

NISL-A Reflection on my Experiences of Working with the Administrators as a Teacher Leader

I was fortunate to be selected to participate in the eighteen month NISL program in the capacity of a teacher leader among district administrators. The experience challenged me professionally and was incredibly rewarding.

In the first few months, I found it a bit intimidating to share my ideas alongside so many administrators, especially since I was still experiencing much of it through my teacher lens. One of the advantages, though, of being one of the only teachers in the room, was the opportunity to share my thoughts and opinions from a perspective sometimes not reflected in administrator meetings and settings. I noticed that many of the administrators had questions for me and appreciated the insights I offered.

In unit 3, we began discussing standards based instructional systems. As the leader in the district in our transition from a traditional educational system to a standards based instructional system, I really found my voice. Due to my experience, research practice and knowledge in this area, there was a shift that happened where I became a valued resource for the administrators.

The second year brought with it the challenges of a new teacher evaluation system which had all the participants looking at each of the remaining units in a different way. I also began a new half-time position as a curriculum leader for the district. This gave me the advantage, and the challenge of experiencing what it is like to lead and evaluate in this new way, as well as what it is like to *be* evaluated in this way.

This identification with both administrators and teachers has provided me with great professional growth. I feel it has caused me to think deeply and evaluate my practice meaningfully. One of the theories we spoke about often in NISL was Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. Growth occurs when instruction is delivered within each individual's zone. After much fluctuation between roles throughout the eighteen months, I feel I have found a place to call my own, and I am able to find my zone, push myself further and continue to feed my passion for curriculum development and the education of our students.