to create structures that allow 1st and 2nd-year principals to engage in a two-year process of building authentic relationships with peers and collaborating to integrate AVID systems at their site successfully. These principals would engage in a two-year professional learning and implementation journey where they relied on the cohort to share resources and success and failures. This sharing would help the NSPN engage in community learning and accelerate AVID's College and

Career Readiness (CCR) systems within the school. AVID Center would provide a professional learning scope and sequence and play the role of convening network members every six weeks.

My project was different from the current network offerings in three key ways. First, it was solely for principals at sites in the first two years of AVID implementation. Second, participants were grouped into problem of practice teams of 5 that remained constant throughout the network events. Third, the network events focused on facilitating principal's collaboration on the common problem of practice integrating AVID CCR systems to accelerate learning and mitigate learning loss. They learned from this collaboration to address common challenges principals faced at their sites. The common roles and continuity of PoP teams' problems allowed principals to build the authentic relationships necessary for members to be vulnerable and share both successes and failures. This rapport sustained collaborative efforts and continuous improvement during the implementation process.

A crucial aspect of the NSPN design was the participation of an expert principal on the PoP teams. AVID had spent the last year cultivating relationships with an experienced group of expert AVID principals who successfully integrated AVID systems at their school. These expert participants served as model principals who spoke from experience and offered insight into common challenges. According to the presurvey data, many 1st and 2nd year principals did not have a strong understanding of the AVID systems they were trying to integrate, so expert principals played a vital role in filling in gaps.

A constraint that hovered over my strategic project was that the NSPN launched during the apex of the COVID-19 pandemic. For safety reasons, all networking events

were held virtually, and from a content perspective, I prioritized principals' immediate needs. These needs included building a community with peers to lessen isolation and taking the first steps toward integrating AVID systems to address student learning loss because of the pandemic. These needs were determined based on interviews and the presurvey that all participants completed. Throughout the project, I collected data on principal engagement in the NSPN. I offered my recommendations for how AVID could use this model to support principals in the future. The anticipated outputs for the NSPN outlined in the Theory of Action were as follows:

1. Fifty percent of targeted principals will participate in NSPN events.
2. New site AVID Principals will report building rapport with network peers and collaborate asynchronously.
3. AVID principals will indicate that NSPN events support their ability to lead implementation at their site by enhancing their leadership capacity.
4. AVID will leverage network members' existing knowledge by coordinating the sharing of peer strategies to address common problems of practice PoP.
5. Principals will use the NSPN to launch strategic action on the common PoP and use continuous improvement (PDSA cycles) to make progress towards resolving the PoP at their site.

These outputs served as the foundation for the NSPN design and evaluation of its effectiveness. Although we sent invites to more than 1000 principals and more than 100 registered, only 42 attended the first of three sessions. The pilot included 42 new site principals and 13 expert principals on ten Problem of Practice (PoP) Teams, and this capstone documents the first three months of their experience in the NSPN. The launch

event in January 2021 was 120 minutes long. The goal was to: set the purpose, build community, provide information about the network, discuss the problem of practice they will address as a community, and identify the next step. I placed principals into a subnetwork called a PoP team based on their school's context, e.g., elementary or secondary. The second event in March was 60 minutes long. Its purpose was for principals to share their progress on their action after the launch session and present a challenge or dilemma they were facing using a consultancy protocol to give and receive feedback. However, only a fraction of PoP team members showed up to the 2nd event, and I could not maintain the cohort model. 11 of the 42 principals who attended session one were present for session two.

Project Design

My design for the NSPN was loosely based on networked improvement communities (NICs), but there were three significant differences. First, the NSPN did not have researchers as part of the network community. While I did incorporate research into the design and collect data on outputs, my role was different from Bryk's (2017) conception of a NIC. The experts that supported the NSPN were high-flier principals or AVID principals who have implemented the College and Career Framework (CCR) systems at a high level. Some of these principals were part of a separate network within AVID, and others worked for the organization supporting implementation. Another difference was with the composition of the network. The NSPN only consisted of principals, so there were not diverse roles as part of the network design. In future iterations, it may make sense to bring in AVID Site Team members to the network to gain a more robust perspective of the problems that must be addressed. The final

difference between the New Site Principal Network and a traditional NIC was that AVID served as both a third-party service provider and the network hub. As a result, AVID had a vested interest in network participants using improvement science to accelerate the successful implementation of AVID systems both as a service to improve the return on investment for clients and as a service to the public good by improving student outcomes.

During my research of knowledge for action, I developed an idea of what I thought a network to support AVID principals should encompass. Towards the beginning of my residency, I presented this model to my supervisor and the LSC for feedback. While logically sound, I quickly realized that my idea was not appropriate for the context I was in at AVID. Rather than just incorporate feedback and iterate, I determined I needed to dig deeper. The concept of Networked Improvement Communities and Knowledge Networks would have to exist alongside the current environment at AVID and principals' present needs. I used the empathy mode from a design challenge to better understand what principals needed, and from there, I was able to adjust my mental model of what the network should be to meet those needs. I used the Design Thinking Process Guide from the Institute of Design at Stanford to lead the Leadership Steering Committee (LSC) in the design challenge. This diverse team had representative leaders from the regional implementation support arm of the organization and the leadership support curriculum and resources arm of the organization. As part of the Empathize mode, I also conducted interviews with new site principals and district directors who work closely with new AVID principals. Furthermore, I sought feedback from AVID staff who worked closely with principals. I hosted a design challenge, and during the define mode, the

Leadership Steering Committee (LSC) looked at data on principal needs. During the Define mode, we created the following problem statement:

1st and 2nd-year AVID principals are facing a myriad of challenges in the 2020 school year; to ensure a strong return on their AVID investment, they need:

1. relevant, timely support to align AVID with their site vision and goals,
2. a clear understanding of the sequence and implementation steps of AVID systems and how they can be part of the solution to current challenges,
3. a network where they build community, share struggles, contribute ideas and collaborate on common Problems of Practice.

In addition to what I captured in the problem statement, I collected evidence that suggested the MyAVID website was cumbersome to navigate, resulting in some users struggling to find resources and register for events. Based on this data and the problem statement, the LSC entered Ideate Mode, and we brainstormed ideas for what a principal network needed to look like to meet the user's needs. Using ideas from the Ideate mode, I created a user-friendly prototype. To simplify the principals' process to participate in the NSPN, I made a Google Drive homepage where each PoP team could easily access resources and collaborate during events. I also sent out calendar invites and emails with a Zoom link to the event so they did not need to go on MyAVID and register.

I refined the prototype based on the LSC feedback and presented it to the leadership teams from the Western, Central, and Eastern regions. With no significant feedback or areas of concern, I received all three regions' support to move forward with launching the NSPN in November 2020.

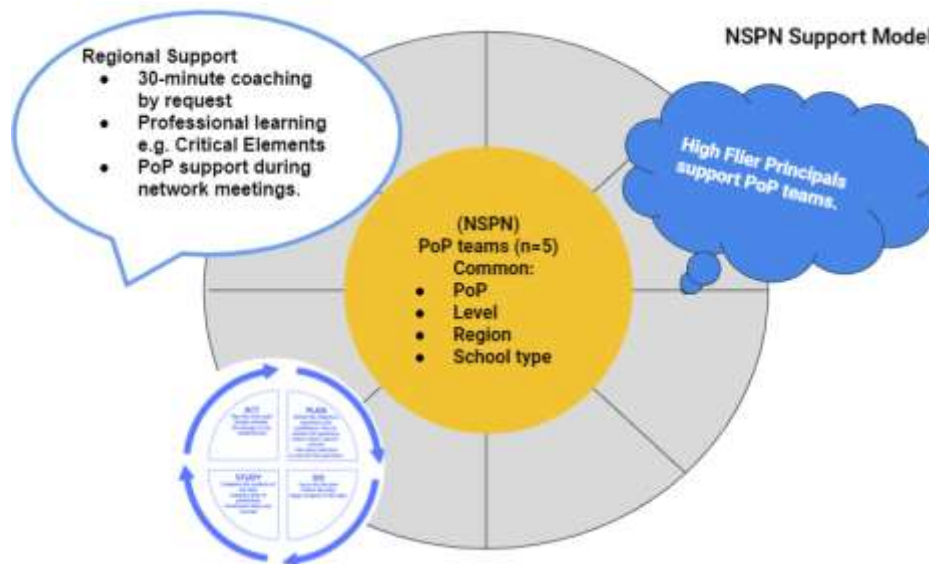


Figure 9. New Site Principal Support Model

Project Implementation

After using design thinking to create a product I believed would be valuable to new principals, I turned my attention to ensuring a successful implementation. The implementation of the NSPN relied on success in three areas:

1. Persuading AVID principals to participate despite competing interests.
2. Sustaining service provider and principal engagement in the NSPN.
3. Building a coalition to support the work in the future.

These areas framed the work I did during the project's implementation phase.

The first step I took to address participation in the network was to gather the contact information for all principals at sites in the 1st and 2nd years of AVID integration. Since there was no listserv with these principals, I solicited AVID's Data department to track down contact information. They provided me with an imperfect list of 1046 principals that became my target audience. I sent two mass communications to the target audience advertising the NSPN and its benefits, along with a link to register and take the presurvey. I sent two targeted mass emails that were concise and articulated how to

register and what value principals would receive from participation in the NSPN. I knew from prior experience and conversations with AVID staff that mass email was not ideal for communicating. I attempted to mitigate the lack of personalization by sending emails from an address principals were likely to recognize.

The next step I took was to establish clear communication channels that would keep partners and AVID staff engaged. When I began at AVID in July, there was a lot of uncertainty about the future, and internal and external partners were dealing with an unprecedented level of change. I was new and wanted to bring more change by introducing a new way for AVID site principals to collaborate. To accomplish this, I needed to influence internal staff at AVID to support the work and external partners to engage with a new product offering. Within AVID, I searched for ways to bring as much certainty to my project as possible. In *SCARF: A Brain-Based Model for Collaborating with and Influencing Others*, Rock suggests three ways that a leader can increase certainty. These include 1.) Breaking a complex project down into simple steps, 2.) Establishing clear expectations for what might happen in each situation, and 3.) Setting expectations for desirable outcomes (Rock 2001). According to Rock, these strategies work by increasing the brain's ability to predict the future. I broke the project into stages to create certainty and offered clear communication on my progress in a biweekly status update. These updates happened during Leadership Steering Committee (LSC) meetings and via NSPN project update emails. The email updates' audience included regional directors and project managers who worked directly with principals and professional learning and leadership content directors and designers. The structure and cadence of this communication were consistent so that stakeholders knew what was coming up and how

the project was progressing. Here is a comment I received from a regional director showing appreciation for my biweekly update. “I appreciate your clear communication and outcomes, Jamaal—thank you.”

I also communicated with the AVID Principal Network (high-fliers) and 1st and 2nd-year AVID principals. I sent them calendar invites, emails with information about events, and reminders the day before an event took place. In addition, I hosted three NSPN information sessions for AVID Principal Network members so that they understood the purpose of the NSPN and what their role was. I sent members who could not make it an email that detailed critical points along with a one-pager and video of the meeting. During the synchronous events in January, I aimed to create certainty for NSPN principals by breaking AVID integration into a small initial step and providing clear expectations for the network's outcomes (Rock, 2001). My efforts at clear, concise, and predictable communication aimed to reduce the certainty threat that many stakeholders experienced due to pandemic-related changes to their everyday routines. I hoped that by reducing uncertainty, I would sustain participation in the NSPN.

While my communication targeted reducing uncertainty, I still needed to create synchronous events that met NSPN members' needs. I accomplished this by building NSPN events based on the problem statement we developed during our design challenge. I used data from the presurvey to identify one common problem of practice for all principals to address and structured time for participants to build rapport and share ideas. By empathizing with principals, I increased the likelihood that the NSPN would be relevant to helping them achieve their site goals.

Throughout implementing the NSPN, I focused on building a coalition of stakeholders who would champion the work at the end of my residency. I sought to involve as many AVID staff members as possible and solicited feedback often during the design process. I incorporated the feedback that improved the network design and implementation and represented the thoughts and efforts of AVID staff who would carry the work forward in the future. The communication that I cited earlier kept internal stakeholders abreast of what was happening and allowed for them to continue to play a role in the development and execution of the NSPN as they saw fit. This ongoing communication gave me insight into possible ways to imbed the network design into AVID's current structures in the future. Ultimately, what I learned from the pilot would determine if the NSPN model is used in the future.

We decided that January would be the ideal time to launch the NSPN because we could frame it as a fresh start to a new year. The NSPN would meet virtually in January (120 min.), March (60 min.), and April (60 min.). There were 1046 eligible principals and 112 principals at 1st and 2nd-year sights registered. In addition, 24 principals registered to support new principals in their implementation journey. Upon registering, principals completed a presurvey that provided information on their foundational knowledge of AVID systems, the level where they are a principal, e.g., secondary or elementary, and the problem of practice preference. This initial survey gave us essential information for planning the NSPN launch.

We launched the NSPN at the end of January, and despite calendar invites and a day before reminder, only 42 of the 112 principals who registered attended the first meeting. This was below my goal of a 50 percent conversion rate. Despite low

attendance, I facilitated an event aimed at addressing the goals of the NSPN. Principals were placed into Problem of Practice (PoP) teams of 4-7 people and given structured opportunities to build community and collaborate on ways to enhance buy-in from staff to implement AVID and address learning gaps. Principals had opportunities to share their expertise, learn from expert principals, identify a next step, and exchange contact information to establish ongoing communication. Based on the LSC feedback and consistent with Design Thinking, I simplified the offering by removing the continuous improvement aspect of the network because our data indicated that principals were overwhelmed and most in need of community, collaboration, and a simple next step to address the issue. Focusing on building community and collaboration proved to be a good choice per principal survey feedback.

The 2nd session of the New Site Principal Network (NSPN) took place in March, and I again sent an initial reminder email and calendar invite to registrants 3-weeks before the meeting and along with a day before reminder email that included the Zoom link to the event. Despite multiple emails and a calendar invite, only 11 of the 42 new AVID site principals who attended session one returned for session two. Poor attendance required me to pivot and place principals in groups with new people. Notwithstanding being in new groups, principals participated in the consultancy protocol and provided each other relevant and valuable feedback per the end of session survey results.

Evidence

I designed the NSPN from the beginning with evaluation criteria in mind to ensure I could determine its level of success at different stages of implementation. By focusing on program evaluation during my project's development, I collected data intentionally during and after events rather than search for data after the project. I gathered data during the design of the NSPN from internal AVID staff who work closely with principals and from interviews with district directors and new AVID site principals. Additional data to help plan the network was collected via a presurvey to better assess participant needs and areas of focus for the problem of practice. I collected attendance data to determine the strength of the NSPN value proposition for principals during the pandemic. Session surveys and the post-survey data provide information on whether the network met the participants' needs and achieved the five goals of the NSPN outlined in the “Description” section. I will determine the NSPN design's success by analyzing the following data metrics.

Network Design Evidence:

- Design Challenge: What do principals need at this moment?
- Interview Notes: What do principals need at this moment?
- EMMA Click Rates: How many principals opened the invite email?
- Presurvey: What are the baseline knowledge, gaps, and needs?

These data sources provided evidence that I accomplished much of what I set out to do in my theory of action (TOA) to meet the output goals. In summary, I designed a network experience that: (1) addressed a current principal need per post-session surveys, (2) simplified the process of collaborating by eliminating the need to register for events on

MyAVID, (3) provided structure for collaboration using Google rolling agendas with protocols, (4) set a clear purpose by focusing on AVID implementation to address learning loss, (5) provided an easy-to-use PDSA template to assist continuous improvement efforts, (6) provided an easily accessible Google Drive platform for sharing resources, and (7) leveraged AVID staff and expert principals to support new principals with implementation. There was disappointing yet not surprising data regarding successfully advertising the event to partners. Fewer than 40 percent (406/1046) of principals opened the mass emails I sent promoting the network. Out of that 40 percent who opened the email, approximately 25 percent (112/406) registered for the NSPN. Overall, only 11 percent registered to participate.

The evidence that I collected related to the theory of action included:

Evidence as of March 31st 2021:

- Synchronous Attendance: What is the initial and ongoing attendance?
- Session Surveys: Was the session relevant to principal needs?
- Synchronous Session Observational Data: Are principals collaborating?
- Post survey (Not available until May 2021): What was the Net Promoter Score? Was the NSPN relevant, e.g., did it meet a need, and was progress made towards implementing AVID instructional systems? Did teams collaborate asynchronously, and is this likely to continue?

When I wrote this capstone, I did not yet have all the survey evidence for the NSPN. I scheduled the NSPN to meet three times, but this capstone was written before the final session. The post-survey data was still outstanding, too. The information I did have access to was the presurvey, registration, attendance, launch session post-survey, session

two post-survey, and observational data from synchronous meetings. Figure ten below demonstrates how the data collected thus far relates to my TOA. Additional data from the post-session surveys can be found in the appendices section.

Theory of Action	Metrics Related to Theory of Action
(1) Fifty percent of targeted principals will participate in NSPN events.	112 of 1046 (11 percent) principals registered for the NSPN registered for the launch event. Session 1: 42 of 112 (38 percent) principals attended the NSPN launch. Session 2: 11 of 42 (26 percent) principals who attended session one returned for session 2.
(2) New site AVID Principals will report building rapport with network peers and collaborate asynchronously.	Session 1: 31 of 31 principals who completed the survey strongly agreed (20) or agreed (11) that they established rapport with their Problem of Practice Team. Session 2: 8 of 8 principals strongly agreed (7) or agreed (1) they felt safe sharing challenges with peers.
(3) AVID principals will indicate that NSPN events support their ability to lead implementation at their site by enhancing their leadership capacity.	Session 1: 28 of 31 principals strongly agreed (14), agreed (14), neutral (3) that the NSPN launch was timely and relevant to their needs. Session 1: 25 of 31 principals strongly agreed (12), agreed (13), neutral (6) that they gained insight on how the CCR framework can accelerate learning at their school. Session 2: 8 of 8 principals strongly agreed (7) or agreed (1) that session 2's consultancy protocol was timely and relevant to their needs.
(4) Principals will use the NSPN to launch strategic action on the common PoP and use continuous improvement (PDSA cycles) to make progress towards resolving the PoP at their site.	Session 1: 42/42 participants collaborated on a common problem of practice as evidenced by team notes. Session 1: 40 of 42 principals identified a next step to improve AVID implementation at their site. Session 2: 8 of 8 principals took action following session 1 and identified a challenge to share for feedback during session 2.

(5) AVID will leverage network members' existing knowledge by coordinating the sharing of peer strategies to address common problems of practice PoP	10 of 10 Problem of Practice teams shared strategies for gaining buy-in from staff per rolling agendas and observation. 10 of 10 Problem of Practice teams shared ideas for integrating AVID systems per rolling agenda and observations. 30 of 31 principals strongly agreed (19), agreed (11), neutral (1) that discussing topics related to AVID implementation with their peers was beneficial. Session 2: 8 of 8 principals strongly agreed (7) or agreed (1) that they gained valuable insight discussing an implementation challenge with their peers.
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Figure 10. New Site Principal Network Data

Preliminary data for the NSPN indicated that most principals did find value from participating in a peer network and collaborating on how to address common challenges. The following quotes from three participants provide a qualitative aspect to the data in the chart above:

- “Thank you so much for creating this opportunity for us to collaborate and learn from each other!”
- “I liked the whole group and breakout format, the materials were easy to access, and ample time was provided for collaboration.”
- “I enjoyed this session even more than the session in January. I don't know if it was because the group was so much smaller or exactly what it was, but I got so much out of today. Thank you for your help, advice, and guidance! I love the AVID community.”

The data is promising as it relates to the principals’ perception of the value of collaborating with peers on AVID implementation but is less encouraging related to the success of a cohort model during the pandemic.

Analysis

In this section, I will analyze evidence related to my plan to design and launch the NSPN. The extent to which I successfully created and launched the NSPN is contained within the macro context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSPN was one of many products that AVID launched to support its partners during this time. Because there was a great deal of change and uncertainty, I developed my Theory of Action (TOA) with a keen sense of stakeholder needs, the limited bandwidth of the organization, and the need to manage the psychological impacts of change. I will look at the intended outputs and outcomes from the TOA (see figure 10) and analyze them with regards to the two following project stages:

- *Project Design:* I analyze the collaborative process where I engaged stakeholders and used Stanford's Design Thinking Process Guide to develop a user-centered value proposition.
- *Project Implementation:* I analyze the currently available data related to the Theory of Action goals.

I will also investigate why the project unfolded as it did through the lens of the Strategic Triangle framework as outlined by Mark H. Moore in *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. In his book, Moore argues that taking strategic action within a public organization requires attention in three areas called the Strategic Triangle. These areas are: (1) Establishing Public Value, (2) Determining Operational Capability, and (3) Establishing Legitimacy and Support (Moore, 1995). Throughout my analysis, I will connect to the Strategic Triangle as it applies to the NSPN. I will use the current

evidence to draw some conclusions about why the network outcomes emerged and my role in it.

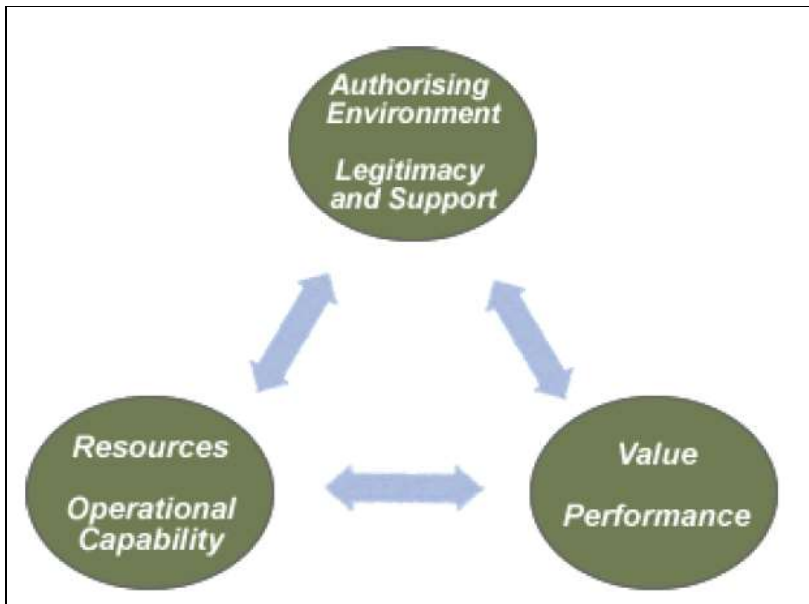


Figure 10. Strategic Triangle (Moore, 1995)

Project Design

The first challenge I faced designing the New Site Principal Network (NSPN) was in differentiating the network from AVID's current offerings since AVID was already engaged in hosting networking events for principals. This distinction would help me communicate the value of the NSPN both internally and externally. I accomplished this by using a design challenge to better understand the needs of principals, differentiate the project from current AVID offerings, and explain why design decisions were made that deviated from research models.

Using design thinking to develop the NSPN was not my initial plan. I first created a prototype based on internal interviews with AVID staff and my research on networks. But as I presented my prototype and continued to get feedback, it became clear that if I wanted this project to be sustainable and meet principals' needs, I needed to simplify the

network's design with input from all stakeholders. The regional directors had many questions about the feasibility of the NSPN and felt that the scope was too broad. Their concerns helped me see the project through the organization's eyes and think about whether it would have the impact on principals that I desired. My original design violated Moore's operational feasibility concept and required more resources than would be allocated to the project. It would require building new infrastructure so that AVID could serve as the network hub. This was an enormous undertaking given the pandemic context and my limited capital as a new resident. The design challenge's collaborative approach helped me build legitimacy and support from the political authorizing environment, e.g., The Leadership Steering Committee's regional directors (Moore, 1995). The Director of Professional Learning and Leadership supported me by providing me with the time, space, and support to host it. The design challenge was successful for three key reasons. First, it allowed me to develop a Problem Statement focused on principals' needs in the current environment and was seen as valuable by my authorizers and AVID partners. Second, it helped me build rapport and gain support from key members of the AVID team who were consequential in ensuring that the NSPN succeeded and continued following my residency. Finally, the design challenge process tempered my expectations for what I needed to accomplish with my strategic project. I better understood the resources available to me and how that would impact the project design. Ultimately, the design challenge was the most critical step in the design process.

My initial design for the NSPN had some problems exposed by the problem statement we developed during the design challenge. The design aspects my prototype was missing were clarity and relevance. My design was too complicated for principals

with limited time and a great deal on their plates to digest and implement. I was too caught up in the research and not empathizing with what principals needed. For example, my original design required principals to meet every four weeks for 90 minutes. This time commitment was required to collaborate on implementation and facilitate learning regarding the continuous improvement network model and AVID Core resources. The design challenge helped me remove aspects of the original NSPN design that did not provide principals with clear, actionable steps that were immediately relevant to new AVID site principals. I used the clarity I had gained with the problem statement and information I obtained from the ideate stage to create a prototype more aligned to principals' current needs. In summation, the new network design would be heavy on collaboration and leveraging principals' existing skills and light on professional learning.

The process of collaborating on the design challenge was also crucial to the success of the NSPN. It helped me build legitimacy with critical stakeholders and changed the NSPN from being perceived as Jamaal's project to AVID's project. This legitimacy enhanced the support I had to lead the project and resulted in regional directors allocating additional resources. Regional directors assigned four program managers with AVID principal expertise to help develop and facilitate NSPN sessions. I had many conversations with stakeholders who provided me with insight or feedback, and I used their input to improve the project design. This process took some time, but I was ready to launch in November 2020. After a conversation with the LSC, we postponed the launch until January because it was more convenient for principals and represented the start of a new semester. The time spent in the design phase gathering and using

stakeholder input improved the value proposition to principals and increased the chances for success.

The design challenge supported the success of the NSPN in tempering my expectations for what I needed to accomplish with my strategic project and turned my focus to learning and continuous improvement. The process helped me understand that the NSPN was one of many products and services that AVID has to support its partners. Several of these products were new and designed to support schools virtually during the pandemic. I observed how AVID leaders focused attention on improvement and allowed for and expected problems to arise with the new products that AVID launched. Through the design process, I realized that in its first iteration, the NSPN did not need to be perfect for partners to benefit and for us to learn from it and engage in continuous improvement. This realization allowed me to move forward with the project focusing on learning and improvement.

I am a collaborative leader who strives to incorporate as many stakeholder voices into critical decisions as possible. This orientation led to positive outcomes with regards to designing the NSPN. It helped me build relationships that are key to the project's long-term sustainability. I was willing to slow down and incorporate the voices of stakeholders closest to the work. This improved the product and created an environment where stakeholders openly provided me with feedback. No less than a dozen members of the AVID team contributed ideas that helped form the NSPN. A member of the Regional Program Manager (PM) team who provided invaluable insight that helped improve the NSPN launch session had this to say about giving me feedback. “You make it easy to provide feedback because you ask questions and seem to genuinely value our opinions.” This example of my humility

and willingness to request and incorporate feedback had an appreciable impact on the quality of the product that we presented to partners.

This collaborative mindset extended to the continuous improvement of the NSPN model during the implementation phase. Following the first synchronous session, I provided participants with a survey to give feedback on how the session met their needs and what we could do to improve subsequent sessions. In response to this feedback, the 2nd session allowed more time for PoP team collaboration and drilled in on the launch elements that participants found most valuable. Additionally, I requested input from AVID staff and expert principals on improving. This feedback resulted in improvements in regional launch sessions to clarify AVID's College and Career Readiness Framework and increase facilitation efficiency. Incorporating stakeholder voices moved the NSPN closer to perfection. It helped me establish a relationship with stakeholders that gained their support and contributed to the success of the NSPN.

Collaborating with stakeholders also served as a learning opportunity for me. Taking the time to engage in a Design Challenge and refining the NSPN based on feedback from stakeholders improved the product and helped to build shared ownership, but it came with the cost of time. I was sometimes indecisive as I tried to perfect the NSPN before launch. The cost of spending additional time during the design phase was that the NSPN did not launch until January, thus limiting our ability to collect longer-term data on the network design's sustainability. Questions about the effectiveness of the NSPN will not be answered until May. These questions include what percentage of principals attended all three synchronous meetings, what percentage of principals

engaged asynchronously, and to what extent did the NSPN add value for the principals who participated?

In the research of knowledge for Action section of this paper, I focused my attention on two main network design models. These were Bryk's Networked Improvement Communities (NICs) and Prusak's Knowledge Networks. Although these network models were the basis for the NSPN, I decided to differentiate this model based on the contextual needs of AVID and its partners and the time constraints realized during the design challenge. The NSPN was loosely aligned to both NICs and Knowledge Networks' design and characteristics.

There were many differences in the design of the NSPN and a conventional NIC. The makeup of participants in the NSPN was one of these differences. The NSPN consisted of only 1st and 2nd-year AVID site principals and established AVID principals who have demonstrated success. Unlike NICs, the NSPN was not a multi-disciplinary team. I made this decision because we had internal evidence that suggested Principal leadership was the key to improved outcomes with AVID integration in schools. This decision came with advantages and disadvantages. The first and most apparent advantage of focusing on principals was that leaders at various AVID organization levels thought it was prudent. Focusing on principals would limit change by building on AVID's current emphasis of improving the principal's leadership of implementation. This was consistent with Cohen and Mehta's first characteristic of successful reform, attending to a known need where a solution is desired (Cohen, 2017). Because AVID authorizers were aware of the need to better support principals, it was easier to garner support for the NSPN. Another advantage of focusing on principal leadership was that it gave me direct access

to the site authorizer who could make decisions and execute changes. This simplified the process and made it easier to design network events. I learned that one of AVID's pain points with not engaging principals was that even if teacher leaders or assistant principals gained valuable implementation tools, they would still have to rely on the principal to provide authorization and any necessary resources. Finally, the significant advantage of just focusing on principals was that they could have discussions with a group of peers who were in the same position and were uniquely qualified to empathize and provide support. All 31 principals who completed the launch session post-survey indicated that they established rapport with their PoP team. 30 of 31 respondents said discussing AVID implementation topics with their peers was beneficial. This sense of community carried over to the 2nd session. However, a potential disadvantage of not having a multidisciplinary team is that you miss out on diverse perspectives on tackling a problem. For this reason, AVID strongly encourages principals to lead through an AVID site team and site leadership team. Although having a homogenous network is a valid concern, given that there was already a lot of change occurring due to the pandemic and that creating a multidisciplinary network would add complexity, focusing on principals was the right decision.

Another difference between a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) and the New Site Principal Network's (NSPN) is that a NIC is focused on continuous improvement efforts and aggregating learning to be shared with the network. The NSPN's continuous improvement efforts were not as robust. They were limited to principals identifying the next step for leading implementation and giving/receiving feedback on challenges they encountered using a consultancy protocol. This was a

tradeoff made during the design challenge when we determined that we did not have the infrastructure to serve as a true Hub for the network, and principals did not have the time to dedicate to organized continuous improvement as a network. Nevertheless, all principals who participated in the consultancy protocol stated that it was relevant to their AVID implementation needs. Despite the brevity of the network meetings and the lack of rigorous analysis, the post-session survey data and Problem of Practice team rolling agendas suggest that principals did have the opportunity to learn from what their peers were doing and apply that knowledge to their sites.

In the following implementation section, I will analyze what was learned during the implementation phase of the NSPN. I will evaluate how the design phase's decisions regarding operational capability and garnering legitimacy and support ultimately impacted the value AVID and its partners received through the NSPN.

Implementation

Theory of Action Goal 1: 50 percent of targeted principals will participate in NSPN events.

In the description section of this paper, I suggested that presenting principals with a compelling value proposition for participating in the NSPN during the pandemic and maintaining their engagement would be essential to its success. AVID has historically struggled to gain consistent principal participation because principals tend to delegate responsibilities related to leading AVID systems' integration at their site. Despite clear messaging that the NSPN was exclusively for principals at sites in the first two years of AVID implementation, I received several messages from district directors (DD's) and principals asking if an assistant principal could participate in the NSPN. Given this

evidence, there is reason to believe that participation was partly impacted because some principals wanted to delegate the responsibility. It also raises the question of whether it would be better to let an assistant principal participate or maintain the exclusivity of the NSPN. Ultimately, I determined that the principals who registered expecting a principal-only space deserved exclusivity and that allowing other participants would potentially harm AVID's credibility. Nevertheless, my goal of getting 50 percent of targeted principals to participate proved to be unrealistic in retrospect. The data shows that 11 percent of principals registered, but less than 5 percent attended the first event, and roughly 1.25 percent attended the second event. I attribute the poor attendance to three factors. First, the ongoing pandemic placed an enormous strain on principal's time and limited their ability to participate in a network that was not immediately relevant to their needs. Second, communicating the value proposition for the NSPN through mass email was not ideal for partner uptake (email opening rate, lack of familiarity). Finally, because the NSPN was essentially an add-on and not part of AVID's product offerings, scheduling impacted attendance.

Convincing principals to give four hours of their time during the pandemic to participate in this network pilot presented a high bar for a value proposition. The challenge was enhanced because a mass email was the only communication mode available to me aside from contacting 1046 principals individually. Moore (1995) suggests that I needed to present something "substantively valuable" to principals and use benefit-cost analysis to determine this value. My value creation iteration started in the empathize mode of the design challenge. It continued when I used principals' presurvey responses to organize the Problem of Practice team's efforts around the common

challenge of integrating AVID instructional systems to accelerate learning and mitigate learning loss. Additionally, support from peers and experts in the process proved valuable to those principals who did attend according to post-session data. The NSPN project was also valuable to AVID internally, as evidenced by my support in organizing the project. However, around 300 principals presumably read the emails, were aware of the value proposition, and chose not to attend. Still, 112 of the 406 (25 percent) principals who read the email decided to participate in the launch session. Some of those principals who read the email inviting them to the network likely decided based on benefit-cost analysis. They had to weigh the opportunity cost of spending four hours participating in the network while much was happening with the pandemic. They could spend this time preparing for the next phase of safely and effectively offering virtual, in-person, or hybrid instruction or whatever else their state and district required. Or they could take a chance on a pilot network program. For many principals, the back and forth and uncertainty were stressful, and if they were not focused on the pandemic, they needed the rest. Despite the challenges, 25 percent of principals who opened the email advertising the NSPN registered to be a member. This, along with the post-session surveys, gives a strong indication that new principals viewed the NSPN as valuable.

Principals who did choose to participate were impacted by the pandemic, too. The NSPN launched in January during the apex of deaths due to the pandemic. The virus was spreading quickly, and people were scared. Following the virus's acceleration, vaccine production ramped up, and in March, many states made the vaccine available to all teachers. The federal government passed the American Rescue Plan, providing money for schools to reopen for in-person learning. During the March NSPN session, one principal

emailed me, letting me know she would not be present because she had four days to prepare for students to return for in-person learning. This excerpt from an email I received from an AVID Director for the Western Region in March captures the pressure principals were under to return to in-person learning quickly. “California principals have a target date of April 1, 2021 to get students back F2F. They have tied money to it. For every day that students are not back in school after that date, they lose 1% of these targeted funds. If they are not back in school in school by May 15th they will not receive any of the additional money. I would imagine that this is stressful for new principals. This could account for the drop off this month.” This shows how the pandemic impacted initial participation and continuation in the New Site Principal Network. Principals who attended found value, but it was not enough to overcome other pressing needs.

Another Component of the NSPN that impacted attendance was that it was essentially an add-on and not part of AVID’s product offerings. This meant that it was not widely understood throughout the organization and impacted attendance in a couple of ways. First, as the project lead, I was responsible for marketing the NSPN, sending email invites to partners, and following up. I likely did not do this as well as AVID’s marketing department would, leading to a lower open rate on my emails and registration rate for the NSPN. Another way this came into play was when a competing event (Elementary School Showcase) for principals was scheduled during the same date and time as the NSPN’s 2nd event. One principal communicated with me that she could not attend due to the conflict, and a second split her time between the two events. This lack of alignment between the NSPN and other organizational priorities further impacted attendance.

There was a positive trend related to attendance in the NSPN. Attendance for Regional Principal Network (RPN) members remained solid. 11 of 13 RPN members attended the second session in March. Their excellent participation rate is due to the relationship that the AVID regions have cultivated with these principals over the last year. RPN principals also expressed joy in supporting new principals along their implementation journey. A third likely reason for RPN member attendance is that they were less likely to be overwhelmed with the pandemic given their experience and comfort level with AVID. Their participation in the NSPN is critical because many new principals have a limited understanding of AVID systems and where to start with integration. New principals' limited knowledge of AVID, combined with the elimination of the professional learning element of the NSPN during the design phase, expanded the importance of the RPN members' role. RPN members could speak from a place of both experience and success, which bolstered the new AVID principals' confidence in the implementation process.

Theory of Action Goal 2: New site AVID Principals will report building rapport with network peers and collaborate asynchronously.

An important aspect of forming an effective principal network was creating an infrastructure for principals to connect, collaborate and engage (Pugh, 2013). This speaks to the operational capability of AVID Center to support this work (Moore, 1995). AVID gave me access to various electronic resources, including Personnel, Tech Support, EMMA, Google Drive, MyAVID, Microsoft Office, etc. These resources helped me create an online space for principals to build trust, a component that is essential to sharing success and failure with AVID implementation (Pugh, 2013). I used Zoom, meeting

protocols, rolling agendas, clear directions, and ample opportunity to collaborate during meetings, resulting in every principal who attended session 1 or 2 agreeing or strongly agreeing that they developed a rapport with their peers in a short period of time. The context of the pandemic likely contributed to principal isolation. The NSPN provided a space for principals to be with peers facing similar struggles. This opportunity to connect also contributed to principals quickly developing a sense of rapport. Combined with AVID's friendly, inclusive culture, this created an environment where principals felt comfortable. Unfortunately, because of challenges with attendance, principals did not have the opportunity to build relationships with a cohort of peers over time. However, the early data suggest that if attendance is consistent, future iterations of the NSPN will allow principals to develop the trusting relationships necessary to engage in the continuous improvement of AVID implementation.

Theory of Action Goal 3: AVID principals will indicate that NSPN events support their ability to lead implementation at their site by enhancing their leadership capacity.

Another component of the value proposition to principals and AVID Center was that principals leave NSPN sessions better equipped to lead AVID implementation at their school than when they arrived. Leaving with a clear takeaway would give a sense of return on investment and factor into a principal's benefit-cost analysis. Not only does an improved capacity to lead implementation provide the public value of more effectively implementing a program proven to improve student outcomes, but it also strengthens the relationship between AVID and its partners. In the post-session surveys, principals indicated that the sessions were relevant and enhanced their ability to lead AVID

integration. This is likely attributable to the considerable time I spent on the empathy mode during the design challenge and my continued attention to principal feedback from after-session surveys. In the first session 28 of 31 participants stated that the meeting was relevant to a current need. The session content was advised by talking to principals and data from the presurvey that indicated principals had varying levels of understanding of AVID's College and Career Readiness Framework, and 90 percent preferred to focus on addressing learning loss. In an example of responding to post-survey data, following the first session, principals provided feedback that they appreciated that they were given substantial time to collaborate but felt that time spent on understanding AVID's College and Career Readiness Framework was less helpful. As a result, rather than reviewing AVID resources in the 2nd session, the entire time was allocated to the consultancy protocol. Consequently, all eight session 2 participants who took the survey agreed that the consultancy protocol was relevant to a current need. Five of them specifically commented on the learning experience and quality of conversations. The post-survey will uncover more regarding what principals felt was most helpful in supporting their ability to lead AVID implementation. Once normal operations return additional data that schools report to AVID Center via the Coaching and Certification Instrument (CCI) can provide a much more detailed perspective of the NSPN's impact on AVID implementation.

Theory of Action Goal 4: Principals will use the NSPN to launch strategic action on the common PoP and use continuous improvement (PDSA cycles) to make progress towards resolving the PoP at their site.

and

Theory of Action Goal 5: AVID will leverage network members' existing knowledge by coordinating the sharing of peer strategies to address common problems of practice PoP.

Goals four and five in the theory of action have a lot of overlap and are best analyzed in tandem. A strength of the NSPN was that it allowed principals to share their existing knowledge. This was enhanced by the presence of experienced principals from the Regional Principal Network (RPN). During the launch session, I observed principals sharing strategies for leading change and gaining buy-in for AVID implementation from teachers. Because principals documented their ideas in their rolling agendas, the information was available to everyone on the Problem of Practice team to revisit. During the launch session, I recommended that principals meet with their AVID Site Team and begin by completing a Gap Analysis for which we provided a template. Rolling agenda notes show that nearly all 41 principals present at the launch session committed to a next step related to leading the integration of AVID's College and Career Readiness systems at their school. Some of those who committed may have done so due to the social pressure of it being public and on the agenda. However, at least some principals who participated in the NSPN took initial steps to improve AVID implementation at their school sites. Data from rolling agenda notes, Problem of Practice team observations, and observations of the consultancy protocols show that at least the principals who attended session two followed through on their next steps from the launch session. However, since only 26 percent of principals from the first session returned to the second session, it is unknown whether most principals followed through with the AVID implementation step they identified during launch. Given the circumstances mentioned in the analysis of goal

number one, e.g., pressure to quickly return to in-person learning, I think it is likely that many principals did not follow through with their action step and even fewer engaged in continuous improvement. In addition to the attendance and additional work related to the pandemic, principals needed more time and support to plan strategic action and engage in the continuous improvement cycle. I planned sessions of 60 minutes because I knew that principals did not have a lot of time to engage in the network. In retrospect, 75 minutes would have worked better to provide principals with time for reflection and planning. For example, during session two, principals would have benefitted from extra time following the consultancy protocol to synthesize what they learned and plan for leading the next step at their school.

Implications

Implications for Self

During my analysis of the NSPN, I discussed being indecisive when leading the project. The source of my indecisiveness was my need for certainty regarding the project's outcomes. I am a perfectionist by nature. Because I am a perfectionist, I always seek ways to improve myself and the work I do. This orientation has benefits and drawbacks that I observed while designing and launching the NSPN. The most significant advantage of being a perfectionist is that I am aware that my vantage point is limited. As a result, I am collaborative and seek to ask questions and gain perspective from as many stakeholders as possible when making critical decisions. This collaboration can also become a problem if I am not strategic in deciding when collaboration is necessary. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss how this played out in leading the development and launch of the NSPN.

I began my residency with a guiding question in mind. What will it take to successfully scale a change initiative within a large organization serving diverse partners, and how can my leadership support this effort? I was unsure how to answer this question, given the uncertainty the pandemic brought to both AVID and our partners. My response was to rely on the strength of my leadership. I was humble and sought insight from AVID leaders and partners by asking questions. I attempted to garner support for my ideas while developing a product that had public value within and outside the organization. I was trying to perfect the NSPN offering before launch.

While seeking feedback and trying to perfect a product are admirable, as a leader, I must be decisive in acting and realize I can iterate and improve along the way. I need to reach an equilibrium when making decisions about how much collaboration and feedback

are appropriate in each situation. My supervisor summed it up well with this quote, “You have great instincts; you need to trust yourself.” A decision will always have both approvers and detractors, and it will never be perfect. My job as a leader is to gather an appropriate amount of information to make a strategic decision and then continue down that path confidently, adjusting as necessary.

Moving forward, I need to be strategic about when something is essential, and it is prudent to collaborate and when I have enough information to move forward without additional feedback. I can accomplish this by doing two things. First, I can reflect on projects I am working on to determine the priorities, what the timeline is, and what information I need to take strategic action? I can also ask myself this question: Does any benefit that may come from additional feedback outweigh the cost of lost time and the appearance of indecisiveness? By reflecting on these questions, I will improve my ability to lead strategically in my future work as an educational leader.

A second area where I can become a better leader in the future is by deliberately nurturing relationships that are important to my leadership goals and communicating strategically. Throughout designing and launching the NSPN, there were several meetings where a member or members of the Leadership Steering Committee (LSC) were not on the same page with me regarding the NSPN. This caused my time allotment during meetings to go over a few times. I should have established individual lines of communication with all committee members so that I could better anticipate their concerns and respond to them proactively. The members I met with individually rarely had a misunderstanding during a meeting. Briefly, meeting with all members would have increased our meetings' efficiency by reducing the need for clarification and allowing more time to focus on aspects of the

NSPN I deemed essential. It would also allow me to deepen those working relationships, improving support for my work.

Another aspect of effective communication I became aware of during my residency is my preference to speak in terms of the big picture but not provide enough details. The second letter of my Myers Briggs (MBTI) type is N for intuitive rather than an S for sensing. Most of the personality types' letters have a 50/50 split, but the N/S split is 30-70. This means I can bet that many of the people that I am communicating with prefer concrete examples and details over a big picture theoretical overview. Because I am aware of this, I will benefit from developing a checklist to ensure that my communication with colleagues and stakeholders includes concrete examples and details.

I will take a continuous improvement mindset to improve these areas of my leadership in the future, and I will become a more effective leader.

Summary of Implications for Self
• Moderate collaboration and feedback with acting confidently • Pursue perfection through continuous improvement. (launch, then perfect) • Reflect on priorities, gather data needed for decisions, trust my instincts. • Anticipate the needs/wants of authorizers and communicate proactively. • Communicate using concrete examples and relevant details.

Figure 11. Summary of Implications for Self

Implications for Site

A clear takeaway from the current data I have collected from the NSPN is that principals appreciate collaborating with their peers to integrate AVID systems at their respective schools. This section will provide my recommendations for how AVID can provide a sustainable structure for 1st and 2nd year principals to collaboratively problem solve and where it can fit within AVID's current professional learning, leadership, and regional support strategy. I start by aligning my recommendations to the Professional Learning and Leadership team's operational theory of action (TOA): "When we engage district and site leaders in high quality and relevant professional learning, networking, and coaching experiences grounded in the AVID CCR framework, then leaders are equipped to ensure equitable opportunities for all students." I will specifically focus on leveraging professional learning and aligning network efforts to support the implementation of AVID's College and Career Readiness systems.

The successful use of the NSPN design in the future relies on three important factors. First, future iterations of the NSPN should be paired with professional learning so that principals have a baseline understanding of the AVID CCR framework and some shared language. Next, participation in the network and access to resources need to be streamlined for principals to easily engage with members of the NSPN and their Problem of Practice (PoP) team. Finally, the PoP teams and overall NSPN should be supported by Regional Principal Network (RPN) members and Program Managers (PM). With these components, the NSPN can support the ongoing engagement of AVID principals and accelerate the integration of AVID systems within their school sites.

Connection to Current Work

The Professional Learning and Leadership team's operational TOA outlines three strategies for supporting AVID leaders to integrate AVID systems. These strategies are professional learning, networking, and coaching. AVID has a vast array of professional learning opportunities available to partner sites. Some of these offerings, such as the leadership strand during SI or DXP and Critical Elements one and two during the school year, are targeted to support new principals with leading AVID integration at their schools. AVID regions also have their Regional Principal Networks of experienced and successful AVID principals that have been cultivated over the past two years. Finally, the regions offer coaching as additional support to partners. The NSPN is completely aligned to the TOA and leverages aspects of all three strategies to support principals at 1st and 2nd-year AVID schools.

Recommendations

In preparing to launch the NSPN, I wrestled with one aspect. The presurvey data we collected from registrants indicated a wide range of Principal knowledge regarding AVID's College and Career Readiness (CCR) systems, with the mean skewing towards principals not having a solid understanding. A foundational step in successfully integrating AVID systems is understanding what they are and how they align with school and district goals and current workstreams. During the NSPN launch, I attempted to mitigate this knowledge gap by introducing the CCR framework and engaging principals in an activity designed to help them better understand it. The post-launch survey indicated that this was the lowest-rated part of the event, and principals still did not have a firm grasp of the framework. We also received feedback that principals wanted

additional time to problem solve with their peers. My takeaway was that the NSPN was not the place to build capacity and structure time to dig into the work because there was no time to do both effectively. Attempting to do both would only detract from networking events' implementation focus. In the future, AVID should structure NSPN networks so that participants engage in professional learning that supports the network's implementation focus. AVID can imbed this into their current system by separating principals who attend site leaders' strands of Summer Institute (SI) and Summer Digital Learning Experiences (DXP) into implementation cohorts as part of an NSPN. This can be in lieu of plugging them into Communities of Practice (CoP) with other educators who attend the site leaders' strand. If all members of the NSPN engage in a professional learning journey together, they will gain a common language and set of tools that will improve the impact of network collaboration. Principals will then come to NSPN events equipped with the tools they need to collaborate and lead AVID implementation more efficiently. A valuable resource for this work is the Principal Profile that outlines what it takes to be a strong AVID leader. This profile can serve as a roadmap for a professional learning scope and sequence that supports the principal's leadership needs. AVID should take time during the summer training to advertise the NSPN to principals along with the principal profile, journey, and professional learning opportunities. Professional learning will build their capacity to lead the integration of AVID systems. The NSPN will provide them with a network of peers engaging in parallel work serving as the implementation vehicle. Principals will build collective knowledge and engage in continuous improvement together.

Participation in the NSPN and access to resources need to be streamlined so that principals can easily engage in the work. During our NSPN, we used Google Drive to document what was shared and learned and Zoom to hold synchronous meetings. Registration for events was handled using a short Survey Monkey link that I emailed to targeted principals. During the design process's empathize mode, I learned that MyAVID was a potential barrier to principals participating in the network. These decisions were made to limit principals' need to access MyAVID to register, find resources, or attend events. To support usability in future iterations, I recommend using Canvas so that principals can access all the information they need in one place. AVID could create a course for the NSPN that had the professional learning journey. AVID would also organize synchronous network events for the NSPN principals for the first two years of their AVID partnership, during which time principals would build strong collaborative relationships that will continue far into the future. The synchronous events will provide an ongoing face-to-face platform for NSPN principals to build rapport and collaborate. AVID can leverage these relationships and use a platform such as Slack, Facebook, or even text for NSPN members to collaborate asynchronously. I recommend using whatever platform principals are most comfortable with because they will be more likely to use it consistently.

The NSPN should also continue to be supported by Regional Principal Network (RPN) members and Program Managers (PM). During all NSPN events, I observed the value that experienced principals brought to the network. Principals appreciate learning from other principals who have walked in their shoes. An additional insight from this year's NSPN launch was that RPN members implicitly enjoyed supporting their peers in

successfully integrating AVID at their schools. I recommend that the regions and PL&L teams continue to cultivate these relationships and offer members the opportunity to support a cohort of new AVID site principals. In addition to the intrinsic value that RPN members gain from participating, I recommend that AVID offer them a Principal Coach badge that signifies they have experience supporting principals in implementing AVID systems. This badge would serve as additional motivation for experienced principals to support the NSPN. RPN principals could earn the badge by participating in a half-day training event to learn about the theory of Action and resources for the NSPN and coaching a cohort of 5 new principals throughout the school year. The PL&L team can develop a short handbook for RPN members that outlines the purpose of the NSPN, their role as expert members, and best practices for taking an inquiry stance to support principals. The one-pager that I developed for RPN members this year can be part of this offering. Finally, RPN members should be offered public praise for their contributions to the NSPN. This will reinforce the joy they receive from the work. Each Problem of Practice cohort of 5 members should also be supported by the AVID Program Manager (PM) for their area if regional cohorts are possible. This allows PMs to cultivate relationships with new principals and gain insight into their struggles. This additional layer of expert support for the NSPN will bolster new principals' confidence and provide further direction as they engage in the work.

In launching the NSPN during my residency, I learned that the network design could engage and support the ongoing development of principals at new AVID sites. Additional data will be available at the end of April and can be used to refine the NSPN design further. With continuous improvement, the NSPN can become part of what AVID

offers new partners. Over time, data will become available that either supports or contradicts my prediction that the NSPN will benefit principals who participate. However, based on the current data (leading indicators) that I shared in the analysis section, the NSPN increases principal engagement and can improve the continuance of the partnership with AVID at participating sites due to the perception of an increased ROI. In the long-term, AVID should disaggregate data to compare new principals who participate in the NSPN to principals who do not. They can use AVID continuance percentages and yearly CCI implementation data to compare and determine the value of the NSPN.

Summary of Implications for Site
• Provide common professional learning to network participants. • Separate principals who attend site leaders’ strands of Summer Institute (SI) and Summer Digital Learning Experiences (DXP) into NSPN implementation cohorts • Streamline participation in the NSPN and access to resources using Canvas. • Regional Principal Network members and Program Managers with AVID principal experience should support the NSPN.

Figure 12. Summary of Implications for Site

Implications for Sector

The idea of using networks or communities of practice to improve outcomes in education is nothing new. The difficult work is to create a shared purpose/focus, structures for principals to collaborate, and sustain their engagement for an extended period. The NSPN has shown some promise in each of these areas at AVID. Both nonprofits and districts face the challenge of focusing attention on high-priority strategies that are most salient to improving student outcomes. This work is more important than ever because of the nationwide impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning. The way to address student learning loss is to improve instruction and accelerate learning at a high level. Focusing on improving principal capacity is the key to doing this at scale. Recent research from the Wallace Foundation indicates that the difference in impact on student learning from a principal in the 25th percentile to the 75th percentile in competence is nearly three months of additional learning per school year (Grissom, 2021). Because the NSPN model brings principals together to solve common problems, creates structures for them to aggregate collective knowledge, and leverages the support of experts that have successfully completed the task at hand, I argue it merits looking at as a possible strategy for school districts looking to accelerate the development of principals and address learning gaps. Districts should prioritize building principal capacity and use networks as a vehicle to expedite the work. They can compel principals to convene as part of a network on a consistent schedule and set a clear purpose for what they aim to accomplish. Districts should also consider whether they should lead this work in-house or contract with an outside agency with more experience and expertise. If the district cannot lead the work efficiently, they are better off focusing their efforts

elsewhere. There is hard work ahead for districts as they aim to recoup learning loss that occurred during the pandemic, and they must find ways to develop their principals and work efficiently.

One of the biggest challenges in creating a principal network is in getting principals to engage consistently. While influencing participation is certainly the preferred route, districts can direct principals to participate in the network's early stages until principals begin to see the value. Districts can provide opportunities for principals to share knowledge related to their shared challenges to improve principal buy-in. Being able to contribute to the group and share their expertise will promote ownership and deepen their ties to the network. Districts can also structure network meetings to promote wins and recognize principals who contributed to the group or made progress towards realizing the collective goal. Districts can also communicate the purpose of the network clearly and consistently and chunk the work so that it is not overwhelming, and principals know what to expect. These steps will enhance the district's success in launching principal networks focused on addressing learning gaps.

Districts and CMOs should also consider how virtual platforms can improve collaboration and professional development efficiency. For example, time is wasted when principals travel from across the city to meet in person. The last year has made many principals experts in using online platforms for communication and professional development. Meeting virtually allows more time for collaboration and engagement in work. Meetings can easily be recorded for members who cannot attend, and experts can more easily participate. If a district decides to outsource the work, a consultant can lead a cohort of principals in professional learning and the execution of strategic goals. Because

the consultant does not have to travel, the district saves on flights and hotels. Virtual collaboration and professional learning have the potential to improve how districts and CMOs support principals.

In conclusion, the network model as conducted at AVID can accelerate student learning throughout the education sector and address learning gaps. However, district leaders should do their due diligence to ascertain if a network is worth the resource commitment, given that it takes time to establish an effective knowledge network or networked improvement community. If they decide to convene a network, they should compel principals to participate in the beginning stages, be patient, and continue to support the work long term.

Summary of Implications for Sector
• Districts, CMOs, and non-profits should prioritize building principal capacity and use networks as a vehicle to accelerate the work. • Leverage virtual platforms to efficiently collaborate and build principal capacity

Figure 13. Summary of Implications for Sector

Conclusion

I entered my residency during a time of great uncertainty for AVID and the education sector. This uncertainty formed the foundation for the NSPN strategic project's overarching goals as outlined in the project brief presented in August 2020. The network needed to engage principals in relevant network activities that established and sustained engagement with AVID and provided value that increased their return on investment (ROI). In service of these big-picture goals, the TOA for the NSPN identified five NSPN pilot outcomes. (1) Fifty percent of targeted principals will participate in NSPN events; (2) New site AVID Principals will report building rapport with network peers and collaborate asynchronously; (3) AVID principals will indicate that NSPN events support their ability to lead implementation at their site by enhancing their leadership capacity; (4) AVID will leverage network members' existing knowledge by coordinating the sharing of peer strategies to address common problems of practice PoP; (5) Principals will use the NSPN to launch strategic action on the common PoP and use continuous improvement (PDSA cycles) to make progress towards resolving the PoP at their site. Preliminary data shows progress towards achieving these outcomes. By using design thinking to empathize with principals' challenges and gaining the trust and support of a coalition of AVID staff, the NSPN is well-positioned to be improved upon and expanded to meet the needs of principals new to AVID.

In the analysis and implications sections of this capstone, I documented key action that I took to design the NSPN to meet the needs of principals, align with AVID's current work, and achieve the TOA goals outlined above. The design challenge yielded a problem statement that focused my design work for the NSPN. Having a clear purpose for the NSPN

and aligning it to principals' needs produced positive data from the post-launch survey. Most principals indicated that they developed a rapport with and benefitted from collaborating with peers and improved their knowledge of AVID's foundational College and Career Readiness Framework (CCR). Observational data and evidence from PoP team rolling agendas indicate that principals shared their expertise and exchanged contact information to collaborate asynchronously. This data also suggests that the NSPN is mutually beneficial to AVID and its partners. My overarching goals of providing value and engaging principals were realized on a small scale, but the ongoing pandemic impacted network attendance. Data that will become available in the coming months will provide more information regarding if principals collaborated asynchronously and if the network improved their perceived ability to integrate AVID systems at their site (ROI).

Looking forward, AVID has an opportunity to incorporate a service that supports principals through the most challenging part of the work, leading implementation. Because leading the integration of AVID systems at a school site is an ongoing, iterative endeavor, principals will have an incentive to continue collaborating with their peers on the journey. This continued collaboration on the work will forge relationships that will add value to principals and ultimately increase their ROI for AVID. Leveraging the power of the collective is in the best interest of everyone who seeks to close the opportunity gap by removing barriers for students because “We can accomplish more together than even the best of us can accomplish alone” (Bryk, 17, 2017).

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Appendix A

Launch Agenda

Agenda

- Logistics for Team Collaboration
- AVID's Mission
- Performance Objectives
- New Site Principal Network Resources (CCR, COE, CCI)
- Problem of Practice Identification
- New Site Principal Network Overview
- Diffusion of Innovations Theory
- PoP team breakout



Appendix B

New Site Principal Network Data Session 1

Registered					
Network	Western		Central		Eastern
New Site Principal Network	41		39		32
Principals Collaborative	14		4		6
Total Registration	45		43		38
Attended					
Network	Western		Central		Eastern
New Site Principal Network	14 (34%)		16 (41%)		12 (38%)
Principals Collaborative	4		3		6
Total Registration	18		43		38
Survey Data (N=31)					
Question	SA	A	N	SD/D	Weighted Avg.
Established rapport with my Problem of Practice Team.	20	11	0	0	4.65/5
Gained insight on how CCR framework can accelerate learning at my school.	12	13	6	0	4.19/5
This meeting was timely and relevant to my needs.	14	14	3	0	4.35/5
Discussing topics related to AVID implementation with my peers was beneficial.	19	11	1	0	4.58/5
Qualitative Feedback					
• More time for small group discussion • Allow participants to share screen in breakouts • Send session outline prior to event so participants can prepare • Ensure clarity around breakout session tasks (CCR Framework) • Promote other AVID professional learning/support resources to fill gaps					

Appendix C

New Site Principal Network Data Session 2

Attendance			
Network	Western	Central	Eastern
New Site Principal Network	3	3	5
Principals Collaborative	3	3	5
Total Attendance	6	6	10
Survey Data (N=8)			
Question	SA	A	SD/D
Did you attend the meeting in January?	5 yes		3 No
I felt safe sharing a challenge with my Problem of Practice Team.	7	1	0
The consultancy protocol was timely and relevant to my needs.	7	1	0
I gained valuable insight by discussing my implementation challenge with my peers.	7	1	0
Feedback: - Great learning experience (5) - Ensure equity of voice (1)			

Appendix D

Kotter's 8 Step Change Process



Appendix E

AVID New Product Development Cycle



Appendix F

Problem of Practice Team Rolling Agenda

New Site Principal Network Problem of Practice Team Rolling Agenda

1. Resources & Norms

Resource Links	Norms
AVID CCR Framework Gap Analysis Template Components of Excellence Elementary CCI Secondary CCI	- Ask questions. - Engage fully. - Integrate new information. - Open your mind to diverse views. - Utilize what you learn

2. Work Plan

Meeting Date and Time	Objectives of This Meeting	Next Steps to Complete Before This Meeting
Wednesday, January 20 2:30–4:30	Meeting #1: - Build a sense of community with the peer cohort that you will engage in the Problem of Practice with. - Explore ideas for using the AVID College and Career Readiness Framework to accelerate student learning at your school	Complete the pre-survey
Thursday, March 11 3:30–4:30	Meeting #2: Identify fresh ideas for addressing a challenge they are having with integrating AVID systems at their school site.	Begin work on the next step that you identified during session one.
Thursday, April 29 3:30–4:30	Meeting #3: - Check-in with your Problem Practice team and share plans for integrating AVID at your site. - Provide feedback to peers on their implementation plans.	Take action to address the dilemma you identified during the 2nd session.

3. Meeting Agendas

Appendix G

Gap Analysis Template

Gap Analysis		
The First Step in Designing a Plan Around AVID Growth and Sustainability		
A gap analysis is a three-column organization tool that can be used to identify the gaps between the current reality and the vision of success. The school's/district's <u>first step is to complete the third column</u>, describing what the vision would look like and sound like when realized. For example, if college and career readiness for all students is the goal, it might consist of all students being enrolled in rigorous courses of study.		
		Vision for Combatting Learning Loss - All students are enrolled in rigorous courses of study. - All courses engage students with high-leverage instructional practices that provide tools for learning. - Teachers build meaningful relationships with all students.
Once the third column is complete, it becomes necessary to describe the current state of <u>reality</u>, located in the first column.		
Current Reality 10% of HS students are enrolled in rigorous courses. 30% of courses regularly incorporate and engage students in WICOR® strategies, providing tools for learning. 60% of students report having a caring relationship with their teacher(s).		Vision for Combatting Learning Loss - All students are enrolled in rigorous courses of study. - All courses engage students with high-leverage instructional practices that provide tools for learning. - Teachers build caring relationships with all students.
The final column to address is the second column, which provides an opportunity to identify strategies for bridging the gap between the current reality and vision.		
Current Reality 10% of HS students are enrolled in rigorous courses. 30% of courses regularly incorporate and engage students in WICOR® strategies, providing tools for learning. 60% of students report having a caring relationship with their teacher(s).	Strategies to Fill the Gap - Engage the Data team in accessing course offerings; determine the forecasting plan for 1:1 <u>conversations</u> with students. - Analyze teacher training and build a plan to support AVID training of teachers over a five-year period. - Engage the AVID Site Team in defining "caring" relationships <u>and</u> <u>identifying</u> strategies to help teachers build caring relationships with students.	Vision for Combatting Learning Loss - All students are enrolled in rigorous courses of study. - All courses engage students with high-leverage instructional practices that provide tools for learning. - Teachers build caring relationships with all students.
Once complete, the gap analysis provides information to support the school/district in the design of a three- to five-year plan to grow and sustain the AVID College and Career Readiness System at their site.		

Appendix H

Modified Consultancy Protocol

Preparing for the Consultancy Protocol

For the March New Site Principal Network meeting you will engage in a Consultancy Protocol with your Problem of Practice team.

Teams will go through four rounds of the Consultancy Protocol, allowing everyone to be the presenter of a challenge that they are facing regarding how to integrate AVID practices at their school.

This challenge can be framed as a problem.

- **Problems** are issues that need to be solved.
 - *Example: Our school wants to focus on using WICOR® strategies, but not all teachers understand the value and importance of incorporating them in lessons. How can the AVID Site Team communicate the value of WICOR and influence its use?*

Consultancies work best when presenters bring a challenge that they are really struggling with and when it is something that implicates the practice of the people on their Site Team (the resolution would involve the team making an affirmative choice to do something different with their planning, not just to wish that others would change).

The protocol has two main purposes:

1. To develop the presenter's capacity to see and describe an essential challenge.
2. To provide fresh ideas for addressing that challenge.

Before the March event, principals should identify a challenge that they will share during the consultancy. It may help to jot down notes about your challenge so that you are able to succinctly describe it to your Problem of Practice team.

Protocol Instructions (*modified for faster timing*):

(3 Presenters)

1. (2 minutes) Presenters discuss the challenge.
2. (3 minutes) Listeners ask presenters questions about the challenge.
3. (4 minutes) Listeners talk among themselves while the presenter takes notes.
4. (4 minutes) Presenter reflects on learning and invites open discussion with listeners.

(4 Presenters)

1. (2 minutes) Presenters discuss the challenge.
2. (2 minutes) Listeners ask presenters questions about the challenge.
3. (3 minutes) Listeners talk among themselves while the presenter takes notes.
4. (3 minutes) Presenter reflects on learning and invites open discussion with listeners.

(5 Presenters)

1. (2 minutes) Presenters discuss the challenge.
2. (2 minutes) Listeners ask presenters questions about the challenge.
3. (2 minutes) Listeners talk among themselves while the presenter takes notes.
4. (2 minutes) Presenter reflects on learning and invites open discussion with listeners.

Adapted from the Consultancy Protocol (<https://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/download/consultancy>) Developed by Gene Thompson-Grove, Founding Co-Director of the National School Reform Faculty. Summary and additional description from Boston Public Schools.

Appendix I

Facilitator Continuous Improvement Notes

Session 1 Facilitator Notes

Challenge	Solution
Naming convention was a challenge	Simplify the convention with admin. Just adding an E or S before their name. It was helpful to have the Network principals designate themselves. Also consider adding a slide and walking people through the processes of renaming
Framework Overview - a lot of information to share	Consider using the video to support here

Appendix J

Plan, Do, Study, Act, Template

Continuous Improvement Cycle																																
Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA)																																
PLAN (Create the plan)																																
Guiding Questions 1. What is the identified goal? How does it relate to your AVID Site Goals? 2. What data do we have to validate this goal and establish a baseline? 3. What action steps do we think will generate improvement? 4. What evidence will we use to measure progress? 5. What are the best resources? 6. What is an appropriate timeline for the action steps? 7. How is this goal connected to other school/district plans? 8. Who will commit to intentional efforts related to this goal? 9. Can we predict what will happen?	1. <i>Identify a problem and write it as a question.</i> • <i>Common PoP: How do we integrate AVID's College and Career Framework to combat learning loss?</i> 2. <i>Write a goal statement including how it will be measured.</i> • 3. <i>How does this goal relate to your current AVID site plan and progress?</i> a. <i>Bright spots:</i> b. <i>Barriers:</i> 4. <i>Identify who will be involved, what action will be taken, and a timeline for implementation and follow-up.</i>																															
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