

New Pathways for Partnerships: An Exploration of How Partnering
With Students Affects Teachers and Schooling

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Abstract

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This “basic” qualitative study (Merriam, 2009) was designed to examine the ways school policy and leadership in the context of an intermediary partnership at one urban high school facilitated the creation of adult-student collaborations. Building on a growing literature on student “voice” in school reform, the study explored how, if at all, these collaborations reshaped instruction; what effects these collaborations had on teacher and student behavior and outlooks; and whether these changes were enduring. Data for this two-year investigation of a “critical case” consisted of document collection, observations of collaborative practices, and semi-structured one-on-one and group interviews with 12 students and 14 adults. Data was coded for reoccurring themes, and analysis focused on teacher and student descriptions of changes in perceptions or behavior based on collaborative activities. The findings suggest the university-school partnership aided in building capacity for adult-student collaborations and that the collaborations had some influence on adult and student outlooks, behaviors, and classroom practice. The model of intermediary organizational partnership and adult-student collaboration at this school contributes new insights into the types of school leadership and professional learning

structures that are beneficial for designing organizational routines where adults and students work collaboratively and continuously for instructional improvement.

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Chapter 1

New Pathways for Partnerships: An Exploration of How Partnering With Students Affects Teachers and Schooling

Education systems in the United States are continually striving to develop efficient and effective instructional environments that equitably serve a broad spectrum of students. Yet while the schooling enterprise is designed to educate our children, students are almost always left out of discussions and decisions concerning the design or pedagogical practice of their schooling experience (Lincoln, 1995; Levin, 2000; Rubin & Silva, 2003; Fielding, 2001; Mitra, 2008). In classrooms that emphasize active teaching and learning, the students may be deeply engaged in discussions that are part of their academic work, and may even have a fair amount of choice regarding the projects or content on which their learning will focus. But still, they tend to be excluded from the thinking behind, planning for, and construction of their learning environments, and they are rarely asked for systematic input into efforts to evaluate or improve it. From one point of view, this is natural enough—those are “professional” matters, after all, and students are not yet professionals. But seen from a different vantage point, as educators concerned about *student voice* do, this is a serious omission, a missed opportunity for students to help realize educational reform goals—that is, revitalize their learning environment, as well as enrich their own learning.

The idea of student voice can also engender mixed reactions from teaching professionals. Some approach student voice with caution stemming from concerns about the negative effects it could have on the value associated with the teaching profession both in schools and in society. In this view, providing students a voice in schools might threaten to open educational environments to the uninformed or immature whims of youth which could serve to dilute the educational

experience, demoralize teachers, or reinforce an undercurrent of cynicism. From another perspective, the idea of student voice might offer better results for engagement and learning, increases in professional efficacy, and improved job confidence (Cook-Sather, 2002; Cook-Sather, 2006; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Demetriou & Wilson, 2010; Mullis, 2011; Morgan, 2011). In reality, attempts to involve students in their education could result in either or both of these outcomes depending on many contextual details including the interplay of the purpose and design of the process, the preparation of the students and educators involved, and demographics or representation of diverse student participants. While there remain many caveats to the implementation of student voice initiatives, the omission of students as key stakeholders in educational conversations is receiving increased attention in school improvement literature and fueling debates about the possibilities and hazards of such practices (Scanlon, 2012; Zhao, 2011; Zion, 2009).

While the concept of student voice is by no means new, its recent popularity has inserted student perspective in discussions involving school improvement, student advocacy, school governance, teacher evaluation, teacher education, and professional development (Lodge, 2005; Rudduck & Fielding 2006; Yonezawa & Makeba, 2007; Cook-Sather, 2010; Mullis, 2011). Commonly, student voice initiatives with the expressed purpose of school improvement concurrently aim to improve academic performance. However, the idea of student voice is also of special concern for democratic nations where citizen participation is valued. In fact, citizen education, the promotion of democratic principles, and the preparation of future citizens are often cited as a rationalization for the inclusion of students in school decision making processes (Hart, 1992; McLaughlin, 1992; Apple & Bean, 1999; Fielding, 2001; Mitra, 2012). Yet, in a broader sense, the increasing popularity of student voice may reflect changes in our modern

culture. In a globalized society, where technology provides learners with increased avenues to direct their own learning, school structures that seemingly offer students less opportunity for responsibility and autonomy than their out-of-school lives, appear dated and ineffective (Rudduck, 2001; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000; Scanlon, 2012). Inviting students to have input in their educational experience has surfaced as one way to address this discrepancy.

While continuing to define and describe student voice from a theoretical viewpoint remains beneficial, an increasing number of educators, students, and researchers are already exploring this new terrain in various forms of practice. Given the unique nature of individual school environments, it could prove informative to explore more about what exactly student voice can and does mean in various contexts and what instances of student voice can present in terms of opportunities or complications. As a relatively new area of study, student voice often lacks a solid foundation of documented instances of school-wide student voice initiatives, focusing on instructional improvement, that have been underway for some years. Documenting the realities of structuring and sustaining student voice efforts that authentically engage students and adults in instructionally focused collaborations might contribute substantially to the school improvement debate.

There are data that point to teacher support for student feedback, but the importance of defining the specific behaviors, on the part of both adults and students, and the structures needed for such partnerships could be restated in more definitive terms (Mullis, 2011; Demetriou & Wilson, 2010; Cook-Sather, 2010). Student voice research has addressed various effects on students and school culture, yet there has been less discussion of the ways in which the adult-student partnerships within student voice initiatives affect educators or their instructional practice.

This dissertation study aims to connect these dots in both defining the structures and behaviors necessary for instructionally focused adult-student collaborations as well as linking specific changes in behavior and instruction to such practices. Such a determination is important when considering relevant stakeholders and “drivers” of school renewal and sustainable school improvement (Fullan, 2011). Without perceived or real benefits for educators and their profession, any new practice, especially one with the potential to disrupt power paradigms, is unlikely to flourish.

This chapter will serve to introduce the concept of student voice and locate the United States within the international movement of student voice in schooling. I will evaluate the ways adult perspectives of students, as well as the power relations between students and teachers in schools, can affect the process. To begin, I examine the term student voice, the various ideas this term can denote, as well as key factors to be taken into consideration when constructing student voice initiatives. Further, I identify the important components of student voice and how, when these are in place, the contributions and collaborations between students and adults may impact teaching and learning, teacher assessment, professional learning and pre-service teacher education. Conversely, I also examine the pitfalls of establishing adult-student collaborations such as power relations, representation or inclusion, adequate training, development of authentic roles for students, and challenging school climates. Finally the chapter provides a preview of the focus of the inquiry as well as a rationale for the study.

Transforming Perspectives and Clarifying Terms

Several nations encourage youth voice by developing formal systems for student participation. To support these structures and the development of youth-inclusive policies to reinforce them, countries such as the United Kingdom have referred to Articles 12-15 of the

Convention of the Rights of the Child (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000; Godfrey, 2011; Mitra, Serriere, & Kirshner, 2013; Roberts & Nash, 2009). This document—signed and ratified by 193 countries, including every member of the United Nations except Somalia, South Sudan, and the United States—defines youth participation as a right. This right includes access to and sharing of information, the expression of views in regards to decisions that affect them, and the freedom to form collective organizations (United Nations, 1989). Youth inclusive policies in nations such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia encourage and sometimes mandate, student voice and representation within education such as on school boards. However, in contrast to these nations, policies in the U.S. tend to restrict or inhibit youth participation, and the student voice movement in the U.S. remains largely grassroots (Mitra, Serriere, & Kirshner, 2013). Thus, while research is revealing that students can make valuable contributions to school reform, U.S. school structures and policies do not typically allow for their participation in the reform process itself (Rudduck, 2007).

A Needed Transformation

Often students may be excluded from participating in reform discussions due to logistical challenges. A more likely reason lies in adult perceptions of youth and assumptions about students' readiness to assist with the “adult” work of leading instruction and school reform (Cook-Sather, 2002; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). To create new forms of instructional partnership, educators would likely need to believe that students, especially those who have been historically marginalized, have the potential to contribute important insights into the instructional conditions that influence their learning. In short, the very participation of educators in such partnerships implies a shift in their perspective—treating students as partners in the schooling enterprise, as much as recipients of what schooling offers. This change in perspective also implies a shift in

established classroom power paradigms and requires that educators hold some respect for, or bestow some authority in the students' point of view. In essence, new forms of partnership might necessitate the transformation of teachers' perspectives on instructional collaborations as well as the development of teachers' capacity to lead such a charge. As Michael Fielding notes, this "transformation requires a rupture of the ordinary [which] demands as much of teachers as it does of students. Indeed it may call for a transformation of what it means to be a student; what it means to be a teacher in an "explicitly intended...radical collegiality" (2004, p. 296). With this transformation in view, not only students but educators and schools could benefit from including students as partners. Yet the realities of student voice in schools, especially in high poverty or urban schools, remains largely uncharted territory.

Student Voice: A Multi-Dimensional Term

While there has been an increase in attention to student voice, the range and impact of such voice can vary dramatically. The term *student voice* has become accepted more commonly in schools, yet it can be misleading given the varied meanings and iterations it has for different individuals in different communities, schools, or classrooms. According to Dana Mitra (2012) this term describes the many ways in which youth have come to "participate in school decision making that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers" (p. 744). This definition of student voice carries with it the assumption that someone, ideally, will listen. However, in reality, listening does not necessarily engender action. Student voice is further problematized by its potential to interrupt dominant power structures, or conversely, to be co-opted to serve these very structures. While student participation in education can provide substantive positive outcomes for both youth and adults, it can also, when done poorly, contribute to disillusionment and the corruption of democratic values.

Student voice can manifest in various ways and in various places within schools. Many different terms are used in association with student voice in the U.S. and abroad, such as pupil participation, pupil perspective, student consultation, student involvement, student engagement, adult-student collaborations, and adult-student partnerships. These terms can be used to describe different activities that include students, such as students using their voice as board members, evaluators, trainers, advisors, or to provide feedback on schooling such as instruction, curriculum, discipline policies, or school structure. Students can also serve as data gatherers and as researchers in school improvement models. There is often overlap in terms associated with student voice such as action research and democratic education. For example, students can be taught the fundamentals of the research process by engaging with their peers in action research projects within their school to inform or change specific policies or practices within the school. The idea of educating for a participatory democracy takes as a key idea that to teach civic responsibility students must be able to practice the necessary skills to sustain a democracy and thus be represented in various forms of school governance. Further complicating these similarities, the scale of each of these terms can vary depending upon the purposes of the process, be it linked to school improvement agendas or classroom-based practice.

Many educators associate student voice with student empowerment or opportunities for students to take part in decisions that affect them through school councils or leadership teams. Yet the types of decisions students participate in do not necessarily lead to empowerment. Decision making can range from relatively mundane topics, such as school lunch menus, to more impactful decisions regarding classroom instruction. Similarly, student participation or collaboration with adults does not always provide them with decision-making ability. Finally, which students participate can raise issues of equal representation as student voice is intricately

entwined with power dynamics, school culture, and student status. In instances where the voices and participation of privileged or traditional student leaders are most prevalent, the voices of other students might not be heard.

In constructing student voice initiatives many factors may be considered. As mentioned above, these considerations include representation of nontraditional leaders (Mitra, 2008; Rubin & Silva; 2003; Beattie, 2012). Other considerations include purposeful project designs that move beyond menial information gathering and event planning (Fielding, 2001), school-wide approaches that are respectful and invite open and honest communication (Fletcher, 2007), a sound understanding and communication of purpose (Lodge, 2005), development of a supportive organizational culture, and proper preparation on the part of both students and educators (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). Given the variations of student voice and the multitude of factors included in defining each iteration of student voice, it can be difficult to compare student voice practices or to generalize about outcomes. This difficulty presents an opportunity for researchers to present illustrative details of specific student voice initiatives in new and different ways. Throughout this dissertation, I use the term *adult-student partnerships* and *adult-student collaborations* to describe instances where adults work collaboratively with students as partners in some ongoing form of action to solve problems and improve instructional practice or other aspects of schooling.

The Potential of Partnership Between Students and Teachers

Despite the complexities of defining student voice, a growing body of research supports student voice as being a key component of educational leadership (Czerniawski & Kidd, 2012). The emergence of this research and practitioner attention to student voice speaks to the potential of educational partnerships between students and adults (Cook-Sather, 2010; Mitra, 2009; Flutter

& Rudduck, 2004). Our understanding of the possible benefits of student voice has begun to emerge from a small number of case accounts over the last decade, documenting the emergence of programs that aim to engage students as partners in school improvement, curriculum and instruction, research, evaluation, and teacher development (Cook-Sather, 2006, 2009, 2010; Mitra, 2008; Roberts & Nash, 2009; Preble & Taylor, 2009; Ozer & Wright, 2012). Emerging from these and adjacent studies are a series of potential contributions that greater attention to student voice can make—directly to teaching and learning on classrooms, to the assessment of teacher quality and professional learning, and to pre-service teacher education. And across several of these areas, greater attention to student voice can affect teacher perceptions, beliefs, and motivation.

Potential Contributions to Teaching and Learning in Classrooms

These studies suggest that student participation can enhance student motivation, school climate, and teacher-student relationships. Student participation in these roles can serve as a catalyst for innovation and change (Mitra, 2008). This change includes improved collaborative culture, shared leadership strategies, academic gains, and increases in student agency or ownership, stronger attachment to schools, and the development of project planning skills (Kirshner, O'Donoghue, & McLaughlin, 2003; Mitra, 2005, 2009; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Rubin & Silva, 2003).

Teacher-student collaborations also have the potential to affect the motivation of educators. Several studies have implied that when teachers work collaboratively with students their feelings of effectiveness can improve (McCombs, 2003; Mitra, 2004). This could be significant because when teachers feel that they can be effective and motivated to improve their

practice, the quality of the classroom learning can improve in significant ways (Ashton & Webb, 1982; Lieberman & McLaughlin, 1996; Ginsberg, 2000).

Generally students in educational settings are expected to do as adults tell them and to try their best to absorb what knowledge is offered in classrooms. Thus students comply by learning and teachers are accountable by teaching (Cook-Sather, 2010). In essence then, teachers and students could seemingly be engaged in two different activities. Students on the receiving end of educational activities provided by teachers are rarely consulted about instruction, or engaged in teacher evaluations or professional development. Yet students are the closest to the education experience and arguably the most expert observers of schools and teachers.

Potential Contributions to Teacher Assessment and Professional Learning

Noting the potential of student observation, there has recently been interest in the inclusion of student feedback in teacher evaluations as seen in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Multiple Measures of Teaching (MET) Project. The MET project was launched in 2009 "to improve the quality of information about teaching effectiveness" and help teachers and schools create more effective teacher evaluation systems. The study's goals were to improve the quality of information about teaching effectiveness and to help build fair and reliable systems for teacher observation and feedback (Kane & Staiger, 2010, p.3). In doing so, they hoped to provide teachers with useful insight into their teaching practice. The project tapped into the work of Ronald Ferguson and the Tripod Project to include student feedback as an integral part of the evaluation process. The MET studies indicate that student feedback is valuable in teacher evaluations because it was more reliable than any other measure in the study (Kane & Staiger, 2012). Further, they found that "combining any of the observation instruments with the Tripod student survey data improved correlations with student achievement gains" (Kane & Staiger,

2012, p. 57). Thus, not only can student feedback be accurate and mirror academic outcomes, but it can also speak to the relational and interpersonal issues important to classroom learning.

Teachers and other adult educational professionals also gain from experimenting with student voice. In essence, schools are learning institutions, yet students are often designated the only official learners. However, it could be beneficial to consider all school actors to be learners. In creating a school-wide culture or community of learning, adults could be more transparent or forthcoming in their aspirations to continue their own professional learning. This could improve teachers' ability to hone their craft, especially in the early stages of their career or throughout changes in curriculum. It might be possible that students can aid in this process and contribute to teacher learning by participating in learning walks, curriculum reviews or previews, co-construction of curriculum, coaching, observation and feedback, or student shadowing. In this way teachers could develop skills that help them feel successful, develop positive relationships with students, and develop leadership capacity. As we consider the discrepancy that often exists between the sociocultural and racial backgrounds of students and their teachers, establishing regular and non-threatening avenues for communication and sharing, especially as it relates to instruction, may be a feasible way to invigorate the professional development of teachers at all levels. Further, high need school districts that do not have access to adequate resources might find partnering with students as one low-cost opportunity to develop their teaching force.

Potential Contributions to Pre-Service Teacher Education

The feedback students can offer educators can be relevant for both pre-service as well as practicing teachers. In exploring these possibilities several teacher educators have experimented with student voice in pre-service and practicing teacher education in the U.S. and abroad (Oldfather, 1998; Demetriou & Wilson, 2010; Cook-Sather, 2010; Kidd, 2012). These ventures

have resulted in some promising new practices that incorporate or work within existing structures to improve or bolster teacher development. For example, one U.S. school district in Boston found avenues for students to create positive relationships with teachers unions by participating in and collaborating with educators around issues of practicing teacher professional development (Catone & LeBoeuf, 2012).

Pre-service teacher educators have also explored the potential student input and student voice has for pre-service teacher development. Several university faculty members in teacher education programs have found ways to engage students in teacher candidate education in ways that provide individuals with more direct and timely feedback throughout student teaching (Cook-Sather, 2006; Morgan, 2011; Kidd, 2012). There are several reasons one could rationalize student participation in pre-service teacher education. For one, learning and academic achievement can be largely dependent on the interpersonal relationships between teachers and learners. Warren Kidd (2012) argues that using student voice to inform the practice and learning of teachers is important for teachers' identity development and will help build *effective relational agency* in new teachers. Relational agency is of great importance for the teaching profession due to the inherent collective nature of the teaching and learning process. Yet in this process teachers need to not only work with each other to support their work, but also work with learners.

Exposure to student voice early on can be important for as Kidd notes:

Many teacher candidates come to the field with little experience with young people and, are often surprised by the degree of confidence, reflection and articulation with which many younger learners are able to engage with their own learning. Educators are surprised at how learners are able to talk confidently about what they think is good teaching and to be able to describe styles of teaching and teaching tools and techniques in some depth and with sophistication. (Kidd, 2012, p. 121)

Quite often, practicing teachers may also be astonished at students' ability to provide instructional feedback. In fact teachers do report surprise that the ideas their students have to offer are "sensible, practical and educationally desirable" (Demetriou & Wilson, 2010, p. 55). In learning, as a collective endeavor, it would be beneficial for teachers to be confident and reassured in their students' ability to provide sensible and insightful feedback rather than be surprised or wary of it.

The boundary crossing nature of student voice could offer one possibility to address what some see as a gap in what is taught *about* the professional practice of teaching and the actual *practice* of teaching. In this view, teachers need to recontextualize their training before it is of practical use (Kidd, 2012). As mentioned previously, this might require a substantial shift in perspective regarding the roles and responsibilities of teacher and student. However, an important component of school reform is the concern for the learner experience. In essence, this concern already moves the attention away from the curriculum or the teacher as primary concern and shifts focus to students and their learning (Rodgers, 2006). In this view, the concern for *covering* material shifts to a concern to ensure *understanding* of the material. Such a concern for understanding suggests new ways for teachers and students to communicate about learning.

Potential to Alter Teachers' Perceptions, Beliefs, and Motivation

In discovering new ways to communicate about schooling and learning, student voice could serve a key role. When educators and students communicate within safe conditions about learning, it is possible for teachers to shift their perspectives of their students and gain new perspectives. Helen Demetriou and Elaine Wilson (2010) discovered that teacher "perceptions of pupils' capabilities changed as a result of talking with them about some of the taken-for-granted aspects of teaching and learning" (Demetriou & Wilson, 2010, p. 56). Teachers' perceptions of

their students are important for several reasons. Substantial evidence supports the notion that the perceptions and beliefs teachers' hold of their students are entwined with their sense of efficacy (McLaughlin, 1993; Medway, 1979; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990; Little & McLaughlin, 1993) as well as the type of curriculum, instruction, and support they provide (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lipman, 1998; Moll, 1992; Olneck, 2004). Thus, the beliefs educators hold about their students' capabilities and potential can greatly affect what type of experience students have in the classroom. McLaughlin (1993) found that teachers referred to their student's backgrounds, abilities, and attitudes when they evaluated their perceived effectiveness and they "discriminated their sense of professional efficacy... on their relationship with students" (p.81). Thus while students play a large part in teachers' motivation and efficacy, teacher efficacy in turn plays an important role in instructional effectiveness (McLaughlin, 1978; Guskey, 1988; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990; Fullan, 2005).

Knowing the important role students play in teacher motivation and efficacy and the role these play in instructional effectiveness, it is relevant to consider ways to focus professional learning efforts to not only be centered on student learning but to *include* students. Importantly this process could be viewed as equally rewarding and invigorating for teachers and students alike. As Demetriou and Wilson (2010) note:

Consulting young people is one way of responding to the needs of teachers as well as to the pupils themselves...If we want to improve pupils' achievements and commitment then we may need to take our agenda for change, at least in part, from what they can tell us about teaching, learning and schooling. (p. 64)

A Road Not Taken: Why the Potential of Student-Adult Collaborations is Often Not Realized in Schools

As the preceding discussion makes clear, student-adult collaborations in schools have revealed promise. Student input can serve as a catalyst for school renewal, curricular innovation, and transformative professional learning (Mitra, 2009). Ultimately, the research tells us that student voice, when done well, has the potential to change education to be more participatory and motivating for both students *and* adults (Rubin & Silva, 2003; Oldfather, 1998; Mitra, 2008; Warren & Mapp, 2011; Cook-Sather 2006, 2009).

Yet the opportunities student voice presents in education are rarely utilized, and attempts to incorporate students often stall at a surface level. The idea of student voice can seem straightforward, but in reality it can be quite complicated. In many ways, these collaborations face significant barriers that stem from both logistical and ideological issues. For one, schools, especially urban schools, can operate amid a multitude of conditions and realities that compete for time and that some would consider chaotic. Secondly, schools, and teaching in general, requires a complex interaction between individuals' values, beliefs, and the practices of the school. Student voice poses a compelling challenge in that it can require the alignment of individuals' beliefs with the practices of the school in order to create authentically cooperative environments where students and adults can collaborate openly and honestly. Thus, efforts to enhance student voice are often mired in the complexities of power dynamics and belief structures. Furthermore, to address these complexities, steps need to be taken to prepare for and ensure that all participants are safely included. And to do so implies that students are given *authentic* roles to play that enable student participation to be meaningful and consequential. In exploring the reasons benefits of student voice are often not realized, I will examine the

complications presented by power relations in schools, difficulties associated with including “non-traditional” student leaders in student voice initiatives, the often overlooked importance of training for adults and students as they engage in intergenerational collaborations, and the idea that authentic student participation cannot occur if students themselves do not find their role meaningful. Finally, I discuss the current structure and functioning of schools, especially high poverty schools, as a reason many student voice initiatives do not take root.

Navigating Power Relations

The issue of power cannot be overstated when considering student voice. A simplistic interpretation of resistance to student voice could be that adults are merely reluctant to give up what they see as their positional power. Yet the reality can be quite nuanced including both systematic and individual components. Finding ways to incorporate student voice, in a systemic way, into the everyday schooling process requires addressing concerns about the disruption of established power paradigms as well as creating ways of promoting comfortable boundary crossings for both students and adults. Allison Cook-Sather (2009) asserts that due to the hierarchical nature of schooling and society teachers must “explicitly and repeatedly” invite students to engage in their education in this new way. To do this genuinely and consistently, teachers must grapple with what exactly their role is, or should be, in the learning process.

Re-envisioning the teachers’ role in the classroom is complex because it requires educators to rethink their professional orientation. It suggests teachers see themselves not as gatekeepers or “guardians of culture” and wisdom but rather as guides or keys to “unmasking authoritative knowledge” (O’Loughlin, 1995, p. 108). Such a reorientation may initially prove problematic for some adult’s professional identity in that teachers who are not able to view themselves as the cause of learning may find it difficult to reposition or justify their role and the

level of importance it holds in the classroom. As Carol Lodge (2006) notes, “It takes time [for teachers] to reorient their sense of themselves from someone who controls to someone who serves” (p. 232). Educators who arrive or maintain this mindset often already pose a personal belief system that values student voice. To value student voice, teachers would need to give validity to and take an intrinsic interest in the ideas and perspectives of students, even or especially, those who may be considered disruptive, apathetic, or disengaged. This would mean that educators maintain a belief that even the most difficult students can offer meaningful contributions. Teachers who do not already maintain these values or who adopt this philosophy would either need substantial support in pre-service or continuous professional development as well as collegial/peer support.

Ensuring Inclusion and Preparation of All Participants

Creating environments where students act as partners in their own education is inherently an exercise in trust and hope, neither of which are easy to maintain or foster in many school environments. In addition to considering adult reactions to student voice, students also must feel invited to the process in a way that allows them to be able to communicate frustration and anger if necessary. The ability to express frustration and anger in productive ways requires teaching and reflection for most individuals, but it becomes essential when doing so in power-laden environments with youth and adults. Thus preparation for adult-student interaction outside of traditional classroom functions means establishing guidelines for intergenerational dialogue. In many ways this also involves the complex task of interrupting the predominant notion of immaturity and “adultism” to reinforce a more positive orientation to youth viewing them as capable and intrinsically motivated (Fletcher, 2007). Further, students need to understand and be able to use the language of education to help convey their feedback in constructive ways. Such a

task requires some up front preparation and reflection as well as establishing guidelines that ensure the safety of participants and relieve anxiety about being attacked or fearing retribution. In other words, authentic student voice demands an appropriate climate of trust and openness.

Language and authority are important issues within any student voice proposition. Any challenge to traditional power relations is laden with concerns of authenticity and inclusion or exclusion (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006). This authenticity can be seen in three important ways; who is allowed to talk, how they are allowed to express themselves, and what they are allowed to talk about (Fielding, 2001). Beth Rubin and Elena Silva (2003) note the importance of inclusion to authentic student voice practices noting, “The increasingly en vogue practice of inviting student participation can, even unwittingly, exclude the least powerful voices and maintain a hierarchy of power and privilege within the school” (p.3). The issue of inclusion encompasses the problem of who is speaking about whom. It is important to note which students are representing the voice of their school. If they are the students who are already best served by the school, it would do little to change or improve conditions for the majority of the student populations who already feel marginalized. Further, being allowed to have a say is one thing but, for students, finding and using voice within the system as it currently exists is harder because it requires a developed strength in identity that provides confidence to enter into adult realms that were previously off limits with little understanding of how your voice will be received (Ruddock & Fielding, 2006, p. 224).

The complicated nature of power dynamics embedded in student voice suggests the importance of including and supporting non-traditional student leaders to participate in student voice practices. The term *non-traditional* refers to students who may be on the fringes of the mainstream for various reasons. These students may include ELL or special education students

as well as the quiet student, the truant student, or even a student who simply has inconsistent academic success. However, even then a prevalent, “pattern of privilege” is sometimes reinforced by students (Rubin & Silva, 2003, p. 18). Yet the inclusion of non-traditional student leaders remains important because students who feel most alienated in schools might offer some of the most relevant feedback for educators who wish to construct their practice and their school to better reach and serve all students. These students might also embody the anxiety teachers may associate with student voice, and the fear of critique is a real and pressing issue to be addressed. As noted earlier, a discourse such as this would require preparation on the parts of teachers *and* students as well as a clearly developed process that all parties understand and ascribe to. Preparation for these practices often may require time, resources, or a restructuring of existing school structures, all of which can prove difficult in educational reform.

Establishing Authenticity of the Roles Students Play

In addition to appropriate student representation and preparation, student voice practices raise the question of what role students are to play throughout the process. Often the type of roles students are relegated to within student voice practices are indications of the authenticity of the practice (Ruddock & Fielding, 2006). Authentic student voice suggests that adults create, or allow students to create, roles for students so that they can participate in ways that students find meaningful. For example, student participation can prove problematic if their role is relegated solely to that of information source or data gatherer. In contrast, authentic student participation might include student involvement on the front end of the feedback process, such as having a say in the development of the process, what kind of issues they want to collect data about, and how or why they want to disseminate the feedback.

If students are not involved in determining the focus of the work, adults don't have a real interest in what they say, or there is no discussion or active follow-up, the process is essentially rendered defunct. In fact, failure to address these issues might produce fatigue and disillusionment for both students and teachers, causing the entire process to backfire or possibly reinforce negative stereotypes. In creating authentic student voice practices a "...disciplined communication of genuine interest in what students think and have to say" goes a long way (Ruddock & Fielding p. 227). Developing or fostering a disposition that values student input in individuals who do not already maintain this belief, or who may be resistant, is tricky at best. Further, negotiating how to gain autonomy or exercise control—important for teenage developmental growth—while maintaining positive relationships with the teachers and other adults who might be guiding development is no easy task (Ozer & Wright, 2012). These conundrums prove to be formidable and often insurmountable hurdles to authentic student voice.

Confronting Realities of Student Voice in Schools

While the research is clear that student voice can carry educational benefits, it also illustrates numerous aspects that can derail or negatively impact these practices. The opportunity for derailment looms ever present in fast-paced, high poverty, and under-resourced urban schools. In these schools, time is a luxury and high teacher turnover coupled with competing or disparate agendas deplete the schools' professional capital. Building the case for student voice and establishing an appropriate climate of trust and openness can prove difficult. Further, while we have come to understand that students can be partners in many ways in schools, most of these roles are emerging. Teachers, students, and administrators attempting to navigate these uncharted waters will likely need help. A lack of capacity can often be the culprit for failing to give proper attention to the preparation of staff and students as well as the development of a

design or structure that is intrinsically rewarding for both teachers and students. Given that partnering with students can require substantial shifts in perspective, innovation, and sustained effort, schools exploring this new terrain on their own often lose steam (Mitra, 2009). Providing a more coherent example of the specific benefits of adult-student partnerships in practice and the structures and partnerships that promote the establishment of such practices may prove helpful and is one purpose of this study.

**Focus of Inquiry: The Impact of Student Collaborations on Instruction,
Participants, and Reform Sustainability**

Despite knowing that partnerships between students and teachers can play a vital role in instructional improvement, these benefits are often not realized when power, ideologies, and authenticity of students' roles are not attended to. Several issues arise that are as yet unexplored or incompletely explored by research. The first concerns the actual effects of engaging student voice on instructional practices, especially in historically underserved communities; the second concerns the feasibility and sustainability of student-adult collaborations beyond the initial experimentation with student voice. Essentially there is a need to investigate what directly changes in classroom practice as a result of adult-student collaborations as well as what may indirectly change by the possible shifts that can occur in teacher and student beliefs about each other. Further, scholars and educators do not yet understand well what specific aspects of intermediary partnership assist practically with developing instructionally focused adult-student collaborations and what key actions or structures enable these collaborations to continue and evolve over time in high-poverty schools.

Investigating the Instructional Impacts of Student-Adult Collaborations

Establishing that student voice has improved teacher-student relations or enhance students' motivation *may* set the stage for a different kind of learning experience in classrooms, but it also may be used by teachers to justify existing approaches to teaching. This is especially important to probe, given that partnerships between students and adult educators potentially shift the power relations within the school substantially. In the context of historically underserved—and systematically disempowered—school communities, such matters are as delicate as they are pervasive. Where student voice enables real student empowerment to happen, the conduct and impact of instruction may be fundamentally different. A shift in initiatives that include students as active participants in discussions about curriculum and learning might produce significantly distinct results. The outcomes of such collaborations on instructional practice and climate have not been substantially defined or investigated empirically (Mullis, 2011). Scholarship has yet to identify particular instructional, attitudinal, or classroom and school climate changes that are attributed to adult-youth collaborations, as identified by the students, teachers, and administrators who engage in these practices. Further, there remains a need to identify specific outcomes of instructionally focused adult-student collaborations when students are given the language and permission to discuss learning and schoolwork with teachers and administrators.

On a similar note, it is not yet understood if, or how, formal student engagement practices within a school influence informal classroom routines and practices. Practices that unite students and educators as learning partners can create environments where teachers are motivated to further examine their perceptions about their students and their practice. As a consequence, it is possible that other school and instructional practices are affected. If including students in conversations about instruction can change students' perceptions of teachers, the same might

hold true as a way to assist with shifts in teachers' attitudes about students and families. If teachers are better able to understand their students as learners, it could affect their motivation to innovate within their classrooms. Ultimately, educational change depends on what teachers do and think (Fullan, 2003).

Investigating the Feasibility and Sustainability of Student-Adult Collaborations in Historically Underserved Schools

A second issue concerns the feasibility and sustainability of such practices given the resource deficit currently facing our schools. Once again, in historically underserved schools where resource shortages are likely to be most acute, it is not obvious that the actual *or perceived* demands of partnering strategies for time, expertise, or even (occasionally) additional funding will facilitate active student partnerships. As research has begun to suggest, external organizations may be particularly important in helping a school community experiment with and embrace these practices.

Student-adult collaborations don't usually organically occur on a school-wide basis. Developing effective structures for these collaborations requires intensive planning and training. Often this support comes from external support providers, intermediary organizations or an external organization consultant—sometimes called non-systems actors. The role these intermediary organizations play in school reform is notable (Datnow & Honig, 2008; Supovitz, 2008), but the role they can play in facilitating student voice initiatives is often substantial (Mitra, 2009). Yet we do not fully understand how a relationship with an intermediary organization enables a heretofore resistant school to begin experimenting with the inclusion of students in significant partnerships with adult educators in the building. This omission is particularly notable when considering partnerships that authorize students to participate in the

professional realm of instruction that is otherwise off-limits. Research has not identified the crucial aspects of intermediary partnership that facilitate this experimentation in safe and open environments in ways that promote growth or in a manner that engenders ownership of the practices.

Intermediary organizations can be one of several third parties such as university partners, community organizations, private foundations, or independent consultants. The very presence of these organizations in schools can provide significant social and fiscal resources for overburdened schools as well as serving as a catalyst for change (Mitra, 2009). This is especially true for low-income schools in times of economic downturns. Research suggests in general terms that the resources offered by intermediary organizations can spark programs that school staff might not otherwise have the time, financial, or cultural resources to initiate (Supovitz, 2008; Honig, 2004; Marsh et. al., 2005; Kronley & Handley, 2003). Yet specifics of such relationships have often not been pinpointed given the unique nature of each partnership.

Further complicating the issue of intermediary organization partnerships is that the relationship is rarely permanent. And sustaining new programs and supporting new practices when funding evaporates requires actors within the school who maintain high levels of agency and skill to continue the work (Datnow, Hubbard, & Mehan, 2002). In the absence of incentives, educators who value the new practices and would like to lead implementation efforts often find themselves overwhelmed with a number of other competing priorities. Similarly, overscheduled or disenfranchised students might not immediately recognize the rewards or outcomes of their participation. So it is important to identify how school-intermediary organization partnerships realize the potential to foster agency among teachers and students. Research on the development of student voice has yet to consider this critical, later stage in the evolution of student-adult

collaborations in a school. In particular, research is needed to explore what schools might do to help educators and students sustain their intrinsic motivation and build their capacity to continuously strengthen and elaborate on partnerships. In this way, as schools adapt to particular practices over time, they can continue to grow, change and improve upon norms of student partnership practices as directed by agency conceived from within the school.

Avenues for Inquiry and Research Questions

While the role of this intermediary organization may have been crucial in establishing student-inclusive strategies at the school, it remains important to understand what, if anything, changes as a result of instructionally focused student-adult collaborations and if any changes can or will be maintained through a new pattern of agency as a result of these partnerships. To explore the influence of adult-student collaborative practices on individuals and schools, I examine one urban high school that has been developing and refining adult-student collaboration practices at their school for six years. While the process has been somewhat of an evolution, the school now engages students as regular participants in instructional feedback activities. To capture the various individual and organizational implications of these practices I focus on several main questions:

1. In what ways, if any, does leadership within the school in the context of an intermediary partnership relationship enable (or inhibit) the development of adult-student collaborations within the school?
2. In what ways, if at all, do adult-student collaborative practices reshape what goes on in classrooms and instruction itself?
3. How do different forms of adult-student collaborations affect the outlook and behaviors of teachers and students, in and out of the classroom?

4. How do power relations in the school change, if at all, inside of classrooms, or elsewhere, as adults and students participate in collaborations around the quality of instruction?

Rationale for Investigating These Matters

Among the myriad of competing initiatives in educational improvement, student voice holds the promise of potentially complementing all of them. Importantly, student voice need not be treated as an add-on but as a practice that can be mutually re-enforcing for other improvement initiatives. Ultimately student voice may prove one way to create a shared ownership for learning and to revitalize the teaching profession introducing new roles and different experiences for both teachers and students. But, as we see an increase in experimentation with student voice, essentially what changes?

The importance of this work is predicated on the idea that students can and should participate in ongoing school improvement practices in ways that enhance student and teacher efficacy and influence classroom instruction. Programs that test these waters are contexts for examining the potential of teachers' instructional collaboration with those who are most directly served by schools—students. Lessons from such research can productively inform educators and community members concerned with creating schools that are engaging and empowering places for students, families, and educators. Through work at one site striving to innovate, we might learn how to more effectively structure instructional improvement and, contribute to the development of academically significant adult-student collaborations. By including student and teacher perspectives in the inquiry, we might discover what essentially changes in the classroom as a result of instructionally focused adult-student collaborations. Finally, an examination of

these processes in in-service teacher development may have implications for pre-service teacher education models.

A Look Ahead

Chapter 2 of this report provides a review of the relevant literature on school reform, teacher professional development, intermediary organization partnerships, and student voice, followed by a discussion of the conceptual framework that informs this study. Chapter 3 outlines the methodological approach and details the design of the study as well as my approach to data analysis. Chapter 4 provides a historical overview of how an intermediary partnership at one school influenced the formation of student-adult collaborations, a description of the practices, and a discussion of the participation demanded of students and adults at the school who engage in these practices. The following chapter explores why or how student-adult collaborations and student instructional feedback are valuable for both teachers and students by addressing how these practices transform teacher and student beliefs about each other and instruction and how they may shape or change instruction itself. Chapter 6 restates the findings from Chapters 4 and 5 within the frame of addressing the research gap and explores what exactly we can learn from this case study about adult-student collaborations in urban environments.

Chapter 2

Understanding How Schools Engage Students as Partners in Educational Improvement: Framing Ideas and Informing Literatures

With the increase in research and practice associated with student engagement, student voice is becoming a movement in its own right. Yet, the concept of student voice is rooted in multiple branches of school reform literature. School improvement research often points to professional learning as a focal point for effective reform, and the realm of teacher or adult learning is another location to consider the possibilities of student voice. Thus research that considers student voice often hints at and proposes student voice as a practice that has the possibility to support instruction, adult learning, and ultimately school improvement. However, there are many caveats to the benefits student voice seemingly has to offer.

In thinking about student voice as a part of the school reform process, the work of Canadian researchers Ben Levin and Michael Fullan proves helpful. In their work, both Fullan and Levin build a case as to why students remain one of the missing and important components or “driving forces” to school reform. In a more practical sense, Richard Elmore provides helpful structural guidance as to the ways in which change can be constructed and which parties should participate in particular ways. Student voice theorists in England, Michael Fielding and Jean Rudduck, have laid foundational work in describing and defining student voice, its purpose, and its central characteristics. Along these lines American researchers, Dana Mitra and Allison Cook-Sather, have done much work relevant to student voice practice. Their research proves helpful in exploring how student voice unfolds in schools and what it means for the teachers and students involved. Finally, there are many practitioners experimenting with and working to promote student voice in schooling. Two of these practitioners, Adam Fletcher and Helen Beattie, have

written about their experiences on the ground and provide useful insights into the ups and downs of program implementation.

In this chapter, I detail how and why student voice has emerged as a possible solution in the school reform literature in order to clarify what purpose student voice can, or cannot, have within school reform. I will discuss various classifications of student voice, descriptions of authentic student voice, and the big issues that shape student voice in school improvement. I will also discuss research and practitioner-based work in the field of student voice and what this work has taught us about how to define and go about working with students collaboratively. I use the work of these theorists, researchers, and practitioners to highlight the effects of student voice on teachers, students, and schools. Further, I discuss the role intermediary organizations play in fostering student voice programs and what this support ultimately means for schools. Finally, I will use these ideas to frame the focus and specifics of this study.

School Reform and Student Voice

A first way to understand student voice is to examine how it has been treated in the literature on school reform and improvement. As we will see, this evolving literature shows increasing attention to the place of students in the reform equation, and to the possibility that their active participation might be part of the solution the reforms seek. Educational institutions are one of the key foundational organizations in our society, but these systems have not evolved at pace with societal developments and sometimes seem virtually impervious to change all together. Further, American society is changing rapidly, and soon students we have been accustomed to calling minorities will constitute the majority of students entering schools (Yen, 2012). Yet our teaching force has far to come to reflect this reality. Given these facts there have

been many ideas of how to best improve schooling. Many of these ideas focus on fixing teachers, changing structures, or some combination of the two.

A consistent challenge of school improvement is incorporating theory into practice in enduring ways that become ingrained into school culture while keeping work vital and responsive to future staff or student changes (McLaughlin & Mitra, 2001). While many at the school might understand and value the theory behind a particular reform, the disparate pressures schools face can dominate administrator and staff energy, resulting in misalignment of resources and organizational fragmentation (Malen & Rice, 2009). Thus the challenge becomes to find ways to align resources and help educators and students develop intrinsic motivation around improvement work. Often this push to build their capacity within the school can be continual and relentless.

Ideally, school change plans develop a clear, consistently communicated and shared vision (Hubbard et al., 2006; Fullan, 2005). Yet whom shares this vision of school change is sometimes less evident. While sometimes difficult to foster, this “collective” consensus of the values behind school improvement is essential to the success of any reform. Thus while a mainstream definition of “collective consensus” might encompass the adults within schools, student voice research is inserting students into this discussion as part of the equation. The emphasis on collective values is due in part to the notion that individuals tend to be driven more by personal beliefs and less by training (Meyers et al., 1998). Thus if a great divide exists between the vision for success and the reality of the school’s culture, it could be difficult to attain intended outcomes (Alderman & Taylor; 2007). In essence, the administrative vision for school improvement in comparison with the reality of school culture, staff opinion, and student commitment to such a vision, lays bare the macro and micro politics in play at the school. If

these factors are not aligned there could be conflict. A collectively designed plan with shared goals might predict a more genuine implementation effort than one which allows little input which teachers and students might be more apt to ignore (Lipskey, 1980).

Among the myriad of approaches to school reform—whether focused on teachers and content-specific pedagogy (Weiner, 2000; Schoenfeld & Pearson, 2009; Darling-Hammond, Wei, & Johnson, 2009), digital or technology integration (Zhao & Lei, 2009), school based reforms (Rowan, Correnti, Miller, & Camburn 2009), or market-driven forces—certain reform ideas and principles signal an important role that students may play in the planning, execution, and ultimate success of the school reform effort. In this regard, reform strategies that espouse democratic principles stand out (Tyack, 1995; Apple & Bean, 1995). Based on a Dewey’s philosophy, democratic schooling models the principles of democracy. Students not only learn about citizenship but learn the skills necessary to participate in a democracy through various forms of participation within the school. In many ways student voice movements are most closely aligned with this reform philosophy. Whatever the goals, key in any reform is participation or buy-in from all relevant parties (Fullan, 2000; Goodland, 1996). Buy-in from teachers and students in this process is especially important, for when teachers do not develop ownership or commitment to the reform it likely will not take root (Fullan, 2000; Elmore, 1995; Cohen, 1995). Along these lines, teachers may become more motivated when they can develop a connection to their students through the reform process and students may buy-in to a reform process when they can participate actively in its development and implementation.

The Role of Teachers and Professional Development in School Reform

Because teachers play an integral role in school reform in general, there is a consensus regarding the importance of professional learning in school improvement (Adelman & Taylor,

2007; Desimone, 2009; Fullan, 2001). Yet the path to growing competent teachers is uncertain territory and hotly debated. Currently the nation is engaged in debates about teacher quality, evaluation, and compensation. This, coupled with the current fiscal recession, has lead teachers to feel less satisfied in their profession (Met Life Insurance, 2012). The Met Life survey indicates that, “in the past two years there has been a significant decline in teachers’ satisfaction with their profession,” (p. 13) the lowest rate the survey has seen in 20 years. Given this reality it becomes important to carefully consider the way we approach professional learning and the effects it may have for teacher motivation and efficacy.

Teacher efficacy is important for schools and students because it signals a teacher’s ability to feel effective in their practice, which in turn contributes to feelings of contentment (Miller & Chait, 2008). Similarly, motivation plays a significant role in one’s willingness to engage openly and honestly in professional learning experiences. Additional recommendations suggest that professional development be school-wide, funded appropriately, supported by leadership, student centered, and collaborative including regular feedback (Little, 1999; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Richardson & Placier, 2001; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Yet designing constructive professional learning experiences that take these issues into account can prove difficult because there are often funding and time restrictions, as well as a variety of content specific approaches.

As researchers and professional development experts agree that professional learning is most effective if it is sustained and based in authentic contexts, such as the school or workplace, it might seem relevant to include students as one component of these professional development designs. Little (1999) highlights this connection to students in professional learning noting that, “Teacher learning arises out of close involvement with students and their work.” Thus it would

seem crucial to tap into, or develop teacher motivation, within reforms or professional development strategies. As noted in Chapter 1, teacher motivation and efficacy are connected to students, so we might presume that engaging teachers and students together will bolster motivation and possibly reform efforts.

Professional development that includes collegial collaboration among teachers and the inclusion of student feedback has been described as increasing teacher's sense of effectiveness and is often experienced as transformative, renewing, and energizing by educators (McCarthy & Riley, 2000; Price, 1992; Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989; Anderson & Olsen, 2006; Rosenholtz, 1989). Here the opportunity for student participation is ripe. McCombs (2003) notes that teachers who experience collaborative work with students, "Experience a sense of being more connected and effective in their work and also demonstrate a change in beliefs about both the competence and motivation of youth in general" (p. 98). According to McCombs, teacher practice changes most when they begin to think about their students differently.

In many senses, achieving a shift in perspective or belief involves engaging individuals in transformative learning experiences. Transformative learning theory stresses the importance of the meaning making process as essential to any learning endeavor (Mezirow, 2000). According to Mezirow:

Transformative learning, especially when it involves subjective reframing, is often an intensely threatening emotional experience in which we have to become aware of both the assumptions undergirding our ideas and those supporting our emotional responses to the need to change. (Mezirow, 2000, p. 6-7)

Mezirow suggests adult learning facilitators employ a pedagogy that offers a relevant experience, allows learners to collaborate, includes self-reflection, facilitates reflective discourse, and initiates focused action.

When adults venture to participate with students in educationally focused collaborations, there is the potential for it to be transformative. Engaging with students around school reform issues or instructional feedback requires teachers to venture into new cognitive realms and potentially challenge their beliefs about student ability. In this theory, after exposure to student voice and participating in student-inclusive practices, teachers may incorporate student voice into their daily lives at school by genuinely attempting to listen to students, trying to act on student suggestions, or even by inviting students to shape their own learning experiences.

Students in School Reform

While a fuller engagement of students has a place in teachers' professional learning, as just noted, their presence in the reform effort can be much more direct and extensive. Somewhere along the way in reform debates, several education theorists noticed that an important piece was missing from school improvement discussions. Suzanne Soo Hoo noted that, "Students have been overlooked as valuable resources in the restructuring of schools" (Soo Hoo, 1993, p. 392). This realization was echoed by Sonia Nieto when she noted that, "One way to begin the process of changing school policies is to listen to students' views about them; however, research that focuses on student voice is relatively recent and scarce" (Nieto, 1994, p. 395-396).

One improvement philosophy that seemed to give voice to the learner experience was the "learner centered" approach. The "learner centered principals" in this model were designed to help educators provide learning experiences that met the basic human needs of belonging, competence, and control (McCombs, 2003). In this model, teachers adjusted their practice to be responsive to each learner, which in many ways required that teachers maintain a willingness and ability to work in partnership with students. However, this willingness and skill to work in partnership with students has remained fairly elusive in the mainstream movements. Ascribing to

such a belief could require a dramatic shift in perspective, and working in partnership with students is not something most teachers have been introduced to in their training programs.

Gradually more school reform philosophies emerged that advocated for student participation and called for educators to reexamine schooling and instructional practice with a new lens. Some insisted it had become necessary for adults to rethink, “the goodness of fit between schools and young people” (Rudduck, 2007). These reform agendas encouraged youth to participate in decision-making processes and practice authentic forms of leadership. While some saw this as a clear possibility to revitalize schools, it remained to be seen if other educators and society as a whole would as well.

As student voice emerged in education discussions and schools began to experiment with it, researchers began to explore the various ways students were participating in different aspects of their education. Several studies revealed that students can play vital roles in school improvement as researchers, co-teachers, planners, advisors, and by providing instructionally focused feedback (Cook-Sather, 2010; Mitra, 2009; Flutter & Rudduck 2004). However, these inquiries also revealed that listening to students’ perceptions about school culture was generally acceptable but, “consulting pupils about teaching and learning is altogether more risky and difficult to manage [given] it’s capacity for destabilizing habitual ways of behaving and familiar patterns of expectation” (Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007, p. 9). Thus, including students in realms such as professional development and instructional improvement seemed to prove more challenging due to power paradigms in teacher-student relations, resistant school cultures, and entrenched organizational systems.

So while student voice initiatives revealed some benefits, such as increased student motivation and achievement, there were several factors that appeared to predicate beneficial

interactions. These factors were identified as a need for such experiences to remain safe, include authentically interested adult partners, and maintain some form of action or follow through (Mitra, 2005, 2009; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Rubin & Silva, 2003). Given these guidelines, there remain many approaches to bringing students and educators together in affirming and productive ways to improve school culture and instruction.

Often school reform philosophies constitute approaches based in what Apple calls “thin morality” and do little to challenge the social inequities that persist within society and within schools (Apple, 2004). Much student voice philosophy is based in critical theory that views the purpose of education as a way, “...of cultivating the skills and knowledge that individuals need in order to control their own destinies and the collective destinies of their communities and society” (Hlebowitsh, 1993, p.4). In this view, the idea of crossing borders between schools, families, students, and teachers could do much to revitalize education. As Lipman suggests (1998), this might constitute a, “...resocialization and the reformation of shared meanings and reconfigurations of existing relations of power in and out of schools” (Lipman, 1998, p. 296-297). Adult-student collaboration within schools is one approach which provides opportunities for teachers and students to begin to construct new and shared meanings.

The Student Voice Landscape: History, Theory, and Practice

A second body of research and theory, more specifically focused on student voice itself, provides a richer picture of how the active engagement of students can fit into efforts to reform schooling. The idea of student voice is not entirely new. Education pioneers such as Dewey (1938), noted earlier, argued that to teach democratic habits teachers need to have students take a more civic role. Student voice research in 1970’s professed the importance of students holding positions on school boards and achieving the right to have some role in school governance. In the

1980s and 1990s, educational writers began discussing the potential benefits of casting students in new roles as partners with adults in learning, instruction, and leadership (Giroux, 1998; McLaren, 1989; Levin, 1994; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). With the U.N. Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1989, student voice gained a new legitimacy. The school improvement movement provided a relevant opportunity for educators to come together to address the issue of student voice (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). Soon there was more of a mainstream push to see school from the students' perspective. This new drive produced a need to define and describe what exactly student voice is or can be.

In the following section, I discuss several conceptual maps developed and used by scholars and practitioners to define the various ways students can, and should be, involved in their education and in educational practice. Most descriptions of student voice run on a scale of high to low student autonomy and control. In order to further unpack the various terms associated with student voice and the forces that affect it in practice, I will discuss the conceptualization and definition of student voice offered by three student voice researchers, Michael Fielding, Dana Mitra, and Caroline Lodge, as well as two practitioners, Adam Fletcher and Helen Bettie. Using these descriptions of student voice, I clarify which terms I use and outline several conditions that serve as reference points in classifying the type of role students are—or can be—taking in their education.

Democratic Roots of Student Voice: Fielding's Conception of Citizenship Education

The concept of student voice often crosses boundaries or carries relational significance with other terms in education. This is especially true in Michael Fielding's scholarship in that he approaches student voice from a strong democratic educational mindset or what he terms, "the demands of deep democracy" (Fielding, 2012). As such, his work provides a broad theoretical

underpinning for various efforts to enhance student voice and provide it a specific and prominent place in school reform.

Fielding's attention to democratic ideals is revealed in his cautions against misrepresentation, and his call for attention to the power and control dynamics in student participation. He uses nine clusters of questions "to probe the rhetoric's and realities of student voice" including:

1. *Speaking*. Who is allowed to speak? Who are they allowed to speak to? What are the allowed to speak of? What type of language are they allowed to use? Who decides?
2. *Listening*. Who is listening? Why are they listening? How are they listening?
3. *Skills*. Are skills of dialogue encouraged and supported with training? Are the skills of dialogue understood and practiced within the context of democratic values?
4. *Attitudes and dispositions*. How do those involved regard each other? Are the principals of equal value and dispositions of care felt reciprocally?
5. *Systems*. How often does dialogue and encounters with student voice occur? Who decides?
6. *Organizational Culture*. Do the norms and values of the school proclaim the centrality of student voice within the context of shared responsibility and achievement?
7. *Spaces*. Where do these encounters occur and who controls these spaces?
8. *Action*. What action is taken? Who is responsible?
9. *The Future*. Are new structures or new ways of relating to each other needed? (Fielding, 2001)

Fielding's organizational structure and his related questions detail essential components of student voice initiatives. Addressing these questions would help structure student voice practices so as to not further marginalize particular groups of students who might lack engagement with schooling, tokenize or misrepresent student input, or undermine students' role in school improvement. These nine categories emphasize the many ways student voice is invariably about power. Power is embedded in decisions of who gets to use their voice, when

they can use it, and what they can talk about. In regards to the power dynamics inherent in student voice Fielding states:

For students in most schools, what you are allowed to speak about is either by way of self-censorship or organizational guidance, more often than not confined to the relatively restricted matters of lunch breaks, discos and school trips. Teaching and learning remain largely forbidden areas of inquiry and if either are allowed into the circle of discussion, the questions and concerns that are raised are invariably identified and framed by teachers for teachers. (Fielding, 2001, p. 101)

Invariably, who is speaking, who they are speaking about, and who listens can reveal quite a lot about who holds power in any situation.

In later work, Fielding asserts the necessity of democratic values in student voice as he calls on educators to attend to the theoretical foundations of student voice in order to avoid, “faddism or manipulative incorporation” to support, “democratic or transformative intentions” and to avoid inviting disillusion or reinforcing subjugation (Fielding, 2004 p. 296). In this view, he asserts that student voice requires the transformation of both students and teachers and what their roles mean in an, “intermingling and interdependence of both.” To Fielding, student voice requires an “explicitly intended and joyfully felt mutuality, a radical collegiality” (Fielding, 2004 p. 296). Further, he accents dialogic equity by raising the problem of talking *about* or *for* others instead of speaking *with* others to develop lines of inquiry. Here Fielding reasserts the importance of adult-student partnerships that don’t exclude “the voices of those deemed less successful or less important in school and society” in order to maintain heterogeneous student participation and avoid hearing only privileged student voice (Fielding, 2012).

Fielding defines student voice by the role students play in what he calls, “patterns of partnership for democratic fellowship” (Fielding, 2012). He categorizes six types of student voice focused interactions between adults and students: (1) students as data sources, (2) students as active respondents, (3) students as co-enquirers, (4) students as knowledge creators, (5)

students as joint authors, (6) intergenerational learning as lived democracy. Through envisioning student voice in these ways, Fielding proposes we envision education as a way to “live and learn together and [to see] schools as examples of democracy in action” (Fielding, 2012 p. 58). For Fielding, the real work of student voice requires radical relationships, radical roles, radical curriculum, and radical structures and spaces to overcome the shortcomings of educational reforms to re-envision education.

Student Voice in School Reform and School Leadership: Mitra’s Pyramid

Several researchers use Fielding’s theories about student voice to inform their definitions of student voice and to examine student voice in practice. As such, they offer a more specific image of the ways that students can be intentionally engaged in efforts to improve the quality of schooling. Prominent among them, Dana Mitra’s work focuses a great deal on student involvement in school reform, with the notion that it would be more effective if students participated. Mitra also notes the importance of school leadership in fostering student voice. By her definition student voice:

...describes the many ways in which youth might have the opportunity to participate in school decisions that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers. Through student voice opportunities, students can work with teachers and administrators to co-create the path of reform to enable youth to meet their own developmental needs and strengthen student ownership of the change process. (Mitra, 2005, p. 1)

Mitra uses a pyramid structure to identify the extent to which students are included as partners (Mitra, 2006). Her model moves from the base of a pyramid from students being heard, upward to students collaborating with adults, and finally to building capacity for leadership (see Figure 1). In this definition she takes much of Fielding’s theory into account while creating an accessible working model by which to define and assess various levels of student voice ranging from limited, to leadership, to student autonomy.

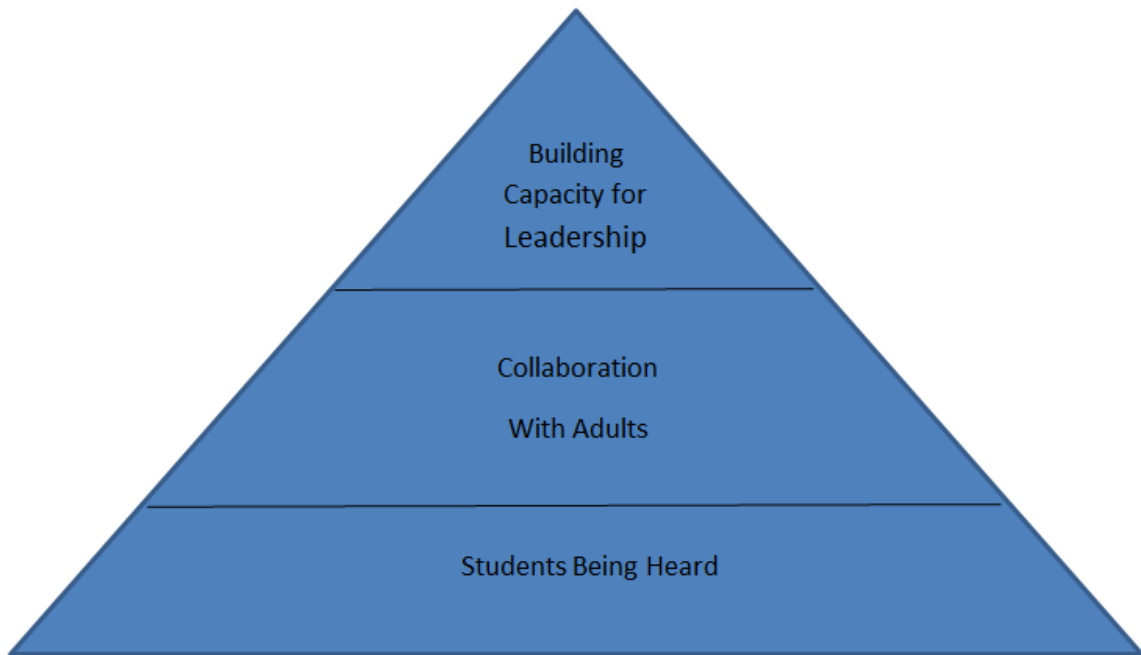


Figure 1. Mitra's pyramid of student voice (Mitra, 2006).

Her pyramid essentially incorporates numerous components of student voice into three levels of student participation:

- Limited or information. Students share opinions with adults through discussions, surveys, or interviews.
- Collaboration. Students participate jointly with adults at the schools to develop forms of inquiry, analyze data, and develop solutions or make decisions on how to make changes at the school
- Autonomy. Students conduct their own research by designing the research questions, information collection, and analysis.

Operating within the limited portion of the pyramid does not assume that action will be taken based on what students share. The collaboration level relies on adults to initiate collaborations, actions, and sustainability. Yet the autonomy level assumes, as its title suggests, that students maintain the responsibility to initiate and facilitate information collection and analysis. Equally important to note is the fact that absent from the autonomy level is the implication of what happens to the information and data analysis students provide. Mitra acknowledges this by citing

the lack of examples of autonomous student-led projects, a student voice limitation that she contributes to the idea that adults would be required to relinquish a certain amount of control for such projects to occur.

Using her definition to analyze specific instances of student voice in school reform, Mitra notes the dialogic difficulties Fielding discusses. For example, student responses can be misinterpreted by adults who do not fully understand student lingo. Conversely, students needed to be taught “education lingo” to interpret data. Her findings are echoed in much student voice literature such as that of Rudduck and Flutter (2000) who note that while students are inherently able to discuss aspects of schooling that they find limiting or challenging or talk about how they learn best:

We could do more to help pupils develop a language for talking about learning and about themselves as learners so that they feel it is legitimate for them actively to contribute to discussions about schoolwork with teachers and with each other.
(p. 76)

Thus as a natural progression of student voice initiatives, Mitra suggests that schools and educators begin at the bottom of the pyramid and work their way up.

In addition to her definitions of student roles in school reform, Mitra provides a framework for leadership conditions that make for successful student voice practices. In designing student voice initiatives, it can be difficult to define adult roles when encouraging students to be autonomous. Yet, “the skill of the adult advisors has been consistently shown to be a critical component of student voice initiatives” (Mitra, 2012). According to Mitra, successful student voice initiatives have leadership that:

- Holds a clear vision. Maintains a clear vision for the initiative even while waiting for other school members to incorporate it into practice
- Maintains opt-in strategies. Allows for teachers to be independent in shaping their teaching in order to utilize their own talents and provide choice to participate

- Accepts variation. Recognizes that teachers might be accepting of student voice at different levels and allow flexibility for implementation for different teachers given their different talents or interests with the given task as it relates to the overarching vision. (Mitra, 2007)

This framework is practical in many senses given the variations in teacher experience, subject matter and ideology in any given school and acknowledges the necessity for flexibility, acceptance, and encouragement for participation.

The Purpose and Design of Student Voice Policy: Lodge's Typology of Student

Involvement

While Mitra's work helps to visualize the active presence of student voice in school reform efforts, the actual qualities and nuances of the purpose of student voice initiatives may vary considerably. This is true specifically regarding the purpose of adult-student collaborations and the extent to which adults see this as a desirable practice. Other work, such as Carol Lodge's, helps to pinpoint these differences. Lodge notes that while it is becoming more widely accepted that student voice is of value to school improvement, we need to analyze the extent to which students are active participants in school life and define the purposes for which educators encourage or use their voices (Lodge, 2005). In developing her conceptualization of student voice Lodge asserts there are "six inter-connected strands that feed into the general discourses on student involvement; changing views of childhood, human rights, democratic schools, citizenship education through participation, consumerism, and a concern for school improvement" (Lodge, 2005 p. 126). Lodge uses these strands to develop her own typology of student voice in which she differentiates student voice by two major points: "the degree to which active involvement by students is seen as desirable or even possible" and "the purposes for which young people are being involved" (p. 129-130).

Lodge's conceptualization of student voice is an interesting way to examine the spectrum of student voice because it makes explicit the many places voice resides and draws attention to the adult motivations behind supporting student voice. In her typology of student voice, she creates a matrix incorporating four main dimensions; the functional/institutional, community or human development, passive participation, and active participation (see Figure 2).

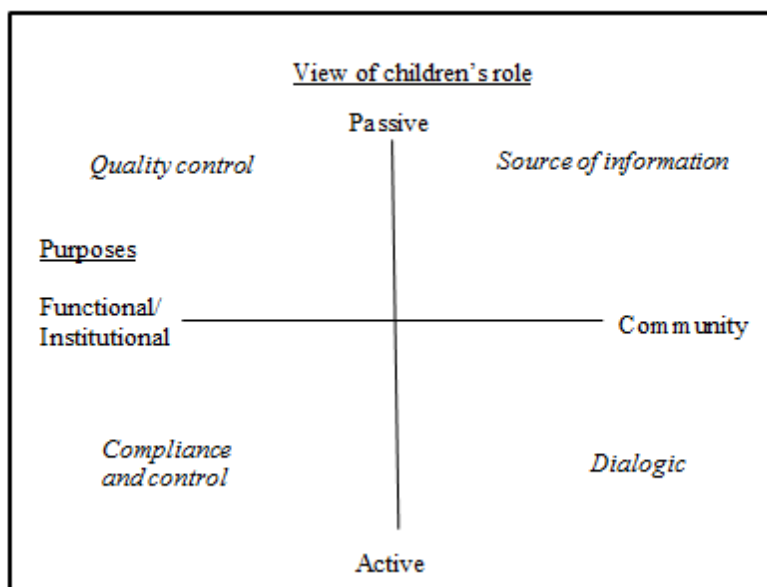


Figure 2. Approaches to student involvement in school improvement (Lodge, 2005).

Within this matrix she differentiates between (1) quality control, (2) students as a source of information, (3) compliance and control, (4) dialogue. In quality control, students provide information and their participation is regarded as passive in that their voice is used only to provide feedback for institutional gains such as surveys for school reviews and as evidence about school quality. Within the “students as sources of information” category, their participation is also passive, but the purpose is improvement. The “compliance and control” approach acknowledges the role students can play in providing input about school decisions, but the purpose of voice is ultimately to serve institutional goals and can thus become disempowering. Finally, the “dialogue” approach views young people as active participants in shaping their own

learning and values the exploration of both student and teacher experiences to build a shared narrative with the purpose of developing improved relationships and shared understanding of learning. Lodge's typology proves helpful in determining the authenticity of student voice initiatives because it can lay bare what the motivations are of such practices and who or what is to benefit from them.

Student Voice in Practice: Purpose and Process as Practitioners Construe It

While there has been an increased interest in student voice by academics there are practitioners who are engaging with youth and with each other on a regular basis to facilitate student voice in schools. As we can learn much from those who research student voice, we can also learn from those who engage with youth to develop and facilitate such initiatives. Adam Fletcher, a consultant and activist in the United States, works with youth and educators alike to design structures and processes for adult-student partnerships. When defining student voice, Fletcher incorporates Hart's (1997) "ladder" typology of student voice but adds some additional categories to develop further description (see Figure 3). In several ways, Fletcher's ladder also echoes Lodge's typology in that his typology also addresses, or suggests we examine, the purpose behind the student voice practices and the extent to which students participate as valued contributors or collaborators.



Figure 3. Ladder of student involvement in schools. Adapted by Adam Fletcher (2011) from work by Roger Hart, et al. (1994).

He asks that student voice practitioners use the ladder as a tool with which to measure student involvement initiatives. The framework Fletcher designed is depicted as a ladder which identifies various levels of student involvement (Fletcher, 2011). His ladder moves upward from the bottom rung, manipulation, to decoration, tokenism, students informed, students consulted, student/adult equality, completely student-driven, to student/adult equity as the top rung. He views student voice as a way to accomplish the goal of learning in school by “dramatically re-envisioning the roles of students throughout education” (Fletcher, 2007, p. 14).

Much like Lodge, Fletcher identifies student voice by its purpose. He defines youth voice as, “the active, distinct, and concentrated ways young people represent themselves throughout society” (Fletcher 2007 p. 14). He asserts that there must be a larger purpose of student voice beyond simply listening to students and it should be part of a larger project or have a greater goal. To Fletcher, maintaining a larger goal is important because when young people are engaged

simply to have their perspectives heard, it provides them with a mistaken assumption of over-importance instead of reinforcing the fact that they are a member of or a part of a community.

Fletcher's definition of student voice, or what he calls "meaningful student involvement,"

includes several key characteristics:

- School-wide approaches that touch on all grades and all students
- High levels of student authority that are validated and authorized by adults who acknowledge the value students bring to school improvement
- Interrelated strategies that incorporate students into sustainable school improvement processes
- Sustainable structures of support that create and promote student voice
- Personal commitment on behalf of both students and adults who wish to invest in improved learning environments
- Strong learning connections with student involvement and classroom learning that are not seen as "add-on" strategies

Further, Fletcher cites three principals of "meaningful" student engagement as mutual respect (you give it and you receive it), honest and open communication, and equitable representation where decisions *about* students are made *with* students.

Fletcher cites one of the pitfalls of student voice being inactivity, and he warns that when a student's voice is met with inaction it can signal to them that their opinion is not of value. To address this obstacle he refers to student voice much like an action research cycle (2005). This interpretation of student voice is broken into 5 phases: listen, validate, authorize, act, and reflect. Other pitfalls include over-controlling or over-permissive adult-student relationships and "adulthood" or what he calls the "discrimination against children and youth [that] is caused by the bias adults have against young people" (Fletcher, 2007 p. 17).

To overcome barriers to student voice Fletcher suggests attention to the "4 Ps" (positions, policies, practices, and procedures). In this perspective, incorporating student voice into these areas addresses that schools are "steeped in process" but should be constructed as tools of

democracy that incorporate the perspectives of all participants. He advocates for student voice to be ingrained in the culture and structure of the school such as professional development, and individual or peer to peer training about student voice. He also notes the importance of intentionally selecting non-traditional student leaders. Finally, Fletcher asserts the importance of the facilitation and development of critical and constructive reflections of activities focused on student voice as well as celebrations of accomplishments.

In another practitioner-focused interpretation of student voice, Helen Beattie found that students in her state are able to consistently contribute substantively to school reform (Beattie, 2007). She developed a program in Vermont designed to change the structures in the minds of educators that renders them disinclined to elicit and attend to student voice and change the structures and relationships in schools that support this disinclination. In Beattie's perception of student voice, it should be used to transform schools and include students and teachers working as partners in youth-adult collaborations. Her project—Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together (YAST)—provides training and support for both students and teachers to work as partners towards the goal of improving learning and fostering engaged youth who are empowered. Notably, her project focuses on students who appear most disengaged or “nontraditional student leaders.” YAST views research and data collection procedures as integral to school transformation and includes students and adults working as partners. However, Beattie also recognizes the importance of adequate training and support for students *and* adults stating that, “The complexity of amplifying student voice within a youth-adult partnerships should not be underestimated; the quality of training and ongoing support cannot be overstated” (Beattie, 2012). Each of these definitions point to the need for equitable representation, adequate training

for youth and adults, safe environments for students to use their voice and for adults who will listen and provide some form of action associated with the encounter of student voice.

A Working Definition

The preceding works suggest a converging conceptualization of student voice, as it may manifest in the design and execution of school reforms. As these works demonstrate, many factors and considerations are at work when constructing adult-student partnerships such as inclusion of nontraditional leaders (Mitra, 2008; Rubin & Silva; 2003; Beattie, 2012), purposeful project designs that move beyond menial information gathering and event planning (Fielding, 2001), school-wide approaches that are respectful and invite open and honest communication (Fletcher, 2007), clear understanding and communication of purpose (Lodge, 2005), development of a supportive organizational culture, and proper preparation on the part of both students and educators (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). For my purposes, I use the terms *adult-student partnerships*¹ and *adult-student collaborations* to include the conditions above and to describe instances where adults work collaboratively with students as partners in some ongoing form of action to solve problems and improve instructional practice or other aspects of schooling. In this sense, the term moves significantly beyond allowing students to voice opinions. To be clear, there are varying levels of intensity within adult-student partnerships. For example, students can collaborate with teachers to provide instructional feedback by participating in school-wide practices, partner with teachers to design and co-teach curriculum within a classroom or content area, aid in designing improved processes for students to become more involved in their schooling, or participate with adults in professional development. However, an important distinction between adult-student collaborations and student voice in

¹ Occasionally the term student-adult or youth-adult partnership or collaboration is used to denote the same meaning so as to not always preference the use of the word “adult.”

general is the level of student autonomy, authority, and follow through that are associated with them. Adult-student collaborations would register near the top on Mitra's hierarchy pyramid or Fletcher's ladder. I use these terms accordingly throughout the remainder of this document.

The Possibilities and Challenges of Student Voice: Effects and Outcomes for Students and Teachers

Given the conceptualizations and working definition of student voice discussed in the previous section, evidence has begun to emerge from research about possible effects of student voice on students, teachers, and schools. Though adult-student collaborations vary in scope and focus, enough beneficial results have been documented to reveal the potential across the range of these collaborations. Student voice can be seen as a force that affects the learning of participating students, the education of other students at the school who are witnesses to student-adult collaborations, and the school culture as a whole. Additionally, adult-student collaborations can affect the adult partners. Teachers and adult educators involved in collaborations with students can also be influenced, in attitude and action, by such partnerships. In the following section I document some of the possible effects adult-student collaborations can have on students, teachers, and schools. This broad range of effects can be grouped in several categories; personal/relational effects such as developmental or social effects, and school-wide/functional effects (Flint & O'Hara, 2013).

Personal and Relational Effects of Adult-Student Collaborations

Some of the individual benefits researchers have found in youth who participate in student voice initiatives are positive identity development and the acquisition and practice of "life skills" such as communication and problem solving (Mitra, 2008 & 2009). Through adult-student partnership activities students often discover or confirm their own perspective, learn to

cooperate with others and engage in dialogue with others to negotiate changes (Ranson, 2000).

Similarly, these students showed increases in self-esteem and agency (Rudduck, 2007).

Participation in these collaborations can affect student motivation because it shifts their role from receivers of schooling to resources and contributors (Fielding, 2002). In this way students begin to, "...believe that they [can] transform themselves and the institutions that affect them" (Mitra, 2005, p. 17).

The relational or social benefits of adult-student collaborations include improved and increased interactions between students and adults within the school (Fielding, 2001; Rubin & Silva, 2003; Mitra, 2004; Ozer & Wright 2012; Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). These intergenerational interactions between teachers, administrators, and students—occurring outside the realm of traditional classroom interactions—have been found to shift student perspectives of the education process allowing each party to gain a greater understanding for the roles and responsibilities of the other (Cook-Sather, 2010; Oldfather, 1998). Students have reported that being part of instructional conversations increases their respect for teachers, their understanding of how instruction and learning can be structured, and helps them redefine their role in the teaching and learning process (Oldfather, 1999; Mitra, 2008; Cook-Sather, 2006 & 2010). One student discusses his experience in a collaborative project saying it, "made me step back as a student and just look at how everything was going on in the classroom. It made me look at how I was being taught and how teachers worked" (Cook-Sather, 2009, p. 353). In this way collaborative practices that include teachers and students as partners can influence the instructional climate by creating a shared understanding about instructional design and purpose. Additionally, student participation in professional learning can provide a rare opportunity for

students to serve as experts or to offer a glimpse behind the curtain, so to speak, and this understanding can illuminate the learning process in new ways.

Positive teacher-student interactions, when students feel their input are valued, can increase a student's sense of belonging and establish new commitment or attachment to school. Developmental psychology notes that many of these outcomes are important factors for students to retain motivation in school and to succeed academically (Eccles, Midgley, Wingfield, Buchanan, et. al., 1993; Goodenow, 1993; Ryan & Deci, 2000). On a larger social scale, student voice practices and the participation of students in decision making processes provides a social benefit of an early and lived introduction to democratic discourse that fosters the next generation of productive adult citizens.

Functional Effects on the School as a Whole

Evidence also suggests that adult-student collaborations may also offer benefits to the school as a whole, thereby enhancing school improvement efforts and improving school culture. While much of the student voice data focuses on the benefits this involvement affords students, several studies specifically highlight the capacity students have in school renewal efforts and the positive effects this engagement has on overall school climate (Mitra, 2004; Jones & Yonezawa, 2009; Prembel & Taylor, 2009). Students can contribute substantially to school revitalization efforts by offering valuable insights on why certain reforms did not work and by providing perspectives from a variety of student groups (Jones & Yonezawa, 2009; Mitra, 2004; Kushman, 1997). School-wide or organizational benefits of student voice initiatives include improvement in the overall school ethos, and improvement in facilities, policies, and rules as a result of student participation on councils or in classroom decision making. Many of these factors are those which students view as important to learning (Mager & Nowak, 2012; Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007).

Some effects of adult-student partnerships create outcomes that benefit both students personally as well as the school as an organization. An example of this mutual benefit can be seen when adult-student collaborations shift student and teacher beliefs about teaching and learning to improve the classroom experience for students and the school as an organization benefits when there are improvements in student attendance and achievement benefits (Fielding, 2001; Rubin & Silva, 2003). By creating educational partnerships between teachers and students, it is possible for students to develop a proactive mindset or an increase in ownership of their learning.

Educational reform efforts, especially those in secondary schools, are increasingly attuned to the quality of the overall learning experience. This student experience includes available learning opportunities, the quality of the classroom and out-of-classroom learning interactions, and the outcomes of learning. Focusing on the learning experience in this way also invites focused attention on educators' role in constructing or engineering learning experiences through classroom practice and in establishing and maintaining school culture. In this way, both teacher practice and the learner experience and outcomes are implicated in concerns about student voice.

Effects on teacher behavior. Several studies have noted initial effects of teacher-student collaborations on teacher behavior, motivation, and practice (McIntyre et. al., 2005; Cook-Sather, 2006 & 2010; Lincoln, 1995; McCombs, 2003; Oldfather & Thomas, 1998). Mitra (2008) observed that student participation in staff meetings and professional development activities helped teachers persist in change making processes despite the difficulties or challenges of the work. She noted:

Teachers noticed the difference when students were present. [It] helped to improve the productivity of the reform-minded faculty [and] reduced the apathy and hostility of resistant teachers, who were less likely to engage in

unprofessional behaviors...during staff meetings or openly showing hostility to colleagues. (p. 74)

Over time she saw an increase in willingness of these educators to collaborate and engage in dialogue with students and noted that several educators were inspired to involve students in their classrooms.

Student data in general tends to have a powerful effect on educators. Levin (2000) found this rather unexpectedly in one of his studies when he noticed that teachers who were presented with data from external consultants or from other schools were able to reject or dismiss the data. “But, when surveys of students in their own school showed significant levels of boredom or disaffection, teachers found this evidence compelling” (p. 159). Here students seem to present a sense of relevancy and responsibility for teachers that might promote new action.

Oldfather (1998) also found that teachers working as co-researchers with students found the experience motivating for their own teaching and influential in raising their expectations of what their students could accomplish. One teacher in this study, who was working in collaboration with a student to teach a course, commented on how working with the student affected his own thinking and motivation saying:

It was like a bucket of water thrown on me. It was like a wake-up call. It was reminding me of where I originally intended to go. Having to take over that class with Paul and his expectations...it was very challenging and very exciting. (p. 17)

In this teacher we can see the potential for student involvement to affect educators’ perceptions and practice.

Linking the effects of adult-student collaboration to changes in teacher behavior often proves difficult. McIntyre and colleagues (2005) attempted such a study. In their findings they noted that student commentary was in general constructive and focused on learning, and teachers

viewed it as such. Students did not, for example, take the opportunity to complain about perceived wrongs or personal characteristics of their teachers that they found disagreeable. Given this acknowledgement, teachers still found it easier to accept suggestions that were already within their repertoire of teaching techniques. However, teachers were responsive to student suggestions on what things they should *not* do. As McIntyre states, “While suggestions might not lead to radical innovations in teachers’ practices, they could certainly encourage teachers to extend their use of the suggested practices” (p. 158).

Effects on equity through outreach and inclusion. In many ways, student voice has the potential to address issues of equity within schooling and to provide an avenue for disenfranchised populations to feel they can pull a chair to the table and direct their educational experience. Schools can be alienating places for many students. Traditionally, schools have been institutions run by government agencies that determine the shape and scope of the learning content and structure. Learners in this model are very much the passive recipients of what knowledge these institutions distribute and in which forms it is offered. Although recent reform movements have influenced some of the traditional school delivery models to include students in increasingly active roles, any pedagogical model is hard pressed to reach *all* students. Even dominant best practice discourse may fall short of reaching students that might be in a place of non-dominance on the social spectrum. In some ways, student voice practices can interrupt this phenomenon to reengage students by giving them a sense of ownership or by building a sense of community and belonging in these educational institutions (Mitra, 2006). Further, there is evidence that engaging students in school improvement helps develop individuals that possess agency and the social and political capital to influence their own lives (Warren & Mapp, 2011).

Another, as of yet underexplored, benefit of student voice is the connections and benefits it has for parent involvement in that students can serve as a bridge between home and schools (Mitra, 2006). Students can be vital in communicating and helping school personnel to understand the experiences, values, and beliefs of their families. It could also be that when students learn about school operations and participate in school decisions they are better able to communicate the perspectives of their educators and school policy to their parents. Further, students can also prove to be helpful in mobilizing both parents and teachers for change in schools (Scanlon, 2012).

Challenges Facing Adult-Student Collaboration in School Reform

While the benefits of adult-student collaborations on relationships, school culture, teacher behavior, and equity are clearly possible, achieving these benefits is not assured. Even in an ideal scenario of adult-student collaborations, there exist significant barriers that need to be overcome or might still need to be tackled. One important barrier involves the power dynamics inherent in such collaborations. While the administration and a core group of educators are supportive of these endeavors, there may still be some that have not yet bought into the student voice philosophy. In this sense there may be pushback, on several levels including contractual, in allowing students to critique or serve as feedback providers on instruction. Student participation in classroom walkthroughs, staff meetings, or professional development could be met with negative reactions by some. Teacher reaction to student input is extremely important. As McIntyre (2005) notes, “However good the pupils’ ideas might be, it is the teachers’ responsiveness to them that is ultimately important” (p. 151). Equally concerning is the danger of romanticizing student feedback or inadequately preparing students to participate. Because the results of student participation and feedback are sometimes hard to explicitly document or

express in measurable terms, the dilemma is further complicated. Thus the benefits of practices that involve commitments by both students and adults are often illusive which can be detrimental to achieving buy-in from outlying individuals who may still have reservations.

Funding issues, school structures, and district pressures can present significant restrictions for adult-student collaborations which can stifle such innovations. Further, students, like teachers, often need tangible motivations to engage in new practices that require time and/or emotional commitments. If the activities related to these collaborations occur outside traditional academics some students might find it difficult to participate due to impacted schedules and conflicting extracurricular activities. Students from low-economic backgrounds may have economic or family pressures that keep them from participating in after-school activities. Thus the need for academic credit or financial compensation for participation can be essential. Yet approving these structures and finding funding can often be difficult. Similarly, communicating clear vision of purpose and process for adult-student collaboration requires professional development time which is often co-opted by district and curriculum agendas.

In these ways, while the possible benefits of student voice or adult-student collaborations have been clearly documented in academic literature, the caveats to achieving such benefits are also well recognized. Many aspects of adult-student partnerships have not been explored, such as the ways these endeavors can help administrators and leaders structure schooling more effectively to be motivating and rewarding for educators (pre-service and practicing) and students alike. Often teachers maintain a desire to feel effective and productive in their work. Improving communication between teachers and students could be one avenue to do this. Increasing formal adult-student collaboration in education could also lead to increases in the

informal or everyday collaborations in classroom interactions which is essentially an alternate pathway to educational renewal.

Enabling Student Voice: The Role of Intermediary Organizations in School Reform

Establishing productive adult-student collaborations may seem daunting to some given power dynamics and scarce resources. For this reason schools often solicit the aid of an intermediary organization to facilitate active adult-student collaborations. Many types of intermediary organizations working on national, state, and local levels carry the potential to bring new perspectives, information, and resources into schools (Datnow & Honig, 2008). In their partnership with schools, intermediary organizations can serve many roles—such as funder, broker, professional development provider, evaluator, resource developer/provider, and facilitator within the school and between schools or subject matter networks. Similarly, the goals of intermediary organizations can vary depending on the origin of funding or the mission of the organization.

Much of the research of third-party support in schools addresses university-school partnerships, content focused teacher networks, or school reform programs (Goodlad, 1988; McLaughlin & Oberman, 1996). Other research addresses the effectiveness of governmental programming targeted for underrepresented students (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977) or non-profit and philanthropic support in school reform (Marsh et al., 2005). Most research addresses the district role in these partnerships or depicts the efforts from the external providers' perspective (Supovitz, 2008). Currently, there is an increase in researchers acknowledging the role such organizations can have in larger district improvement efforts (Honig, 2004; Kronley & Handley, 2003). Yet while student voice research is increasing there remains more to learn about

the role intermediary organizations can play in fostering student involvement in school reform (Mitra, 2009).

The Complicated Nature and Sustainability of Intermediary Partnerships

Partnerships between schools, districts, and intermediary organizations are complicated in nature and necessitate that partners navigate issues around authority, support structure and style, resource allocation, and accountability. Further complicating these partnerships are the complex structures that can exist both within schools and within intermediary organizations. Thus, the impact intermediary organizations have on school reform and instructional practice has often been limited (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Marsh et al., 2005). Research on intermediary organization support in school reform has revealed several factors that can influence these partnerships including staff perspectives of the external partners' credibility, the extent to which the support is flexible and responsive, the degree of intensity, and the duration of time of support. Successful partnerships had intermediary organizations that were viewed as credible experts, were flexible in the program making changes based on local needs, and who provided consistent support over an appropriate duration of time (Supovitz, 2008; Finnigan & Bitter, 2009). Most partnerships seem to benefit from a well-coordinated implementation plan that includes ample learning opportunities, sufficient resources, and opportunities for teachers to voice their opinions. Partnerships are rendered ineffective if there is insufficient intensity, lack of coherent program goals, inconsistent support approaches, or an imbalance between flexibility and accountability. Further, administrative support, teacher attitudes about the program and staff turnover impact the program's success or failure (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977).

One of the biggest challenges in education is determining how to sustain innovative practices. A great deal of research offers conclusions as to why the nature of current education

systems resists sustainable change (Fullan, 2001; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Often the continuation of new practices requires the change of professional culture and school norms (Moffett, 2000). Yet several researchers have found that change can be sustained if structures, such as professional communities, are developed to support them (Coburn, 2003; Louis & Miles, 1990; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Sustainability is of special concern for schools who partner with intermediary organizations due to the fact that these partnerships are most always temporary. Yet the role external change agents play in capacity building and personal mastery can be valuable to set the stage for sustainability when responsibility transfers to the school.

Intermediary Organizations Supporting Student Voice

While many intermediary organizations engage in content-focused or whole-school reform, some have ventured to work with schools in order to increase student involvement in both classroom instruction and school governance (Mitra, 2009; Cook-Sather, 2006 & 2010; Rudduck, 2007; Beattie, 2012). Thus many successful student voice initiatives involve third party support. Much of the research on these endeavors details projects that were university initiated with university faculty partnering with one or more schools to have students serve as co-researchers about specific issues such as content-based teaching and learning or school climate. Other projects involved incorporating students and student perspectives into pre-service teaching programs.

Due to the nature of university-driven projects, few of these practices continued or were sustained after the research project was complete. However, Mitra (2009) conducted a qualitative study of 13 urban high schools that received grants to create programming aimed at increasing student voice in school reform. Through her observations, interviews, and document analysis, she found that student voice initiatives supported by intermediary organizations were far more

successful than student voice projects which were solely school-based. Successful projects were defined by their sustainability or their continuation beyond grant funding and the support of the intermediary organization. The success of these projects was attributed to support the intermediary organization provided in planning, mentoring, on-site assistance, and funding. These findings spotlight the potential for intermediary organizations in aiding schools to establish and maintain student engagement practices. However, we could learn more about what and how intermediary organization-school partnerships contribute to building leadership capacity and agency within the school which enable adult-student collaborations to continue.

Framing the Study: How Research Helps Conceptualize Adult-Student Collaborations

Within Schools

The ideas just discussed serve as important components for a conceptual framework illustrating the factors influencing intermediary organization-initiated, adult-student partnerships and how these activities might affect teachers, students, instruction and the school overall. In this way the framework takes the intermediary organizational partnership, with all its resources, and the school culture and leadership as the context in which adult-student partnerships function and then focuses inward on how these activities affect student and teacher behaviors as well as instructional practice. Figure 4 illustrates (1) intermediary organizations and the school context as factors influencing the development and enactment of adult-student collaborations, (2) adult-student collaborations and the effects they might have on student and teachers, and (3) the possibilities of how adult-student collaborations—and the effects they may have on students and teachers—might influence what goes on in the classroom.

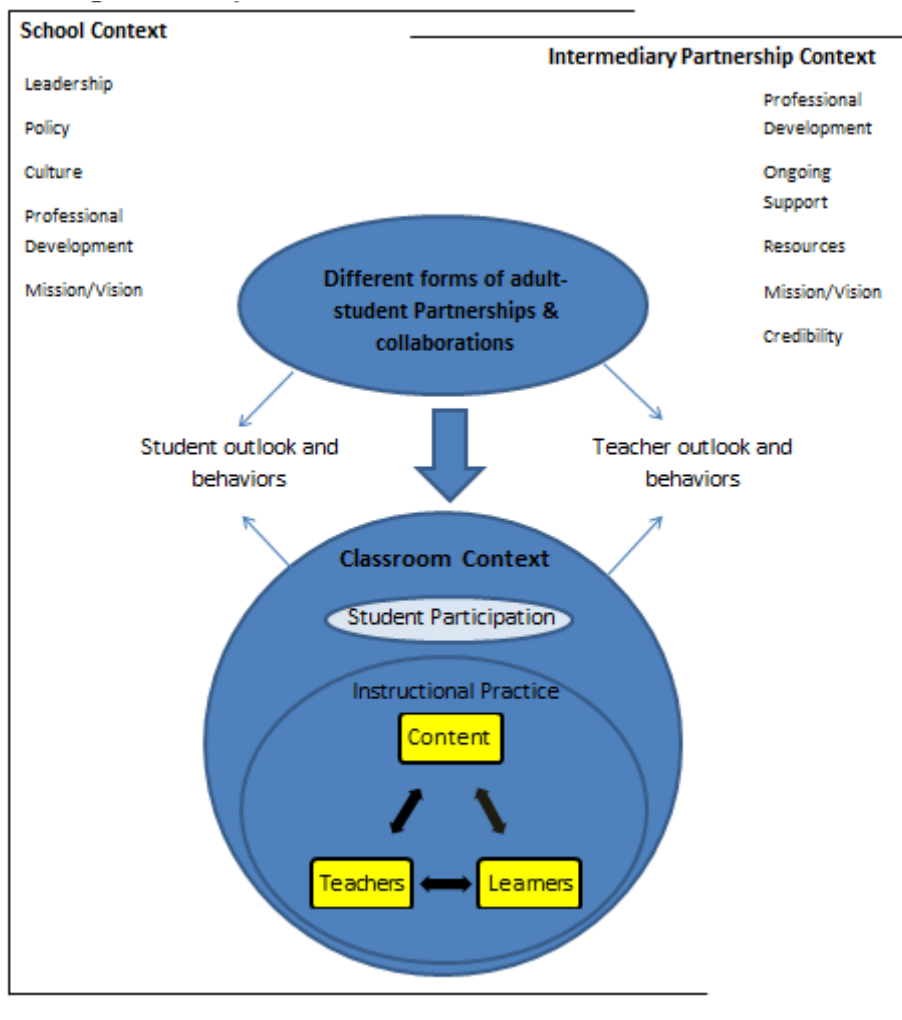


Figure 4. Conceptual framework.

Intermediary Organizations and School Contexts

Like any school-change processes, developing and implementing adult-student partnerships requires support, alignment of resources and policies, and consistent accountability. The presence, or absence, of these within the school context is a strong indication of the likely success or failure of such programs. Important components of the school context includes the quality of leadership, existing or new policies, school culture, mission or vision statement, professional development routines, teacher quality, and teacher assessments. For long-term

sustainability of new practices, there would need to be a school-wide culture that systematically supports the work while avoiding tokenistic or surface compliance. Concurrently, the success or failure of school-intermediary organization partnerships rests on the same principles discussed earlier. Intermediary organizations function successfully in schools when they hold a mission or vision that is aligned with the school's. These partnerships benefit when the organization maintains flexibility to adjust to the local needs of the school, the school staff view them as credible, and there is adequate funding to provide ongoing support, resources, and professional development. The ongoing training and support for teachers to participate in adult-student partnerships is especially important given that most teachers have no formal training or expectations that they develop strategies or practices that involve student voice (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006).

Adult-Student Collaborations and the Possible Effects on Teachers, Students and Classrooms

As indicated earlier, research has revealed that adult-student collaborations—when they attend to key factors such as power dynamics, participant preparation, the purpose of the collaboration, and the commitment of adults to the partnership—can impact students, teachers, and schools. The central portion of Figure 4 highlights these interactions. Figure 5 expands on the Adult-Student Partnerships and Collaborations portion of the conceptual framework to illustrate the manner in which the key aspects of adult-student collaborations influence the outcomes of such endeavors. Within the category of Power and Inclusion one would note the importance of creating safe environments for teachers and students to participate, the inclusion of non-traditional leaders and the establishment of some form of dialogic equity. Student Preparation includes providing students training on educational jargon, effective feedback

techniques, and norms of professionalism. Teacher Preparation might include exposure to the fundamentals of adult-student collaborative research, intergenerational dialogue techniques, and participatory action research. Finally, the Purpose and Commitment category would indicate the ways school culture, policies, and professional practices influence adult-student collaborations. For example, is the purpose of these interactions reform based, school-wide, or classroom based? Or are the practices, as Lodge (2005) would note, motivated by compliance and control? In other words, the commitment to the authenticity of the adult-student collaborations is a key to the outcomes of the practices. All these pieces of adult-student collaboration play a role in how, if at all, these partnerships affect or change teacher or student outlooks or behaviors.

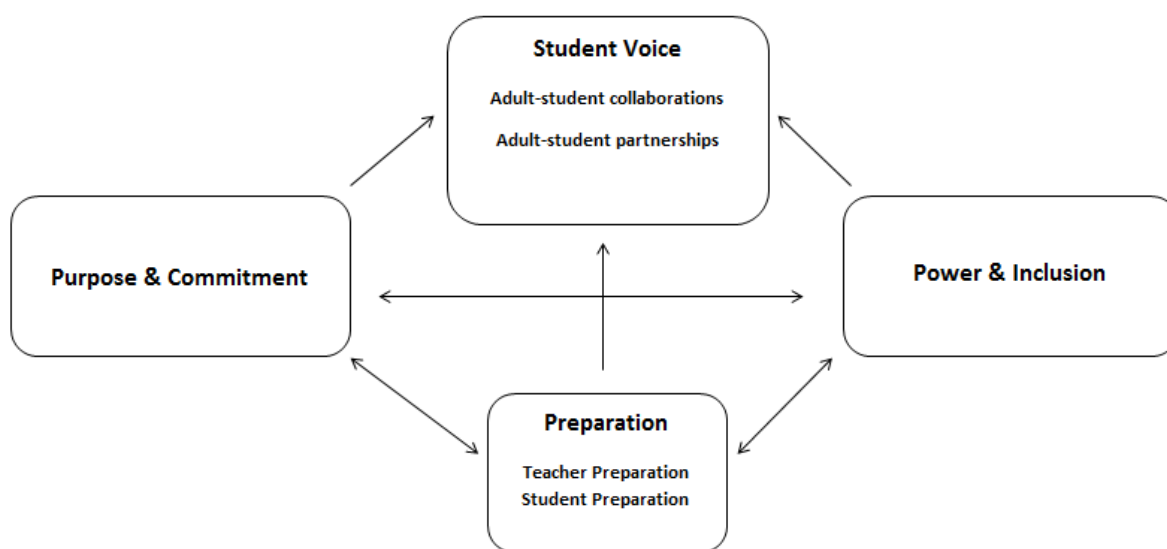


Figure 5. Components of adult-student partnerships.

When the central components of adult-student collaborations are accounted for we might determine how, if at all, any changes in teacher and student outlooks or behaviors translate to changes in the classroom. Possible classroom shifts might manifest themselves in improvements in teacher-student relationships, changes in student participation, or shifts in instructional practice. Within the classroom context in Figure 4, we can see what some consider the key

components encompassed within instructional practice as content, teachers, and learners (Cohen & Ball, 1999). This model takes into account the relational complexities of the teaching and learning interactions, including the learner's relationship with the content and the instructor as well as the instruction the teacher constructs, based on content and their beliefs about their students and their abilities to learn.

Overall, all the components included in this framework might be used to reflect back as to what, if any, changes in teacher and student behaviors or changes in classroom practice have on the school context. While we know that students can play a role in school change, little research addresses the level of importance they play in the actual school change processes. Additionally, there is little documentation that links student participation in schools to change outcomes (Zion, 2009).

Elaborating Questions for Investigation

In framing the research problem in this way, we can determine what aspects of adult-student collaborations initiated by intermediary organizations, and the students and teachers participating in these activities, might be explored further. Doing so suggests a more fine-grained set of questions and sub-questions. The school at which this study takes place was partnering with a local university to improve instruction and student engagement. Through this partnership, students and teachers engaged in several forms of instructionally focused partnership over the course of six years. Although participation in these activities was not mandatory, and student and teacher participants varied or did not participate in all activities, there was a small group who participated consistently over the course of several years.

The issues of development, instructional impact, intermediary role, and sustainability of student partnership routines—in the context of a school serving historically underserved

students—are the central concerns to which this study was addressed. A primary interest of this dissertation was to understand how the school’s partnership with a local university functioned in developing new instructional practices; how they affect teachers, students, and administrators; and if these changes are enduring. The following questions and sub-questions served to guide the study.

- **How do different forms of adult-student collaborations affect the outlook and behaviors of teachers and students, in and out of the classroom?**
 - What forms of participation do these practices demand of students and adults?
 - In what ways, if at all, do teachers describe or demonstrate that they have heard what students have said?
 - In what ways, if at all, do students describe or demonstrate how teachers or administrators have responded to what they say?
- **In what ways, if at all, do adult-student collaborative practices reshape what goes on in instruction itself?**
 - In what ways, if at all, do teachers or administrators describe or demonstrate changes they have put in place as a result of what students have said?
 - In what ways, if at all, do students describe or demonstrate changes they have put in place as a result of what students have said?
- **In what ways, if any, does leadership within the school in the context of an intermediary partnership relationship enable (or inhibit) the development of adult-student collaborations within the school?**
 - What, if anything, expands the leadership capacity?

- What contributes to building leadership capacity and agency within the school community, both among adult educators and among students?
- **How do power relations in the school change, if at all, inside of classrooms, or elsewhere, as adults and students participate in collaborations around the quality of instruction?**

Chapter 3

Study Design and Methods

This study was designed as a “basic” interpretive qualitative study (Merriam, 2009) incorporating interviews, group interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analysis. While the bulk of data informing this study was collected in the winter and spring of 2013, interview and focus group data from 2011 and informal group interview data from 2009 is also utilized in order to establish historical context. All data was collected from one critical case, a northwest urban high school with a diverse student population. I consider this school a critical case because it meets the criteria for making adult-student collaborations dramatically, and one could argue that if we can find an effect at this site it could potentially happen at other similar sites (Patton, 2002). Further, the site has a great amount of information and experience with adult-student collaboration which could have the greatest impact on the development of new knowledge on the subject (Patton, 2002, p.236). This school, which I refer to as Viewland High School (pseudonym), is *information rich*. That is, it maintains programs that engage students as regular collaborators in instructional feedback activities. In this way, Viewland provides a context from which we might gain an in-depth understanding of the process and outcomes of these activities (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002).

The study is intensive and employs a micro-lens, or a focus on particular people, experiences, and everyday interpersonal interactions to explore the experiences of teachers and students as they navigate, implement, and redesign practices that involve students. The methods used were designed to elicit the experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of students and teachers who engage in some form of teacher-student collaboration. Data consists of semi-structured individual and group teacher and student interviews, focus groups, administrator interviews,

observations, and document analysis. The participant sample is based on the representativeness of the individuals' participation in adult-student partnership activities (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Student engagement may touch many aspects of the school and occur in broad strokes throughout the school. Yet, in some senses, it is the micro aspects of the story or the specific relationships between or experience of individuals that provide the strongest support for the ways these changes influence the macro, cultural, social or institutional conditions at the school. In this way, the macro is known through the micro or lived everyday experience (Mason, 2006).

This exploratory case was designed for the purpose of explanation building and to reveal and describe as many perspectives as possible on the process, experience, and outcome of adult-student partnerships (Yin, 1994). Attention is given to identifying the different types of adult-student collaborations at Viewland, how and when they occur, and the evolution of these practices—or rather how they have come to exist in their current state. Data collection was designed specifically to illuminate how, if at all, these student engagement practices changed student behavior, teacher behavior, and instructional practice at the school.

The Research Tradition

Employing a qualitative approach using ethnographically informed research methods is appropriate for this study in that it is particularly useful to understand and render the complex structures around teacher-student partnerships and to explore the ways in which individuals understand and experience these situations and activities (Geertz, 1973). Qualitative methods are important in this instance in order to document the adult-student collaborative processes occurring at the site, explore the variances in how different people experience the process as expressed in their own words, and document how, if at all, these approaches facilitate individual and/or systemic change (Patton, 2002). In this work, I focus on the students and teachers, who

are pioneering these intergenerational partnerships, describe instances of teacher-student collaboration, and explore the various ways it has, or has not, affected participant's actions, outlooks, behaviors, and motivations.

For a study dependent on such detail, I needed to understand how individuals were interpreting and attributing meaning to these experiences (Merriam, 1998, p. 5). It is this description of the "meaning-perspectives of particular actors in a particular event" and consideration of the "local meanings" of these events which were necessary to answer my research questions (Erikson, 1986, p. 121). An ethnographically informed approach also allowed me to investigate the perceived impact participants felt these experiences had for them personally or on their actions in the classroom. Further, qualitative methodology allowed for the examination of pertinent issues as they surfaced (Wolcott, 2009). As this study aimed to contribute to the knowledge base of student voice and school improvement, it was important to explore and document both the positive and negative aspects of these cases, and to understand what made them so. By considering all aspects of the partnerships and perspectives of participants, the information might be applied to improve practice and strengthen partnerships.

Site Selection and Sampling

The study employed purposeful sampling to identify an information-rich site so that I could explore the development and impact of student involvement practices developed in partnership with an intermediary organization with the aim to facilitate instructional improvement and student engagement. Viewland High School was not viewed as an advantaged school, yet it had invested resources over several years into a handful of school-wide professional learning practices, including Data in a Day (DIAD), Lesson Study and project vetting, and Student Instructional Council (SIC), that systematically engaged students in

providing instructional feedback. Over the course of several years, these processes, to be described later, had become well established in the school, thereby affording a window on the effects of adult-student collaborative practices and the related dynamics of a partnership with an intermediary organization. Each of these practices included students as collaborators and one practice brought family and community members into the feedback process. Additionally, Viewland had specifically made an effort to provide ongoing opportunities for non-traditional student leaders to participate in these activities. In this way, Viewland presented a sufficiently intense—but not extreme—case of student voice practices to study (Patton, 2002).

Viewland High School

Viewland is an urban high school in a large northwestern city consisting of roughly 750 students. It is considered high-poverty because of its free and reduced lunch count of 77.5%. Student demographics at the school as reported by the Washington state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction are 2.2% American Indian, 35.4%, Asian, 1.8% Asian Pacific Islander, 41.5% Black, 11.9% Hispanic, 4.4% White, and 3.2% two or more races. Approximately 13% of Viewland students qualify for special education. In addition to the large African-American community at the school, many students speak a language other than English at home and the largest groups of recent immigrants are from Africa, Vietnam, the Philippines, Central America, China, and Samoa.

In 2003, the school—under a Gates Foundation Grant—separated into four separate academies, but academic improvements did not follow the reorganization. In 2008, the school received additional funds from the district in an attempt to bolster innovation at the school where enrollment had dropped significantly under the district's school choice plan. In the fall of 2010, the school opened as an *option school* with a Science, Technology, Engineering and

Mathematics (STEM) focus and was divided into two academies: Life Sciences and Global Health, and Engineering and Computer Science. With this new designation and the additional money received, the school had an instructional day that was half an hour longer than other district schools and the teachers were compensated for the longer work day. Additionally, the instructional strategies and curriculum were all transitioned to a project-based design. The school's 11th and 12th graders were accepted into the STEM program, but continued to attend school in a general studies program.

Intermediary Organization Partnerships and Professional Learning Practices

While Viewland held many partnerships with various community organizations and institutions of higher education, two of these partnerships were of particular relevance to this study. One organization, founded and run by a local woman, worked at the school to train academically stable students to mentor other students who were facing issues of truancy and credit retrieval. Due to this woman's previous work and relationship with students at the site, the school recruited her to volunteer as a course instructor for the Student Instructional Council class in 2013, officially titled "Introduction to Teaching."

Viewland also maintained a partnership with a local university professor of education and housed a center office on the school campus which served as a hub for university students, school staff members, and activities associated with the partnership. This partnership helped the school implement professional learning practices, including a series of DIAD events, Student Instructional Council, Lesson Studies and project vetting many of which aimed to engage students as regular participants in instructional feedback.

Data-in-a-Day. DIAD was launched in 2007 and persisted through three different principals. DIAD was originally developed by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory as a

way to include students in school improvement. The DIAD process was transformed by Viewland's university partner in collaboration with school administration so that it was specifically relevant and identifiable to the school staff and students. The protocol was altered to be anchored in a motivational framework and rewritten to use a shared language that reflected Viewland's district language. As conceptualized and implemented at Viewland, DIAD occurred approximately three times a year as a non-evaluative process that teachers planned and facilitated.

DIAD typically unites students, family members, educators, and community members as observers of instructional practice (NWREL 2008; Ginsberg, 2001) and observers focus on specific aspects of instruction. At Viewland, DIAD involved the greatest number of students and teachers, thereby providing a window into the effects of student engagement practices. Five teams comprised of four (or more)-members—each of which were led by one or two Viewland students—collectively visited approximately 25 classrooms for 20 minutes each to learn from and provide feedback on instructional interactions related to the four conditions of the “motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching” (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2000), a heuristic that synthesizes interdisciplinary research on intrinsic motivation. DIAD feedback is not specific to a particular classroom. Rather, it is based on universal themes across classrooms that the teams notice. Although not scientific, DIAD is designed to provide information about how teaching and learning appears to observers on a single day in several classrooms as well as to allow non-educators and educators to listen to each other's perspectives.

Student Instructional Council. Viewland's Student Instructional Council is likely the most prominent form of formalized student voice. At the time of this study, the council was in its third year. Initially the Council was formed as club by the academic dean with the purpose of

building on DIAD visits by providing additional feedback about classroom conditions of motivation from a student perspective. The Dean recruited students by publicizing the club in flyers and by asking teachers for student recommendations. In the fall of 2012, Student Instructional Council became a credit-bearing course titled “Introduction to Teaching” that was partly conceived to attract students’ interest in the teaching profession. Students who participated in Student Instructional Council studied instructional language and observation techniques, observed teachers in their classrooms, and provided teachers with feedback in the form of a jointly written instructional memo.

Lesson study and project vetting. Lesson Study (Lewis, et al., 2006) is a collaborative process that includes developing, watching, and critiquing lessons with involvement from a small group of peer teachers and students during each part of the process. At Viewland High, teachers adapted the process to fit their challenging schedules by bringing a lesson in the formative stages to a small group of colleagues and students, after which the group watches the lesson being taught by the teacher who has proposed it. They meet again at the end of the day to discuss the lesson and set instructional goals related to it. Students at Viewland participated in lesson studies with math teachers on topics such as stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995), and with language arts teachers on topics such as providing respectful feedback to students on their narrative writing.

Project vetting with students emerged in part from the Student Instructional Council. As Viewland was oriented toward project-based learning, project vetting was a process students and teachers developed to strengthen the potential of project-based lessons. To vet a project a teacher brings a proposed curricular project to a small group of peers and/or students, presents the goals and scope and sequence of the lesson, and solicits feedback. This practice does not involve real-

time observation, and for that reason, it is less challenging than lesson study to schedule.

Although teachers had been vetting projects to one another for approximately three years, this was the first year of vetting projects with Viewland students. Figure 6 roughly illustrates how these practices occur fluidly over the course of an academic year.

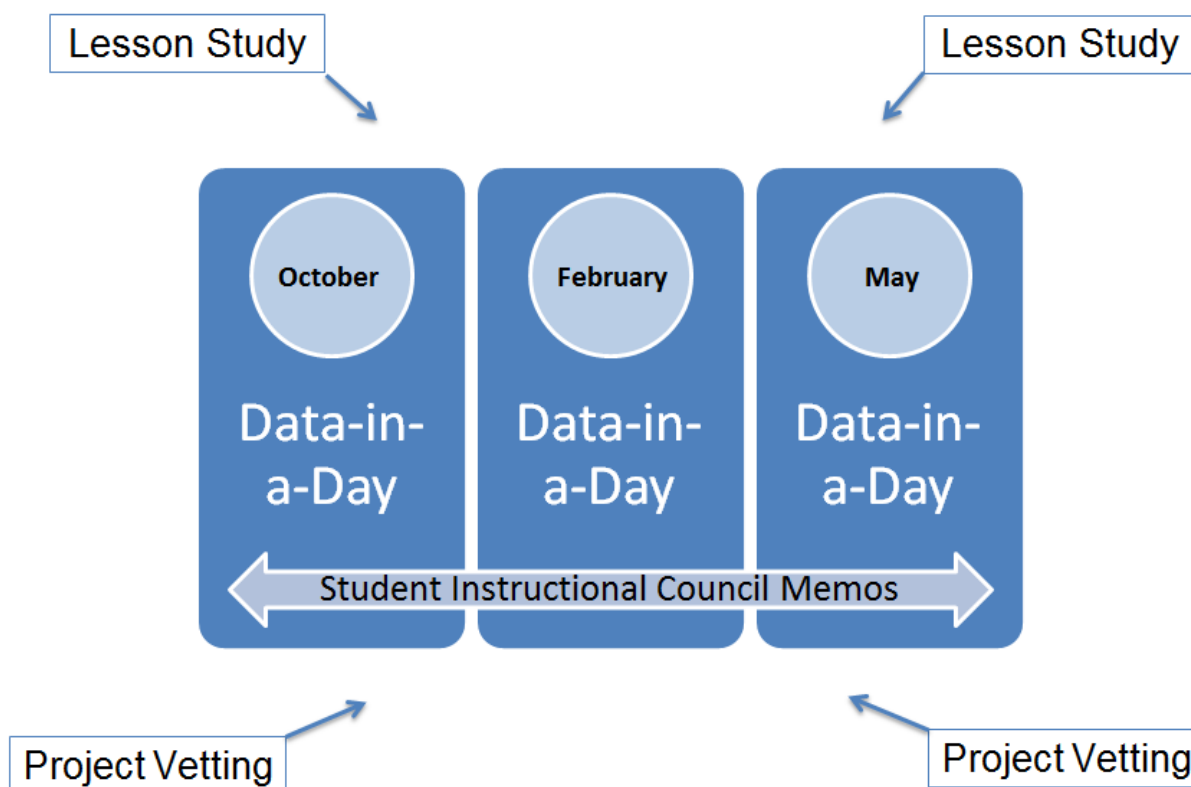


Figure 6. Example of how student engagement practices might occur at Viewland High School throughout an academic year.

Participants

In this exploratory case, I selected individual teachers and students by their critical role and/or participation in the practices that included students as partners. The study relied on a purposeful sample of students and teachers who were at the nexus of Viewland's intergenerational partnerships, and who were able to describe instances of teacher-student collaboration and the various ways it had, or had not, affected participant's actions, outlooks,

behaviors, and motivations. In order to find key informants, or teachers and students who had extensive experience with multiple forms of adult-student partnerships at Viewland, I occasionally employed snowball or chain sampling (Patton, 2002). As such, some participants were either identified by administrators or third-party partners, while some were chosen due to their self-identification of their engagement in these activities. Special care was taken to search for outlier participants that might provide discrepant contradictory evidence. Total participants included: twelve students, several of which were included in multiple forms of data collection; three administrators including the academic dean who was interviewed twice, an assistant principal, and the principal; two intermediary partners including a university professor and a community partner; ten teachers of various subjects, grade levels, and levels of experience, three of whom were interviewed both in 2011 and in 2013.

Administrators and intermediary organization participants. For background and historical context I interviewed the assistant principal, the principal, and I twice interviewed the academic dean who was the advisor for the Student Instructional Council. This administrator, referred to thus forth as Carla, also served as the professional development coordinator for the school. Additionally, I interviewed two intermediary partners including the university partner who developed or facilitated and co-lead professional development around student-centered activities and a community partner who served as the instructor for the Student Instructional Council class in 2013. Table 1 details the administrator and intermediary organization partner participation in the study over the two-year period.

Table 1

Administrator and Intermediary Organization Partner Participation

Role/Title	Male/Female	Data collection type
University Professor of Education	Female	Semi-structured interview by phone
Community partner/Instructor	Female	Semi-structured interview by phone
Academic Dean	Female	Semi-structured interview *
Assistant Principal	Male	Semi-structured interview
Principal	Female	Semi-structured interview

* Interviewed two times; 2011 in person and in 2013 by phone

Teacher participants. To investigate how adult-student collaborative practices were experienced by teachers, I interviewed ten teachers who had participated in one or more of the events or practices including students. Administrators and university partners helped to identify these teachers by providing a list of teachers who had a range of experience with student voice and whom they felt would feel comfortable speaking freely about all aspects of such practices. The resulting sample consisted of five male and five female teachers who taught a range of grade levels and subjects with their experience teaching ranging from one to eighteen years. Table 2 details the teacher participation in the study over the two-year period including three teachers who participated in multiple portions of data collection.

Table 2

Teacher Participants

#	Male/ Female	Subjects/Grades Taught	# Years Taught	Student Voice Participation	Data Collection Type and Year(s) Collected
1	Male	9 th -12 th grade Engineering, CAD, Robotics, Computer integrated manufacturing	18 (7 th at Viewland)	Observed in multiple Data- in-a-day cycles	Semi-structured interview, 2013
2*	Male	12 th grade Language Arts	7 (5 th at Viewland)	Observed in multiple Data- in-a-day cycles Lesson Study Observed by and received feedback from student instructional council	Semi-structured group interview, 2011 Semi-structured interview, 2013
3*	Male	9 th grade Science & AP Chemistry	5 (5 th at Cleveland)	Observed in multiple Data- in-a-day cycles Observed by and received feedback from student instructional council	Semi-structured group interview, 2011 Semi-structured interview, 2013
4	Female	9 th -12 th grade World History, Journalism, and Online Credit Retrieval	2 (2 nd at Viewland)	Observed in multiple Data- in-a-day cycles Observer in one Data-in-a- day cycle	Semi-structured phone interview, 2013
5	Female	9 th -12 th grade Pre- Calculus and AP Statistics	15 (2 nd at Viewland)	Observed in multiple Data- in-a-day cycles Observed by and received feedback from student instructional council	Semi-structured interview, 2013
6	Male	9 th grade Science/Tech- education	1 st year	Observed in two Data-in-a- day cycles	Semi-structured interview, 2013
7*	Female	9 th -12 th grade Sciences	13 (11 th at Viewland)	Observed in multiple Data- in-a-day cycles Lesson Study Observed by and received feedback from student instructional council Project Vetting	Semi-structured interview, 2011 Semi-structured interview, 2013
8	Female	9 th -12 th grade Language Arts, Social Studies, & Technology	6 (1 st at Viewland)	Observed in two Data-in-a- day cycles	Semi-structured group interview, 2011

#	Male/ Female	Subjects/Grades Taught	# Years Taught	Student Voice Participation	Data Collection Type and Year(s) Collected
9	Male	10 th grade U.S. History	18 (3 rd at Viewland)	Observed in multiple Data- in-a-day cycles	Semi-structured group interview, 2011
10	Female	9 th – 11 th grade Math/Algebra	9 (9 th at Viewland)	Observed in multiple Data- in-a-day cycles Lesson Study Observed by and received feedback from student instructional council	Semi-structured interview, 2011

* Interviewed two times; 2011 and 2013

Student participants. The academic dean and intermediary organization partners aided me in identifying a diverse sample including a multi-gendered group of students from various grade levels, race and ethnicity, and academic success. Table 3 details student participation in the study over the two-year period, including students who participated in multiple portions of data collection.

Table 3

Student Participants

#	Male/ Female	Grade Level at Last Instance of Data Collection	Data Collection Type and Year(s) Collected
1*	Female	Junior	Focus group, 2011, 2013 Semi-structured interview 2013 Student panel observation, 2013
2*	Male	Senior	Semi-structured interview 2013 Student panel observation, 2013
3	Female	Senior	Focus group, 2013
4	Female	Senior	Focus group, 2013
5*	Female	Senior	Focus group, 2013 Student panel observation, 2013
6*	Female	Senior	Focus group, 2013 Student panel observation, 2013
7*	Female	Sophomore	Focus group, 2013 Student panel observation, 2013
8	Female	Senior	Focus group, 2011
9	Female	Senior	Focus group, 2011
10*	Male	Senior	Focus group, 2011 Student panel observation, 2013
11	Male	Junior	Focus group, 2011
12	Female	Alumni	Semi-structured interview, 2013

* Participated in multiple forms of data collection in years 2011 and 2013

Data Collection

Specific attention was given to align data collection procedures with research questions, take into account previous literature, and consider the external and internal validity concerns of the study. To triangulate data I used three different types: interviews, observations, and document analysis. Additionally, interview data was collected from four different sources: administrators, intermediary organization partners, teachers, and students. Data from these

different sources, prolonged engagement, and various member checks with the university partner and school administrators, helped to establish the trustworthiness of my analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Interviews and Focus Groups

Semi-structured interviews, small group interviews, and focus groups were an essential part of data collection and serve as the primary source of quotations for this study. Questions were designed with the aim of understanding the multiple realities or the different views of what was happening at the school around adult-student partnerships² (Stake, 1995, p. 12). These questions focused on generating perspectives of the cumulative influence of student-teacher partnership practices on individuals and the school. I interviewed, in two one-hour focus groups, a culturally and academically diverse group of students. The first focus group consisted of five students and the second consisted of seven students. In addition, two students were interviewed individually in semi-structured interviews. I interviewed teachers, administrators, and intermediary organization partners individually, but in two cases I conducted small group interviews of two teachers. All interviews and focus groups lasted 45 minutes to one hour and were recorded and transcribed verbatim³.

Interviewing was appropriate for this study in that it allowed me to view the participants' perspective and document their stories. Further, a semi-structured interview protocol provided the structure and sequence for questions throughout the interview to deeply elicit perspectives on the experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of students and teachers, but also allowed for the

² When interviewing participants I used the term "student voice" when discussing all instances of student involvement and collaboration because it was easily understood and regularly used. By using this general term I could gauge how intensive they viewed such teacher-student interactions.

³ Students were provide copies of questions to write down their thoughts and were collected with their permission. Group norms were developed to ensure equal participation from all group members.

researcher to follow relevant topics in the interview as they arose (Patton, 2002). I chose a focus group approach, as a form of group interviewing, for student data collection for several reasons. First, as a relative outsider to students and coming from a possible position of power—due to my age and relationship with teachers and administrators at the school—a group dynamic could help provide students the ability to comfortably provide information and arrive at some degree of consensus (Morgan & Kreuger, 1993). Second, the chaotic nature of school schedules and student responsibilities within those schedules can be particularly difficult to overcome, and focus groups become an effective way to obtain a larger amount of information in a shorter period of time (Gibbs, 1997). Finally, focus groups can enhance the quality of data and provide an opportunity to generate responses that might differ from other methods (Glitz, 1998; Patton, 2002).

Through questioning, students were asked about their involvement at Viewland, how they felt about using their voice, how they felt their voice was heard and received by adults at the school, and how these experiences might have affected them personally. Teachers were asked to discuss their perceptions of teaching and the students at the school, what student voice meant to them, their experiences with student voice at the school and what meaning, if any, these experiences had for them. Some of the discussions also included imagining how other adults at the school might perceive or make meaning from some of the same all-school practices. The interview with the academic dean and SIC advisor focused on providing background information about the current practices involving students and how such practices fit with school renewal efforts.

Central to the design of interview and focus group questions was the goal of understanding the perspectives of teachers and students, the ones who have the most direct or

active involvement, to explore the ways they came to participate in these collaborations, how they were prepared, how they felt about the experience, and how, if at all, their participation has changed their personal perspectives or professional practice. In accordance with motivation and transformative learning theory, questions were also framed to solicit participants thoughts about their desire, or lack of desire, to use what they learned from the experience in future situations and to gauge their level of motivation to continue participating or to create new opportunities to collaborate. Given what we know about the importance of collaboration in professional learning, interviews addressed participant's ideas about the effectiveness of the collaborative structures in which they participated and the inclusion of students in these interactions. Questions solicited specific examples of pedagogical innovations or changes they attributed to these experiences. Interviews also elicited responses from participants about characteristics of the intermediary organizations' partnership with the school including what aspect(s) were most beneficial and how, if at all, new routines and practices would be sustained (See Appendix A, Interview and Focus Group Protocols).

Observations

Observations were conducted of relevant events that included students preparing for or engaging with adults in some aspect of practice associated with the program developed or facilitated in conjunction with the intermediary organization. As the activities being observed varied, so did the length of the observations. All activities observed were considered part of Viewland's school improvement and professional development plan, and most of the events were developed in conjunction with the university partner. I used ethnographic field note methods to record observational data during these observations (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995).

Observations focused on how the activity was structured, what the purpose was, who facilitated the group, who attended, how individuals participated, who talked to whom and when, what artifacts or actions the interaction generated, and how the activity was concluded. Attention to these details illustrated power dynamics within the group, the role students were felt permitted to play, the extent to which students were considered partners, and the extent to which teachers appeared to value student feedback (See Appendix B: Observation Protocols).

Nine observations were conducted for this study. I observed two instances of DIAD, including planning and team-preparation sessions, classroom observations, debriefing, and group sharing of findings. These observations provided additional context for participants' perceptions. Table 4 details each of these observations in the years 2011 and 2013. Of the nine observations, I was a participant as observer in five events including serving as an observer in the DIAD events and a student in the university course session held on site at the high school. Detailed field notes were taken for each event. Immediately following each observation, I filled in details in my field notes which took a narrative form (Merriam, 2009). When it was not possible to record direct quotes I summarized participant comments.

Table 4

Observation Details

#	Event Type	Year	Event Description	Participants
1	University course session	2011	School background provided by administration to university students	Principal, two assistant principals, academic dean, leadership intern, university partner faculty
2	Student Instructional Council Data-in-a-Day planning session	2011	Preparation for students to lead DIAD orientation	5 SIC students & Academic Dean
3	Data-in-a-Day participant orientation session/dinner	2011	Dinner and work session to acquaint new DIAD participants with structure, purpose, and process of event	Administrators and students as facilitators. Parents, district administrators, community members, teachers and students as participants
4	Data-in-a-Day event including team-preparation, classroom observations, debriefing, and group share-outs	2011	Visit 6 classrooms for 20-30 min. on a team with students, community members and teachers or administrators- Debrief in teams and share out	Administrators, students, teachers, parents, and community members
5	High school staff meeting to disseminate Data-in-a-Day feedback	2011	Feedback from DIAD shared with staff	Students were planned as presenters but were not able to attend. Thus the Academic Dean and principal facilitated. Attendees included school administrators, staff, and university partners
6	Student Instructional Council Data-in-a-Day planning session	2013	Preparation for students to lead DIAD orientation and event	20 SIC students, Academic Dean, University Partner Professor, and Community Partner Instructor
7	Data-in-a-Day event including team-preparation, classroom observations, debriefing, and group share-outs	2013	Establish teams and review observation protocols. Visit 6 classrooms for 20-30 min. Debrief in teams and share out to group.	Administrators, students, teachers, and students in partner university's principal education program. 10 SIC student served as team leaders for observation teams and debrief and share out facilitators

#	Event Type	Year	Event Description	Participants
8	Student Panel	2013	In the afternoon of the DIAD event SIC students served on a panel to answer general questions for university students in the principal preparation program	10 Student Instructional Council Students and roughly 30 university students in the principal preparation program
9	Student Instructional Council post-DIAD debrief	2013	In class the following day, students debriefed about leading the previous day's DIAD event and participating on the student panel	20 SIC students, Academic Dean and Community Partner Instructor

Document Analysis

A portfolio of school improvement documents provided a behind-the-scenes glimpse and insight into the purpose and development of practices, contributing depth and quality to other data (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). In addition to interviews and observations, I analyzed documents collected at various events and from the academic dean and intermediary organization partners. Some of these documents included meeting agendas, feedback session data summary posters, a lesson used to teach Student Instructional Council members how to provide written feedback to teachers, and an informational pamphlet describing the history, purpose and results of DIAD. I also used public websites from the district and school for historical information on the school and the partnership with the university.

Data Analysis

Because this study was exploratory, it did not begin with an established coding scheme. My approach to data analysis began with my research questions and conceptual framework. I first created graphic organizers to map which types of data sets would best address each research question or area of the conceptual framework. Data analysis began early in the research process as I used data from the first year (2011) as well as my participant observations to shape future

research (Merriam, 1998). I used open and axial coding to analyze data from interviews, focus groups, observations, and documents (Stringer, 2004; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Analysis was ongoing and data was coded inductively for specific categories of student involvement to identify students' and teachers' perspectives relative to the three practices. After an initial read-through, I coded line-by-line with open coding to identify key themes, and on the third reading I moved to axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The initial coding focused on instances of student voice, perceptions of the experience, teacher and student perceptions of each other in the process, perceptions of the feedback produced from each instance of student participation, perceived impact of student feedback on practice, and descriptive accounts of the impact of student feedback on instructional practice.

Analysis of data also involved an examination of the characteristics and nature of the school-intermediary organization partnership, the types of external support the school received, and the individuals involved. An in-depth examination of all aspects of the program design and implementation was conducted to provide adequate historical descriptions and setting for the activities in which students and adults were now engaging. This data was further analyzed to identify and refine emerging themes in regards to participant preparation and introduction to the idea of adult-student partnerships.

Throughout the data, I examined the types of collaboration in which participants engaged, the ways they described the experiences of these collaborations, and what actions they may, or may not, have planned to take as a result of the experience. Interviews and observations were analyzed to identify how, if at all, these practices influenced teachers and students perspectives on teaching and learning at the school. I paid close attention to specific instances when respondents noted changes in behavior or actions associated with student teacher interaction. All

data were reread for codes that emerged from later interviews and selective coding was used to reduce data and to generate a hypothesis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Visual displays were used to illuminate trends, patterns, and contradictions and identify further questions or avenues of inquiry. I also wrote data summaries and memos (Charmaz, 2001) about interviews and particular portions of interviews that moved from specifics of the individuals' experience to the general links between interviews in what Robert Weiss calls "local integration" and "inclusive integration" (Weiss, 1994). Finally, I attempted to confirm my findings with member checks, checking for representativeness and following up on outliers and surprises (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Researcher Role and Positionality

Prior to selecting Viewland as a research site, I regularly visited the school in my capacity as a University pathway program manager, a community partner who has participated in DIAD, and a graduate student who shadowed students to understand school from their perspective. This previous contact and experience at the school allowed me to supplement data with my own participant observations based on my historical understanding of the context. In the role of researcher, I was mostly an observer as participant (Merriam, 2009). However, as mentioned earlier there were times when this role shifted to that of participant as observer as I engaged in activities such as DIAD. Further, in my position as a researcher, I intend to employ what Boyer (1996) calls the scholarship of engagement. I intend this work to not only contribute to scholarship but to contribute to practice. Thus while this dissertation is basic research in that it is designed to contribute to theory and knowledge, I also intend this work to traverse boundaries between scholarship and practice by taking into account what teachers and students report about their work together so as to shape future practice.

Limitations of the Study Design

While this study examined the perspectives of a group of students and teachers at one site, participant perspectives may not necessarily be reflective of the general student or teacher population there. In effect, the study attempted to maximize what is learned from those who became most engaged in partnerships, had the greatest ability to participate in or observe these partnerships in action, or were most affected by them. Descriptions of individual experience of student-teacher collaborations varied greatly within the sample and thus could vary greatly within the larger school population. Also, it was difficult to obtain a sample of participants who had participated in all forms of student-adult collaborations at the school thus introducing additional sample variability.

The need to sample participants who had enough experience with adult-youth partnerships to comment on the process also created somewhat of a dilemma because in many instances these individuals were those that may already subscribe to the idea of youth-adult partnership. Additional interviews and study participants could add greater depth to the study. Due to time constraints or teacher turnover, I was not able to re-interview some of the teachers who were interviewed in 2011. Other study participants who could enrich our sample include student alumni who participated in one of more partnership activities and who have since graduated, and students and teachers who might purposefully avoid partnership participation due to skepticism or other hesitations. My attempts to reach two student alumni, however, were unsuccessful.

Finally, acquiring data about individual shifts in thinking, beliefs, or even practice and behavior is always difficult. While a combination of interview data and observation is one avenue to capture these shifts, it would require extensive and intensive observation to actually

capture behavior changes and even then the very presence of a researcher can affect behavior. Interview data relies heavily on teachers and students self-reporting these shifts which might be affected by the desire to either portray their growth in a positive light or conversely note that it may have only reinforced what was already sound professional practice. In another perspective, my participation and presence, as a researcher with affiliations to the university partner, might influence participant's responses.

Chapter 4

Building a Partnership: Developing Student-Adult Collaboration Practices in the Context of a School-University Partnership

Like many urban high schools, Viewland is one of several schools served under the umbrella of various intermediary nonprofit organizations. Administrators at Viewland reported that 123 different organizations functioned within or in support of Viewland. The breadth, scope, and focus of various organizations providing support or programming within the school varies greatly, depending largely on the type and amount of funding they receive. Similar to high-poverty high schools, these organizations often find it difficult to hire and retain experienced personnel with a deep understanding of teaching and learning. Given this difficulty and the often focused mission or goal of such organizations, many do not provide comprehensive or consistent services for students. Compounding these challenges is the fact that many of the organizations functioning within one school compete with one another for resources and/or funding. Thus, as they struggle to make claims about their effectiveness, they fail to develop cooperative relationships to provide better or more coordinated services.

This study focuses on the ways, if any, in which intermediary organizations contribute to or enable the development of adult-student collaboration practices. It also examines how, if at all, intermediary organizations build leadership capacity and agency within schools. Given the landscape of intermediary organization proliferation at Viewland, this study spotlights one particular partnership between Viewland High School and an intermediary organization. In this case the intermediary organization, and individual associated with it, is a large local university and one of its faculty members, Professor Grace Walker. A resulting subsequent partnership

between Viewland and an additional nonprofit organization folds into the larger story of the initial university partnership.

The partnership between Viewland and the university provides a good opportunity to explore the emergence of adult-student collaboration practices in a high-poverty high school, especially as these relate to instructional improvement. The case also helps to identify the possible contributions that a long-term, instructionally focused, school-wide partnership of this kind, spanning roughly seven years, can make to the evolution of student-adult collaboration at the school. This chapter provides an overview of how the partnership between Viewland and the university was established, how it was sustained through three different school leadership changes, and the nature of the student engagement practices that were shaped or prompted during the development of the partnership. It explores how the partnership, originally between one university faculty member, Professor Grace Walker, and the larger school, paved the way for a secondary partnership with another non-profit organization. The chapter also discusses aspects of these partnerships that conform, or do not conform, to conventional literature regarding intermediary organizations in school reform, including scope and function of the partnership and sustainability of practices that emerged from the partnership (Supovitz, 2008; Honig, 2004; Finnigan & Bitter, 2009).

The chapter is divided into three sections, beginning first with a historical overview of how the partnership developed, as perceived by administrators at the school and Professor Grace Walker. These accounts provide important framing as to the development of adult-student partnership activities as well as the communication of purpose and process as conveyed to school staff and students. Second, the chapter provides descriptions of the student-adult collaborative practices that were developed, how they were developed, and when they occurred. Here, a

vignette of a three-day Data in a Day (DIAD) cycle is described to illustrate the specific nature of the instructional partnerships between students and adults and to bring the reader into specific instances of adults and students discussing instruction together. Additionally, this vignette reveals some of the conflicts that can occur within a larger school context when a whole-school approach is applied. Third, a discussion follows of the specific forms of participation such practices demand of students and adults as noted through observations and participant descriptions. These descriptions of adult and student participation in instructionally focused adult-student collaborations serve as a focal point from which to reflect back on framing ideas of “student voice” as well as to note shifts and/or complications around power relations within the school.

The Beginning of a Partnership: A Changing Context

Considering the complexities involved in establishing student-adult collaboration initiatives that move beyond ASB type event planning and into instructionally relevant topics, it is particularly important to grasp the aspects of leadership and adult alliance that accompany the development and implementation of such policies. In this section, I will address the research sub-question regarding the way in which the partnership between the University and Viewland developed, and what the school leadership context looked like throughout this time period. In understanding contextual specifics of any school a historical perspective is helpful. This is especially important in the case of Viewland, given the structural and leadership changes that occurred throughout the ongoing partnership with the university and Professor Grace Walker. Table five demonstrates a brief historical timeline of the leadership changes and partnership milestones that may be relevant in Viewland’s evolution of adult-student partnerships.

Table 5

Historical Timeline

Time Frame	Event
January 2004	Principal Massey assumes position as principal.
Fall 2006	Principal Massey and a small team from Viewland attend a presentation by Professor Walker at a local high school and invite her to speak to the whole staff at Viewland.
Summer 2006	Whole school staff attends a workshop at the University and is introduced to the principals of Professor Walker.
Fall 2006-Spring 2007	Staff votes to work with Professor Walker. Professor Walker begins partnership with school.
Fall 2007	Principal West (A previous assistant principal) Assumes position as interim principal.
Fall 2007	School moves from temporary building into remodeled permanent building.
Fall 2007-Spring 2008	DIAD cycles and Lesson Studies begin and continue through subsequent years.
Fall 2008	Principal Sander assumes position as principal.
Fall 2008- Spring 2009	School receives additional funds from the district in an attempt to bolster innovation at the school where enrollment had dropped significantly under the districts school choice plan.
Fall 2010	School re-opens as an “option” school with a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) focus and is divided into two academies, School of Engineering and Design, and School of Life Sciences.
2011-2012	Carla starts Student Instructional Council as a club and serves as the advisor.
2012-2013	Student Instructional Council becomes a credit bearing course titled “Introduction to Teaching” in partnership with youth focused non-profit. Carla serves as the instructor of record.

As mentioned previously, in 2003 Viewland committed to divide into separate academies and underwent staffing reconfigurations and professional development in accordance to these

guidelines, as dictated by their Gates Foundation Grant. In the meantime, Viewland was moved out of their historic building, which was to be remodeled, and into a temporary building across town. While at the temporary location, Viewland lost a significant amount of its student population who chose to attend different local high schools rather than be bused to the secondary location.

In January 2004, the school leadership changed and Viewland received a new principal, Principal Massey. Principal Massey intended to increase student enrollment at Viewland by increasing student engagement at the school and enlisted the aid of like-minded faculty at the school to do so. In 2006, after attending a presentation by Professor Walker, Principal Massey invited Professor Walker to speak at Viewland to share aspects of Professor Walker's school reform work regarding student motivational theory. Shortly after, Principal Massey leveraged the resources of this organization to send the entire Viewland staff to attend a summer workshop at the university, designed around Professor Walker's work about motivation and motivational conditions in learning. At this workshop teachers were introduced to various ideas and practices that encouraged engaging students in more active roles within their learning environment.

Over the next year, Professor Grace Walker met informally with Principal Massey and presented at a staff in-service. Next, a "memo of understanding" was drafted between Professor Grace Walker (hereafter referred to as "Grace"), the school district, and Viewland. In describing the initial agreement Grace notes, "There was no pay involved in any of this. They were basically just letting me in." Grace volunteered a percentage of her time to the school to help shape professional development there and Principal Massey made commitments to use the principles of Grace's motivational framework in their school transformation plan. The school's commitment to the motivational framework included a staff pledge to school-wide collaboration

as well as a willingness to experiment with various professional learning strategies such as DIAD and lesson study. Many of Grace's proposed strategies, such as DIAD, already included students as participants, and in this sense, the initiation of the school-university partnership was explicitly concerned with the notion of adult-student collaboration as a central part of the school improvement equation. Figure 7 is a recreation of a document provided by Professor Walker, illustrating the progression of how her work with Viewland began in the first year.

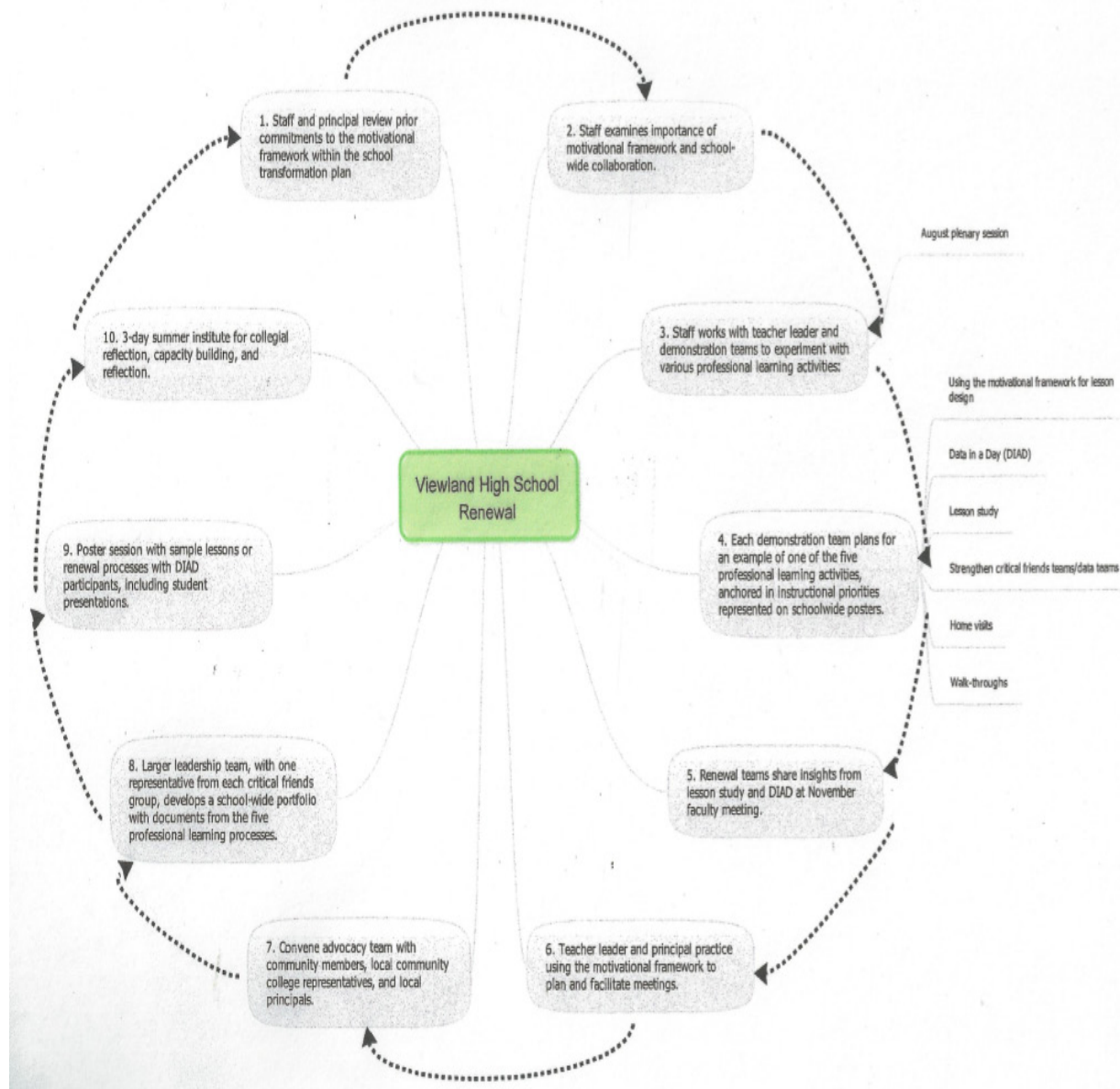


Figure 7. Viewland High School renewal.

While partnerships between schools and universities are not necessarily unusual, several aspects of this partnership were unique. For one, there was no specific money or grant tied to the partnership. Thus, neither Grace nor the school received funding. Rather, Grace volunteered her expertise to the staff and administration at the school. Grace's expertise was particularly relevant because she came into her role at the university with a history of working with high-poverty schools across the U.S. and overseas, including serving as a state support person for a federal

program serving high poverty schools. So, as she notes, she "... was familiar with high-poverty schools from lots of different theoretical and pragmatic perspectives." In describing Viewland,

Grace says:

It was familiar to me as a school that had earned, I would say, a bad reputation in the community. The reason I say bad reputation is because initially speaking with students, they spoke about how Viewland was a school people were not choosing to go to.

It is significant that Grace's way of characterizing the school reputation was based on an immediate outreach to students, in addition to whatever she might have learned from adults in the building. Here, too, the early steps in appraising the situation and planning for improvement were anchored to students' views.

These early descriptions of Viewland were echoed by students. Veronica, a senior in 2011, noted that people outside the school, "...think we don't learn here and that it is easy to pass at Viewland. Like, they'll be like, 'oh you came from Viewland? You don't know nothing.'" In 2011 interviews, several teachers also acknowledged Viewland's rather notorious reputation. Alex, a Language Arts teacher, explains how some perceive Viewland by saying:

People have perceptions of what poor schools look like and what poor people getting taught looks like and how crazy things are. When I got here there was a reputation of a lot of violence and chaos...When you serve poor people you deal with a mess of socioeconomic issues that find their way into school. If you don't understand the way the system works at large then you tend to blame the people, or just simplify things that are more complex.

The Assistant Principal, in a 2013 interview, described Viewland saying, "When I came here as a teacher eight years ago, I was told that the biggest challenge was getting kids to come to school...When they did come they treated it like a prison."

In 2007, a year after establishing the partnership with Grace, Principal Massey retired. Viewland moved back into their newly renovated building with the former Assistant Principal,

Mr. West, serving as the interim Principal of Viewland. As the school population settled back into their new building, the administration set about rebuilding their student attendance, which on many levels, required remaking their image within the community and the current student population. To do this, Grace helped Viewland engage students as partners within the process of DIAD. According to school documents, the school developed a professional development plan focused on strengthening critical friends teams and encouraging teachers to understand students more deeply by following three specific students of differing academic levels. Teachers also visited student's homes through a home-visit protocol Grace established. Finally, teachers developed portfolios on the data they had collected on these students as well as their reflections and insights gained throughout the process. Here again we see a focus on students in unique ways by encouraging teachers to see instruction through their eyes and to come to know who their students are outside the classroom.

In fall 2008, Principal Sanders became the fourth principal of Viewland in five years. Also in 2008, Viewland received funds from the district in an attempt to bolster innovation and enrollment at the school. District leadership formulated an idea to remake Viewland into a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) school. However, Grace felt strongly that:

By the time the district declared that Viewland would be a project-based STEM school people were, I felt, much more serious already about their work, and students were included. I believe, but I don't have specific evidence for this, that the teachers always liked and respected student input...And it helped faculty, I think to see that their instruction not only mattered in this micro way, but faculty got prouder, I think, of what they were aspiring toward.

Here Grace's comments suggest the occurrence of a cultural shift at Viewland, where teachers had come to view students as partners. Given the dominant or traditional power structures of schooling, where the adults administer educational practice with little input from students, this is

no small feat. Further, Grace also hints at possible increases in faculty efficacy and motivation as a result of these new interactions with students, in ways that we may consider transformative.

In fall 2010, Viewland opened as an “option” school with a STEM focus and was divided into two academies. In addition to the STEM focus, Viewland introduced project based learning. As described on their website, project based learning is not a curriculum but rather, “...an instructional strategy to help students learn core content while also building 21st century skills that will help them be successful in college, the workplace, and life.” Amid the shifts in location, leadership, structure, and focus, Viewland also saw considerable turnover in staff throughout this period. Viewland was changing in curriculum, pedagogical practice, and cultural norms. As, Grace notes, “The naysayers had a choice. They could either stay, and be relatively ineffective trying to slow change down, or they could leave. And a lot of them left.”

The Workings of a Partnership: Motivations, Theory of Action, and Practice

While Grace received no payment for her work at Viewland, she describes the partnership as “reciprocal” and “interpersonal.” By interpersonal, she notes her extensive interactions with staff and students afforded by her weekly presence. Given the lack of monetary compensation, it is relevant to consider what other motivations spurred the partnership. The discussion of this issue addresses the research sub-question regarding the focus of the partnership as well as the theory of action that guided the main partnership activities.

Grace maintained a shared office at Viewland and scheduled her attendance at the school to coincide with the early release day. On these days, staff would attend critical friends groups and participate in other professional development, or planning meetings. With the ability to be consistently present, during these planning and development periods, Grace felt she was able to establish herself as, “A part of the school, and...a reasonably trusted colleague.” In many

ways, Grace's ability to establish a consistent presence at the school enabled her to provide consistent support over time as well as design numerous learning opportunities and informal avenues for teachers to voice their opinion and communicate with her (Supovitz, 2008; Finnigan & Bitter; 2009).

In describing the partnership as reciprocal, Grace noted the time and expertise she provided Viewland, but she also described a type of revolving door philosophy in which her university students could:

...come to Viewland and learn about urban education in a school that typified what happens in high-poverty high schools, which is the coming and going of different people and initiatives and policies...All those kind of things you can try to read about, but being there creates so much more nuance in terms of what graduate students can understand about urban schools and urban school change.

In addition, Grace had Viewland high school students come to the university to shadow her and to work with graduate students to teach them about practices such as DIAD. There was additional overlap between the university and Viewland in that, Grace came to have four Viewland faculty members as students in an Ed.D. program at the university devoted to preparing system-level leaders.

Overall Grace asserted that her orientation towards her professional work, her "belief in possibility" and love of being there fueled her motivations at Viewland. She notes:

I don't think you can do this kind of work if you don't love it and love the people you're associated with, and I loved every aspect of that. And then, I also have a set of ideals that I try to live by. Carla [the Academic Dean at Viewland] once called me a 'revolutionary optimist' and I believe it is necessary for everybody to have a similar stance.

While Grace describes her theory of action as evolving, she describes it as first operating from a conceptual understanding as she had, "a lot of experience looking at literature and research and trying to apply insights to the unique contexts of different schools." Further, the recent

reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act had led the way to a time of comprehensive school reform so there was, as she says:

A lot of experimentation...but rich forms of communication about those. So there was a lot to use, as a way of developing strong conceptual understanding of what it takes to create a clear focus and tie it to instructional improvement. I tried to model this in all my interactions, from how I developed workshops with others, to everyday interactions in the hall.

Another key aspect of Grace's theory of action was developing a "capacity system" with routines and "clear lines of responsibility." In this way she set about building a team with the Principal that could, "adapt and eventually lead to a deep and coherent approach to examining and improving instructional practice throughout the school."

In reflecting on the partnership, Carla, the Academic Dean, mused that the partnership was possible because of the "coherence and strength of [Grace's] ideas" and the staff's willingness to pay attention to student motivation with, "the idea that all students are motivated to learn." Here again, a focus on students and student perspectives is noted. Carla describes Grace using many of the same adjectives used to describe effective intermediary organization partnerships (Supovitz, 2008) saying she was, "incredibly adaptive and respectful of Viewland's local context" citing her willingness and ability to, "crosswalk her language with the district/school language so that it would feel consistent and coherent for Viewland staff and the Viewland community. And that stuck."

Carla also credits some of the school's transformation of image in the community and what she calls the school's culture of transparency, to the practice of DIAD in that Viewland made it a "signature" practice that brought people together. Further, Carla notes that Grace made such practices sustainable by "making it local." She describes the process and its possibility for sustainability by saying:

I co-facilitated with her, she encouraged me, she helped me to grow in designing collaborative teams to support DIAD so that there's a lot of—it's a widespread knowledge base, there are a lot of people who feel like they have some stake in those processes and a strong base in how to do those processes. And also, the website, I have to say, too, that the website is another great legacy that ensured there is a record of the work that we can continue to get documents from and send people to.

In this way Grace established DIAD as a new norm and set about establishing structures and professional communities to support it (Moffett, 2000; Coburn, 2003; Fullan, 2001). Grace also established relationships within the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) by attending meetings. Many of the parents who participated in DIAD were from the PTSA. Further, Grace often hosted students at her home to plan for DIAD and other events or presentations allowing students the space to collaborate with adults outside the school domain.

Of particular importance to the issue of local control is the manner in which Grace conducted herself amongst and between Viewland and the district. Grace acknowledged that her position at the university provided her an endorsement by the district. However, she made a conscious effort not to take advantage of that endorsement, “except to legitimize the partnership.” In other words, she, “...resisted meeting with people in executive positions unless the principal set it up and was there.” In addition to this respect for Viewland leadership, Grace notes the importance of continually and collectively brainstorming and “trying things out.” In this vein she highlights the value of being flexible. While she came to the school with an initial plan Grace says:

I kind of worked with the school rhythms and strengths and needs and experimented in a way that was more casual. I would have loved to say to the principal “every Wednesday from this time to this time we'll be doing such-and-such,” but...there are so many on-the-moment demands that even if we had a plan, it would have been difficult to keep leadership in at that level.

In this way, Grace worked in *cooperation* with school leadership but not always *with* school leadership. Expanding on this idea she asserts that it is essential for an intermediary organization to have an ally in the school or, “somebody who occupies a position with influence but not the principal...someone with credibility and visibility.” Carla served as this person for Grace at Viewland. Grace says that she often functioned behind the scenes at Viewland, especially in the later years, by designing faculty meetings where the students would speak but not facilitating the meetings. She notes, “I was deliberate about that. I wanted the school to take these ideas and I wanted to help Carla build her capacity to lead the school.” Thus, while Principal Sanders can and does speak knowledgably about the practices at Viewland that engage students, she does not claim ownership of such practices and cites the influence of Grace and Carla in their creation and facilitation.

Similarly, Grace asserts that, in cooperation with leadership, an intermediary organization can sometimes be the “vision holder.” Grace continually worked to clarify and promote the “vision” and the work at Viewland by writing proposals for administrators, teachers, students, and parents to present at school board meetings and at professional conferences, such as education research associations and state school directors conferences. These presentations served to reinforce the changes Viewland was making and to gain recognition from the external education community. Further, Grace continued to bring university students into Viewland to “lend support to teachers in their classrooms” and to use Viewland as an internship site for both the principal certification program and the teacher education program.

Essentially, for Grace, working with Viewland meant, “Being able to solve problems, to understand what the emerging problems were, and trying to solve them.” For example, Grace and Carla found that maintaining consistent student participation on the student instructional

council was difficult. In their estimation, what was needed was more structure than the “club” designation could provide. Carla, as the club’s advisor, had job responsibilities as academic dean that required much of her attention and the students on the SIC were unable to give too much of their attention to the council due to competing academic and extracurricular commitments. Both Carla and Grace agreed the council would benefit from becoming a credit bearing course, but they needed someone who could teach the class with little or no funding. Thus, Grace went in search of a non-profit that was already working with students in the community, because, in her words, “If a non-profit is invested here, seriously invested, maybe there’s a way to build on what they’re doing in order to further help Viewland evolve itself.”

Through her inquiries in the community, Grace found a small non-profit managed by one woman, Lauren, who had done considerable work with high school students in the district around truancy prevention. Lauren operated her program through a federal grant, but was ready to move away from a whole district approach and focus her program on one school where she felt she could have more impact. Grace, working with Carla and Principal Sanders, convinced Lauren that Viewland would be a good fit for her program, as they could offer her a consistent group of students who she could train as mentors in a year-long course. While there was not yet funding for Lauren at Viewland, there was the hope that with the approval of a city levy in the fall some money would come through. In this way, in fall 2012, Student Instructional Council became its own class at Viewland titled, “Introduction to Teaching.”

The course name was chosen only because it was the best fit from the district list of approved courses. Carla would serve as the instructor of record for the course, but Lauren would be the teacher present in class each day. In talking about her role Lauren expressed a mix of frustration and success. She described her feelings on her initial days at Viewland saying:

I knew I was supposed to be a part of the school, but I didn't know really what that meant and because everyone had so much going on it took a long time to figure things out. I just think everyone is so busy that unless you walk in and you know clearly where you're going, it's not easy. It's not easy at all. It isn't for a lack of caring, it is for a lack of time and resources.

Grace was aware that Lauren, "didn't have an educational skill set," and thus, offered to help design the course and to coach Lauren as an instructor. The support that Grace provided Lauren and the connections she helped her build at the school was appreciated by Lauren. She notes:

I found so much success with partnering with the people at Viewland. The principal bought into it, the Dean of Students, Grace and I could actually try to do the work and try to make it successful. I knew that they were busy but they were supportive and believed in what I was trying to do.

Thus, the partnership between Viewland and multiple intermediary organizations served to help stabilize the consistent student participation on the instructional council.

Adult-Student Collaborations at Viewland: An Evolution

As is often the case with the development of adult-student collaborations in schools, it begins with an adult ally who either already finds value in the input students can provide regarding instruction or who ponders the possibilities of such partnerships. In talking about students at Viewland Grace says:

I really loved the students, because they, like most youth are, full of energy and so forth, but I also appreciated how they found each other around a lot of the issues that were challenging them in life and at Viewland.

While discussing the possible roles of students in instructional improvement she also notes:

With students, it is always easy to find ways to have conversations about the conditions that influence learning and life...It is really easy to use the line, 'Keep students in the center.' But it's, I think, very important to explore what that means and whether we're really learning from the students.

Similarly Carla, who began her career as a teacher, "...was curious to hear what students had to say about the instruction they were getting."

This portion of the paper addresses the research sub-questions regarding what specific adult-student collaborations evolved through the school-university partnership, what roles students played, how they were prepared for these roles, and how student participation manifested itself inside specific practices. I begin with *DIAD*, as it was the first practice at Viewland to include students in roles where they provided instructional feedback. After *DIAD*, teachers began including students in *lesson studies* to varying degrees. Next, Carla established the *Student Instructional Council* (SIC) and students began conducting their own instructionally focused walk-throughs. Once SIC became a credit bearing course, the students were able to begin *vetting projects* with teachers at Viewland. I discuss each of these practices at length in the following sections.

Student Participation in Data-in-a-Day at Viewland: A Gateway to New Practices

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Data-in-a-Day (*DIAD*) is a practice that unites students, family members, educators, and community members as observers of instructional practice (NWREL 2008; Ginsberg, 2001). Initially, student volunteers for *DIAD* at Viewland were solicited through teacher recommendations, posters in the school hallways, and word of mouth. Although later, once the Student Instructional Council was formed, those students participated and took the lead in recruiting other students. In speaking about student participation Carla says:

We asked some students to recruit other students, especially students that we may think of as on the margins. You know, it's kind of a volunteerism I think that really makes the difference for students. I certainly try to pick out students that I think are a little bit on the margins and where it could be a good intervention, honestly, as well as students whose voice we need to hear.

Initially students would receive only service learning hours for their participation. In later years, the school had money to pay the students who served in more substantial roles such as on the planning committee and as facilitators. Students new to *DIAD* attend an orientation just like

adults new to the process. The orientation usually takes the form of a working dinner the evening before DIAD during which participants are introduced to the four “R” language (relationships, relevance, rigor, and results) as qualities of instruction. Then they are given time to practice observing a classroom by viewing a video clip.

During the DIAD event, students participate as members of a team comprised of a mix of teachers, community members, district office personnel, and parents. Each member of the team is designated to look for one of the four “R” conditions during six twenty-minute visits to classrooms throughout the school. Figure 8 is an example of the template of “look-fors” and shared language that participants use as a guide when visiting classrooms. School documents describe this language as, “Language anchored in motivation and a Project Based Learning Approach.”

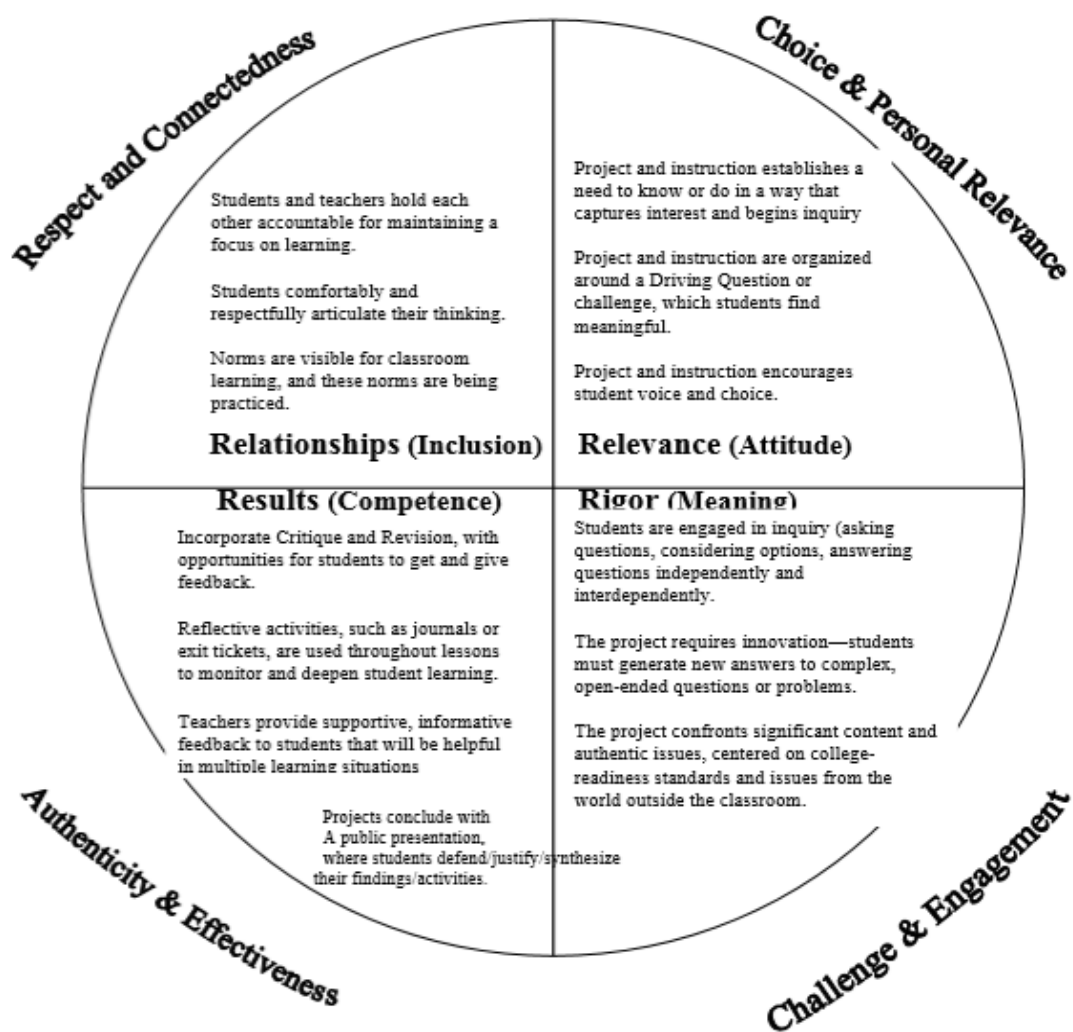


Figure 8. Viewland instructional “look-fors” 2011-2012.

According to school documents, as a result of the first DIAD in 2007, the administration used the 13 “instructional themes” that emerged from the observations to develop rubrics for walkthroughs. These were themes that teachers had agreed to work on and were depicted on a rubric for each of the “R” categories with a likert scale of 1-4. When the visits are completed individuals debrief with members of other teams who focused on the same “R.” As a new group they compile a list of “wows” and “wonders” related to their observations and tally their rubric numbers, divided by the number of classes they observed, to form an average.

Eventually, as students at Viewland became more familiar with the DIAD process, and better trained in classroom observation, they began to take ownership of the DIAD process. Carla created a document titled, “What’s Happened at Viewland as a Result of Data in a Day?” which details various staff, district, and administrative decisions and actions that were a result of DIAD over three separate years leading up to 2011. This document was used during the orientation session for new participants. Later, once Student Instructional Council was created, students began managing the data generated from DIAD participants and presenting the findings to the staff the following day. Principal Sanders cites DIAD as one of the biggest ways students are involved at Viewland and says, “The very cool part of it is that students do the presentation to the staff.” Grace, Carla, and Principal Sanders all report that during these student presentations in staff meetings the level of staff attention is notable, and as Carla says, “When those kids get up there and present their findings from DIAD you can hear a pin drop in the room.” Principal Sanders comments further on student participation in DIAD noting the diversity of student participants and their level of preparation saying:

Here is what usually happens. The kids who are the strongest academic kids are usually the ones who are put on display and, yes, they’re going to impress. But our kids that do this, they are just trained to do it...It is a risk to put those kids out there to do that. I was willing to take the risk. It wasn’t a big risk for me because I feel like I had strong teacher leaders that had some ideas, some really powerful ideas. And so, I trusted that they were going to prepare the kids in the way they needed to be prepared.

Grace remained present at all these presentations to “provide structure to help teachers deeply analyze the information presented, and to talk about next steps.” The strong teacher leadership Principal Sanders mentions is likely that of Carla in conjunction with coaching from Grace. Grace initially co-facilitated the early DIAD cycles with Carla and a small leadership team at the school who aided in planning. Then, after handing the responsibility for the planning and

facilitation of DIAD over to Viewland, she maintained a coaching role with Carla in which she says Carla, “always confided in me and we were always bringing new people into to these conversations.”

Through these conversations ideas began to germinate for new ways to continue including students. Once DIAD became an established practice at Viewland, occurring roughly three times a year and including students, community members, teachers, and administrators, Grace began bringing groups of graduate students to Viewland to learn about DIAD. The university students that came were enrolled in a principal certification program or another leadership degree program at the university. Thus, the adults coming to learn at Viewland were aspiring school leaders. In order to learn about DIAD as a process, Grace, in partnership with Carla and Principal Sanders, would have university students participate in conducting DIAD with students from SIC as both trainers and guides through the process. As a concluding session for the graduate students, students from Viewland would sit on a panel to talk about their work at Viewland and answer any questions from the university students. Once the DIAD event was complete, Grace would take the feedback produced by the university students in partnership with Viewland students and compile or condense it into a memo which was sent to the entire faculty of Viewland. An example of one of these memos is provided in Appendix A.

Grace credits DIAD as one reason students were considered viable partners in new instructional pursuits saying:

Really, the first thing that made the broader school community realize how important student voice is, is when students participated in DIAD. That was a very public initial event-type learning experience...DIAD really made visible the potential of students as instructional allies and people who could help improve the school as a whole. Out of that came a set of learning experiences with teachers through which we would just pull students in as best we could figure out.

Carla corroborates Grace's recollection of their collaboration and notes a similar evolution of student participation in instructional feedback beginning with DIAD:

Grace helped me to see the ways in which students could involve themselves in instructional conversations through things like DIAD and lesson studies. Then, with Principal Sanders as our principal, I think that she really formalized and went in-depth with the power of instructional walk-throughs and the way that became a routine. It helped me see that, it is a routine that students could do.

Lesson Study

As DIAD broadened teacher perceptions of students as collaborators, Carla and Grace began to formulate ways to seize the opportunity to continue weaving students into new and different forms of professional development and adult-student collaborations. Grace recollects:

At one point Carla and I decided we should be more deliberate about ways of involving [students] in the work we were doing. And so, what I think we did, was just grab them and bring them into all different practices. That included mostly, at that time, lesson study and helping teachers come together to use the tool of the motivational framework by planning a lesson together that they believed would be highly motivating and culturally responsive, and it just made sense to have students here thinking this through with us.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Lesson Study is a collaborative lesson design process that involves a group of colleagues developing, watching, and critiquing lessons with involvement from a small group of peers. At Viewland, Carla and Grace helped teachers bring students in as collaborators in this process. Teachers adapted the process to fit their challenging schedules by bringing a lesson in the formative stages to a small group of colleagues and students. The team further developed the lesson, after which the group watched the lesson being taught by the teacher and a collaborating student.

As noted in school documents describing the lesson study protocol:

A major priority before beginning this process is to create a safe and trusting team and environment. This will allow for more authentic and in-depth discussion around effective teaching practices. While vulnerability may be a part of the process, the supportive team members provide a safety net for success.

After the lesson is taught and observed, the team would then meet again at the end of the day to discuss the lesson and set instructional goals related to it and to, “Identify one problem or issue of practice that the team wishes to consider more deeply.” Students at Viewland participated in formal lesson studies with math teachers on topics such as stereotype threat, and with language arts teachers on topics such as providing respectful feedback to students on their narrative writing.

The lesson study on stereotype threat was an idea formulated by a group of math teachers. The goal was to design a lesson that would be effective in communicating the idea behind stereotype threat that would be taught by adult-student teams in advisory period prior to a math testing cycle. These teachers recruited several students, collaboratively researched stereotype threat, chose relevant resources, designed a lesson and co-taught the lesson to all 10th grade students who were about to participate in a standardized state-wide testing cycle.

Similarly, a group of language arts teachers spent time within their critical friends’ group pondering how best to provide constructive feedback to their students about their writing. This group of teachers decided to ask some students. Through informal discussions both the adults and student in the group realized they had more to learn from each other regarding communicating with each other around classwork and feedback. The adults gained ideas about how to give respectful feedback to students and the students gained knowledge about the best way to approach teachers when advocating for themselves. The group felt that all students would benefit from these skills, so they designed a lesson to be co-taught to all 9th grade students regarding respectful feedback and how to best advocate for oneself at school. The resulting lesson involved adult-student role plays and other examples of actual situations.

Student Instructional Council and a New Intermediary Organizational Partnership

After experimenting with including students in lesson studies, Carla found she wanted to answer teacher requests for individual feedback. In 2011, she talked about the reasons she started SIC saying:

One of the ongoing wishes that teachers had for DIAD is that they saw the value it had for the community as an engagement tool and for us to get a generic snapshot of instruction at the school but they felt on the one hand that they had put themselves out there and been observed but then they didn't get direct feedback...that is the thing with DIAD, if you try to give people direct feedback anonymity cannot be maintained. And it is tricky too because these are raw notes that people are taking. They are not always helpful or give examples that would help teachers to understand. That is when I started thinking about Student Instructional Council. I thought students could give teachers these examples.

Carla had already been including students in weekly administrative rounds with other adults at the school and thought she might try doing rounds with a group of students. She noted that:

Over the years, I knew there were many students who were very interested, who did DIAD every time they could. Who did lesson study any time they could. They were a group of students who reported being very engaged by this work. So I put it out in a variety of ways. I publicized...I framed it as a chance to engage in meaningful instructional dialogue with students and adults about a topic that impacts [their] lives in a very direct way.

To recruit these students Carla sent emails out to all staff, requesting recommendations for diverse participants, and non-traditional student leaders. Additionally, she posted flyers and made daily announcements. For the first meeting she estimated 60 students showed up and expressed interest.

Carla describes the students who participated in the early SIC club as, "those who, at least if they were not already academically achieving they could flip on a switch and be achieving without much effort." However, she also notes that, "There are some students who participate who are not in that category for sure." While Carla may view the students who participate as more of an academically homogeneous group, teachers at Viewland seemed to

view the students on SIC as a diverse group academically. One teacher noted that she believed the group of students was:

Taking on leadership roles that are new for them. And many of them...were actually students who had had problems with their own attendance, and so they were trying to turn that around and be that other student, be the encouraging student.

Another teacher used what he considered a student's lack of academic success as a reason that particular student should *not* participate in giving teachers feedback saying, "this student is one of the biggest zeros there is here, and for him to provide feedback to teachers is just plain ludicrous."

In order to communicate the purpose of SIC to teachers and the process by which students would do rounds, Carla sent the faculty an email. In her email, she asked teachers to tell her if this would be something they may have discomfort with. She reported that she did not hear back from any teachers expressing concern. She also noted the creation of the SIC during a staff meeting, noting that the group of students would be available to provide teachers with instructional feedback upon request.

The students who served on SIC and later who enrolled in the Introduction to Teaching course were trained in providing instructional feedback. This feedback came in the form of what Carla called an, "instructional memo." Carla describes the way she facilitated the group training on letter writing by saying:

I have emphasized with students when they write that being as kind of camera-like in their data, focusing on observable data. Providing a snapshot and being low inference kind of notes and on a strategy of the sandwich of kind of compliments and push and then complements with teachers.

The students learned about the four "R" language that was shared by the school faculty as portrayed in Figure 8. They then practiced rounds with adult support using the same observation

protocol administrators used for learning walks. They also participated in a mini-lesson about different models of instruction.

Before engaging in classroom observations, students decided which classrooms to visit, and who would write instructional memos to which teacher. Speaking about the process Carla says, “Either accompanied by me, or by themselves, students visit four classrooms for ten minutes each. When appropriate, they interview students in the room about their learning.”

Figure 9 is the protocol students use for the entire process.

HOW WE DO ROUNDS IN STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL COUNCIL

Purpose Statement:

This is a protocol for high school students visiting classrooms in a brief period of time, in order to give feedback to teachers. This protocol is not to be used as an evaluation of teachers or an in-depth conversation about a single attribute of skillful practice.

1. Review procedures for instructional rounds: 10 minutes
 - 1) Review purposes/procedures
 - 2) Create schedule of classes to be seen
 - 3) Assign roles
 - 4) 10 minutes per classroom, 5 minutes in hallway—3 classrooms in 45 minutes

2. Establish roles:
 - 1) Timekeeper
 - 2) Leader in/leader out/facilitator
 - 3) Collector/tallier of data from sheets
 - 4) Positive feedback to teacher observed

3. Visit classrooms. Protocol/etiquette for being in classrooms:
 - 1) Identify a leader
 - 2) Follow that leader in and out of the room (the leader decides when to go)
 - 3) Observers should integrate fully into the classroom
 - 4) Interact with students openly, inquisitively, and respectfully
 - 5) Identify yourselves (nametags or introductions where unobtrusive)
 - 6) Don't write notes while in the room—save note-taking for hallway

4. Hallway protocol: Purpose is to reflect on the range of practice
 - 1) one minute for writing/think time
 - 2) five minutes discussion—one round of wows, one round of wonders—starts with wows.
 - 3) one minute transition

5. Writing time—begin letters to teachers. If possible, done in company of fellow observers so writer can ask clarifying questions, get feedback on draft, etc.

6. Finished drafts of letters are due no later than the evening of the rounds. Email them to Ms.

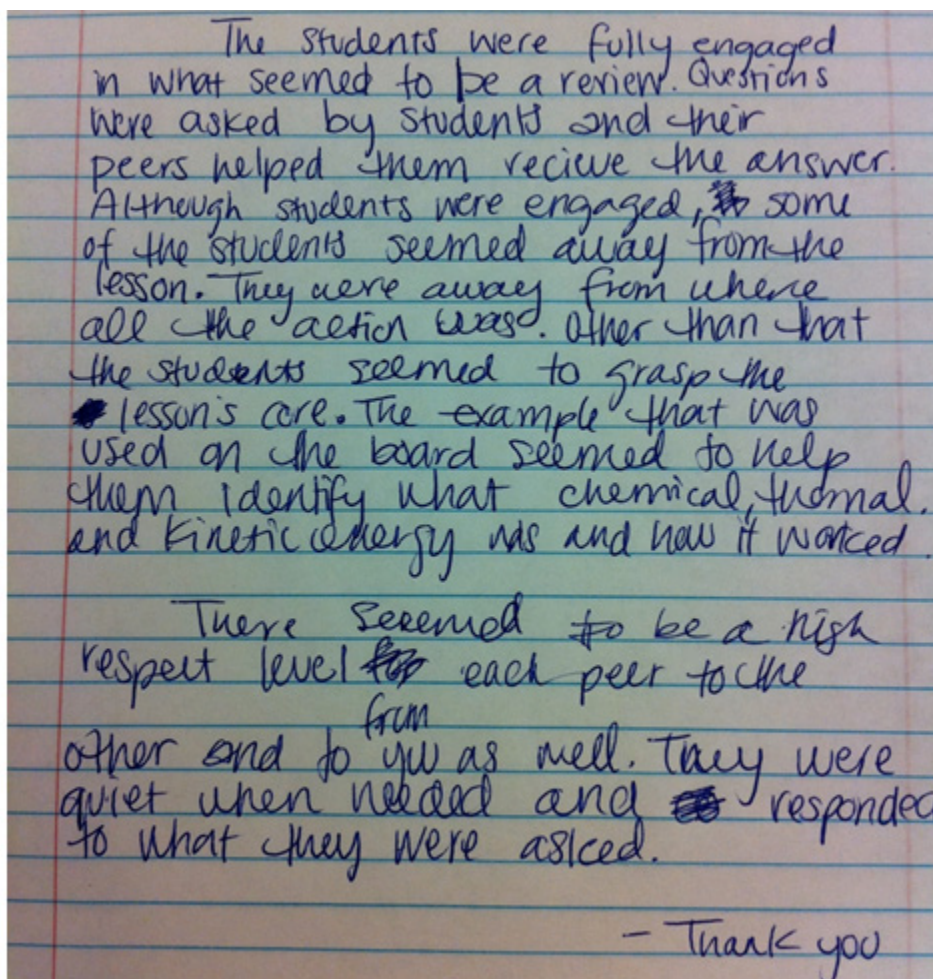
Figure 9. Student instructional council classroom visit protocol.

After completing rounds students gather and debrief about the visits using a “Wows and Wonders” protocol where they collectively create a list of “wows,” or complimentary feedback, and a list of “wonders,” or constructive feedback that might push the teacher to consider another point of view or instructional alternative. Once the team has compiled their list of these two types of feedback, they begin writing their letters, which are due to Carla by that evening. Carla

then passes the letters on to teachers with no student names on the letter. Both students and Carla feel that this anonymity is important for, as she says:

Students raised the concern to me early on and it is one thing I continue to safeguard for them, their anonymity in the process so that in case something is said or someone is hurt and festering on that it doesn't bounce back on a student...I would hate to have my optimism in the staff be the thing that bites us later.

In interviews, students reflected on their training about providing respectful and helpful feedback with many students mentioning the “sandwich” model in which they provide a compliment (wow), a push (wonder) and then another positive comment. Figure 10 is an example of a letter students provided to one teacher after a visit.



The students were fully engaged in what seemed to be a review. Questions were asked by students and their peers helped them receive the answer. Although students were engaged, some of the students seemed away from the lesson. They were away from where all the action was. Other than that the students seemed to grasp the lesson's core. The example that was used on the board seemed to help them identify what chemical, thermal, and kinetic energy was and how it worked.

There seemed to be a high respect level for each peer to the other and to you as well. They were quiet when needed and responded to what they were asked.

- Thank you

Figure 10. Student instructional council instructional memo.

Students sitting on a student panel for a group of university graduate students demonstrated their mastery of their feedback expertise as they spoke of the best ways to provide teachers feedback noting that it should be specific and provide examples for the teachers.

Once SIC became the Introduction to Teaching course, Lauren was able to offer students additional training in a more sustained fashion. Carla describes Lauren's class as offering students new ways to grow their social and political capital by setting up meetings and connections with a wide range of people in the city such as the city attorney and other individuals from city government. In this way Carla says her course helped students, "get a sense of ways to talk to power and ways to engage with powerful people and organizations. Lauren's class provides them a window into another sphere of influence than they are used to."

Perhaps one of the biggest changes to SIC, as it became Introduction to Teaching, was the addition of the mentor role in which the students served. Each student in the new course received a mentee at the school. The mentee assigned to them was a student who had several unexcused absences and who was considered at risk for truancy. Lauren provided guidance on mentoring based on her experience running her truancy prevention program at the district level. The students participating in the course then also received recognition and attention at the school as mentors. Much of this recognition came in the form of student presentations at staff meetings.

Lauren describes one of these presentations saying:

It was actually my students that said, look, we want to be valued, we want to be heard. And I went to Mrs. Sanders, and she immediately said have them present at a staff meeting. And that's exactly what we did. The kids said, 'We want to be helpful to you teachers. So please let us know what we can do to make—we're all in this together, and we want you to understand that our goal is to help these students. So we're here to help you.' Then there was an exchange between the students and the teachers which is what needs to happen. I mean, you can't do this in isolation.

However, even with the structure of the course and the added communication about student roles in the class, Lauren felt there could be more communication. She felt that other students most likely didn't know about the class unless they had a friend in it. Further, she felt that her capacity was limited in communicating with the staff about Introduction to Teaching student activities because as she says:

I'm not paid for any of this, so I am very careful about my time. The staff meetings are at 3 o'clock. I teach at 8:00, and I'm not going to necessarily always go back there because, again, it's just too much. I'm already spending a tremendous amount of time, and that's my choice, but I just feel like I can't do everything. So having said that though, if this was a position that was paid, and part of the staff, which is the hope and the future, I think that there could be more communication with the teachers on an ongoing basis. Maybe even you could survey them and see how this is impacting their instruction, if it helps them at all. What does it do for them?

In Lauren's mind the volunteer nature of her role at Viewland inhibited her ability or desire to build on the activities her students facilitate by helping to serve as a bridge in communication between students and teachers. She further notes that due to the nature of her position at the school she resisted delving into issues concerning teachers because she says:

I don't feel like I'm in a position to be an authority to make decisions or whatever, I need Carla for that, and she just doesn't have the capacity. So I kind of stepped away from it because I don't want to step on toes. I don't know enough about the politics there, nor do I really want to. So I just haven't even gone there.

The issues of responsibility in relation to funding are echoed in Grace's comments when she notes, "Unless somebody is being paid a salary to do something specific, it's very difficult to get a real commitment."

Project Vetting

Once Student Instructional Council was established and teachers were somewhat aware of its existence, another idea of how to work with students around instructional feedback surfaced. Initially one of the assistant principals at Viewland asked Carla if she could talk to the

students about a long-term project for the school so that she could get their feedback.

Subsequently, a teacher, Allison, asked the same thing. Carla describes project vetting as “the idea of [teachers] using a tuning protocol to get a group of students to provide feedback on a project or group of lessons.” In describing her motivation for asking to vet a project with students Allison says:

I had already vetted the project with adults so I figured, “Let’s see what the kids have to say.” Most of those kids had done the project in my class as freshmen so I thought they might have some ideas about things we could do differently.

The process involved Allison bringing a packet for the students that included a project overview, an entry document and the final project rubric. She described the how the process unfolded saying:

It is a set amount of time for each activity where I tell them what it is for five minutes and then there are questions for five minutes. And then I literally pull away from the table—the presenter pulls away from the table. They have a discussion about wows and wonders—and I take notes. Then I rejoin the group and talk about what I gained from it, like this was a really good idea. I’m going to try that etc. Then it is a debrief process.

After vetting a project with the students, Allison reported out about her experience during a staff meeting and encouraged other teachers to also vet projects with the students. Allison also, at the urging of Carla, composed and sent an email communication to the faculty at Viewland as a kind of public service announcement of sorts reporting that she had vetted a project with students in the Introduction to Teaching class and encouraged them to do the same.

Grace noticed similar teacher communications at meetings and in critical friends groups.

In fact, she felt there were many more instances of adult-student collaboration happening at Viewland as a result of a word of mouth effect. She says:

What happened was, almost always there would be a teacher who was impacted by something students did or said. There were a lot of people who were taking risks with their practice who were pretty visible in certain ways. And they would

share. They would do public testimonials at staff meetings and say, “You should try this.” They even had their own system so that they didn’t have to rely on Carla or even the students on instructional council. They would set up their own opportunities, give invitations to students to come to their classrooms to think through a project, that kind of thing. That’s how it got messaged. It was informal but deliberate.

In a summary description of the progression of the way adult-student collaborations unfolded at Viewland Grace says:

It went from sort of chaotic to building intrigue from faculty about student involvement, and then experimentation pulling the students in, then a development of certain kinds of systems that seemed to fit well with the school, like students leading DIAD, students leading instruction rounds or learning walk-throughs, students getting external recognition, and then eventually this course where students really began to learn how to write to teachers thoughtfully, how to respond to teachers who were interested in vetting their projects, and most of that came out of DIAD because with DIAD teachers started wanting individual feedback, not just whole-school feedback... students were always either on the landscape or involved in a central way, other people had no choice but to notice.

Thus in many ways, project vetting grew out of other adult-student collaborations including Student Instructional Council. In addition to student involvement with teachers at Viewland, Grace also notes that she would bring students into university classes she taught on site at Viewland saying:

Whenever I would have a class or whatever there, students would be a part, the high school students would be a part of our learning by showing us around or participating in a lesson study with a graduate students and so forth.

The professional learning strategies as they grew at Viewland incorporate many of the ideals of professional development supported in the literature such as being ongoing, based in authentic contexts (Little, 1999; Hawley & Valli, 1999) school-wide, supported by leadership, and including student feedback (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Further, many of the practices, such as lesson study and project vetting, hold true to Mitra’s (2007) notion that leadership would be more successful in implementing professional development that includes

students if it accepts variation of the practices as teachers make it their own given changing comfort levels. Similarly, the adult-student partnerships at Viewland land on the upper levels of Mitra's pyramid of student voice (Mitra, 2004) with students building capacity for leadership and in the "Active, Dialogic, and Community" realms of Lodge's Approaches to student involvement (Lodge, 2005). Further, students and adults at Viewland engage in many of Fielding's (2012) six categories of focused interactions such as students as co-enquirers, active respondents, knowledge creators and joint authors. Next, to view the various ways adults and students interact at Viewland I will present a vignette of a DIAD cycle.

A Vignette of a Data-in-a-Day Cycle

In practice, DIAD occurs over the course of three days and requires various levels of participation by most faculty, administrators, and students in the school as well as a variety of people from the community. DIAD begins with scheduling and planning of the event by a core team of leaders at the school. The event begins with an evening orientation occurring the night before the DIAD event, then classroom visits and the subsequent debrief occur throughout the following day. Finally, a presentation of the data gathered by DIAD participants occurs roughly one day after the event during a staff meeting. The act of observing classrooms can serve as a professional learning opportunity for the faculty members who participate on the DIAD teams, as well as a growth opportunity for student participants. Participating in DIAD provides additional insight into motivational conditions of learning, as well as providing opportunities for participants to observe colleagues and peers engaging in acts of teaching and learning. Additionally, DIAD can provide parents and community members a first-hand glimpse into school instructional practice which can be important given the ways schools are often self-contained and those who do not work in schools are rarely afforded entry other than by invitation

on back to school night or for intervention issues. Below, Table 6 details some of the various ways different groups of individuals participate in a DIAD event.

Table 6

Data-In-A-Day Participation

DIAD Task	Students	Teachers	Intermediary Organization	Administrators	Parents	Other Community Members
Planning	Students who are members of SIC or in Intro to teaching class participate with leadership team to plan event including orientation agenda.	Several teacher leaders volunteer to participate in planning the event i.e. scheduling, handouts, ordering food.	Consult with leadership team on schedule. Design the orientation and debrief sessions.	Academic Dean serves as lead team coordinator and aids in recruiting student participants, parent and community members and agenda construction.	Sign permission slip for students who are participating so that they can miss class.	
Teaching/ Facilitating	Student leaders facilitate portions of the orientation and debrief sessions.	All teachers at the school volunteer to open their classrooms to visiting teams except those who “opt out” by putting a sign on their door asking not to be visited.	Facilitate orientation and debrief. (This role changed over time as the school took more ownership of DIAD. It became co-facilitation and finally to a passive role.)	Principal provides a brief welcome at orientation. Academic Dean serves as co-facilitator with Grace and eventually as a co-facilitator with students.	Attend orientation dinner.	Attend orientation dinner.

DIAD Task	Students	Teachers	Intermediary Organization	Administrators	Parents	Other Community Members
Observing	Serve as members of observation teams. Eventually serve as guides for teams.	Teachers who are participating as observers (and not teaching) participate as members of a team.	Academic Dean waits in homeroom to answer questions any team may have throughout the course of the observations.	Academic Dean waits in homeroom to answer questions any team may have throughout the course of the observations. Principal and Assistant Principals serve as members of teams.	Serve as members of observation teams.	Serve as members of observation teams.
Debriefing	Participate in creating a list of wow's and wonders with other team members who were looking for the same "R." Complete survey for DIAD observers.	Participate in creating a list of wow's and wonders with other team members who were looking for the same "R." If they observed, complete survey for DIAD observers.	Facilitate or co-facilitate session.	Academic Dean facilitates or co-facilitate session. Other administrators debrief with team members. If they observed, complete survey for DIAD observers.	Participate in creating a list of wow's and wonders with other team members who were looking for the same "R." Complete survey for DIAD observers.	Participate in creating a list of wow's and wonders with other team members who were looking for the same "R." Complete survey for DIAD observers.
Presenting Data	Present data to staff with Academic Dean.	Attend staff meeting to learn about data generated from DIAD. Respond to data through survey administered at conclusion of meeting.	Initially co-presented with Academic Dean. Later participates in passive role.	Academic Dean co-presents data with students. Principal provides support in staff meeting.		

DIAD is a particularly good activity to use to examine the types of participation required by the parties involved, due to the extensive nature of the event and the various people it includes. Also, it can serve as a window into the type of participation other practices demand given that DIAD,

in many ways, served to foster a policy of transparency at Viewland that made other practices possible. Further, the other practices involving adult-student collaborations at Viewland involve a similar planning, observation, and debriefing or reflection cycle with the possible exception of SIC classroom visits and project vetting in which either the students or the teacher do the planning without the other.

The following excerpt from my observation notes provides an example of the various ways students and adults interact throughout the various stages of a DIAD cycle. I chose specific sections from each of the main stages of the process including orientation, observation, debrief, and data presentation, in order to provide a glimpse into all aspects of the process. This is important because each process requires different participation on behalf of each individual or group. The vignette will serve to address the research sub-question regarding what forms of participation the practices demand of adults and students, as well as illustrating the various ways intermediary organizational partners and school administrators interact throughout the process to reinforce organizational norms around adult-student partnerships. Further, portions of the vignette illustrate how adults receive and experience feedback, participation in these processes vary, and leadership, with the support of intermediary organizational partners, can both accept and respond to these variations.

Orientation: Day 1

It is April 2011 and it is Viewland's ninth DIAD cycle. In the room, there are roughly 25 people including a homework center resource person, three teachers, three adults from local community organizations, five student leaders, three students who are new to DIAD, one Viewland alumni, two parents, Grace, Carla, and one of the Assistant Principals. Carla provides a short overview of the DIAD process letting people know that the purpose is not evaluative. The Assistant Principal gives a welcome, thanking the volunteers for what he described as the "gift" of their insights. Carla introduces Grace and discusses Grace's work around motivation and learning. She discusses the way the data will be shared with the staff and highlights that students present the data, noting that the level of engagement of staff during these meetings is high. Carla also notes that there will be many more people participating the following day, but many of them

are district personnel or others who have done the process before and are familiar with it so they did not need to attend the orientation session. Grace directs the group to do a “turn and talk” about what people are most excited about and most apprehensive about. There are two students and one parent at my table. One student says that he is excited to be the one observing in the DIAD event because he always saw students come through his classroom from the SIC, but he thought it was an evaluative thing.

Two student leaders from the Student Instructional Council review the shared language the school uses based in motivational theory and discuss the four “R’s.” One student notes that of all the “R’s” Results is the hardest one to see during short classroom visits and provides examples of what one might look for as an example of this. Another student provides examples of how to take notes, what to note, when it is appropriate to speak to students and what you might ask them. Further, they explain that if a teacher does not want to have visitors, they will have a note on their door.

Next the student leaders have people number off to indicate that they are a Relationships, Relevance, Rigor, or Results focused person. Carla informs the group that they will practice observing by watching a video of another teacher teaching a math lesson. Each person is to take notes that relate to the “R” which they were assigned. The group watches the video and takes notes. When the video is done each table discusses what they saw that related to their “R.” Justin, a student at my table, was focused on “Results.” He noted that it didn’t appear that all students were being called on equally.

Justin: How do we know everyone got it? The teacher was calling on the same students over and over again. Sometimes I just like to say it out loud, what I think it means, so I know that what I have in my head isn’t wrong or taking me down the wrong track.

Another student, Alicia, was focused on relationships.

Alicia: The kids seemed to respect the teacher. They were not being purposefully disruptive. But they did look bored. The teacher was just talking, talking, talking. I wouldn’t want to raise my hand or talk in that class because she seemed like she might just cut you off and keep going.

Justin: Yeah and those kids, that are the quiet ones, are the ones you need to check on the most. Some kids sit up front and are into it but then there are the ones in back and they are probably like, “What is going on and when is this over!”

To debrief the practice run, one of the student leaders asks someone from each group to volunteer something they talked about that relates to one or each of the four “R’s.” Another student leader acts as a scribe and records responses on the white board. Justin, the student from my table speaks for our group. He reiterates his comments from earlier and also adds:

Justin: Even though it wasn’t my “R” to look for I wrote some other stuff down. I just think that there are teachers who put students in groups randomly because group work is big at this school. I wonder how much thought they put into the groups because

sometimes the chemistry can be bad and it can be a bad experience. It might be good if they were open to hearing student opinions about that.

The orientation session provides an example of the type of preparation and scaffolding provided for both adult and student participants in order for them to engage in this type of instructional feedback (Ruddock & Flutter, 2000). The training also appears to clarify the purpose of the DIAD process for one student who now understands that as an observer the goal is not to evaluate, a piece that was not apparent to him before. The orientation further reveals the way students from the Student Instructional Council take lead roles in the design and facilitation of these processes. Their performance also demonstrates their ability and competency in the use of instructional language. Further, the ready participation of students new to the process, to engage in the instructional feedback discussion, demonstrates their willingness and ability to do so. The training, in this sense, appears to encourage students to speak and facilitates the skills of dialogue to do so (Fielding, 2001). Finally, the structure of the DIAD event abides by Mitra's (2007) guidelines of allowing teachers to opt in (or out) as their comfort level increases.

Classroom Observations: Day 2

The day of the DIAD event, there are roughly 20 adults and 8 students who arrive early in the morning. Two student leaders and Carla convene the group with a short welcome and review of the process. Principal Sanders gives a brief welcome and thanks volunteers for coming to provide their insights to instructional practice and notes the influence Grace has had in bringing these practices to the school.

Principal Sanders: I had a group of principals here yesterday for a principal learning community meeting. Grace suggested we spend our time shadowing special education and English language learning students. It was a great experience and I think they all appreciated it. Professor Walker has worked with us to develop a shared language for good instructional practice and also helped bring students as expert observers into classrooms with the Student Instructional Council. It is something we did not have before and it has been successful.

A list of names is on the white board dividing the participants into small groups of four, plus one student leader who will serve as a guide. My team has four adults and two students (a district

administrator, another graduate student, a school teacher, a student, myself, and a student leader). We receive our packets which include a schedule of the classes to visit as well as note taking paper specific to the four “R’s.” We quickly decide who will focus on which “R” and set out on our classroom visitations. Once in the hallway, on our way to our first classroom, our student guide, Kyle, asks if there is something we would like to know about Viewland. The university student on our team notes that he is surprised that the school is “really clean.” Kyle replies:

Kyle: Most kids here respect the school.

Upon entering the classroom the adults hang in the back of the classroom quietly. Monique, the other student on the team, moves throughout the classroom looking over student’s shoulders at their work and greeting them quietly. Kyle begins by greeting the teacher and then kneels to talk softly with a student. He works his way around the room speaking quietly with five students. Many of the students he talks with are quiet or appear to be disengaged with the classroom activity.

After we visit our first classroom, Kyle facilitates a debrief with our group in the hallway asking us each to share a wow or a wonder from our observation. The administrator wonders how group work is graded in the classroom so that the students feel it is fair. Kyle shares some of his insights from being a student at Viewland.

Kyle: When we are in a group we are usually assigned different roles and we have to work it out. We all know each other pretty well because we are in academies, so we have classes with each other all the time. We all have to learn about how to get along and cope with a group. Sometimes that is a positive or a negative thing academically for myself.

The Viewland teacher in our group asks Kyle a question.

Teacher: What do you see when you are observing in that classroom?

Kyle: I see that there is a lot of group work and I wonder if some of the students are challenged by the lack of direct instruction. Most of the students looked comfortable but there was one group who was not talking to each other at all. I wondered if they needed help working together.

In these portions of DIAD, there are several indicators that reflect a supportive leadership culture as well as adequate student preparation. The welcome comments provided by Principal Sanders, and the Assistant Principal the evening before, display a level of support of this practice and others initiated by Grace as well as an acknowledgement of her expertise in some senses. As Principal Sanders mentioned in her interview, she had to have some level of trust to know her

students would be well prepared to engage with adults in instructional conversations. Kyle depicts this preparation in his ability to interact with the adults on the team and the teacher in the classroom. He deftly addresses one of the adult's apparent surprise at the level of cleanliness of the school. He also shows appropriate respect to the classroom teacher in the manner in which he greets the teachers and asks permission to speak with students. Kyle's interactions within the classroom and in the hallway with the group later, reveal considerable confidence in talking about instruction with students, facilitating these discussions with adults as well as sharing his own insights. Further, Monique's actions support the notion that students have some level of comfort in participating in an observational role as well as demonstrating a respectful demeanor.

Debrief: Day 2

Upon returning to the meeting room a student leader directs each group to divide up into which "R" they were focusing on and form new "R" groups at a different table. Thus I joined with all the individuals from other teams who were focusing on "Respect." At my table there are three adults and three students. Another student facilitator gives clarification on how to record wows and wonders on poster paper. Additionally, individuals at each table volunteer to serve in one of four different roles including "Process Observer" to make sure everyone is being heard, a "Scribe" to transcribe comments on the poster, a "Reporter" who will speak for the group, and a "Mathematician" who will tally the numbers for the likert scale and convert it into an average. Students at my table volunteer to serve in two of the roles.

At our table we each begin discussing what we observed. A student in the group reports that when she asked a student in class about what he was working on he told her it was something he was glad to do because his teacher had told them about another student who used the same project in a college portfolio. A wow is recorded as, "Project products are important portfolio pieces for college and real life work." A wonder is, "What can teachers do to hold all students accountable (even the few who are disengaged) and give them appropriate support?"

One of the more quiet students in our group noted that she saw how the teacher in one class seemed to be able to relate to a lot of different students as they worked through a difficult problem. She explained that she noticed certain students she knew from other classes were more willing to participate and engage in this class. The administrator serving as the scribe in our group had difficulty understanding what the student meant and how to record it on the poster paper. In his attempts to interpret her comments she became increasingly shy and unnerved. Another student stepped in to provide clarification. The first student agreed with the way the second student interpreted her comments, and the adult scribe recorded the comment as a wow

saying, “Diverse ways of building and maintaining relationships contributing to rigor and risk taking.”

Two other student generated comments on our chart were, “What are the benefits for the students learning from the purpose of the project?—How is this important for the long-term and the short-term?” and “How do student groups negotiate challenges during collaboration and how does the teacher receive feedback that might inform instruction?”

Throughout the discussion at the table, the frequency with which students and adults speak is roughly equal denoting confidence on the students part and respectful communication by all. At one point in the process, the process observers turned to the quieter student and solicited her comments, revealing how establishing roles such as this can be beneficial in maintaining dialogic equity. The student facilitators also demonstrate an ability to implement student-driven process design, for, as I discovered in my previous interviews with Grace and Carla, students had developed the agenda for the event as well as the pacing of specific activities. Students at my table demonstrate competency in using instructional language and in the task of providing instructional feedback that is student driven. Additionally, the students at the table reveal a unique ability to translate for each other in various ways, so that adults do not misinterpret student comments. Finally, the fact that three students throughout the larger group choose the role of “reporter” to report their group’s findings to a room full of adults, many of whom they do not know, suggests some level of confidence.

Presentation: Day 3

It is Wednesday which is an early release day for students. It is also a staff meeting day for the adults at Viewland. The agenda for this meeting includes 10 minutes for students to present the results from the DIAD observations the prior day. All administrators are present as well as Grace. The students who had volunteered to stay after school to present the findings were unable to come as Carla says, “Due to an orchestra performance and a family emergency.” Thus, Carla says she will present the data and the notes that the students had highlighted. The posters from the debrief session are hanging in the room. Carla reads a few of the comments from the DIAD surveys. Then she writes the rubric results from this DIAD event next to the results from the last DIAD in November. The numbers have increased in every

category except for the category of “Relevance” which remained the same. A teacher raises his hand.

Teacher 1(Dan): This is not real data. This is people putting feelings into numbers and calling it data. They are untrained and we are putting numbers to it. It just seems squishy to me. This is not data, we cannot call it that. I’m just saying, because we feel like that but we might not want to stand up and say it because we think we might lose our job.

Carla: Careful about saying “we” because who is that exactly?

Teacher 2 (a participant observer in this DIAD): There is a training people do the night before and it is pretty extensive. So they are not untrained. They understand all the R’s they know it is a snapshot of what is going on. They do have some expectation of what they will see.

Carla: There is some value of having different people from our community come visit our school and give feedback about what they see.

Grace: It was not my idea to put numbers to the data. But the idea of data is all over the map anyway. For a long time it was said that teachers’ opinions didn’t matter because they were too squishy. Some of this feedback is from teachers at your school, so it is one way to reclaim data. This says that teacher, student, and community member’s opinions matter. I would be the first to stand up if someone said teacher opinions don’t matter.

Teacher 1(Dan): I find DIAD valuable, but the debrief is not valuable. I can’t remember what was on the posters from last year. I think it is good PR, but maybe it should be us that does it. We should do it as teachers.

Teacher 3: I did do it as a teacher. As a new teacher. And I found it relevant and recommend that everyone does it. Having transparency is very important.

There are murmurs of “here here” from around the room.

Principal Sanders: What would good data look like to you? Can’t we just look at it as another piece of data? If I send this around as an email that doesn’t work either. I don’t think a few minutes of your time is too much.

Carla: We had folks come volunteer to spend time at our school, so we should find 20 minutes to value their opinion.

Teacher 4: Think of it as an acknowledgement, the wows, I mean how often do you get to have people come in and give you acknowledgement about your job or help you find some growth points so you can say, “I’m going to get better at this.” It does have uses. I don’t understand the purpose of this conversation.

Teacher 1 (Dan): I guess I want to know how we are going to go forward with this to make it valuable. I want more clearly defined results. It seems kind of vague.

Carla: If you want more specific feedback, let me know and I can come observe you with the Student Instructional Council. I hear you want the dots connected. We can come and give you specific feedback in an instructional memo. I would like to talk more with you about this outside the meeting. Maybe we can touch base afterwards.

In order to move the meeting forward Carla instructs everyone to take a marker and quietly roam around the room reading the comments putting asterisks next to the comments that resonate with them. On the poster that I compiled with the students and adults, the comments with the most asterisks next to them are the comments that were driven by or generated by student participants at the table.

This portion of DIAD provides an illustration of several aspects of youth-adult collaborations, reactions to co-created or student generated feedback, and the importance of school leadership in such practices. First, at this point in Viewland's development of student participation in feedback processes, students were participating in strictly voluntary capacities through one-time participation in DIAD or through Student Instructional Council as a club. This may have contributed to the lack of student attendance for this particular staff meeting and data presentation. This in turn, may have led to the dissenting comments of Dan. As Mitra (2008) has noted, student presence at staff meetings and professional development activities often improves productivity and reduces the outright hostility or apathy of resistant teachers. This idea is discussed by another teacher in an interview conducted directly after the staff meeting when he says:

I think in the past the reaction has been very positive. I think the conversation that happened today would not have happened if...I mean, Dan is not going to stand up and say 'I think this is a waste of time' if students are in the room or are sitting there giving feedback. I think that the times that, in my memory, when students have shared or have debriefed with us, then that, you know, in a sense that is a component of DIAD that is the key or a key component. That is one of the key communities that we are trying to engage in this is students.

While Dan's comments in the staff meeting make apparent that there are teachers at Viewland who are resistant to aspects of the culture of transparency the leadership at the school is supporting, in partnership with Grace, this interaction leaves us unclear about which aspect of transparency is so unsettling for him. In a later interview with Dan (2013) he noted that he valued student feedback saying, "It is useful, as long as you're getting real feedback. There is usually some stuff from those kids in the middle that they tell you that can be really useful." However, he still notes a disdain for the DIAD process, although ambiguously, by saying:

It's retarded. I mean, I don't know why we still do it. You have some uninformed people kind of walk through your room and look around for a couple of minutes, and then draw opinions on it which I think is ridiculous....I could see why we would do it a couple of times in the beginning. In the beginning I said, O.K. it's an interesting idea or whatever. But they keep doing it over and over and I am not sure why it is still going on.

In this piece of the vignette we can glimpse the larger staff's perception of DIAD in the way several teachers speak in defense of the process. As one teacher notes in a 2011 interview after this meeting, "I think there are a variety of ways teachers receive student feedback." This sentiment is reiterated by one teacher (2013) in reflecting on DIAD feedback as she notes:

I took ownership of the data in terms of our school...I know that administration ties those areas to professional development. So I'm excited about what might come next because I know those are places we have to grow. I take it as a collective applause for all of the work we have done and an acknowledgement that we can and should grow with our students.

Further, we can also view the leadership's support for DIAD, and maybe for Grace, in Principal Sanders' and Carla's comments justifying its importance.

Another important factor to consider in thinking about how this interaction played out is the considerable empathy school leadership, including Carla and Principal Sanders, have for teachers who are opening their doors to DIAD observers. Carla says:

We are so trained to discount youth. It is a cliché but it is so automatic and then too, I think we heard this in the meeting when there was some pushback on DIAD. When you think about the incredible complexity of the task of teaching and you think about all that you have to learn to stay afloat in that task, let alone to excel in that task, it is understandably emotionally a little galling and hard to imagine to have someone outside that experience, or that you perceive to be outside that experience to come into it. However, I think that, it is easy to get blinders to who is really in that experience with us because certainly students are in that experience with us in very real ways.

Thus, while Dan may represent a resistant perspective, his perspective is not discounted, but rather taken into account by Carla.

The Demands of Participation of Adults and Students in Student-Adult Collaborations at Viewland

In a summary of the evolution of Viewland's progression towards student generated instructional feedback, Carla notes in a conference presentation the following:

1. Partnership with Professor Grace Walker.
2. Professional learning anchored in ideas around motivation and Project-Based Learning.
3. Shared staff language around the 4 "R's": Relationships, Relevance, Rigor, and Results.
4. A focus on public, transparent practice (Data in a Day, Peer Observations, Learning Walks).
5. Teachers wanted individual feedback- (Student Instructional Council, Lesson Study, and Project Vetting.)

After an examination of how student-adult collaborations were created and evolved at Viewland, what they entail, and viewing a glimpse of how one such practice unfolds, we can now discuss the various types of participation such practices demand of both the adults and students at Viewland. Within these demands we can also address what barriers arose, and in what ways the overall partnership arrangement enabled participants, and the school as a whole, to address these barriers. For example, in some senses, for teachers and students, DIAD set up a demand for participation in being observed. This demand could be met only in the establishment of a safe environment which in turn could continue to breed a culture of trust and openness. For students,

participation initially demanded commitments of time, in both school day and post school schedule. This demand was somewhat alleviated with the establishment of the course structure. Yet given power dynamics, student participation in instructional feedback requires a certain level of confidence. In all these demands, the role of the intermediary partnership at Viewland was key in facilitating the ability of individuals and the organization to meet them.

Teacher Participation

It is important to note that one of the first practices implemented at Viewland, DIAD, asks for participation of virtually all students and teachers at the school in the possibility of being observed, not only the teachers and students who serve on the teams that observe classrooms. In this sense, DIAD could be one of the most influential components of establishing particular organizational or cultural norms around transparency. While teachers were allowed to “opt out” of classroom visits by posting a note on their door, the vast majority of teachers were open to the process, Grace says. She further notes that those that were resistant became “conspicuously visible.” Thus in some ways, professional/peer pressure may have contributed to pushing most, if not all, teachers to embrace the type of open door community at Viewland.

Participation of teachers throughout the school also came about by the influence of a team of teacher leaders there. In discussing how teachers in general, and at Viewland, come to change Grace says:

What I’ve seen, not just at Viewland but at other schools, is that the teachers come in towards the center. I always used to say how I think that schools have movers and shakers, but most of the teachers are in that middle ground, they’re mildly interested, but they’re oftentimes tired or bothered that there’s so much going on. And then there are a few people around the edges who are naysayers and who are really not interested in asking the good questions. What happens in a lot of schools that can’t leverage ideas is, all the attention goes to the naysayers. But in the work that I was doing with Viewland, all the attention was going to try to build a core team. And you know, that core team didn’t come together very easily. They were located in different parts of the school but they were influential,

and positive. It made it—it brought more people to the table from that center and maybe from just outside of that center.

In many ways we could view teachers in three categories regarding the extent to which they may participate or be ready to participate in adult-student collaborations; the progressive, who is open to student instructional collaboration and is ready to use student feedback to shape instruction; the teacher at the center, who is using student feedback as a basis for reflection; and the traditional teacher who believes that students' opinions can be important but that in many senses, you shouldn't tell a pilot how to fly a plane.

In reflecting on the establishment of the school-wide focus on public and transparent practice, Carla noted that by 2010, most teachers knew that being observed was an expectation and that:

All but a few teachers that I can think of are, I don't want to say comfortable with because I don't think anyone is ever comfortable with being observed at work. You kind of have a heightened sense of adrenalin. Especially with teaching because it is such a personal thing. All but a few teachers recognize the goodness of that kind of transparency. And the goodness of students taking part. I mean that is the thing, it is hard to discount the incredible investment that students have in their own education. And so denying them the chance to come and visit and give thoughts on what they think might be going on is hard to justify.

However, even though teachers seemed willing to open their classroom to students and other adults, the idea of how to receive feedback and what level of detail is appropriate or desirable within this feedback remained an issue. In this sense teachers required preparation as to what type of feedback they could expect to receive and how they might possibly interpret and use that feedback. As Carla notes, "there is no monolithic student voice" and she attempted to make clear to teachers engaging in collaborative practices that there is a danger in making assumptions that what some students say is representative of all students at Viewland. In this way she emphasized teacher participation in student-adult collaborations about the process as much as the product.

Student Participation: Barriers and Demands

When DIAD was first implemented students volunteered to participate. Teachers and fellow students may have recommended them but their participation was outside, or in addition to, their regular responsibilities as students or otherwise. While the establishment of Student Instructional Council provided better structure and organization for training for these students, the club designation of SIC did not provide much in the way of alleviating obstacles for participation. Much like teachers, students maintain very demanding schedules and for many these include afterschool activities or activities that may be ancillary to the traditional class schedule. SIC was one of these activities. Carla could identify several students who, while they reported a desire to participate, had to let SIC go due to competing extracurricular activities or other responsibilities from home or work. As noted previously, the issue of student participation in adult-student collaborations is important so as not to, “only raise the voice of privileged youth” (Mitra, 2008, p.13; Silva & Rubin, 2003).

While Carla noted that student interest in her first call for participants was high, the fact that students were required to provide a signed permission slip, indicating they could miss class occasionally to participate, weeded out many possible applicants. Eventually Carla was able to secure grant funding that she could use to pay students who took lead roles in DIAD planning, teaching, and facilitation which helped regulate student participation in these events. However, the establishment of the Introduction to Teaching course seemed to be the most influential factor in allowing students the allotted time to plan for and participate in adult-student collaborations.

Time commitments aside, participating in adult-student collaborations requires a specific, and sometimes demanding, skill set for students; a skill set that adults often doubt students maintain. As discussed previously, Carla took pride in the training she provided for students in

preparing them to engage in classroom observations and provide instructional feedback.

However, regardless of preparation, students would need some level of confidence in order to follow through with these activities given the innate power dynamics in schools between adults and students. Carla felt that students who are interested in this work usually have confidence and the training she provided them solidified this confidence. She says:

They are confident because we trained and did role playing. I will also say that kids that are drawn to a club where you are subverting a power paradigm between students and teachers are going to have some confidence.

In addition to confidence, students should be able to solicit the opinions of a variety of students in order to provide the most accurate feedback. In this aspect, student observers may excel over adults. As Carla says:

I do think they are exceptional in regarding the opinions of all students and at finding students that they don't normally talk to when they interview students in the classroom they seek out perspectives that are not their own and they do well at finding a variety of voices in that scenario.

Principal Sanders notes the student's ability to solicit other student's feedback saying:

When I walk through and I kneel down and say well, tell me what you're working on and tell me what's going on and all those kinds of things, they'll give me the stock answer. But it feels like they give the kids-- as I've been through there and I've been through a classroom, and I've asked a kid a question, and then I've watched as, intentionally, one of the kids went and asked the same kid a question, there was a different answer. -- All the time I was thinking yes, the kids are giving me this feedback and it's a wonderful thing. But when I was with the kids and they were giving them feedback, they were really telling the kids how they felt about lessons or the task that they were doing. So it was an eye-opener and it's a good thing.

Here Principal Sanders witnesses how the participation of both student observers and students being observed is somehow unique in that the student-to-student interaction appears to eliminate the power dynamic that may exist between students and adults and enables a different type of student participation.

How Intermediary Organization Partnerships Facilitated Participation of Adults and Students

In order to continue bringing people to the table Grace spent a great deal of time making feedback cycles “safe” for teachers and students so that people wouldn’t feel they needed to “run for cover.” She aimed to develop trust with the faculty in order for them to feel comfortable enough to take risks in their professional practice and to open their classroom to others. Additionally, the various ways Grace brought the university into Viewland, through graduate student and principal certification student participation in DIAD for example, highlighted teachers and students at Viewland as experts and as individuals others could learn from. Thus, teachers and students at Viewland could participate not only as examples to be observed, or as students themselves, but as teachers of university students in some senses.

If we are to examine DIAD alone, and the types of participation adults and students must engage in throughout we can see several different levels of participation as highlighted in Fielding’s work (2001 & 2012). For example the orientation session of DIAD requires that student and adult participants volunteer an evening of their time to engage in learning and practicing observation techniques together. During the DIAD event adults and students demonstrate the skills they practiced the night before in a type of “Co-enquiry” (Fielding, 2012). Throughout the debrief session adults and students create knowledge together and engage in dialogue requiring both listening and speaking together. As a result of this process they participate as “co-creators or joint authors” of knowledge in the feedback posters they will give to the school. Further, during the presentation portion of DIAD, when students present the data, we may view the possible attitudes and dispositions of the staff and students in how they regard each other. As both Carla and other teachers noted, student presentation of data solicits

engagement and respect by teachers. These sessions might denote the organizational norms at Viewland of the value in student feedback in the context of shared responsibility and suggest that there is some value to the feedback that is felt reciprocally. However another aspect of the adult-student collaborations at Viewland that remains unclear is what Fielding (2001) describes as the “action” or “the future.” In other words, what action is to be taken as a result of the feedback and who will be responsible? In some ways Student Instructional Council was a response to this question in the way that teachers wanted new ways of receiving individualized feedback, but then the question could be raised yet again regarding the next level of feedback. What becomes of it? These questions will be discussed further in the next chapters.

The role of Grace, the intermediary organizational partner, was integral in the construction of adult-student collaborations, as well as shaping the structure and process of the practices, and the shaping of the kinds of participation adults and students had in the practices. While not all teachers and students at Viewland actively participate in adult-student collaborations in that they have served as observers in DIAD, participated in a lesson study or project vetting, or participated in or been observed by student instructional council, they are more or less passive participants in the culture of transparency and shared responsibility for instructional improvement that many have attributed to practices like DIAD. All classrooms, teachers, and students participate in being observed and see teams of adults and students visit their classrooms together. Some see teams exclusively of students visit their classrooms. Some teachers receive individual student generated feedback from these visits or when requested regarding a specific curricular project. In many ways the adults and students participating in these more involved ways have had to learn how to give and how to receive feedback using shared instructional language. And while there may be some variation in the level of value

teachers attribute to each of these practices, for these study participants, student instructional feedback does matter and is important. The following chapter explores why, or how, student-adult collaborations and student instructional feedback are valuable for both teachers and students by addressing how these practices transform teacher and student beliefs about each other and instruction, and how they may shape or change instruction itself.

Chapter 5

Effects of Adult-Student Collaborations on Teacher and Student Beliefs and Instructional Interactions

Chapter 4 focused on how adult-student collaborations were established and how they evolved at Viewland through the partnership with the university and Professor Grace Walker. This chapter builds on the historical and descriptive aspects of Chapter 4 and employs a different analytical lens to explore how the instructionally focused adult-student collaborations at Viewland affected adults, students, and instructional practice at the school. In this way Chapter 4 addressed the outer edges of the conceptual framework, the school context and the intermediary partnership context, and moved down and inward to explore the different forms of adult-student collaborations and what type of participation these required of adults and students. Chapter 5 continues following the conceptual framework downward and inward to explore how these partnerships affect student and teacher outlooks and behaviors as well as aspects of classroom practice such as student participation and instructional practice. Here, as described in Chapter 2, the use of the term instructional practice describes the interactions between teachers, learners, and content (Cohen & Ball, 1999).

The chapter begins with a depiction of both student and teacher views of the various adult-student collaborations at Viewland including the various ways each group perceives the other as a partner. Within these descriptions we can glimpse the ways power relations affect the adult-student partnerships. Student descriptions of their participation also illuminates how they view their responsibility in this role as well as the various issues they consider and techniques they use when conducting observations and constructing feedback letters. Next, I examine the various ways students and teachers view the purpose of adult-student collaborations at Viewland

as well as how they understand the processes involved in these practices. These descriptions are followed by an account of changes, or shifts in beliefs and/or classroom or instructional practice, as self-identified or as observed by study participants. Within these accounts, I discuss shifts that each of these groups note about the other as well as administrative and intermediary organizational partner comments about changes or new actions they have noted as a result of the adult-student collaborations at the school. Also, I will discuss issues such as power dynamics and teacher efficacy in relation to adult-student collaborations and the descriptions of these collaborations. Taking all these examples into account I then examine how the participants' descriptions of change resulting from adult-student collaboration fit within the structures of developmental, social, relational, or functional descriptions as identified by Flint & O'Hara (2013).

Student-Adult Instructional Collaborations: Teacher and Student Perspectives

The DIAD vignette analysis in Chapter 4 illustrates some of the ways in which student participation in instructional improvement can be bumpy as well as influential and evolving. An analysis of all of the structures for student participation at Viewland points to the complexity of each stage of implementation, and to the ways in which student participation, and other people's perceptions of students, can change over time. In particular, data from this study suggests divergent perspectives in that students and teachers perceived each other differently as more collaborative activities occurred at the school and as they participated in adult-student collaborations more frequently. Teachers and students could also experience the activities differently with different concerns, priorities, and perceived outcomes. The following section describes some of these teacher concerns within adult-student collaborations such as trust and

control. Concurrently, I will also describe student perspectives on collaborations which can almost serve as a response to teacher concerns.

Difficulties with Trust and Power Relations: Teacher Concerns About Students as Viable Partners

Teachers and students hold divergent views on the overall viability of instructionally focused adult-student collaborations. Most teachers viewed student engagement practices favorably. For example, teachers thought it was important to engage students in more leadership roles, provide students with more choice and responsibility within their own learning. However, two teachers specifically communicated concern regarding the ability and desire of students to provide instructional feedback. The two teachers, Dale and Dan, had less experience receiving student feedback than the other teachers interviewed, having only seen students come through their classroom for DIAD. In discussing their perception of student feedback and their willingness or desire for continued interactions with student feedback through SIC, these teachers voiced two different concerns. Their concerns fell into two categories, one regarding student ability and confidence, and another regarding quality and validity. In a 2011 interview, Dale expressed concern about students' comfort levels in feedback discussions and students' potential hesitation to participate in such interactions. Dale might be considered a teacher at the center of the continuum discussed in Chapter 4, which describes a teacher's readiness to participate in adult-student collaborations by placing them on a continuum someplace between "progressive" and "traditional."

Dale voiced concern regarding student authority to provide instructional feedback. This highlights the complicated power dynamics of such collaborations, Dale worried students might find providing feedback to teachers to be "more power than they want." He further notes that

students who were not academically successful might not be equipped or able to “rise to the occasion” to use instructional language with adults. Dale also thought that he might find it:

Hard to take feedback from students who [I] think don't even have their act together in class. I would be willing to take feedback from students who came and tried although I know maybe they would come more or try more if some of these things were more in place.

Dale's comments about student ability represent a greater concern for whether or not he would consider their feedback valid, relevant, or useful. However, Dale seems conflicted in what he views as a duality in student feedback which he has not yet been able to account for. When asked what students he would like to hear from most, Dale described the typical quiet student who seemed disengaged. Yet, he expressed that feedback from a student who seems disengaged could be hard to accept given that the student does not appear to put forth effort in the classroom. On the other hand, perhaps listening to the feedback this student provides may aid in constructing learning environments and structures that tap into this student's intrinsic motivation to learn and thus, encourage increased participation and effort in class.

Dale's sentiments about less academically successful students participating in providing instructional feedback were echoed in the comments of Dan, who noted that he had difficulty accepting feedback from the student he felt was, “a real zero.” Dan would most likely fall into the category of “traditional” on the continuum discussed in Chapter 4, in that he felt skeptical of instructional feedback unless it was provided by individuals he felt were “proven and qualified to give it.” For Dan, the idea of particular students providing feedback was “ludicrous” and thus, the feedback this student could offer would be of little consequence to him given his perception of the student's efforts in school. These perspectives, while not the majority of teacher perspectives, are none the less significant. Further, they are illustrative of the power dynamics discussed in Chapter 1. In these comments, we can see that these teachers have difficulty giving

validity to the perspectives of the students they find apathetic or disengaged. This may be a reflection of the teacher's personal belief system or their values, but it could also be a reflection of what they perceive as those students' values and beliefs which may, or may not, be accurate. Further, it could also reflect a teacher's assumption that "useful" feedback should come from someone with expertise rather than from the experiences of the learner.

While these teacher's comments demonstrate a certain level of uncertainty or apprehension amongst teachers about students as instructional partners, student participants, as noted in Chapter 4, displayed high levels of confidence in their interaction with adults throughout these activities. In this way, student data does not corroborate the concerns of teachers who have reservations about the ability of youth to provide instructional feedback that fits within the shared language used within the school. An analysis of all student interview transcripts provides consistent evidence of students' skill and confidence in discussing instruction. In fact, some of the students who participated in the interviews could be considered as struggling students or maybe those Dan referred to as, "real zeros." Further, students' instructional vocabulary closely aligned with Viewland's established professional criteria for instructional observations. Thus, while students perceived and demonstrated their ability to provide relevant feedback with confidence, teachers may need more experience engaging with students around such feedback in order to change their perceptions of students as collaborators. Further, preconceived notions of student ability can paradoxically affect such feedback. As noted by Carla:

Everybody hears student voice and puts their own spin on it. We imbue the narrative with what we believe. Some people, who I may have some concerns about their beliefs about students as a group, and what students are capable of as a group, probably hear their words with more suspicion or they have a more critical response. But here's the thing, having students value what we do is the currency

for all teachers. There is no teacher, I think, that can well say, it doesn't matter what students think.

Throughout teacher interviews, in discussing student-teacher collaboration, matters of trust and control were generally evident. In some senses teacher's ability to trust students in such endeavors was a priority. One teacher stated that in order to engage with students in project vetting or lesson study the student collaborators "...would have to be students I felt comfortable with...that I trust and have a good relationship with." Another expressed the desire to be able to choose which students participated. Thus, issues around student selection, participation, and preparation were entwined with the idea of trust. A paramount issue for some teachers was that they feel in control or have a sense that even if students were helping them "lay the tracks," they were "driving the train."

The need for some educators to control and maintain power in student-teacher feedback scenarios appeared to stem from feelings of fear or vulnerability of unjust criticism or student's personal bias. Several teachers discussed the idea that revealing one's practice was sometimes uncomfortable and especially difficult when doing so with students. As one teacher explained, "I think vetting a project, even to adults, is kind of scary. But let alone to students, that might be your former students, maybe your current students, that is really scary." Another teacher gave a specific example of this feeling of vulnerability when she described overhearing a student observer ask another student if they, "liked the class and if they liked me." This teacher found such questioning alarming given what she considered the personal and relational nature of the question saying:

I think relationships is a really important piece, but I think we can get at relationships without directly asking...and in some cases I know the reason they don't like me is because I push so hard. I know I have to find a way to make them more comfortable in what I'm pressing them to do but I don't have to become their best friend.

The response this teacher had to this particular instance of student-led classroom observations illustrates potentially subversive power paradigms and the need to continuously work on trust between student and teacher partners.

Teacher acceptance and trust of students as partners in instruction seemed to improve with the establishment of the Student Instructional Council as a class. The establishment of the class also appeared to increase teacher understanding of student preparation to provide instructional feedback as well as an increased exposure to students in this role. In other words, the teachers who had more knowledge about the Student Instructional Council or who participated in DIAD alongside students had a more positive and trusting outlook on engaging with students as instructional partners. However, the initial disparity between teacher perceptions of students' ability to provide instructional feedback and data supporting student's ability to do so seems to present an example of how pre-service teacher education, peer support, and/or professional development may prove beneficial.

Student Perceptions of What They Can Offer Teachers in Instructional Feedback

In addition to providing their own perspectives on instruction, students on SIC believed in their ability to provide specific feedback from diverse groups of students at the school. In this way, they felt that the few students on SIC could in some senses amplify student voice at the Viewland. Shawna, a junior who had been participating in adult-student collaborations since her freshmen year, noted that:

Participating in Data in a Day and observing each classroom for Student Instructional Council benefits us and benefits the teachers. We, as students, give feedback [that] students you [adults] might interview during class but they wouldn't say the same thing to you that they would say to us...It is an opportunity for us students to give that feedback and we have the voice, we are their voice throughout the whole school and we give that feedback to all teachers.

Shawna's comments here echo those of Principal Sanders, who noticed the same phenomena as noted in Chapter 4. My observations also revealed a similar pattern of SIC member's methods for speaking to students during classroom observations. These findings are consistent with those of Rubin and Silva (2003) who underscore the importance of including non-traditional student leaders in student involvement practices. The actions of SIC students at Viewland suggests that they were prepared to represent or consider the perspectives of a variety of students.

Student Instructional Council members also felt that they could offer particularly well informed feedback given that they may have been a student in the teacher's classrooms whom they observe. In fact, Melicia says:

I usually pick teachers I know of so I am not evaluating a teacher I don't know. Because if you were a student before, then you can understand the teacher more. It is not the same if you have not had them and you are only seeing their class for 10 min.

In this way, Melicia noted that her prior knowledge of the teacher's style and curriculum helped her provide feedback for each particular observation, a sentiment that was seconded by several other students in the focus group. Odessa, a Viewland alumni studying political science at a nearby university, notes a similar observation saying:

I think students can offer, I don't know, the eyes that are actually learning the material. I think that being able to really know if the teacher is effective or not is something that the students are able to determine better than the administrators, because again, the students are learning it.

While students were confident that they could offer teachers important feedback, some students wondered how teachers perceived them coming in to observe. Several students mentioned the possibility that teachers may feel, "a little scared." Alysa noted that:

Some teachers are really open minded or used to people randomly coming in their class. And they are like, "OK this is just another day." And then some teachers that are probably newer to it are going, "Oh there are people watching me now."

Do I change? Do I keep teaching how I'm teaching?" I see like a nervous look on their face when they're deciding what to do.

Another student reported that once she and her fellow SIC student observers were told they were not allowed to come in to observe a classroom by a teacher they perceived as resistant. She was taken aback by the teacher's reaction saying:

Even though we're students, we had a job to do that day. And for you to just look at us like oh, our voices don't matter. I'm not saying that what we say always matters, but there's always room for improvement. And so now she's going to keep teaching the way she knows, the way she always teaches, and not get the feedback she needs.

This student noted that the reason the teacher may have reacted this way was in part because they did not have Carla with them at the time or because she may not have received an email from Carla informing her that the SIC would be coming to observe her. When I asked if there were other examples like this one, none of the students could provide another example. In fact

Latonna noted:

A lot of the teachers here are more like, "tell me what I'm doing right or wrong." So only certain teachers who are kind of more like the old ways of teaching say that they don't like to be evaluated or told what to do.

In these comments, Latonna illustrates the resistant nature of the "traditional" teachers at Viewland. However, she continued to assert that these teachers would most likely still be willing to engage in instructionally focused adult-student collaborations if it was a student that they, "had a better relationship with."

In discussing how they construct feedback student comments reflected both a constructive and conscientious mindset. Shawna describes her observation technique by saying, "I just pretend like I'm watching from a camera so I never make myself personal with it. But I make it so they can be the best teacher they can be." Keenan noted, "I come in to be honest, like OK I get to evaluate teachers...but not to bash them. It's like this maturity thing, like OK I have

to keep it cordial and be like well, keep a level mind.” When I asked students in the 2013 focus group to complete the sentence, “When adults ask for my feedback on instruction and curriculum...” Students replied with some of the following. (Each line is a different student speaking.)

I give them the most serious response possible.

I'm honest and give them my honest opinion about it.

I give them my honest opinion, like I don't sugar-coat anything, but I say everything in a nice way-- not come off rude.

I use a kind comment...And then a kind of way they could improve that-- like a wow and a comment.

I tell them the truth, but I don't say it rude. I just soften it.

I tell them my perspective and maybe what someone else would think.

I just be honest and try not to be too harsh. But I just try to give, like a wow then a comment. So they won't be that offended, but at the same time they'll think of improving.

I try to be realistic. Like, telling them about certain things they can do is great, but if it it's not going to be doable, then just don't say it.

I use the sandwich where you give a compliment and then you give a push, but in a nice way, and then you give another compliment of what they did well.

I make sure I am specific and give examples. I also make sure not to make it personal.

In these student responses we can glimpse the training they have had to provide constructive feedback in non-threatening ways. Students here reveal particular attention to being respectful yet honest, and complementary but also constructive. In reflecting back on her four years at Viewland and in providing teachers with instructional feedback Odessa comments:

I've had a really good experience talking to teachers and voicing my opinion when I make sure that I come off respectfully, knowing that regardless of whatever they say, they're the teacher and I am the student. But when I do come that way, and when other students do, I think the teachers are very respectful of

what we have to say, and very receptive and want to make a change because they are here for us, which is something that I really appreciated throughout my four years there.

Students also noted a kind of reflection of value and skills in their ability to provide feedback to teachers. In other words, students felt that the way teachers' model providing respectful feedback to them, about their performance in class, is mirrored in the way they provide instructional feedback to teachers. One student, Rose, notes, "Teachers are always evaluating us, and so we learn from them how to be good evaluators. We depend on them for grades and letters of recommendation so they could also depend on us." Here Rose not only reflects the idea of mirroring respectful feedback, but she also hints at the idea of student feedback as a way to evaluate teacher performance. She continues to assert, "If it was up to me letting us come in [and observe] would be part of teachers' job." Odessa supports this notion saying:

I think it's something that teachers should be taught that is going to happen when they're in the schooling to be a teacher. I think that's kind of something that gets missed or pushed to the side. Like the idea that you are supposed to build relationships with your students because you're serving them... You shouldn't be doing this for yourself because you're not the one learning. Like if you get up there and talk for an hour and I don't understand anything you've said, you failed to do your job, and I maybe failed to listen. But there are two ends to the story.

So I think that teachers who aren't willing to do that maybe should be re-evaluated maybe why they decided to teach. I feel like there's nothing that a student can necessarily do to say hey, you have to listen to me. I think it's going to have to be like higher policy or come from the administration.

The purpose of instructionally focused student feedback at Viewland is not evaluative, yet here Odessa raises the point that teachers should at least be open to the idea of student feedback and that it should be instilled as an expectation through district policy and/or administrative structures. Thus, while Carla takes specific care to teach students to provide feedback in a "non-

evaluative” way, student comments often imply that they think of what they are doing in providing feedback is somewhat “evaluative,” but in a constructive and respectful way.

Student Motivations for Participation in the Feedback Cycle

For students, the ability to participate in feedback cycles instilled a sense of respect for the process as well as for educators willing to engage in the process with them. Students participating on a student panel for university graduate students who had just participated in DIAD were asked by one of the adult participants, “Given the hectic nature of your school schedule and your lives, why do you take the time to do what you do on Student Instructional Council and here after school with us?” Students replied with the following:

Student 1: For me it's like I see it as a respect thing for all of you guys as educators or teachers or whatever profession you choose. If you guys are going to take the time to come out and ask me about my opinion, I can take the time to give you my opinion back, you know? For me that's my give and take. I appreciate you guys coming out here to actually ask us.

Student 2: There's a lot of reasons for assumptions. But, the fact that you guys are here asking us now, that's the most important part to me. I can give you guys my time and getting you guys to understand what we value in education is important.

Student 3: If you want to hear what we have to say, you actually value it, and you don't-- like you're not obligated to be here, and you're taking your own time, then why can't I take out my own time? Because you're missing work, you're missing time with your families, your friends. And so, I think I can take my time out for you to hear that so you can let other students after me have and experience that is the best they can have.

Here in this panel interaction we can not only view the level of importance that both the adults and students attribute to the practice of adult-student partnerships but we can also glimpse the ways that simply taking the time to engage in such processes can influence student and adult perceptions of each other. Further, these students also provide examples of the ways engaging in adult-student collaborations can instill a sense of responsibility in students with regard to their

education as well as a positive attachment to school (Mitra, 2004; Rudduck, 2007; Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007). I explore this idea more fully later in this chapter.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Purpose, Process, and Practice of Student Feedback Cycles

While data indicate that teachers felt adult-student collaborations were generally beneficial, their conceptual and pragmatic knowledge of the practices varied. Most of the variation occurred in teachers' understanding of the purpose, and process of feedback cycles. For example, student participants were trained to provide low-inference and non-judgmental comments, but some teachers felt the feedback was muted. Tony stated:

I don't mind people saying you did this well, you didn't do this well, because I need feedback. It [may not] make you feel like rainbows and sunshine but ... I like it to be more pointed. It was powerful in the sense that they had to write like that but it also made things a bit more convoluted. I thought it was supposed to be evaluative sort of.

Another teacher thought the feedback was not quite as effective as he had hoped because students were, "not as thorough in explaining their thoughts and feelings as I would be if I were reflecting or evaluating." Thus, it appears that these teachers find the sandwich style of feedback too generic and not critical enough. Here, there is a tension between a desire for more detailed feedback and an ability to trust students to provide it in a way teachers can openly accept, highlighting the difficulty in solving for individual comfort with feedback.

Despite the efforts of administrators and Grace to prepare students and teachers in a consistent manner, over the course of five years of implementation and staff turnover, the opportunities for students to voice their perspectives on instruction resulted in varying teacher perceptions about how and why the practices were designed and implemented in particular ways. One example of this is the disparate perceptions teachers had of how students were selected to participate in Student Instructional Council. As noted in Chapter 4, some surmised members of

Student Instructional Council had been selected due to attendance, social, or academic interventions. In reality, students self-identified themselves by showing interest in the club and later enrolling in the course. While teachers may have recommended or encouraged some students to participate, ultimately students were the driving force in determining their participation, which allowed for a diversity of student participants. Relatively few of the teachers interviewed knew which students participated. The teachers who were knowledgeable about these students were the teachers who had participated in DIAD alongside the students. For example, one teacher, Cathy, noted that from her perspective:

The kids in that class are really, really diverse, which I think is really helpful. You have your quiet kids and your really noisy kids. It is important to have representation across the board. I think if you have a class of over-achievers, you're going to hear different things from students who are actually struggling.

However, there appeared to be an overall lack of clarity about student selection for SIC.

Teacher perceptions of which students participate in providing feedback are important for several reasons. Like Dale, many teachers often have ideas about who they want to hear from but, as noted earlier, they tend to question the ability of students to engage in such dialogue coherently and purposefully. When asked about which students teachers most wanted to hear from, the answer was invariably “the quiet kid.” As several teachers noted, this quiet student could be an English Language Learner, a disengaged student, or a student who is not challenged or is, “quietly suffering through the class.” Hearing from these students seemed promising to teachers and connected to their feelings of efficacy or ability to reach and teach all students. However, this potential was complicated by teachers simultaneously questioning the ability of these students to participate in teacher-student partnerships. Here it seems that a clarification of student participation and student training would alleviate some of the hesitations teachers demonstrated.

Given the complicated and fast-paced nature of a busy urban school, it can be challenging to ensure all teachers are aware of the specific goals of student feedback and the possible perspectives students can provide. Designing observation cycles to include students is further complicated by the fact that teachers have different comfort levels with feedback. One teacher thought it would be wise to, “Always ask teachers up front about what kind of feedback they want,” a comment echoed by Keenan who wished he *could* ask teachers what level of feedback they wanted. Another teacher commented that student feedback would be better if students, “...were trained on what good teaching looks like, and what to look for.” Yet another teacher noted that he had questions about who was selected to observe saying, “I would like to know how they select the different students and what qualifies them to be making those observations. Everything else is really clear but that is less clear.” Here, the disconnect between what students and administrators know about SIC student preparation and what teachers know about SIC student preparation is apparent. In reality, these students are trained in the hallmarks of good teaching as outlined in the school’s four “R” framework. From focus group and interview data, one might easily surmise that teacher confidence in students as instructional partners will grow as student preparation and transparency about preparation increases.

As noted, data suggest an overarching problem of practice—maintaining ongoing clear communication in complicated and changing education environments. Given this challenge, it is feasible that the divergent perspectives about each practice created a space where teachers could demote the importance of these practices. Each of these practices could then be viewed as voluntary and ancillary. Thus, while the administration might refer to the student involvement practices as professional learning, teachers in this study could consider them differently. This

insinuates the need to probe how enhanced communication and teacher preparation might influence teachers' value for and commitment to learning from and with students.

Influences of Adult-Student Collaborations on Their Relationships with Each Other and Perspectives on Schooling

Given the complexities of adult-student collaborations including teacher apprehension regarding student feedback, student confidence and ability to provide feedback, and the communication regarding collaborative practices it is important to examine the reactions about these experiences within each group. In this section, I first discuss the ways various teachers reacted to collaborative practices in regards to the ways they viewed students and perceived particular student participation. Next, I present student responses to their participation in adult-student collaborations. Within these descriptions students not only reveal specific changes in the ways they perceive teachers, but also in the ways they view education, their role within the education process as well as changes in the way they view themselves. Finally, I examine how the changes in beliefs and perspectives identified by students and teachers influences student-teacher relationships at Viewland.

How Participating in Adult-Student Collaborations Influenced Teacher Beliefs and Perspectives

Despite the regular occurrence of formalized student collaborations, there remained a level of astonishment, on the part of teachers, at the ability of students to provide relevant and useful feedback about instruction. One teacher noted, "I was surprised...they can be incredibly, very good and very informative, provide very good and informative feedback on a very adult level, which surprised me right away, that they have that capability." Commenting on teacher

surprise at student's ability to participate in instructional collaborations with teachers Carla notes:

It shouldn't be a surprise to us what students can do if you let them do it. And yet it is. I think we have to acknowledge that we live in a construct of school, even as much as we try to change that, it still is a construct of adults are teachers and students are students.

Instances of teacher's surprise or astonishment at student ability to engage in instructional feedback tend to be one important or initial way to influence and change teacher perceptions of students. An example of this can be seen in the comments of Tony, a science teacher. In 2011, Tony initially reacted to the idea of students providing feedback saying, "I would not expect much because they are kids you know. I guess I would just take it all with a grain of salt." Later, in 2013, when I interviewed Tony again he discussed receiving feedback from SIC students from classroom observations and through participation with students on a lesson study. He described the experience saying:

I think kids have a lot of good feedback. Sometimes if you don't set them up well it's just generic stuff, but I think that's why if they are trained they can provide some feedback. Some of those kids had some really interesting feedback. It wasn't they surprised me in terms of I never thought they would say that, but just their level of—it was just like how and adult would share something and made you think differently about something.

The difference in tone between Tony's comments in 2011 and 2013 reveal a shift in his belief about students as partners and student's ability to provide relevant feedback. This shift would most likely not have occurred if he had not participated in such collaborations.

Along these lines, Nancy, a math teacher who had only been at Viewland for two years described her experience of exposure to student-adult collaborations at Viewland as an "epiphany" in her teaching practice. Nancy had not previously experienced students as contributors in providing instructional feedback. She first was observed by DIAD teams that

included students and attended the staff debrief that was facilitated and led by SIC students. In commenting on the feedback presented from her first DIAD she said:

It was good feedback. I took ownership of it in terms of our school and being part of this whole program. There were definitely places where we need to work on things. I also know that the administration would tie those areas to future professional development. At the same time, there was no piece of information anywhere that clearly identified me. So I actually wanted to know more. So I talked to Carla and she set it up for SIC to come visit my classroom.

Nancy described the feedback she received from SIC students after their classroom observation in her room by saying:

There were some really positive things that students noticed that I was happy that they see it happening. Because sometimes I wonder when they're just in the class and they're doing it, they're like yeah, yeah, I know you're trying to get me to do math, yeah, yeah... I might be trying to pick a problem, like Angry Birds or something that I think is relevant to them, but it's not going to be relevant to every student... I might hit five kids, but still I'm picking something and I'm trying to get it to be relevant.

So it's nice to see that they're able to pick up the attempt in that they can see it is going to be relevant to some of the student body. But they also, they gave wonders. And so-- I mean they were good wonders. They were thoughtful wonders.

Through the way Nancy recounts her experience over her two years at Viewland and her exposure and reaction to instructionally focused student collaborations, we can see the ways her perceptions of students as collaborators changed. In many ways, Nancy likely had not pondered the idea of students as partners prior to working at Viewland. Her experiences being observed for DIAD and then again by SIC students changed her perceptions to now include students as viable partners. Further, in noting the positive feedback students provided Nancy reveals that the affirmation she received from the students was appreciated. This type of student affirmation could be important for the development and maintenance of teacher efficacy and job satisfaction.

Also, her acknowledgement of the “thoughtful wonders” students provided suggests a level of respect she attributes to the feedback these students provided.

The experience of not only receiving feedback *from* students, but collaborating in providing feedback *with* students seemed to be influential for the teachers who had participated as observers in DIAD alongside students. Nancy described her experience as an observer in DIAD participating on a team that included students from one of her classes saying:

I was a little concerned that they wouldn't be open in front of me. In fact, one of them that does well in my math class, but is very nervous when it comes to explaining your point of view, she spoke so eloquently about what she was seeing in other classrooms. I was like, “Oh my gosh! That is so cool the way that you described this!” I know that all my students are smart but I couldn't see that part of her before. It wasn't visible to me.

While serving as an observer with students in DIAD her perceptions of the student team members changed. Similar comments were made by another teacher, Cathy, who was in her second year of teaching and her second year at Viewland. After experiencing DIAD as one of the classrooms that was observed she asked to participate as an observer along with students from SIC. In describing the experience overall she used words like “helpful” numerous times and specifically mentions her interactions with students during the process saying:

I really liked doing it with the Intro to Teaching class students. I went around with the students and it was great to hear so many different perspectives on a classroom, because as a teacher we kind of go in with already an understanding of what it looks like because we're a teacher. But it was great to hear the students talk and say this is something that frustrates us when this happens, or this is something we really like about this teacher because they respect us by doing this.

So it was really helpful to have the students be evaluators of classrooms and really hear what they did and didn't like about it. And I was really impressed by what the students said. It wasn't like I don't like this teacher because they're rude. It's usually like they'd always have something like I don't really appreciate this teacher all the time because we don't always feel like they want to take the time out of their day to help us. So it's like oh, I understand what you're talking about there.

So it's really feedback that I feel like, as teachers, we can really use and improve our relationships with the kids, improve our instruction. But I thought that was really great.

In these comments we can see the new perspectives both Nancy and Cathy have gained about students as partners in instructional feedback and the value they have attributed to the experience of working in partnership with students.

While participating on observation teams with students can shift teacher perspectives about students with whom they are collaborating, a similar shift can occur when teachers observe students they know in different classrooms. Both Nancy and Cathy noted that their perspectives of certain students changed because they were able to observe them in different classrooms or rather, classrooms other than their own. Nancy notes as a result of her participation in DIAD her perceptions of several students were altered. She says:

I saw so many other students...in other classrooms, I was like, "Oh my gosh, you're a superstar in video productions or you have such great ideas in Government!" It was really powerful to see kids in other places but it was so amazing to see how other teachers were interacting with those same kids and getting different results.

Thus, participating as an observer in DIAD helped Nancy not only realize the potential of students to provide feedback but also to realize positive attributes her students displayed in other classes when they were out of the "math phobic place" in her classroom. Importantly, observing on a team with students allowed her to debrief about what she saw with other students to gain their perspectives as well as her own. In this way, changing the typical classroom power dynamic of student and teacher and authorizing students to serve as instructional partners outside the classroom seemed to provide opportunities for teachers to build trust with students as well as change teacher perceptions of students by allowing them to view students in different situations where they could showcase some of their other strengths.

How Participating in Adult-Student Collaborations Influenced Student Beliefs and Perspectives

Participating in adult-student collaborations also affected student beliefs and perceptions. Students noted several ways their beliefs had shifted. First, they gained different perspectives of their teachers and the work they do. Second, many students began to see the process of schooling and their role in this process differently. Thirdly, some students began to view themselves in a new light. In many ways, student comments reveal new insights they have gained into themselves, their interactions with other students, and their power and agency.

Many of these perspective shifts can be seen in the case of Shawna, a junior who had participated in almost every collaborative activity at Viewland since she was a freshman. During my interview with Shawna she discussed what she felt she had learned from her participation.

She specifically mentioned that her perceptions of teachers had changed saying:

I'll say how I see teachers had changed. Some good and some bad. The good is, I've learned to appreciate teachers because I learned how hard it is to be a teacher, because you have to be that coach and that mentor, and you have to accommodate everybody's needs. So I know it's really hard to be a teacher, so I appreciate them for that.

But on the other side, I know how easy it is to get away with things as a teacher. If it's your classroom you rule it. So I guess I learned those two things, and I learned how to be a better person from that.

In her initial comments we may surmise that exposure to the behind the scene issue of teaching gave her a new appreciation for teachers. However, her subsequent comments reveal an additional issue which hints at accountability.

Other students mentioned similar things during the student focus group. One noted, "I just know now to be open-minded, like I realize that teachers' jobs are not easy." Another said, "Coming in and observing a class was interesting because I was also observing students. I saw

all the stuff that was going on and that teachers had to deal with.” Veronica described collaborating with teachers during DIAD by saying, “You get to see like the teacher’s point of view and see how they think and what they say about us students too.” Along these lines another student describes the way he thinks of teachers differently after being privy to staff meetings saying, “I used to think that teachers just sat around in meetings thinking about ways to discipline us! Now I know that most of them really care about us and want us to learn.”

During this discussion one student noted that these changes in perceptions of teachers would be something that more kids could learn from. He recounts a type of increased attention to instruction noting:

Like when I first started [high school] I was like oh, school, yeah, whatever. But when I started observing not just as a student I was like oh, school, yeah. Oh, I see this and that, and this is really interesting. I guess this teacher's doing this and that because they want us to do this and that. Well, I like the way this teacher's teaching. So, I think it will be a good experience for other students to experience being an observer.

Here this student provides an example of how his attention to instruction produced some form of understanding about what teachers were doing in the classroom, something that had not been apparent to him previously. This shift appears to have helped make his experience as a learner better, an experience he thinks his mentee may also benefit from.

Other students also noted a shift in perspective about education. One student said:

Now I know that it's not all about me. I know that people are affected by the teachers and faculty anywhere. I know that if I say something or stand up for it, then it'll make it easier for everybody else around me.

Here the student notes that the educational process is collective in many ways, yet the individual can affect the process in positive ways. Another student shared skills she felt she had gained from her experiences in SIC and DIAD saying:

It actually helps you to prepare in the future with working with different people of different ages, like if you have a job, and how to come upon things when you're asked a question. So this really helps you and prepares you for real life things. And so you're learning something from-- like I've learned a lot from everybody, adults and peers and it's all around one topic, education. It teaches me, and it helps me help others. And so it broadens that whole new perspective in life.

Within these comments we see the ways students have shifted perspectives about the educational process as a collective endeavor between and among adults and students.

In addition to comments about changes in perceptions about teachers or views of education, many students noted how they had themselves changed. One student referenced a change in his ability to be objective saying, "Now I think twice about every situation. Don't just be impulsive about certain things. You should look from your perspective and someone's outside perspective." Another student reported similar reflections noting that she has learned now to:

...think outside the box. Like you don't always have to think about yourself and your needs, but think about what others think, like their background they're coming from. Because that's one of the basic things that you can't just judge someone based off of what you see, but you have to really understand that person and be able to have that good relationship with that person.

Thus, in some senses these students report the experience to have instilled the belief of approaching situations impartially, with tolerance, and with the mindset of understanding situations before making judgments. One student notes the changes within himself saying:

You do change. You will change a little if you put your mind to it and you know you really believe in yourself first, and then believe in the people that you work with. I think that you'd be able to make a difference. It also gives [me] confidence cuz you realize that you have a voice and a say and that things can actually change if you want them to

Students also noted that they felt their participation in partnership activities may change the ways other adults and student at the school perceive them. One student said that teachers began to treat her differently once she started participating in Student Instructional Council. She explains:

I feel like they hold us to a higher standard than other students. Like favoritism in a way, because they know that we're taking this extra step to be other than the average student. Like they'll say, you know you're better than this. You know you can do better.

Several student participants mentioned the ways other students at school view students who were part of the Introduction to Teaching class. As one student noted:

Like we have a lot of kids that tell us, tell me-- they're like I really want to be in that class. They're like I'm mad I didn't get it and stuff. So I think that they see us as leaders. They may see the changes that they can make.

Thus in some ways, the visibility of these students to others in the school, as they visit classrooms and engage in other collaborative activities, can shift the way teachers treat them and the way other students see them. It could be that the presence of these students engaging in school improvement activities makes others aware of the possibilities that adult-student collaborations present.

Reciprocal Respect: Building Better Student-Teacher Relationships

As discussed in the previous two sections, there are several ways that the adult-student collaborations at Viewland influenced shifts in both student perspectives and teacher perspectives that aid in strengthening student-teacher relationships. As one teacher summarized, “It promotes a double consciousness. Students understand teachers much better, and teachers understand being a student better.” In this way, teachers and students are able to develop a mutual respect for each other reflecting Fielding’s (2001) joyfully felt “radical collegiality.” The prevalence of the idea of respect was evident throughout student comments simply in the frequency with which they mentioned the word respect. Students noted that an increased understanding of their teachers and education made them more respectful of teachers. Conversely, students felt that when teachers viewed them taking an interest in education they received more respect from their teachers.

In a similar observation Jason, a student, described how Student Instructional Council helped teachers and students connect more and develop a “friendship factor.” This “friendship factor” is one indication of a new familiarity between students and teachers or improved teacher-student relationships. Odessa echoed this idea saying:

What has changed as a result are expectations I would say is the communication that students now have with teachers have allowed teachers to say what they expect and the students to be responsive to that. And the students can say, ‘This is what we expect from you,’ and the teachers to be responsive to that. Because that communication from both sides is coming, like students hold to their expectations if the teachers hold to theirs. So if you do what you say, I’ll do what I say. And then that’s made Viewland a better place.

While these comments provide glimpses of improved relational and climate aspects at Viewland as a result of the student-adult collaborations we have yet to determine the ways these partnerships actually influence classroom behaviors of teachers and students. The next section will address this question as well as the question of how, or if, adult-student collaborations affect instruction.

Influences of Adult-Student Collaborations on Changes in Classroom Behavior and Instructional Practice

The majority of teachers and students at Viewland believed that the student engagement practices there had positive effects both on instruction and school climate. However, documenting these effects in tangible ways can be challenging. In this section I bring forth the stories, observations, and self-reflections of teachers, administrators, and students to illustrate some of the tangible examples of changes in teacher practice and student participation. First, I take teacher reflections about how their behavior and practice has changed as a result of student partnership practices. In these teacher accounts I present a range of perspectives including perspectives of teachers from across the spectrum; traditional, center, and progressive. Within

each of these perspectives we can view changes that have occurred as reported by teachers themselves, changes that could be attributed to the influence of collaborative practices, and possibilities for future directions. Next I reveal the ways in which administrators and intermediary organizational partners at the school describe changes they have seen. Finally, I present the student perspective about changes they have seen in their teachers, in their school, and in themselves.

Teacher Responses to Student Feedback

As one might imagine, there are several types of reactions teachers have to the feedback they receive from students as well as to the experience of participating in the collaborative process. Some teachers used the experience of discussing instruction with students to become more reflective and deliberate about the decisions they make about instruction. Others reported change based responses ranging from changes in curriculum to changes in classroom instructional routines or participation. Most teachers described a response in which they carefully considered the student feedback in a respectful way. Carla explains this by saying, “It is easy for teachers to discount feedback from outsiders saying, ‘They don’t know our situation.’ But when it is from our students here, you can’t ignore that.” In describing the various reactions teachers had about student partnership I will depict the reactions of teachers from each of the three areas of the spectrum—progressive, center, and traditional.

How teachers “in the center” responded to student feedback. For those teachers who would most likely be considered mainstream or in the center—like Mike, Tony, and Nancy—collaborating with students around instruction seemed like a good idea overall. These teachers were, for the most part, open to student feedback as a way to increase their efficacy or their knowledge of whether or not they are being effective with their students. As Mike says:

I'd rather know, and I kind of view the classrooms, working with the kids every day is kind of an experiment, like I'm constantly experimenting of what works and what doesn't work. So there's no way to change your experiment without getting some sort of data, whether it be just like that worked for me or that didn't work for me kind of thing.

While the teachers at the center often viewed the prospect of student collaboration favorably they also often cited caveats to their participation such as the need to have established trust with the students participating as well as maintain some form of control in the process. In other words, teachers needed to be able to trust student feedback in order to make changes. However, experimenting with student feedback was one way for teachers to develop this trusting relationship with their students. Mike describes this balance by saying:

They're teenagers, so sometimes I don't trust them that much, but-- a lot of times it works and they buy-in, and if I'd be like do you need extra time to do this? Yes. All right, I'm trusting that you really need this extra time. So I expect you to be on task and doing this. And they seem to buy in and do that better. I learned really quickly that if they have some sort of voice into even the classroom management, they buy-in better. And it works the same way in the learning scenario.

Even with the caveats teachers cited regarding student feedback teachers generally noted that the feedback they had received influenced their practice either generally or specifically. For example, Tony who continually noted that he took student feedback with a grain of salt, described the feedback he got on instructional memos saying:

Yeah, it does [affect my practice]. I definitely will change things up to get to-- to make sure that I'm doing stuff that they're all going to be engaged in and understand, and that can change how I structure directions or if we do a lecture I break it up differently. Things like that. So it does affect my practice directly. And it does make me think as a bigger picture. Like one, how do I keep getting their feedback? And then two, what am I going to do with their feedback?

He continues to say, "I would say [my motivation to keep doing this] is high. I want to have them to have some sort of voice and some sort of involvement in their learning environment they're seeing." Both Mike and Tony came to student-adult collaborations doubtful and a bit

untrusting. Yet after experiencing them and receiving student feedback through formal procedures, they reveal shifts in classroom practice and possible increases in future feedback practices within their own classrooms.

Despite the openness to student feedback that the mainstream teachers at the center of the faculty spectrum, along with their progressive colleagues, displayed, their comments also revealed the potential for initial defensiveness. As Nancy describes:

My initial response to the wonders is well, I already thought of that and I didn't do that because of X, Y or Z. That's my initial, like my gut feeling. Well, I've been teaching for 15 years. But then I had to stop and say but they're the ones who are experiencing it now. And so if they need something else, something more, whether I thought of it or not, I can now re-think it and find a way-- like it forces me to reflect and stop making excuses for the few things that maybe I didn't think would work but they could work another way...It motivated me to grow and give them more of what they need.

Here Nancy gives voice to an emotion that could be one experienced by most teachers when receiving student feedback. Nancy, however, is able to move past her initial defensiveness to consider the student feedback more constructively and to think about how to apply it to her practice. Similarly, her more progressive colleague, Allison, described her cognitive process upon reading her instructional memo by saying:

Their wonder was, well I had already noticed it. It was the same thing I had already noticed. But it was interesting. It was beneficial to read it from them. It was a good question because I guess I was wondering the same thing. Their wonder was, what about the kid who doesn't have their laptop? I had to then think, well right. I guess I should have some paper activities as an alternative. Because what if they don't have their laptop because it got stolen or something that is out of their control?

While Allison could be considered one of the more progressive teachers, in that she readily sought student feedback already and was eager to participate in collaborations with students, her reaction to her student generated instructional memo seems to begin with defensiveness. Initially she notes that what students cite is something she “already noticed” so in some ways she could

have initially dismissed their comment. Then as she considers it more carefully she begins to make use of their observation to devise solutions or alternatives to the issue of students coming to class without their laptop. Thus we can almost preview the changes she may make, due in part to the student feedback she received.

In reflecting on her student observation and her instructional memo Nancy felt that she would recommend the experience to other teachers. However, she did offer a few notes of caution saying:

I would say that before you do it you should be thinking about why you do the things that you do in your classroom. Not just to defend yourself, but to really ask yourself--Is it meaningful? Am I doing this because I really think it's going to improve their learning, or am I doing this just because somebody else did and I'm just following their lead? Like what's the reason? And then even if I feel like I have these strong reasons, when I find out what students think, I have to either be able to help them understand what these reasons are, or be able to make some shifts, or maybe somewhere in between. Because I told you my first instinct is to be a little bit defensive but I realized I need to be willing to still make some shifts and make it visible to them that I'm hearing you and I'm making some shifts.

Here Nancy provides a good example of the ways this experience has led her to be more reflective about her practice. These instances where teachers more carefully consider student experience in relation to their instruction are important. Nancy's comments illustrate what McIntyre (2005) asserted in that while student feedback may not always lead to "radical innovations in teachers' practices" it may prompt innovation or the encouragement to extend their practice (p.158).

How the more traditional teachers responded to student feedback. Discussing student feedback with Dan, one of the more traditional teachers at Viewland, was fairly difficult in that, due to his resistance to the idea of student partnership (noted in the vignette in Chapter 4), he had little experience receiving student feedback. Thus, in essence the only feedback he had received was the general feedback presented at the staff DIAD debrief meetings,

where he had made his skepticism clear. Dan had not been specifically *asked* or *invited* to participate as an observer for DIAD, nor had he *volunteered* to participate as an observer. Dan could also not recall having SIC come to his class and had thus not received an instructional memo. However, in our one on one interview, Dan identified some aspects of DIAD he found helpful. For example, he notes:

The only thing I've ever seen that is worthwhile, perhaps, is that they bring the community in and they got a chance to see the school. Because the community doesn't get a chance to come and see schools very often. And this way you're actually bringing in the people from the outside to get to come and see what the school looks like while it is functioning.

In discussing student feedback, although he had not specifically received any, Dan pondered that it could be useful, "as long as you're getting real feedback not just this project sucks or I hate that teacher." When I pushed Dan to more fully describe what real feedback meant for him he said:

You're not going to get the truth from all of them. But there are some of them that are-- they're really good students, they won't give you feedback because they're used to always being the happy face and getting good grades. And so they don't want to like sour it by saying something bad, so they'll just go along with things. They're very compliant. -- They're so good at playing the game, they know how to run the system, and that's why they get such good grades, and they're just like oh yeah, that was fine. I mean it doesn't really help you if a person says yeah, this was great, and it's not true.

The middle-of-the-road ones-- I like to hear across the spectrum. Because the kids that are at the very higher end, that are performing really well, a lot of times you'll think they're working on something, they're enjoying it, and then you'll find out later that they might say you know, I really don't like that or this is kind of boring or we took too much time on this. And some of those students, it depends-- you'll notice-- some of them I've noticed will give you accurate feedback. I can do something with that kind of feedback. Like I might end a project early, if I find something in general they're not enjoying or not having fun with. If it's one or two people and everybody else seems like it's working for them it's a different story, but if you kind of get the feeling that this isn't really working for everybody, stop and do something else.

Here it is clear that Dan has specific ideas about what kinds of students he wants to hear from and that he is willing to listen to. Dan's comments echo Dale's comments from earlier, regarding hearing from the quiet students, and again illuminate a consistent problem of practice amongst student voice initiatives, especially when dealing with instructional feedback. As Fielding (2012) notes it is essential *not* to exclude, "the voice of those deemed less successful or less important in school and society." However, in these comments we can see how teachers may need more support to understand why listening to these voices is important as well as support in learning to listen.

While Dan may come across as resistant to instructionally focused feedback or particular about the types of students he would accept feedback from, he also provides examples of the ways he thinks students should offer feedback to schools and teachers in formal ways. For example he says:

So I have almost a 10-year history at a Community College. They would give out forms for the students to fill out about the class. But it was blind, though. You would basically, you'd hand them the papers, you'd walk away, they would put them together, they'd put them in an envelope, seal it, and that went to the administration. But you never saw them. I think something like that, a system where the students-- I mean you're going to get some weird stuff if you do that. You're going to get kids that are like, "This teacher's the worst!" That's fine. But you're going to get a percentage of that, you're going to get a percentage of the ones that oh, the best thing since sliced bread. But in the middle somewhere you're going to end up with some interesting data that's truthful, and they know-- what you want is you don't want them to think it's going to reflect on them, especially if they're grade conscious or something else, or they don't want to get in trouble, so they don't want to say anything. But if you ask for stuff like that, it's got to be blind. And I don't care if they put my name on it-- it'd be fun.

What I'm trying to say is if they want to give me feedback, that's fine. I would love to see stuff like that. They are talking about how to evaluate teachers. Why not ask the students? But they don't. I have had students tell me stuff about who is a good teacher or not and they are kids you can trust. Not like the kid who has trouble with all his teachers. I wouldn't be afraid to even let the administrators see what my students say about me. I'm sure some teachers would though.

Thus, while Dan has stated that the DIAD feedback is not helpful for him, he has not been visited by SIC or received a memo, and he doubts some low achieving students' ability to provide useful feedback he remains optimistic about the opportunity to hear student feedback about his curriculum. In fact, Dan provided examples about how he changed or shifted his instruction based on student feedback which he solicited during his class. His discussion about the possibility of soliciting blind student feedback was one that was mentioned by several of the teachers in the study. Yet along with this suggestion teachers tended to present an attitude of uncertainty about the type of feedback they imagined they would receive or a worry that some students may be preoccupied with a teacher's personality instead of instruction. In other words, there remained concerns on the part of teachers about whether students would view effective teaching the same way they did, regardless of a teacher's personality. Further, teachers tended to wonder if students could comprehend the aspects of curriculum that are sometimes outside of a teacher's control (such as district standards and pacing). Similar fears have been noted in studies of college faculty (Spooren, Brock & Mortelmans, 2013). Yet, Spooren et al. found that contrary to popular perception, student comments revealed that the college students in their study valued the quality of the instruction they received more than they valued instructor characteristics. While more research needs to be done on this topic, it could be that high school students might share similar values.

How the more progressive teachers responded to student feedback. Among the two teachers in this study who might fit into the progressive category—Allison and Alex—there was a general consensus that students were viable partners, could affect instructional practice through feedback, and that the idea of instructionally focused adult-student collaborations was sound. However, there were several boundary pushing ideas that came up in my one on one interviews

with these teachers. First, both teachers expressed interest in taking the student collaborations at Viewland to the next step for their own practice. Second, they felt that more teachers at Viewland should experience instructionally focused student collaborations. Third, they felt there needed to be better formalized systems for promoting adult-student collaborations school-wide and one teacher specifically noted that there needed to be some form of accountability for what teachers did with student feedback. In other words, they felt the student collaborations at the school did not go far enough or there were not enough structures in place to make them accessible and part of a routinized system of practice.

Allison, one of the teachers who advocated for increased opportunities for student collaboration, asserted that student feedback had affected her practice. Allison had been visited by SIC several times and received instructional memos as a result. She describes the student visit and memo positively saying:

It was very sandwich style feedback. They had a positive wow, then a good wonder, and then another positive. It was very productive and really thoughtful and it was professional and respectful. And I don't know how Carla preps them to do that. But they are very respectful, and they ask, in a whisper if they can talk to students in the class I always say, 'Yeah.'

Here Allison has not specifically noted any change in her practice due to the student feedback, yet she reveals her open attitude towards receiving their “thoughtful” observations. Also, within these comments we can glimpse the result of Carla’s student training as well as the level of Allison’s knowledge of student intention with the memos. Further, it reveals the difference in teacher comfort and expectation around student feedback.

As discussed in Chapter 4, Allison asked to vet her project to the Introduction to Teaching class. Allison describes the experience saying:

I got a lot from it. Most of those kids did this project when they were in my class. So they could tell me what they might do differently. It gave me all kinds of crazy

ideas. It just made my wheels spin. One of the things that they said was that I should do a 3D kind of model, like a hands-on kind of model. And in the past they had to do a Prezi, and they had to do Google sketch-ups... Their idea was to add in another component, a third component of actually having a physical model. I loved the idea. So I changed it from a Prezi to a website, to a Google site and we did the 3D [model] and [I taught] that. I would like to-- I need to get it cleared with Carla in administration, but I'd like to take it back and then we vet the student work like what we do in critical friends groups... Did this address the learning goals? Did it meet the standards? How could we adjust it for next time? Like I can see this person really got it, or no, this person didn't get it. But what's the difference. I think they got these two things, but this one they really missed out on. So how could you teach this one differently is kind of what that points out. So that's the next step is to take a high, medium, and low piece of work from that project, back to that group and say what do you think? I did it, now what do you think?

Here Allison not only provides specific examples of how she used student feedback to rework her project, but she also cites what she sees as the next steps in this student-adult collaboration. The training the SIC students had in providing instructional feedback no doubt aided in making this experience a positive one, but it could also be that student's prior knowledge of the project provided students with specific expertise to provide such feedback. Allison notes this as well as a realization that the experience may have had positive effects for the students participating in collaborations with her saying:

They had good ideas, and I think that they appreciated being heard. It was good to have a group who had done the project look at it with a critical eye and reflect back onto their work. It was pretty powerful. I think the kids get a lot from it too. After I did my vetting there one of the kids said, "Oh my gosh this is so much work to be a teacher. You really had to do all this before you could do a project?" The students were like, "Miss Waxton, you've got to tell everyone else to come over. It'll be fun. We'll do it."

Thus while Allison experienced adult-student collaborations positively, her comments provide further data indicating that adult-student collaborations cannot only influence instruction but student and adult perceptions of each other as well.

Allison asserted that “all” teachers at Viewland should have the experience of getting instructional feedback from students. She felt this was specifically appropriate at Viewland given the existence of a trained group of students in the Introduction to Teaching class, some of whom had been participating in adult-student collaborations since they were freshmen. She says:

I tried to tell everyone about what a good idea project vetting is but I think it would be hard for them to do it given the structure right now. [It was] kind of an opportune time for me because their class is second period, and I usually teach during second period, but because I have an intern, I had freedom to go over and vet for a half an hour.

Without some additional scheduling or structure in place for teachers to vet projects with the Introduction to Teaching class the only viable existing time for vetting to occur was during second period. Thus only the handful of teachers who has second period as a preparation period would have the opportunity to vet curricular projects with the students. Allison also noted that she had self-motivated to seek the students out to vet her project. In order for other teachers, or those who may not have yet come to embrace adult-student collaborations, due to trust and power dynamics or simply lack of exposure, there may need to be more of a nudge to participate. Allison felt that, “Some teachers would need to know it was expected of them.” However, she was empathetic to the emotions around opening one’s practice and provided ideas of how to message vetting to teachers saying:

I think [project vetting] is kind of scary I think for some people. To me, it’s no big deal. I don't take it personally. I just think people need to understand they don't have to take every bit of feedback. Like there are some things, as a professional, whether it's an adult or not, just as a professional in my profession, I know that would work and wouldn't work. And so somebody might have an idea, and I may know that it may not work or it won't work, and so I don't have to use that idea. And it's kind of like going to PD. You're not going to take all the information back and then put it in your classroom the next day, right, and then be like oh, that didn't work. I need to go to another PD and try it again. You're going to take bits and pieces and make it work for you.

Alex, the other teacher I have described as progressive, was open and eager to develop adult-student collaborations in his classroom and throughout the school but was less satisfied with the collaborative activities already in place. He found DIAD a useful practice and spoke in defense of it in reaction to Dan's comments at the staff meeting. However, Alex noted what he saw as a lack of accountability to the feedback as one problem saying:

So you put the wows and wonders on the board, there's no accountability for implementation. There's like ah-ha moments, but as human beings, we all fall back into what we've been doing. So we create a groove and we stick in that groove until something shakes us out of that groove. And I think that that's easiest to characterize as human nature in many ways. And so just the question and then the accountability around OK, pick one thing, write it down or submit it, and we're going to come and watch to see that you're trying to do this. So one thing at a time you're changing in practice.

In this way, Alex acknowledges that the DIAD feedback, in its generalized form, may be interesting for teachers but not necessarily compelling enough to inspire instructional changes within classrooms. In his suggestion to have teachers self-identify personal and professional goals based on the feedback, that administrators can hold teachers accountable for during evaluative interviews, he is proposing links in student feedback to legitimate school structures.

Alex, like many teachers, is not only open to feedback but desires more feedback that specifically relates to his teaching practice and curriculum. While Alex and Dan may differ significantly in educational philosophy and attitudes towards various types of student feedback, they both cited anonymous college type exit surveys as one way to achieve this feedback. Alex notes that:

Teachers often [have] a fear of evaluation and there's fear of criticism. And there's no growth without evaluations and criticism. It's human nature to want to or think you are successful and feedback can sometimes push against this. But teaching is a place where you have to have a tough skin. And we don't always get the type of skins in the game.

He cited particular frustration with existing official structures for teacher evaluation saying:

To this day, I haven't received any, in my five years here; I would say any critical feedback that's influenced my practice from an administrator. Students can give that feedback because they have a different perspective. I think administrators are like why is your purpose statement not on the board, and there's a lot of BS that goes with being an administrator. Your head has to be in multiple camps at the same time. I also think that administrators are not people who have been teaching often, or not the most successful teachers often. But in reality, if you take teachers and administrators and you put them in a setting where they actually have to be students, 9 out of 10 times they're poor students. They're not good students. They don't model any of the behavior they expect. And so it's like oh well, you have these expectations, but you can't meet them and you don't model them in practice.

When I asked about the SIC visits he had experienced, he noted that while students had visited his room several times he could not recall receiving a memo, an issue he felt tarnished the goals and reputation of SIC. Further, Alex echoes Allison's comments in his desire to take the idea of SIC further. He notes he would like to have some kind of structure with which he could request or solicit students from the class to come observe for longer periods of time and conduct face to face debriefs. He says:

You can unpack different goals around learning, if there's an infrastructure. But right now I don't feel like there's any infrastructure for feedback. Jason is a student who's on the Student Instructional Council who I love and is amazing and gives great insight into things. I would love to have him sit and watch my class and have the opportunity for him, as a set structure in the school, to actually communicate with me what's going on. So to provide that as an option.

Alex also had a unique perspective about the evolution and functioning of the adult-student practices at Viewland. For several years Alex served as a legal guardian to Scott, a Viewland alumnus now in college, who had participated in many adult-student collaborations at Viewland including DIAD, lesson study, and SIC. Alex mentioned this relationship with Scott saying that in his conversations with him, "His biggest complaint was you weren't allowed to actually give critical feedback to anybody. You could only provide compliments." In a follow-up

question I reminded Alex of our previous interview two years before when, in discussing SIC, he stated:

I don't think it is productive for students to be directly critical of a teacher. You know when they are an observer in the classroom. They have no power or authority to remove someone from a classroom or to dictate curriculum in the classroom and it is kind of, you know, it has already been decided or it is a prerequisite in many ways that they are not listening to student voice enough if students are going to say that. So how is student voice going to make things better? If the goal is to make things better having students criticize is not going to make things better.

To clarify, Alex again cited a need to tie student feedback in with some form of accountability saying:

I don't know if [students being critical] is going to help the school, but Scott's frustration absolutely was apparent in that students see things with teachers that need to change. So, I don't know if students are the place, but students-- Carla is one person who helps coordinate this. If the feedback went to Carla, and then it trickled up, and then it spread, then there would be some insight that allowed administration to provide critical feedback or follow up during their observations. So there's an avenue by which you can say OK, the Student Instructional Council witnessed this, so then it's attached to the whole council, it's not attached to one student in the council. But something that I think needs to be solved in the sense of am I an evaluator or am I a builder of teachers. I think the goal should be to build an environment in which everybody is trying to improve, and there's not fear for your job if you're improving. You need to grow by having somebody say hey, maybe you should try this or that, or at least a process by which people are reflecting on their own practice consistently enough, with some accountability steps for them.

The goal is for teachers to be more reflective of what they do and how it influences and affects students. You know and what better way to do that then to get students to share their perspectives. I don't know, I tend to be a little more heavy handed in my want for feedback to go to certain people. You know, and I think Carla has done a wonderful job of maintaining a neutral diplomatic line. Which I think is essential if you are going to have students in class observing.

Alex's comments, in many ways, reflect the tenuous balance between constructive and critical feedback when addressing teaching. But importantly Alex's frustration with issues of

accountability and student voice illustrate the complex issues at play within adult-student collaborations and power dynamics.

How Adult-Student Collaborations May Increase Student Partnership in Informal Ways

While Data in a Day may have been influential in increasing the adult-student collaborations at Viewland, few teachers cited feedback from DIAD as influential in changing their practice. However, several teachers talked about specific student feedback from instructional memos that had been influential. Further, every teacher in this study cited the influential nature of the feedback they solicited from students within their own classrooms. Thus there may be a snowball effect of student voice at Viewland evident not only in the teacher initiated lesson study, but also in their interests in soliciting this informal student feedback and the frequency with which they did so. By informal feedback I mean the student responses teachers solicit from their students within their classrooms through surveys, polls, journals, and/or conversations. These informal avenues for student feedback are not part of any formal process at the school such as DIAD, SIC, or lesson study. While this study did not specifically address the question of how much, or how often teachers solicited student feedback on their own within their classrooms, many teachers self-reported that they now regularly provide students avenues to provide feedback regarding curriculum and classroom practice.

Jason's comments in the previous section about how formal adult-student collaborations at the school created a "friendship factor" may also be an indication that these improvements in teacher-student relationships can make it easier for teachers to solicit informal feedback from students in the classroom. In other words, if teachers see students participating regularly in providing instructional feedback they will be more likely to solicit instructional feedback from students in their classrooms. In this way the formal student involvement practices at Viewland

could be seen as multiplying occurrences of adult-student collaboration by eliciting student involvement in ways that are informal and ongoing. Additionally, when teachers see students paying attention to instruction they may expend more energy to make instruction more effective for students. Thus, in some senses, both teachers and students influence instruction and the classroom environment.

While teachers valued informal and formal student feedback strategies differently, it is possible that the presence and exposure to formal student feedback processes at the school contributed to an increase in informal student engagement. In soliciting feedback within their classrooms teachers could solicit targeted feedback as well as maintain control of the process.

Many teachers cited post project reflections as influential. Cathy notes:

I do a lot of informal check-ins. Like I will take a kid out into the hall if they're disengaged and try to figure out what is going on and see if they are receiving what they need from me. I use reflections every year, I change my project a little bit based on what my students are telling me about how it didn't work for them. I know one of the teachers here presented a project to the Intro to Teaching class and they really helped her revamp the project. She is a huge proponent of it. I am definitely interested in pursuing that in the future.

Here Cathy references the effect the solicitation of informal student feedback has on her practice.

Additionally, she notes the word of mouth endorsement for project vetting she received from

Allison. Even Tony, who felt you needed to take student feedback, "With a grain of salt"

reported finding informal student surveys helpful saying:

I like to listen to all kids. We do some reflections at the end of projects. I sometimes will throw out a question like hey, should I make this part optional? Should I do this? And then kids will have some feedback on it. So I think there are things either added or deleted or changed about specific projects based on feedback from students. One project I dropped entirely because I think I knew it was lame, and then they knew it was lame. It just wasn't--it wasn't very intrinsically motivating, to use the words. And so, yeah, it's been helpful. I try to stay open to student feedback.

Thus while Tony reports a certain amount of skepticism about student feedback he also reports a certain amount of influence it has on his practice.

Teachers cited informal feedback as a powerful motivator and a helpful tool to improve their instruction. In fact, it was the conviction of *all* teachers interviewed that their solicitation of student voice in their classrooms influenced their teaching greatly and the changes they made to their curriculum based on student feedback helped them feel successful. One teacher asserted that this feedback “helps make my experience with them much better.” Another noted, “I know that I am meeting their learning needs better when I am talking to them about it.” In this vein, interacting with students about instruction could aid in improving teacher efficacy as noted by McCombs (2003) in her finding that teachers who experience more collaboration with students feel more “connected and effective in their work” (p. 98).

While the various informal ways of seeking student feedback had clear potential benefits for both students and teachers, as described above, there was also the possibility that, if students didn't see results or action from their participation, they could become disillusioned or lose motivation to continue. While it is most likely beneficial for students to gain more opportunity to provide feedback regarding instruction, there are possible drawbacks to such avenues when not coupled with other more formal formats. As Dale notes, informal feedback may be highly relevant for teachers in constructing curriculum and instruction for future students, but:

I am not sure how much students experience the efficacy of their voice in that I don't know that they would say I really feel that my input has shaped what we do in here, but I do think that it is important that they do hear me say, I want to know what you think, and they do see that there have been some things that we have adjusted along the way based on some of what they have said.

Thus while this informal student feedback seems to touch on some of the phases of Fletcher's (2005) student voice cycle (listen, validate, authorize, act, reflect) and teachers can describe the

ways they have heard and acted upon what students have said, students may not feel the same way. Students who provide end of quarter or post project feedback to teachers might feel their responses dissipate into a vacuum. They most likely will not be able to see or describe how teachers have responded to their feedback, nor will they experience the changes their comments might initiate thus shortchanging any democratic benefits of the process. This aspect of adult-student partnership is one of the most problematic and difficult issues within student voice initiatives (Fielding, 2012 & 2001).

How Administrators and Intermediary Partners Viewed the Influence of Adult-Student Collaborations on Instruction and the School

Instructional partnerships between teachers and students at Viewland, beginning with Data in a Day, influenced instruction in ways that appeared to increase other opportunities for adult-student collaborations. For example, Carla recalled one point at which:

The language arts teachers organized a massive lesson study with about 10 students on the topic of how we could teach students to advocate for themselves in conferences. It was fascinating. It was a lesson study, using student voice, about how to amplify student voice in conferences with teachers.

In this way, teachers took the initiative to work in collaboration with students to improve teacher-student relationships. In doing so, they created a new structure for adult-student collaboration which intimately involved students in the creation of curriculum as well as the implementation and teaching of the lessons. The lesson study format was a strategy Grace had introduced as a professional learning practice. Yet including the students in the process and developing the topic of student advocacy was a new iteration of the practice.

Principal Sanders and the Assistant Principal both discussed cultural shifts at the school noting that the school atmosphere had changed dramatically. While data in this study cannot

correlate these changes to the implementation of adult-student collaborative practices at Viewland these administrators do. The Assistant Principal says:

A lot has changed as a result of our efforts to involve students more. I can tell you about some simple physical things like the amount of trash on campus. When we first moved into this building students immediately set about the task of defacing the school and intentionally breaking things. When we queried them about it they would say ‘well we are a south end school you know.’ They were not comfortable thinking of themselves a little differently. That has changed over time by involving them more, instead of treating it like a prison, truthfully. Also, our intentionality as a learning community had definitely improved. Intentionality around considering how we structure assignments. And again, all of that is through the lens of the student by hearing their feedback and the question of whose interest are we serving.

Principal Sanders asserted that because SIC student feedback was “targeted and concrete” teachers could use it to make changes, a fact she claimed to have witnessed. Lauren was able to provide an example of the ways the students in the Introduction to Teaching course had changed teacher behavior. In discussing the role the students in the class have as mentors to younger students she says:

One of the things that does come out of this is a lot of the mentors will hear from the mentees, ‘Oh I have issues with this math teacher,’ or whatever it might be. And then the mentor would go over to the math teacher and kind of play the facilitator and help the student work out an agreement with that teacher to make up work or rewrite papers or whatever.

This effect is possibly important in that it directly benefits students at the school who are struggling. In helping bridge divides between teachers and the students who are most in need of assistance the SIC students might possibly be impacting classrooms and the school on many yet unseen levels. In this way, these students are addressing issues of equity in schooling by bringing a voice, and some advocacy, to the disenfranchised students there. In recognizing this effect Carla says:

I do think they are exceptional in regarding the opinions of all students and at finding students that they don’t normally talk to when they interview students in

classrooms. They seek out perspectives that are not their own. No matter what their perception is of what's going on in a classroom they also listen to other students in that room and I think they do well at mining these variety of voices in any scenario.

Although it is often difficult to completely capture the broad and specific impact of this work, there is some evidence that Student Instructional Memos do impact instruction. Carla provided one example in which she debriefed with a teacher who had recently received an instructional memo after a classroom observation. The teacher noted that student feedback had prompted him to consider facilitating group work differently. Later, in an informal visit to the teacher's classroom Carla noted, "...he was actually trying to implement some tweaked suggestions from the instructional memo. So I've definitely seen teachers be influenced by student voice in their practice. Without question I can say that."

How Students Perceive the Influence of Adult-Student Collaborations on Teachers'

Behavior and Their Own

As we have seen, both teachers and administrators have cited adult-student collaborations as influences for their behavior and practice. Some of these assertions have been more specific than others and many tend to be general. There remains a difficulty for teachers to recall specific instructional changes they have made as a result of particular student feedback. Some of the difficulties teacher have in attributing changes in their practice may be a result of entrenched ideas about teachers as experts and other power related issues. As experts in the classroom, it could be difficult for teachers to assign specific instructional changes to student expertise. However, students had some examples of first hand observations of teacher change. Additionally, students themselves noted significant changes within their own behavior as a result of their participation in student-adult partnerships.

Changes in teachers' behavior as witnessed by students. Shawna provided several examples of changes that she observed over her three years of participation. Shawna clearly denotes some changes in teacher behavior as resulting from her feedback. She reports:

And I've actually seen things that people have done differently. So we'll go and check up on teachers and see if they do things differently, and I've actually seen them take some of my suggestions and put more wall work up, or do certain things in lessons that will interact with students. There was a teacher that was new to the school, and he didn't have a lot of wall work, he didn't have any norms on the wall. He didn't have a friendly environment-- it was just plain, blank, everything. There was nothing on the wall and it was already like April. I wrote in the letter, it would be better for your students if you had this, because I noticed that you don't have anything on your walls. We came in three weeks later, and we kind of go in by random, but not by random because we say we might come in. So, we came in and there was work everywhere, there were norms on the wall. It was just colorful and everything else...Just three weeks. It was about three weeks, yeah.

In this example we see a teacher, new to the school, who had taught almost eight months in a classroom with walls devoid of student work examples, norms, or other welcoming decor. After receiving this observation from the SIC students, Shawna noted a marked change in the classroom appearance.

Alysa noted a similar experience after sending a teacher an instructional memo. She says:

There was one teacher, like she wouldn't write the objective [of the lesson] and the why, who, and what we're doing this for on the wall. And so I said that maybe that would be better for students in what they were doing, they would do their work because I feel like if I know what I'm going to be doing. Then I'm going to do it. But if I don't know what I'm doing, I'm not going to do it. And it's a part of what you're supposed to do at Viewland anyway. And so we came in about a month later, and she actually had on the white board, objective: who, what, where, and why...She knew it was important to us.

Here Alysa notes specific changes this teacher made based on her recommendations. Her comments also reveal that her recommendations came from her experience as a student.

Further, in making note of the expectation that teachers at Viewland write the lesson objective on

the board, Alysa demonstrates competent observation and feedback techniques that align with the school improvement guidelines.

Another student, Jason, who also had participated in adult-student collaborations for three years, noted a shift in teacher's enthusiasm and openness to student feedback. He notes:

Every once and a while I have a teacher come up to me and be like, 'Hey can you come to my class and evaluate me?' That never used to happen. It felt good to know they want to improve themselves and when I give them suggestions and see them do it in class later or hear from a friend that they used my idea it is pretty cool.

Keenan provided another illustration of teacher behavior change when he noted:

Finals were coming up and a freshmen came up to me and she was like, 'My grade's not good in this class and I need to pass.' And then she didn't know how to advocate for herself to the teacher. So she asked me and I went to talk to the teacher and I realized it was one of her low grades was for professionalism that was worth 10 percent. And I end up talking to him and then using the proper advocacy methods, and he was like, 'Well, I know she's a good student and that she's asking people for help and stuff,' so he came up with a way for her to make some of it up. So that's one difference that I've seen – is if you speak up for yourself, the worst that can happen is things remain the same but you also have the ability to change the circumstances. If you can't advocate yourself in the proper manner, even with good intentions, you won't be heard. Now we can get our needs met and now we have a way to articulate ourselves better that's gonna be more socially acceptable.

This observation echoes Lauren's observation of SIC students advocating for other students.

However, it also illuminates that while some of the changes teachers make based on post project student feedback are not readily visible to all students, these student were able to witness concrete changes in their classrooms or teacher behavior that they perceived to be a result of their feedback or actions.

Several students had more general examples of the changes they had perceived at Viewland that they attributed to adult-student collaborations. Latonna noted:

Just the support from the teachers, like they're a lot more understanding than they used to be my freshman year, because maybe since it's a new school, everybody

was really rigid and strict and kind of uptight, like they didn't let us be students. They just made us be robots. And now they have to put student work on the walls, and they make it a friendly environment versus just come to class, do the work, and leave.

Additionally, Jason commented:

I have been doing this since I was a freshmen and a lot has changed. There is a lot more student work in the classrooms, art on the walls, a lot more collaborations with teachers, a lot more relationships, and everybody has the four R's in mind. We are making those four R's one R. R to the fourth power or something. Everything has benefited us in the classrooms. As a Junior now looking back I have to say it's an evolution that's going on here.

Changes in students' behavior experienced by students. In addition to citing changes in teacher behavior, students also noted changes in their own behavior. For example Muna explained, "If [teachers] see me as... a leader when I come visit a class, I know that is how I need to act when I am in the class." Muna's comments spotlight how participating in adult-student collaborations can influence student behavior. Here, Muna felt teachers held her to a higher standard due to her participation in adult-student collaborations. In this example we can view ways student and adult participation in collaborative activities can change both teacher expectations of students and subsequently student behavior.

Shawna also noted changes in her own behavior due to her participation in collaborative activities saying:

Before, I did the Student Instructional Council, I was more to myself and I didn't really venture out into the school or do anything or really want to go to games or anything. And so then after I did it my sophomore year, I started doing more things in school. And then I actually started going to basketball games and football games and being involved. And then my junior year I did student government, and so I was really involved. And before in class I would usually put my earphones in and I would listen to music and just do my work, turn it in, and then I would leave. And so then after that, I started speaking in class, raising my hand, and interacting.

Shawna's comments are a good example of the ways student-adult collaborations can influence students' commitment or attachment to school. Shawna not only reports an increase in extracurricular participation, but also her academic participation and engagement within the classroom setting.

Teachers also noted changes in the behavior of students who participated in Student Instructional Council or DIAD. One teacher mentioned she had a student who previously often skipped her class and with whom she had difficulty establishing a relationship. Once he began participating in Student Instructional Council she noted:

He still had his moments but every time, after one of those [classroom] visits, he was a different kid for a while. And it helped build the relationship between us. He's left us now, he goes to another school, but he still comes back to visit me. I didn't know we had that kind of relationships, but apparently we did.

These responses reflect the benefits these practices can have for the school in improved teacher-student relationships as noted in previous literature (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000; Cook-Sather, 2010; Fielding, 2001).

Pulling it Together: Adult and Student Comments in Relationship to Student Voice Literature

Through the accounts of the student and adults in this study we can see examples of both individual benefits and relational benefits. Many of the individual benefits such as "life skills," communication, cooperation, and dialogue, as discussed in Chapter 2, were visible in student comments about their changed outlook on school and their increased ability to be objective when approaching problems and situations. We could also see how students would acquire and use these skills through the project vetting process as they worked collaboratively with teachers to enhance or negotiate changes in curriculum. However, some of the most apparent changes in self-esteem and agency (Ruddock, 2007) were also evident in students. For example, when

students were asked to complete the sentence, “When I use my voice at school I...” they provided answers such as:

I feel empowered, especially when adults engage with me.

I felt like my opinions of things I had to say mattered.

I don't regret it. I feel confident about it.

I use different perspective, not only mine, but other peoples.

It gave everyone else a different outlook on things, like your opinion does matter.

I think about who I've impacted and who I've motivated to be able to speak up and use their voice, too-- who I've led.

I make sure that it's clear and very understandable so they'll get the point. So like they'll know what to do afterwards.

I really think about it because I really want my feedback to be useful.

Here these students provide examples of the confidence they have gained using their voice as well as the acknowledgement of the agency they feel as a result of using their voice.

The social and relational benefits of student voice were also evident in the data in this study. Teachers reported increases in respect for students after listening to their feedback. Similarly, students reported increases in respect for teachers as people and professionals after engaging with them in instructionally focused collaborations. In many ways engaging in these collaborations influenced student's views of education and both teacher and student's views of each other. These increased interactions between students and teachers outside the normal realm of the classroom appeared to help each party gain a better understanding of the other, as well as influencing what goes on in the classroom, in a way that was a positive experience for both student and teachers. In this way we may compare the effects to what Fielding (2012) refers to as “patterns of democratic fellowship.”

As mentioned previously, it can be difficult to link specific school climate changes to one specific factor. However, some of the functional benefits from adult-student collaborations at Viewland that were identified by study participants, included such things as improvement in student treatment of school facilities as noted by the Assistant Principal. Statistically school attendance was on the rise as were standardized test scores. Also, several students mentioned a warmer climate at the school visually, with “wall work” as well as a general feeling that teachers were more respectful, supportive, encouraging, and friendly. As Jason explained, the teachers seemed to be making the four “R’s” one “R” which in many ways references both the relational and academic aspects of the school climate. The issue of school climate is an important one, especially as it relates to student-adult relationships. For as Bryk and Schneider (2002) point out, schools with what they call high “relational trust” are likely to also make positive changes to improve academic achievement (Bryk et al, 2010). Thus, Jason’s “friendship factor” and the one “R” observations could be an important indicator of more to come.

This chapter has documented what students and adults at Viewland said about their experiences participating in adult-student collaborations, and the influences their participation had on their beliefs, motivations, and behavior. However, there are some issues that surfaced as I asked students to think about some of the things that were less certain. For example some of the things students wondered about were:

Who has something to say, and who wants to be heard, but is too afraid to say anything or speak up. Like I wonder what hinders them.

I want to know if it is taken seriously and acted upon.

I wonder about the impact it would make if every student were to use their voice.

If students are saying what they really mean. Because I think it is easy to filter what you’re thinking to what adults want to hear.

In the next chapter I will take up a discussion of some of these student wonders, as well as some of the wonders teachers mentioned, in relation to what we have heard from students and teachers at Viewland. Further, I will explore how some of these comments relate to the larger research questions of the study and for future directions of the work.

Chapter 6

Concluding Discussion

School reform discussions continue to evolve and researchers are increasingly examining the ways students can participate authentically in schools, through shared governance or by reframing what goes on in the classroom. As the analysis in the preceding two chapters implies, there are real individual, social, and organizational benefits that can result from instructionally focused youth-adult collaborations. Importantly these benefits extend to the adults involved and not solely student participants. However, as also suggested by the analysis, the process and practice of adult-student collaboration is complicated by factors such as adult openness and commitment to adult-student collaborations or organizational capital. The ability of schools to leverage available resources, to establish clear and consistent routines around adult-student collaborations, or to scale up such practices in a sustainable manner can present significant challenges to sustainability (Coburn, 2003). Student voice research has identified many possible benefits of adult-student collaborations, as well as important components to enhance such practices, such as by utilizing intermediary organizational support (Flint & O'Hara, 2013; Rubin & Silva, 2003; Ozer & Wright 2012; Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007; Cook-Sather, 2010; Mitra, 2008, 2009; Rudduck, 2007) However, there remains a need, which this study has addressed, to identify how schools can effectively leverage these resources to establish effective partnerships and foster such collaborations. Further, more detailed examples are needed of how to structure and sustain adult-student collaborations that have positive and possibly transformative impacts on adults, students, and instructional practice.

Given this knowledge gap, this study provides richer descriptive accounts of how adult-student collaborations are structured in schools that build adult and student capacity for future

collaborations, based on a critical case in which a process undertaken across an extended period of years built viable and impactful adult-student collaborations of various kinds in a struggling urban high school. In this setting, the study examines and identifies successful aspects of a school-intermediary organization partnership that encourages the development and support of adult-student collaborations, defines essential structures and behaviors for functional collaborations, and links shifts in behavior and classroom practice to such collaborations. As there is a need to explore these ideas specifically in historically underserved communities, this study takes such a school as its site of study and examines the feasibility and sustainability of these ideas in the reality of an urban high school environment. Details from examples such as this, build a growing body of knowledge about student voice in school reform, while also helping frame teacher education programs and informing school leaders who wish to foster organizational features that strengthen youth participation and encourage students to be active agents in the learning process.

This final chapter provides, first, a brief summary of the study findings organized in a way that highlights some of the points of interest in the study. These topics include productive qualities of the partnership between an intermediary organization and the school, participant perceptions of adult-student collaborations, the role trust and power play in these interactions, and the effects such partnerships have on students, adults, and instruction. Following this recap, I step back to explore what larger meaning we might make of these findings, including what can and cannot be learned from the study. Within this discussion I indicate the study's limitations, consider alternative explanations for findings, and identify unanswered questions and possible avenues for future research. Finally, I discuss what the study might contribute to current education research and practice.

Summary of Findings

The evidence reviewed in Chapters 4 and 5 hints at a set of teacher-student collaborative practices that have guided teachers and students in this case toward enhancing and changing their beliefs about one another as well as shifting their instructional practice. While not generalizable, these findings may be important when considered with the ultimate goal of creating more powerful and equitable schools. Fuller, more definitive evidence of this learning would require a more expansive study design, better pre and post measures, and a larger sample of participants, among other things. Yet, emerging from the data that has been collected thus far are glimpses of change in teaching practices, and growth in teachers' and students' articulation of the positive impact of teacher-student instructional collaboration. This suggests that a transformative process may be at work in the school's sequence of adult-student collaborative interactions and that practices such as Data in a Day, Student Instructional Council memos, and student participation in lesson studies and project vetting may be instrumental in shaping this experience. Further, evidence suggests that Viewland's partnership with a university professor, throughout several leadership changes, was important in developing and establishing these practices as norms within the school. Below I will recap the clues that data from the study offer about the nature and potential effects of the school-intermediary organizational partnership and the resulting adult-student collaborative practices.

Characteristics of the School-University Partnership at Viewland

The partnership between Viewland and Professor Grace Walker demonstrated considerable staying power, given that the relationship lasted over several years and spanned three different principals. When Grace was invited to partner with Viewland initially, as well as throughout the partnership, she received no monetary compensation for the work. Yet, Grace's

description of the partnership as “reciprocal” and “interpersonal” indicates that there was a mutual benefit. Grace and the university benefited by using the school as a learning site for university students while being motivated by the interpersonal relationships she established with the faculty and students at Viewland. The school benefited in that Grace brought an extensive background of working in high-poverty schools, which afforded her a familiarity with the types of challenges Viewland faced as well as the strengths the school had on which to build. This familiarity allowed some level of trust among administrators and faculty there and helped foster an environment that encouraged innovation. Among the important roles she played at the school were “vision holder” and “problem solver,” in that she provided a consistent direction for school improvement based on student learning and motivation and that she found solutions and resources to continue the work as in the way she helped to establish the Introduction to Teaching class. Additionally, the opportunities Grace provided for faculty, students, and parents from Viewland to present and share their work helped build support for continued innovation.

Carla, the Academic Dean, and other faculty members at Viewland found Grace’s style of partnership effective in several ways. First, Grace’s flexibility and ability to adapt to the school’s established systems and throughout its transformation to a STEM school were noted as a valuable attribute for a trustworthy partnership. Second, students, teachers, and administrators at Viewland found Grace’s informal nature and accessibility beneficial to the partnership. Grace’s presence at the school on a weekly basis allowed for this type of interaction. Third, Grace’s adaptability, given her understanding of the fast paced nature of urban school environments as well as her respect for the pressures of school leadership, allowed her to continue her work at Viewland in cooperation with school administrators while not requiring large commitments of their time.

Range of Perceptions about the Practice and Processes of Adult-Student Collaboration

Although Data-in-a-Day illuminates some of the ways in which student participation in instructional improvement is influential and evolving, an analysis of all of the structures for student participation at Viewland points to the complexity of each stage of implementation. For example, while data indicate that teachers felt the practices were generally beneficial, their conceptual and pragmatic knowledge of the practices varied. Most of the variation occurred in teachers' understanding of the purpose and process of each feedback cycle. Additionally, teacher perceptions of students as collaborators appeared to be malleable over time.

All teachers in this study thought it was important for students to have a say in their educations, and they viewed student participation as valuable and desirable. However, the level of confidence in student ability to participate as collaborators differed among teachers and appeared to increase with the level of experience teachers had in collaborating with students. The increase in teacher confidence in students as collaborators seemed most evident in the teachers who came to the idea of student collaboration in the center of the medium, or rather with an open mind that student collaboration could be valuable. Once these teachers participated in a Data in a Day event with students, or received an instructional memo from SIC, they noted some surprise at the students' ability to provide such high-quality comments.

The Role of Trust and Power in Teacher-Student Collaborations

Among the teachers who initially expressed apprehension regarding student-teacher collaboration, matters of trust and control were evident. Teacher perspectives about students as collaborators, or rather teacher perceptions of student willingness and ability to engage in instructional dialogue, affected teachers' ability to trust students in such endeavors. The concept of trust also contributed to the already complicated power dynamics present in school, where

teachers traditionally hold authority and teaching expertise. Thus many teachers expressed a desire to control the process by having some say about which students provided them feedback or at least knowledge of how students were chosen to do so and what training they had been given to enable them to provide instructional feedback.

Teachers in this study communicated a desire to receive feedback from students in their classes who were less vocal or the “quiet students.” However, given that these were students they most likely had less trust in as they were students the teachers had not been able to cultivate a relationship with, it presented somewhat of a “catch 22.” In this way teachers expressed a desire to learn what quiet students might say about their classroom experience but at the same time expressed a sense of skepticism about these students’ ability to provide useful feedback given their apparent detachment in the classroom.

Student data did not corroborate the concerns of teachers who have reservations about instructional feedback from youth. An analysis of interview transcripts and observation notes corroborates other research by providing consistent evidence of students’ skill and confidence discussing instruction, curriculum, and assessment (Cook-Sather, 2003; Fielding, 2001; Rudduck, 2007; Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007). Importantly, some of the students in the study could have been considered those quiet students teachers wanted to hear from. Further, student collaborators at Viewland used instructional vocabulary that closely aligned with established professional criteria for instructional observations. Thus students in the study depicted both confidence and competence while engaging in adult-student collaborations. Additionally, students on Student Instructional Council appeared to offer one solution to giving voice to the “quiet students” in that many of them indicated an ability to bring voice to a wide range of students by taking care to solicit the opinions, in classrooms, from different types of students. In

this way SIC students asserted that they were able to obtain raw feedback from students that might otherwise not be offered to adults.

Influence of Adult-Student Collaborations on Outlooks, Behaviors, and Classroom Practice

Even though many teachers already had certain well-developed adult-learning skills (for example, working with one another in professional learning communities) teachers indicated and demonstrated changes in thinking about students and their teaching. In spite of some early reservations, most teachers in this sample indicated a heightened focus on making learning relevant, willingness to experiment with new ways to engage a range of learners (for example, in small group work), and a desire and hopefulness for continued ongoing collaboration. Teachers who came to the idea of student collaboration with an open mind often used the experience of instructionally focused adult-student collaborations to reflect on their teaching and the experience of students in their classroom. This form of reflection often led to subtle shifts in instructional delivery or the addition of new avenues for teachers to solicit student feedback within the classroom environment.

Several teachers noted taking the initiative to customize instruction to meet students' specific challenges or needs, and consistently attributed positive instructional changes to their experiences with students as instructional partners. Some teachers used student feedback to make specific changes in curriculum projects or to try different innovations within their instruction. In some cases, teachers found much needed affirmation about their practice in student comments (McCombs, 2003). Research has documented similar effects of teacher-student collaborations on teacher, learning, behavior, motivation, and practice (Little, 1999; McIntyre et. al., 2005; Cook-Sather, 2006, 2010; Lincoln, 1995; Oldfather & Thomas, 1998). Additionally, practices

such as Data-in-a-Day allowed Viewland teachers to see other aspects of students, when observed in other classrooms, revealing strengths that were maybe not visible to them before.

Student behavior was also affected by their participation in adult-student collaborations. Many students in the sample recounted how they embedded in their daily lives the ideas they were encountering through instructional conversations. They did so increasingly over time, such that the students who had completed two or more years of involvement communicated the referent of instructional feedback to teachers as pivotal influences on their relationships with teachers, their motivation to learn, and their goals for their future careers.

Students noted their participation in adult-student collaboration as providing them with increases in confidence and ability to communicate with a wide array of individuals. Other acquired skills included practice in reserving judgment and approaching situations without bias. Students also reported gaining a better understanding of the educational process, pedagogical techniques, curriculum theory, and of their role as learners. These new perspectives and skills changed the way students interacted with peers and teachers inside and outside the classroom. For when teachers and other students at the school had the opportunity to see them in the role of instructional collaborator, it had the potential to change how they behaved in class.

What the Viewland Case Tells Us about Establishing and Sustaining

Teacher-Student Collaborations in Urban High School Settings

Viewland represents a site, like many busy urban schools, with multiple and changing priorities. The intermediary partnership between Grace and the various different administrators likely withstood these changes because teachers and faculty there noted that the focus on student learning, adult learning, and student-adult relationships was more than the usual surface reform. Often school reform focuses on curriculum materials or school and classroom organization. The

approach that Grace employed recognized that school change can and should be a convergence of multiple resources. However, the complexity of educational reform, and the difficulty of capturing concrete changes, can sometimes make it easy to underestimate the work. This difficulty is often compounded within high-poverty schools where stakes are high and resources are scarce. The following section highlights what Viewland's development and implementation of instructionally focused adult-student collaborations can tell us about the process of designing such collaborations, as well as what this can tell us about reform and education in urban schools in general.

The Critical Role of Intermediary Partnership in Establishing the Norms and Practice of Adult-Student Collaboration

The extent to which adult-student collaborations developed and took root at Viewland would most likely not have been possible without the partnership between the school and Professor Grace Walker. In Viewland we can glimpse the genesis and development of student involvement and teacher-student collaboration relative to how teachers and students experienced their mutual participation in instructional improvement. In many ways the partnership between Viewland and the university aided in establishing instructional transparency and collaboration as cultural norm of the school. As such broad-based student participation in adult-student collaborations was consistent with the school-wide expectation of transparent and continual instructional improvement. Students and teachers were cognizant of this norm, as demonstrated by the relative comfort and lack of surprise they demonstrated as visitors filtered in and out of classrooms for observations.

The partnership style and practice Grace employed at Viewland was especially effective in fostering teacher buy-in, collaboration, and innovation. Part of this could be due to an attitude

of collective experimentation where she was ready to jump in and help teachers try new ideas, while at the same time adding important suggestions, such as including students in more authentic ways. This level of collegiality and Grace's adaptability to local context helped build trust with the teachers and administrators at Viewland. As Grace herself notes, if school partners represent their work in a way where they indicate that they always know what they are doing, or what the proper course of action is for any given situation, it does a disservice to the complexity of educational reform and can serve to alienate those working in schools. A key factor in the functioning and practice of the partnership, as noted by both Grace and by teachers at Viewland, was the development of ownership and local control of new practices. Grace used the term "capacity building" to describe the way she included faculty and students in the planning and facilitation of practices such as Data in a Day and noted this as a way to develop a leadership team with clear lines of responsibility around examining and improving instruction at the school. Carla noted this type of inclusion as a way to develop a shared stake in the process.

While the concept of student voice can sometimes conjure images of bottom-up reforms, where students bring forth issues of concern and are given resources to make change, there is also the reality that adults cannot simply relinquish control entirely or simply listen to students without engendering some form of collective action. The idea of adult-student collaborations addresses this gap but, like at Viewland, *it is a process that must be taught, learned, and practiced* by all involved. Student participation in school improvement can be rather tokenistic if adults are unprepared to engage with students on such topics (Fielding, 2004; Hart, 1992; Mitra, 2006; Ruddock, 2001). Furthermore, if both students and adults are not allowed safe arenas to try these collaborations out, giving way to new ideas and suggestions to strengthen the process, the practice could stagnate. Given the highly charged nature of adult-student collaboration rooted in

power paradigms, a safe arena for practicing these new interactions can prove fruitful. At Viewland Grace helped to provide this environment by serving as an important resource, confidant, and source of encouragement for faculty, administration, and students who were venturing to attempt new forms of partnership between adults and students. She provided additional avenues and resources to help prepare adults and youth to engage in collaborative activities by providing thoughtful structuring of activities and meetings, and by serving as a facilitator at key events. This pattern of ongoing support suggests a larger need in such school settings: *some source of neutral support, offered through an intermediary partnership (or some equivalent arrangement), appears to serve a critical role in the process of establishing the norms and practice of adult-student collaboration in an urban high school of this sort.*

Fostering an Open and Committed Disposition to Student Collaboration

The support of the intermediary partnership enabled several developments within the school that reveal what it may take for adult-student partnerships to take root. In order to structure authentic collaborative interactions between adults and students, the educators moved to a disposition in which they genuinely felt students might offer valuable insights, or that they were in some way seeking student collaboration—some reached this disposition more quickly than others, and some never really got there. But attaining this disposition, at least in some degree, made it possible for there to be real action based on the exchange. However, as Damiani (2014) asserts, “many adults, who don’t share the same backgrounds as their urban students, struggle to view students as collaborators that can potentially inform their practice” (P. 202). Further, teachers may often not be willing to listen to students, who they view as possessing no academic/educational or social capital. Such a stance presents a dilemma in providing instructional environments to engage these students. This dilemma is complicated by the fact that

no matter how good student feedback might be, it will only be “heard”, understood, and acted upon if the teachers are responsive to it (McIntyre, Pedder, & Rudduck, 2005).

Teachers at Viewland who exhibited a traditional mindset regarding adults’ and students’ roles in instruction—who thus did not initially attribute much value to instructionally focused student feedback—could still envision ways it could be beneficial. However, without first-hand experience engaging in structured adult-student collaborations, they remained skeptical of student ability to provide “useful” feedback. In contrast, teachers on the progressive end of the spectrum of viewpoints regarding adult and student roles—who thus were initially open to collaborating with students—found that adult-student collaborations did not go far enough in structure or accountability. These teachers wanted adult-student collaborations to be more structured or consistent, and they were vocal proponents for student collaboration. One teacher communicated her positive experience with project vetting to the entire staff and encouraged others to try it. Another teacher felt there could be more teacher accountability to address the feedback they received from students. Thus while all teachers appeared to value student input, the extent to which they were committed to the practice varied. This range in commitment to adult-student collaborations suggests that with some form of structured encouragement and safe arenas to experiment with partnerships, even the somewhat resistant teachers might be willing to engage in such collaborations, with the support of administrators for the practice and the example of other teacher colleagues.

The findings of this study reinforce the idea that, *as teachers become aware of student preparation to engage in such collaborations, their interest in participating in adult-student collaboration increases*. Research has demonstrated that adult allies, who are capable and ethical, are an important factor in building student capacity to engage with adults in

collaborations and they may also be influential in encouraging other teachers to explore student-adult collaborations as a way to improve instruction (Mitra & Gross, 2009). Teachers need help not only in beginning to view students as collaborators, but they also need support to interpret the feedback students offer. A developed cadre of adult allies within the school and administration can help faculty navigate these interactions.

It is within the delicate balance of power between adults and students in school that we might find new ways to create reforms that take root. The key to successful adult-student collaborations often falls to key adults within the school regarding the organizational capital they pose to generate an interest or desire on the part of other adults at the school to engage in such collaborations as well as the power and flexibility they have in preparing students and adults to participate in collaborative activities. This is especially true if there are many teachers who fall on the traditional end of the spectrum of viewpoints regarding teachers' and students' roles in instruction, as discussed in Chapters 4 & 5. One solution to addressing this initial hurdle is to address underlying beliefs or assumptions that might be held by teachers regarding the perceived competence of student ability to collaborate with adults and adult preconceived notions of students' authority to have some say in their school experience (Damiani, 2014).

Thus while looking to external partners for support in initiating new forms of adult-student collaborations, looking to adult allies within the school to establish these practices in authentic and transformational ways is equally important. As Coburn (2003) notes, to implement or scale-up reforms within a school, the underlying beliefs, assumptions, and norms also need to be addressed throughout the school. Norms include, "teacher and student roles in the classroom, patterns of teacher and student talk, and the manner in which teachers and students treat one another" (p. 5). These norms are particularly important in fostering authentic communication

between students and adults where students feel they can say what they really mean and believe that what they say will be taken seriously. School leadership, teacher leaders, and those the leaders partner with, can be important in serving as an example of the way adults can include students in authentic ways. In this way visible adults within the school can model appropriate action based on student feedback. This action may empower other students to speak up and to feel safe doing so. Here, too, their capacity to develop and embody an open and committed disposition towards student collaboration appears to play a role.

At Viewland the administrative leadership, including the Academic Dean Carla who prior to assuming this position was a Language Arts teacher at the school, continually made efforts to lead by example in that they included students in administrative learning walks and in presentations to district and other officials. Further, Professor Walker invited students to shadow her at the university and to present to university students in the courses she taught. The examples these school leaders and partners provided may have aided in fostering a predisposition or openness to the value student collaboration can have for the larger school population. In this way faculty at the school could move beyond experimenting with student collaborations, into concrete structures that might be capable of affecting change. In many senses, when the school principal and its assistant principals model a willingness to include students and address their perceptions, it helps build relationships between students and adults. In this way the practices legitimize student agency in that they not only serve as an example to faculty members but they also serve to strengthen the opportunities for reform within their school (Damiani, 2014).

In many ways, Viewland's partnership with Professor Walker initiated a shift in faculty's perceptions of the value of student feedback by opening the door to student collaboration through whole school practices such as Data in a Day that included students providing feedback in safe

arenas. This initial feedback was safe in that it was not tied to specific faculty members and as such teachers could experience the types of observations students might offer about instruction without being on the defensive. This experience was magnified when teachers served as team members with students throughout this kind of event.

In summary, key actors in positions to exercise influence within the school—from the intermediary partners, school leaders, to other staff who are the early proponents of student voice—can do much to foster open and committed dispositions to student collaboration. As such, they offer a model as well as a kind of collegial peer pressure towards making adult-student partnerships a regular feature of school life.

The “Multiplier Effect” of Improvements in Teacher-Student Relationships

Given open dispositions on the part of adults and beginning demonstrations of what adult-student collaborations can look like, the case of Viewland suggests that momentum develops and has a “multiplier effect” on the quality and reach of subsequent adult-student collaborations. Instructional collaborations between teachers and students at Viewland influenced instruction and other aspects of the school governance in ways that appear to snowball. As students began to experience teachers’ willingness to listen, and possibly be swayed by their feedback, they became more confident and open to talking about learning in deeper and more personal ways with adults. Concurrently, when students are afforded an opportunity to reveal that they have worthwhile things to say about instruction, and that they can communicate these appropriately to teachers, adults are more apt to find the courage to continue to seek out these opportunities to collaborate with students. In many ways this may occur as a result of increases in positive relational characteristics between students and teachers affording them both a new level of respect for each other that contributed to improved communications.

The practice of Data in a Day was one of the first avenues to include students within examining classroom practice at Viewland. The practice could be contentious at times and the faculty often desired more detailed or individual feedback. However, the implementation of Data in a Day, with the inclusion of students as collaborators, fostered a school environment that encouraged educators to experiment with designing new ways to achieve student buy-in and student collaboration. By introducing the idea of students as possible sources of instructional feedback and collaborative partners in instructional improvement, teachers were able to envision a new role for students. Some of the new practices that emerged at Viewland, such as lesson study, Student Instructional Council and project vetting, included students as collaborators in increasingly authentic ways. Thus while particular activities were noteworthy for adult learners (for example, Data in a Day or Student Instructional Council memos) and though different experiences stood out, depending on the individual, all teachers indicated student-adult collaborations as influential in their learning.

This phenomenon is echoed in other researchers' observations, as well as action research studies that suggests a powerful connection between students and teachers that has so far been underutilized (Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007; Kane & Chimwayange, 2013). These studies find that disruptions in the entrenched educational and classroom roles could open the door to transformations in classroom and administrative practices. Just as some teachers at Viewland found new ways to include students through practices such as project vetting, teachers in Kane and Chimwayange's (2013) study, "saw an opportunity to enlist student collaboration in deciding how to approach new areas of study,"(p.10) whereas they would have previously done this planning independently. In fact, all teachers in their study developed new practices as a result of collaborating with students. However, to capitalize on this snowball effect, systems and

structures to create a supported and sustained approach to adult-student collaborations could be helpful. Like any new practice, it cannot become a school norm unless it occurs frequently, as a part of professional learning and in ways where students can see patterns in teachers as well.

Consistent Communication of Purpose and Process

Along with the issue of shifting school norms and addressing underlying teacher beliefs about the potential of adult-student collaborations, *several other factors help to establish consistent and continual application of such practices: a clearly communicated description of the purpose behind collaborations and a defined and established structure for engaging in the practices.* Further, if faculty are involved in the planning process, then those who may be initially resistant or wary of adult-student collaboration might buy-in to the process. For example, students and teachers who have taken part in developing collaborative structures and who participate in communicating this to other students and staff members might have more success in establishing the school's perception of the practices as a form of personal and professional growth. Within this transparent communication, leaders could message a clear definition of growth versus evaluation. In this way the fear of constructive criticism used as formal evaluation (with possible consequences for the staff member) could be alleviated. While assuring faculty collaborators that student participants are not there to serve in an evaluative role, student participants may also benefit from clarity around their collaborative roles without diminishing the importance of their partnership. In the absence this type of communication, vetting of new practices, including faculty and student comment in their development, some teachers may continue to be dismissive of student collaboration or otherwise feel threatened.

Given the complexities of establishing a collectively understood conceptualization of the purpose of adult-student collaborations and the process by which they might occur, it may seem

to be an impossible feat. However, there exist many possibilities for alleviating these barriers. Some solutions include administrative example, where school leaders include students in their feedback cycles, and by first hand demonstration of the practices, such as inviting or including otherwise resistant teachers as observers in practices such as Data in a Day where they can experience first-hand how students might experience their school days and begin to learn more about what that means to students outside of their own classroom. Of these two techniques the latter may have been underutilized at Viewland.

The teachers in this study who were most resistant to adult-student collaborations were the teachers who had the least amount of experience collaborating with students. A minimal expectation that *all* teachers participate in a practice like Data in a Day, alongside trained student collaborators, could prove a safe and helpful way for schools to develop a new and collective belief that student participation and feedback could aid in improving instructional practice. Such a belief seems an essential first step. Further, as a teacher at Viewland noted, the effects of such experiences have an organic effect on making teachers begin to think of new ways to include students in their own classroom environments as they gain comfort and confidence with the concept of collaboration. For as Mezirow (2000) notes, transformation occurs with a reframing of experience. This “reframing” seems to occur organically when students trained in instructional pedagogy interact with educators outside the power confines of classroom walls.

Clarity around the process and establishment of a consistent and feasible structure, for adult-student collaborations remained a concern at Viewland. Most teachers at Viewland noted that they felt the staff there was already open and willing to have students heavily involved in aspects of planning and instructional feedback, yet the barrier of scheduling and scarcity of time remained a persistent challenge. One teacher suggested having a portion of professional

development days set aside for project vetting to the Student Instructional Council students. Yet there would remain a concern of how to solidify student attendance during non-instructional time.

As students in this study noted, they often participated in adult-student partnerships at their own prerogative, negotiating complex and compact schedules with work, family, studies and extracurricular activities. *While many student participants found intrinsic value in their participation in adult-student collaborations, adults may want to consider that this could be abused or taken for granted. The reward of compensation for student time is often equally important as compensation for adults.* The establishment of the Introduction to Teaching course at Viewland proved an important step in addressing these issues, yet an evolution and solidification of future collaborations could prove beneficial.

Complexities of Power Dynamics

Improvements in the communications around purpose and process of adult-student collaborations could serve to alleviate many of the issues that arise from such interactions due to power dynamics. As Fielding notes (2004), as of yet, “there are no spaces, physical or metaphorical, where staff and students meet one another as equals, as genuine partners in the shared understanding of making meaning of their work together” (p. 309). In the establishment of formal spaces and structures for adult-student collaborations, there comes more flexibility and willingness to engage in collaborative practices. However, as demonstrated by Viewland teachers’ interest in which students participate and how they are chosen, providing adults some idea of the ways students are prepared to engage in such efforts can go a long way towards reassuring reluctant or wary adults. This doubt in student capability to provide relevant feedback may account for the lack of concrete examples of instructional changes on behalf of teachers. It

may also be that educators are still reluctant to attribute shifts in practice to collaborative experiences they have had with youth.

The reluctance some adults might feel in attributing professional decisions about practice and curriculum to student input may be related to ingrained power dynamics which establish clear roles of expert and learner. Thus, in an effort to maximize the momentum towards goals of shared ownership of learning, more could be done to communicate to adults how students are prepared to engage in collaborative practices and how they come to be prepared to participate. As one teacher noted, every student and adult involved should have some idea why such practices are encouraged at the school and how they can be important for instructional practice.

The Perils and Possibilities of Expectations, Evaluation, and Efficacy

The implementation of Data in a Day at Viewland presented a new avenue of faculty and administrators to collaborate and receive feedback from students, parents, and other community members. Yet the novelty of such an opportunity seemed to wear off for teachers eventually and a call for increased or individualized feedback was apparent. While most teachers were clear they did not want to discount the value Data in a Day had for larger school and community outcomes, many wanted to find ways to funnel feedback to their own classrooms. These feedback desires seem to suggest that the current system of professional growth and evaluation is flawed, and suggest possible improvements in it. Teachers often operate in an environment that can, at times, seem lonely and that does not lend itself to regular feedback. Given that reality, when feedback comes, or is offered, it can be jarring and at times threatening. It would seem a new professional norm would be in order, or as one Viewland teacher noted, a way to get tougher skins. In some senses student feedback can offer not the need for tougher armor but a much needed opportunity for affirmation. Teaching can be lonely and it is not often enough that

educators are able to confirm, in non-standardized ways, that they are on the right track in their practice. Student feedback and adult-student collaboration can add some of this aspect into the educational equation. As researchers have found some teachers find a much needed affirmation from students comments they express a sense of relief in knowing the other perspective of the individual on the other side of the desk.

While it is essential that teachers and students understand that adult-student collaborations around instruction are non-evaluative, it might not be entirely detrimental to expect that students, at some point, play a role in evaluation. Nor would it seem fanatical to expect that educators engage in some form of safe feedback and interchange with their students. It is here that the line can become tricky and the role of administrators becomes paramount. Both administrators and teacher leaders can play important roles in creating and articulating non-threatening expectations around participation in various forms of adult-student collaborations. It seems that one key to navigating this pathway successfully is to lead by example, give a voice to the teachers who have found such experiences helpful, and by illustrating the ways students can broaden adult perspectives and develop new ways of knowing for both parties. Through these efforts there may emerge new avenues of communication between teachers, administrators and students about what they want and need from collaborations. These communications, in turn would serve to solidify and strengthen such practices. In this way, teachers who are already finding benefits to adult-student collaborations can continue to push their practice while teachers who are maybe still testing the water can find ways to experiment without peril.

Alternative Interpretations and Limitations of Study Findings

As with most studies there are alternative explanations to consider regarding the findings of the study. For example, as a graduate student, affiliated with the university at which Grace

Walker was employed, it is possible that teachers and students presented me with data that they perceived I wanted to hear. Also, the need to sample participants who had enough experience engaging in adult-youth partnerships to comment on the process also created somewhat of a dilemma, in that in many senses some of these individuals could be those that may already have subscribed to the idea of youth-adult collaboration. Thus, in essence, there may have been some semblance of preaching to the choir. However, within the range of participants in the sample were individuals who represented an outlier perspective as well as some who were new to Viewland and adult-student collaborations and may not have been aware of the history the school had in partnership with the university. Given this sample diversity and the kinds of reactions they described about their experiences in adult-student collaborations, it could be difficult to imagine that the whole of these were concocted for my benefit.

Another sample concern is that, while this study examined the perspectives of a group of students and teachers at Viewland, participant perspectives may not necessarily be reflective of the general student or teacher population. In effect, the study attempted to maximize what is learned from those who become most engaged in adult-student collaborations, those who had an ability to observe these collaborations in action, or those who were most affected by them. Descriptions of individual experience of teacher-student collaborations varied within the sample and thus could vary greatly within the larger school population. Thus, it could be that the sample of students and teachers in this study were not actually representative of a larger trend in acceptance and innovation with adult-student collaborations. Yet my observations of larger staff meetings and my historical knowledge of other teachers within the school suggest that the opinions and experiences of the students and teachers in the sample were widespread. A larger sample would be one way to make this assumption more apparent. Further, it was difficult to

obtain a sample of participants who had participated in *all* forms of student-adult collaborations at the school, thus introducing additional sample variability.

A continuing difficulty, given the constraints of this study, was in linking changes in teacher and student behavior and instructional practice to their participation in adult-student collaborations. This study relies mainly on subject's reflective self-report, although I was able to collect these views at different points in time across several years, and could corroborate self-report with a limited amount of participant observation across time. Additional interview and observational evidence would need to be collected, and perhaps pre- and post-instances of adult-student collaborations, to more specifically and fully nail down if and how changes in behavior occurred after engaging in collaborative experiences. While in-depth, two-time-point data detailing perspectives before and after collaborative experiences might be idealistic given teacher turnover and student mobility, it would nonetheless be valuable.

Finally, my analysis, with its focus on the partnership between Viewland and Grace Walker might underestimate the impact of other instructional renewal experiences occurring at the school throughout the same years as the university partnership. For example, throughout the time frame of this study Viewland underwent a conversion to a project-based STEM school. Similar content based approaches were also being facilitated, among teachers of mathematics for example, that employed collegial collaboration and observation. The instructional and collaborative changes that accompanied these efforts have not been accounted for in this study. That said, these other renewal experiences were not explicitly designed or enacted to feature student voiced in any extended way, so they are unlikely to explain how teachers or students viewed their respective participation in partnership relationships.

Unanswered Questions and Possible Future Research

Even with the longitudinal perspective of this study, there are many more questions that arise regarding the future of adult-student collaborations at Viewland, especially around the issue of sustainability. While adult-student collaborations at Viewland grew, multiplied, and evolved throughout the period of this study, it remains to be seen if and how they might continue to do so. This is important to consider given that the intermediary partnership between Viewland, Grace Walker, and the University is now mostly defunct. Subsequent to the conclusion of this study Professor Walker accepted a new position in a different state across the country. While she and Carla may maintain some form of collegial and social communications there is no formal interaction between Grace and the faculty at Viewland. In light of this break in formal partnership it is relevant to note that Viewland has continued implementing several forms of adult-student collaboration. For example, in a recent email communication with Carla, she indicated that the school had plans to facilitate an upcoming Data in a Day event and that the school continued to aspire to facilitate at least two such events per year. Given that Principal Sanders has since retired, bringing a new principal into the school, and that the partnership between Grace and Viewland is now defunct, this is no small feat. It could be important to follow the ways this practice, as a flagship practice bringing in students and adults as collaborators on instructional feedback, continues under yet another leadership change.

That said, the Viewland case suggests that the norms and practices established under the supportive umbrella of an intermediary partnership may be sustained over time, beyond the end of that partnership. Consider the fact that the Introduction to Teaching course is (at the time of this paper) still in place and continues to be taught by Lauren. Further, Lauren now receives compensation for her work at Viewland. Thus the school found the course viable and valuable

enough to invest in its continuance. Additional inquiry into the ways students in this course are trained to engage in adult-youth collaborations, and the roles they take in other aspects of instructional renewal at the school, in absence of Grace as a course collaborator, would also prove illuminating regarding issues of sustainability.

Setting aside questions of sustainability and future actions at Viewland there also remain unanswered questions about the present functioning of adult-student collaboration at Viewland. For example, if teachers who express hesitation to adult-student practices are invited to participate in instances of Data in a Day or project vetting would they accept the invitation? Further, would the experience of collaborating with trained students from Student Instructional Council create a transformative experience for these teachers that might change their beliefs about students or influence their practice? Or might they use the experience to further reinforce their established beliefs about the value of students as instructional collaborators? Additionally, while the tone of Student Instructional Council student training is non-evaluative, why is it that students continue to speak about their work as collaborators in an evaluative manner?

Within this study, several findings invite further examination. For example, it could prove helpful to explore the value students attribute to the more sanctioned or “formal” practices of adult-student collaboration in contrast to the influential nature with which teachers referred to the “informal” interactions and the extent to which these informal interactions increases within classrooms. Such a differential in attributed value, and the perceived reasons behind this discrepancy, might prove helpful for others when conceptualizing new structures for adult-youth collaborations as they are both clearly important in different ways to both parties. It may be significant, if possible, to document any changes in instructional practice as a result of such collaborations. For it may be this “unseen” multiplier effect that influences school culture and

reform more than other practices. For while research supports the benefits student voice activities have for students, such as increased agency, attachment to school, increased effort in classroom interactions, new understanding of the complexity of teaching and learning—we could focus more on the benefits these practices also bring adults, and the situation of school within the community. Along these lines, it could prove interesting to explore if and how much student participation in adult-student collaborations within the school affect parental involvement at the school.

Research has indicated that students often lend voice and attention to social justice issues such as race, gender, and socioeconomic class that adults often shy away from. In this way adult-student collaboration may be a key to establishing more equitable schooling environments, or at least heightening attention to equity concerns. However, the educational research community may need to provide more credence to student voice within the academic realm. Researchers often tend to neglect student perspectives given the difficulties documenting these perspective can sometimes entail. However, we could enrich the school reform debate greatly by doing more to legitimize the value of student experience by asking students more, and repeatedly, about the reform work going on within their schools.

Finally, the viability of a shared ownership for learning in schools seems to emanate from some form of policy and school leadership. In this vein it seems important to explore how the new understandings adult-student collaborations provide about the educational experience can inform the ways in which we think about educational leadership, organizational culture, curriculum theory, and teacher education.

Concluding Comments: Possible Uses for the Study

While there may be a continual need to document and categorize various aspects of adult-student collaborations and the challenges and benefits they entail, it remains more important to legitimize this work for the pragmatic value it offers the students and teachers who reside daily in schools. Given the ability of students to advocate and give voice to a range of students, and each other, this work could be important for students who are in schools that are considered traditionally underserved. In these schools students may be more likely to lack the social capital, skills, or confidence to communicate effectively with adults who are in positions of authority. This study also provides an example that may be of use to others who are looking to design new organizational routines and infrastructures for instructional improvement that include students as partners. Further, by contributing another example of adult-student collaborations to the literature we can begin to address how to construct programs that work under a wide range of circumstances.

School reform grinds ever forward yet as Cook-Sather (2002) notes, “Decades of school reform have not succeeded in making schools places where all young people want to and are able to learn” (p. 9). Further, it is not entirely clear that our schools are places adult educators want to spend their careers either. It may be time to spend energy and expertise to prime the ground for students and teachers to find equally enriching and fulfilling experiences. For school reform to move forward it would be beneficial to include students as participants. To do this, teachers, students, and the public might need to re-envision what the roles of student and teacher entail (Fielding, 2004). Further, to create schools where student-adult collaboration is encouraged and youth agency is not underestimated, there would need to be spaces where students and adults can work as partners and where issues of power can be minimized or eliminated for a time (Rudduck,

2002). Unless policy-makers and educators begin engaging students, even the ones they feel most unable to reach, about schooling, reform efforts will likely continue to lack potency and enact little change. In schools like Viewland we can see how students and adults can grow intellectually and professionally as they created new structures to communicate and develop mutual respect. However, some level of transformation, or rupture of the normalized social hierarchy and organizational structures of schooling seems to be in order. It would be a process that is ongoing and messy, however, as we now look to the pressures schools face to implement core standards it seems timely. Common core implementation in schools presents a new pressure on administrators and schools. Can and should students play a part in sharing the design and implementation of their education? Can't students serve as a bridge to their parents and communities further unifying these goals? While these aspects of student-adult collaboration may seem dangerous and subversive it may be the one untapped resource, requiring little funding, that may provide lasting change. For in this exploration of teacher-student collaboration we might discover, or realize, educational settings where there is a shared ownership for learning and what Fielding (2002) describes as a "radical collegiality" between the educators and students who reside there.

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Appendix A: Data-In-A-Day Letter to Viewland Staff

February 28, 2013

Dear Viewland Staff,

For the past 5 years, you have been opening your classroom doors to families, students, community members, and Viewland High School (VHS) staff to build school-family-community partnerships that include instructional conversations. As you have done in the past, last week you opened your doors to aspiring school leaders from the University's Educational Leadership Program and teacher candidates who are interning at VHS. Five, four-member teams, each of which was led by one or two VHS students, visited approximately 25 classrooms for 20 minutes each, to learn from your commitment to:

- excellent instruction for diverse learners,
- intrinsically motivating and inquiry-focused project-based learning – often with a STEM focus,
- transparent instruction, and
- innovative professional learning.

The leadership cohort was also interested to:

- learn from Viewland students who, in many ways, led the process and who have become skillful instructional partners and ambassadors for the school's success. *(After classroom visits, and the opportunity for teams to share “wows” and “wonders” based on your instructional priorities, approximately 10 students formed a panel to discuss their experiences and insights into academic success. This was particularly relevant and intriguing to University students),*
- imagine how to orchestrate these kind of Data-in-a-Day (DIAD) visits and instructional partnerships with students in their own contexts, and
- to consider how to prepare others to provide effective informal feedback to educators whom they barely know and who have been gracious enough to make the complex work of excellent instruction for every student transparent.

The Purpose of this Note

The purpose of this note is to (1) thank you for hosting the leadership cohort and the five teacher education students (one of whom is a University field-based mentor for their learning), (2) share some of the teams' “wows” and “wonders” through your lens of 4R's – Relationships, Relevance, Rigor, and Results, (3) share what students had to say about VHS, and (4) pass along some of the questions that students suggested that they be asked. Given student involvement leading teams in Data-in-a-Day, providing instructional feedback to teachers who request it, and providing mentoring to students who are working on more consistent attendance, you may find some of these questions relevant to those you already seek to explore.

A Reminder about DIAD Feedback

As a reminder, Data-in-a-Day feedback is not specific to a particular classroom. Rather, it is based on universal themes across classrooms that the teams noticed. Unlike teacher evaluation

feedback, DIAD provides an overview of how teaching and learning appeared on a single day in several classrooms. Although it is not scientific, we hope that it will, nonetheless, be informative.

The University educational leadership program is comprised of educators from approximately eight local metropolitan school districts. Their insights are particularly unique in that they tend to reflect the instructional and professional development work that is being done across the region. Therefore, their collective insights provide a window not only into Viewland's work, but also into work that is or *is not* happening in other schools or districts.

“Wows” & “Wonders”

An overarching “wow” is how students are at the center of school transformation. Other “wows” included:

- students' desire to learn
- student pride and ownership in school
- aspirations of students
- student independence, interdependence and social responsibility
- the degree of student choice and the level of expertise and independence displayed by student,
- quality of projects (planning by teachers and execution by students)
- authentic connections to “real-world” applications

An overarching “wonder” is “How do teachers continuously build upon the work they are doing by gathering and sharing success data that connect teacher practices to student learning?” Other “wonders” included:

- What social supports exist for students who struggle in a group setting?
- How is accountability set up for groups? (Are there norms that are posted and follow-up on?)
- What do teachers do to ensure that the projects are consistently relevant?

VHS Student Perspectives

The following bullets highlight what University visitors said in response to the question, “*What are some of the most important things your heard students say in the panel discussion or in informal interactions?*” A reminder: Although the high school students with whom visitors interacted with represent a range of academic, cultural, and linguistic attributes, they tended to be students whose attendance is consistent and who are reasonably confident as learners. It was noted that it would be important to repeat this process with students who struggle academically and/or socially.

VHS students spoke about or demonstrated how they --

- love their teachers
- enjoy working in groups
(Some see project-based group work as divisive, at times)
- feel like their voices are heard
- feel prepared and optimistic
- embrace diversity
- are responsible to the school community
- are empowered
- struggle with time management and homework – especially those who participate in athletics, after school programs. or have family responsibilities.

- seek out opportunities to be heard by those with power
- want teachers to remember that “we are in high school but we are still kids!”

A Few Summarizing Comments

Once again, and on behalf of the University visitors, thank you for opening your doors to us! Your respect for students, academic quality, ongoing improvement, and the broader community provides an important context from which other educators (and students, families, and community members) can learn. The university students left their experience at VHS with a sense of the potential of an approach such as Data-in-a-Day and greater clarity about intrinsic motivation as the foundation for professional learning in urban education - and elsewhere.

After reflecting on Data-in-a-Day at Viewland, University students reflected on the implications of the experience for their own contexts. Here are a few (slightly paraphrased and anonymous) examples of University students’ appreciation and ideas:

“This was a really unique experience for me. ...Wow. ...I want to provide students with the experience of having their voice matter.”

“My experience this week at Viewland High School with Data in a Day was simply amazing. ...Through the panel discussion, the side conversations with the students and the talk from Principal Sanders, I was able to better understand how Viewland High School is working to empower their students toward self-advocacy. What I want to take back to my campus is the overarching theme of the day, which was allowing for authentic student voice in classroom instruction.”

“I really, really enjoyed the process. It’s something I will definitely incorporate as a building leader someday. What a great way to get some raw data from multiple perspectives. And the simplicity of it makes it an easy task to take on.”

“...In my school, I’d like to pay specific attention to how rigor is maintained for students who are learning English or who are identified for special education – I would ask whether observers to note differences in the evidence of relevance and meaning for students through engagement cues. ...I’d also encourage observers to look closely at student talk and how both teachers and classmates are interacting. Without “pre-identifying” kids for the observers, I’d be particularly interested knowing whether any students appear isolated or segregated by group, away from the whole class community. I think such evidence may give our school a good idea at how accessible our building is for ELL’s and students with special learning needs.”

“Viewland High School has a culture of learning and improvement that I would like to see grow at my location.”

Thank you, once again, for being such a terrific partner with the University and to so many others.

Respectfully,

Dr. Grace Walker, Associate Professor
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Protocols

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for School Administrator

Tell me about your position or role here.

How long have you had this position?

What are your general responsibilities in this position?

What can you tell me to gain an accurate picture of this school as you experience it? (Follow up questions on specifics such as perceptions of students and teachers there)

Tell me a little about the project you were or are involved in that includes students and adults collaborating in any way.

How did the external support organization come to partner with your school?

What can you tell me about how this relationship developed?

How long have you or did you partner with this external support organization?

Has or did this relationship change over time? (Are you still partners?)

What types of services or support did this organization or individuals from this organization provide at the school?

Of these services or supports what did you find most helpful?

Can you give me an example of how this organization interacts or interacted with individuals within your school?

Can you describe some of the activities that have resulted from the partnership you have with the external support organization?

Are these practices continuing? (If not why? If so have they changed in any way?)

How were these activities developed?

How were these activities put into practice?

Who facilitates these practices?

Describe your role in this process.

What, if any, are the fears you have about engaging in these activities?

What could improve these activities from your perspective as a school administrator?

What are your hopes for the outcomes of these practices?

What do you see in the future regarding these practices? (Follow up: Do you expect these practices to continue or change? Why?)

Can you paint a picture of the ideal long term outlook of this project?

What are the short term issues you are thinking about to achieve this long term picture?

What, if any, changes have you noticed as a result of this partnership?

What, if any, changes do you attribute to specific practices?

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for External Support Organization Members

Tell me about your position or role within your organization.

How long have you had this position?

What are your general responsibilities in this position?

Tell me about the partnership with the school. (Are you still in partnership with the school? If not when did this conclude?)

What is your role within the school?

What types of responsibilities do/did you have within the school?

Tell me about the school as you perceive it.

How did you or your organization come to partner with this school?

What can you tell me about how this relationship developed?

How long have you partnered with this school? (Are you still in partnership?)

Has/did this relationship changed over time?

What types of services or support did or do you provide at the school?

Of these services or supports which ones do you think people at the school found most helpful?

Can you give me an example of how you interact or interacted with individuals within the school?

Tell me a little about the project you developed or are currently involved in that includes students and adults collaborating in any way.

Can you describe some of the activities that have resulted from the partnership you have/had with the school?

How were these activities developed?

How were these activities put into practice?

Who facilitates these practices? (Are they continuing?)

Describe your role in this process.

What, if any, are the fears you have about engaging in these activities?

What are your hopes for the outcomes of these practices?

What do you see in the future regarding these practices? (Follow up: Do you expect these practices to continue or change? Why?)

Can you paint a picture of the ideal long term outlook of this project?

What are the short term issues you are thinking about to achieve this long term picture?

What, if any, changes have you noticed as a result of this partnership?

What, if any, changes do you attribute to specific practices?

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Students (First interview)

How old are you and what grade are you in?

How long have you been at this school?

What can you tell me to gain an accurate picture of your school as you experience it? (Follow up questions on specifics on teachers, climate etc.)

Do you feel that you are or can be successful in your classes and at your school?

Tell me about some of the times you have interacted with teachers or other adults at the school outside of regular class activities.

How did you come to participate in some of these collaborations or interactions with teachers?

How long (how many times) have you been engaging in these types of collaborations with teachers?

Are these practices continuing? (If not why?)

Have/did these activities or collaborations changed over time?

Have you participated in any activities or work to prepare for these types of interactions with adults?

What people were involved in organizing some of these interactions or activities? Can you tell me a little about your interactions with each of them? (I.e. what types of support did they provide?)

Of these interactions with people and or supports provided, which ones did you find most helpful?

How do you feel about the partnership your school has formed with _____ (the individuals from the support organization or the organization in general)?

How well prepared do you feel to do engage in this work? How did you come to feel that way?

Tell me about how you felt while interacting with teachers in these environments or activities.

How did you feel after you participated in these activities?

What kind of feedback do you think students can offer educators that are different than what they might get from other teachers, parents or administrators?

(Second interview)

What activities have you engaged in since we last spoke that involved you working with or providing feedback to adults at your school?

What was your role in the process?

What are your feelings about engaging in this work?

Is this type of adult-student collaboration something you see continuing at your school? Why or why not?

What kind of feedback do you think you or other students offered that was different than what other adults offered? Can you give me an example of this?

Can you talk a little about how or if participating in this project has changed or is changing your behavior or your way of thinking?

Has participating in this experience changed your perceptions of the teachers or administrators at your school? (Follow up: How or why and what changed them)

Does your family or guardians have any feelings or reactions to your participation in these activities?

Do you feel you can be successful as a student at your school? Explain. (Follow up: has this changed at all as a result of this experience?)

What might you change about this feedback process between students and teachers?

What do you see as most important in keeping these practices occurring at your school? (Are there certain people who drive the practices or school structures that are important?)

Do you think other student, educators, or individuals in your school or other schools might benefit from engaging in similar processes? (Why or how so?)

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Teachers (first interview)

How long have you been teaching?

How long have you been at this school?

What subjects and age group do you teach?

What can you tell me to gain an accurate picture of your school as you experience it? (Follow up questions on specifics such as perceptions of students there)

Do you feel you can be successful in your work as an educator at your school? (Follow up: why? explain.)

Tell me about some of the times you have interacted with students at the school outside of regular class activities. (Such as receiving or soliciting feedback from students about instruction, co-teaching, lesson planning, professional development etc.)

How did you come to participate with students in this way?

Was this something new for you?

How long (how many times) have you been engaging in these types of collaborations with students?

Are these activities still occurring at the school? (If not why?)

Have these interactions or collaborations changed in any way over time?

Have you participated in any activities or work to prepare for engaging with students in this way?

How well prepared do you feel to do engage in this work? How did you come to feel that way? (Follow ups about exactly what activities they did etc.)

What people were involved in organizing some of these interactions or activities? Can you tell me a little about your interactions with each of them? (I.e. what types of support did they provide?)

Of these interactions with people and or supports provided, which ones did you find most helpful?

How do you feel about the partnership your school has/had with _____ (the individuals from the support organization or the organization in general)?

What role did or do you play in these activities or processes?

Tell me about how you felt while interacting with teachers in these environments or activities.

How did you feel after you participated in these activities?

How do you think most teachers in your school or department feel about partnering with students in these ways?

What kind of feedback do you think students can offer educators that are different than what they might get from other teachers, parents or administrators?

(Second interview)

What activities have you engaged in since we last spoke that involved you working with or providing feedback to adults at your school?

What was your role in the process?

What are your feelings about engaging in this work?

What are your initial impressions of these student-adult collaborations or activities? What are your feelings about the project as a whole and its functioning at the school?

Is this type of adult-student collaboration something you see continuing at your school? Why or why not?

What kind of feedback do you think students offered that was different than what you have been accustomed to hearing from other adults such as administrators or colleagues? Can you give me an example of this?

Describe your experience of collaborating or engaging with students in these activities that go beyond regular classroom interactions.

What stood out for you as you think back about your participation in these practices?

How do you think other teachers at your school might feel or are feeling about these practices?

How do you think other teachers at your school feel about the partnership with _____?

Can you talk a little about how or if participating in this project has changed or is changing your behavior, teaching, or your way of thinking? (Professionally or in general)

Has participating in this experience changed your perceptions of the students or other teachers at your school? (Follow up: How or why and what changed them)

Do you feel you can be successful as a student at your school? Explain. (Follow up: has this changed at all as a result of this experience?)

Are there any other changes or effects of this program that you can see at the school?

What might you change about some of the ways adults and students interact in these practices?

What do you see as most important in keeping these practices occurring at your school? (Are there certain people who drive the practices or school structures that are important?)

Do you think other student, educators, or individuals in your school or other schools might benefit from engaging in similar processes? (Why or how so?)

Has this experience changed your perceptions of the students or other individuals at this school? Explain. (Follow up: How or why and what changed them)

Appendix C: Observation Protocol

I will be introduced to the group by the lead teacher, external support provider, or administrator. At this time I will briefly describe my project and why I am observing the activity in which they are engaging.

Purpose and Procedures

Thank you very much for agreeing to allow me to observe your meeting/activity/event today. The study that I am working on is an effort to understand the experiences and effects of teachers and students engaging in collaborative work in activities such as professional development, instructional feedback, co-teaching, lesson studies, curriculum development or shared decision making. This study also seeks to understand what characterizes these programs, how external support organizations have aided in this work, and investigate if engaging in these activities affects participants and instruction at the school.

The information from this study will serve as a foundation for my doctoral dissertation. With your permission I would like to audiotape portions of the meeting/activity/event today. Within 4 weeks of the interview or observation I will create a written transcript of the conversation that will identify individuals only by their role in the event and I will destroy the original recording. I have no plans to share the recordings. I can provide you with a transcript of the recording if you so desire.

Observation focus at such activities will be on:

What the activity is and how it is structured

How it is set up and conducted (who is doing what and when)

How many people are involved, what is their usual role in the school and what is their role for this activity

How is the event convened or started

Who is leading the activity

Who is speaking and to whom are they speaking

What is being said and who is listening

When are students allowed to speak and to whom

How often is each individual speaking

What types of body language cues are occurring

What artifacts, props, tools or documents are being generated or used

What documents or project generated protocols are being used by participants and facilitators and how are they being used

How is the event concluded