

An Exploration of Relevance & Depth in Teachers' Team Conversations

Susan F. Henry
Doctoral Candidate
Harvard University Graduate School of Education

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sfh744@mail.harvard.edu

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Why Team Talk?

- Potential to improve student achievement

Newmann, 1995; Saunders, Goldenberg, & Gallimore, 2009; Supovitz, 2002; Supovitz & Christman, 2005

- Impact on instruction remains under-realized

Achinstein, 2002; diPardo, 1999; Ingram, Louis, & Schroeder, 2004 Supovitz, 2002;

- Limited understanding of team conversations

Protocols, Conversational Routines,
Representations of Practice

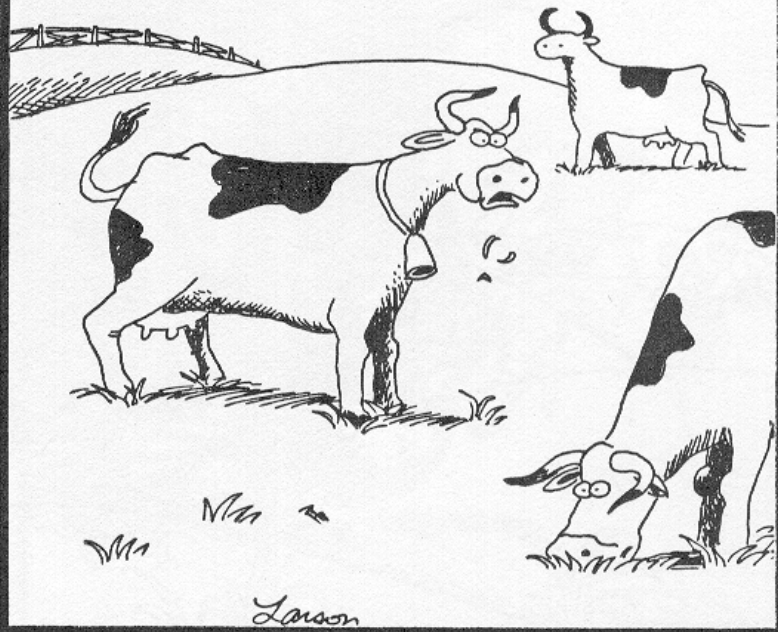
Little, 2002, 2003, 2007; Little & Curry, 2008;

Little & Horn, 2007; Horn, 2010



Our Goals

“Hey, wait a minute! This is grass!
We’ve been eating grass!”



To become more mindful
and deliberate about our
team conversations

Relevance & Depth...

1. What do they mean?
2. How do they sound?
3. What does this mean for our WG team talk?

Why Relevance & Depth?

Effective communities of instructional practice

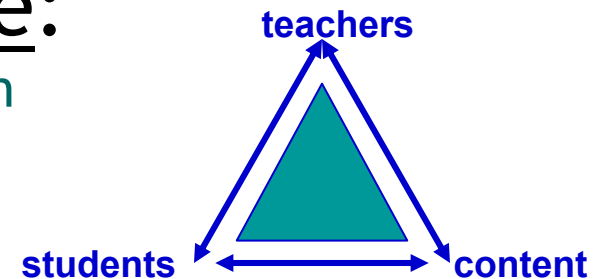
“examine and discuss student work in relation to standards and how it is differentially produced through a variety of instructional approaches...they offer constructive criticism of each other’s strategies....
experiment with a variety of strategies that deepen their understanding of the craft of teaching”

(Supovitz, 2002, p. 1617)

Concepts Defined

WHAT ~ Instructional Relevance:

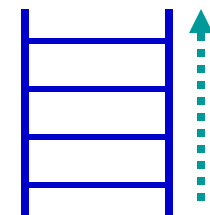
The extent to which team discussion focuses on how relationships among teachers, students, and content shape instruction and learning in specific contexts (Cohen & Ball, 1999, 2001)



HOW ~ Depth of Inquiry:

The extent to which team discussion appears based in higher-level thinking skills (e.g., analyzing, problem solving, experimenting, reflecting, goal setting)

(Marzano & Kendall, 2007)

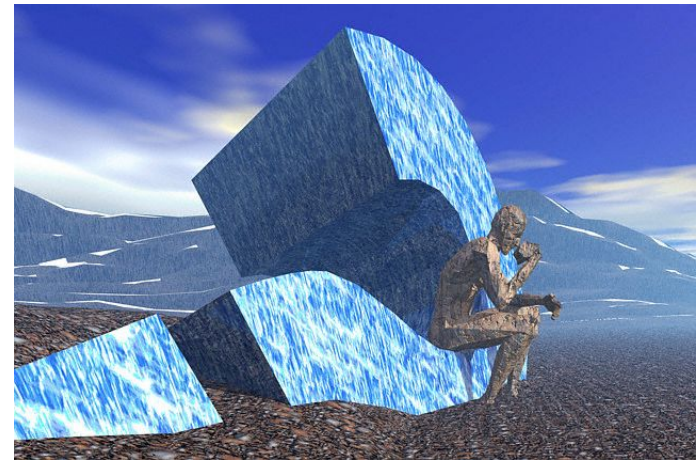


Research Questions

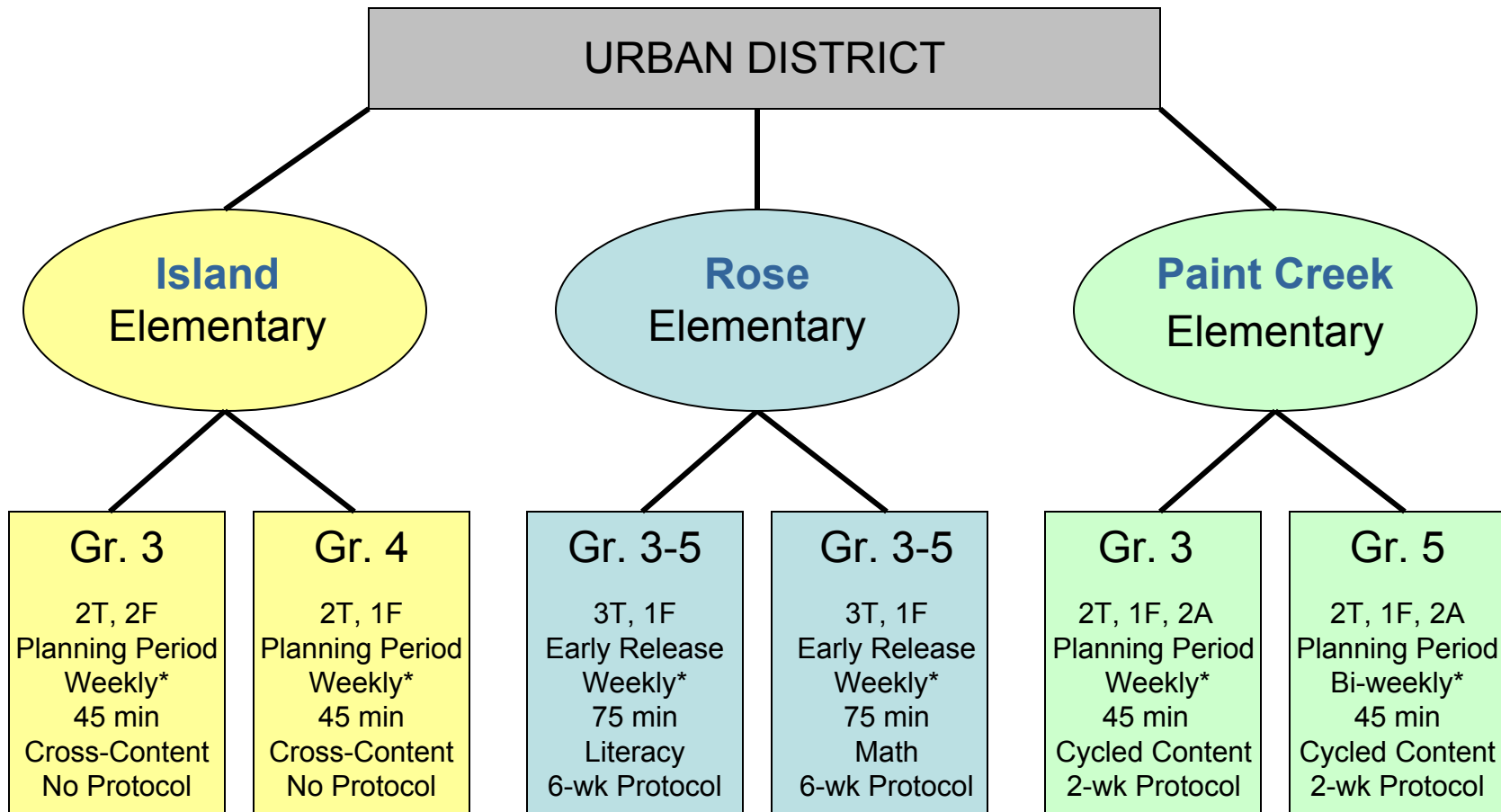
How, if at all, are Instructional Relevance and Depth of Inquiry apparent in teachers' data team discussions?

How might these concepts be useful for understanding how team discussions support instructional improvement?

What factors may relate to how Relevance and Depth take form in team talk?



Participants



T= Teacher F=Humanities and/or Math Facilitators A=Principal and Asst. Principal

Methods

Meeting Transcript

Topical Exchanges

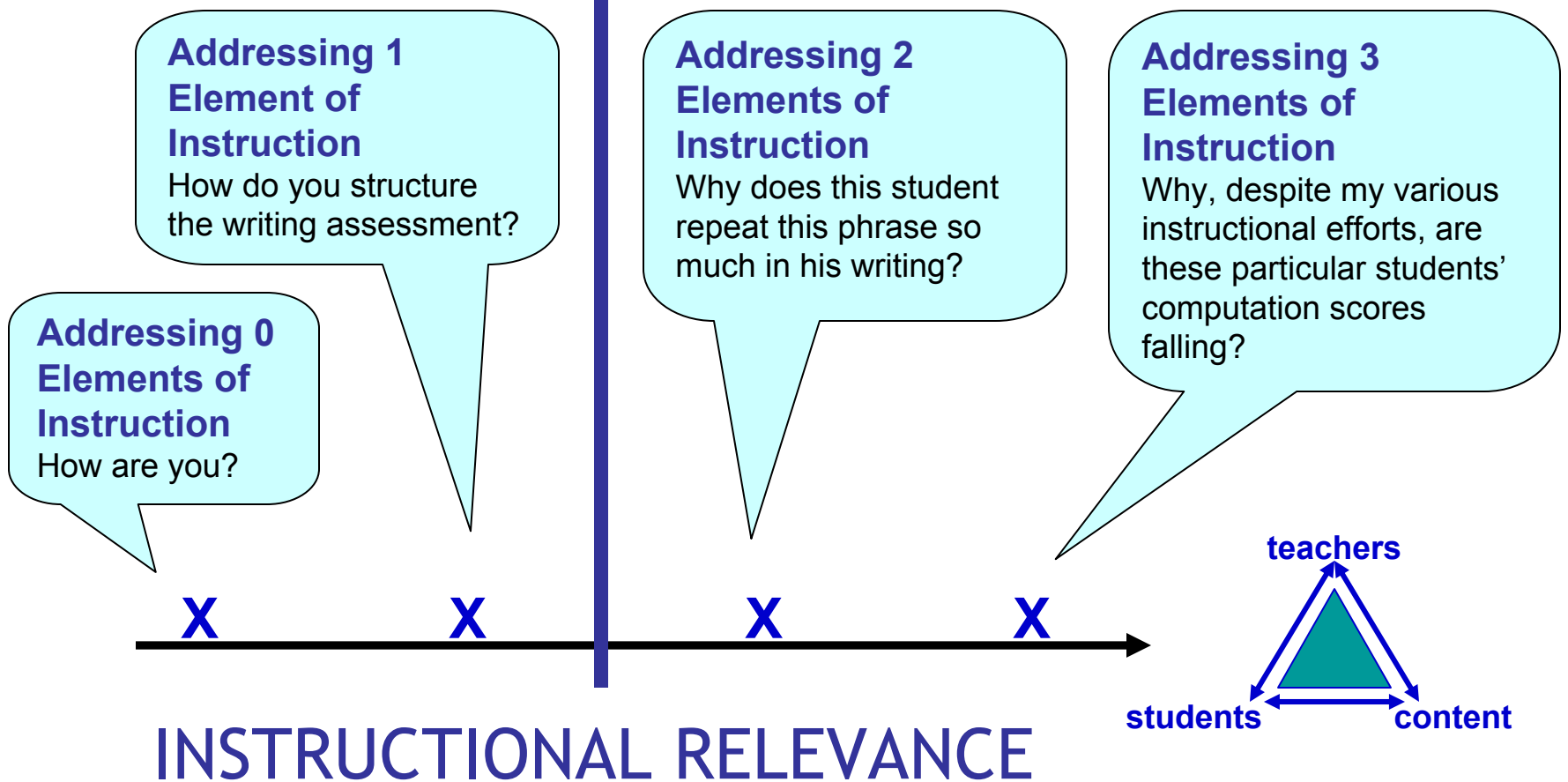
Conversational Exchanges

P: Do you, do you have [flipping through papers], what'd I do with [MT's]//HF: What are you looking for?//I have two [TT]s and one [MT]//AP: Do you have two [MT's and one TT?] //I have way too much data here, compiled, piling up! //AP: I have two of MT's right here.//Do you have two of MT's? [Everyone flipping through paper]
AP: No, I have one of each! Don't take mine! [P laughs] I'm good.
MT: I know I gave it to you. Is it under your chair? No?
HF: So you're missing MT's?
[lots of paper rustling throughout this section; getting organized]
P: I have it.//HF: Oh, you do?//I just have, um//AP: piles//[unclear]

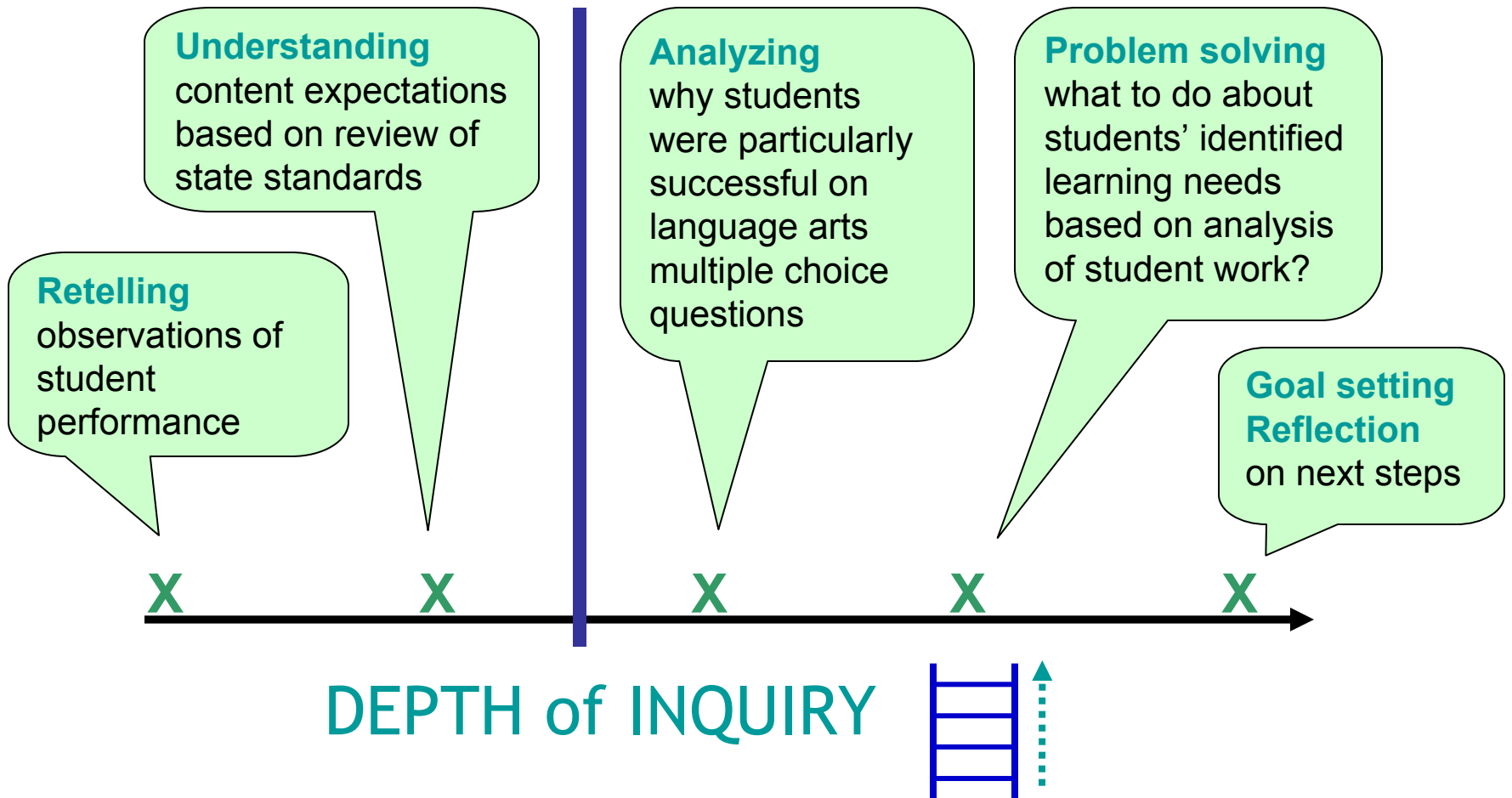
AP: You did a good job, ladies.
MT: Thanks.
HF: Yeah, you-
P: Yes, thank you. You were very well prepared.
MT: It's really fun to analyze data when you're kids are proficient. [laughs]
HF: When you have it, and it's here, and you know what you're doing, it's great [laughs]//AP: Yes//
TT: I do finally feel like I've started [unclear]. Like the first couple of months, I was just, [MT] what do I need! [frantic tone] I don't know what I'm supposed to look at! What I'm supposed to do. Show me what to do! Like the last couple of ones-
AP: Is it getting easier?
TT: Yes! I've been able to [unclear] okay, I look at this, and make sense of this, and I understand how to use this.
AP: Very good.//HF: [small laugh]
AP: [Principal name]//P: [unclear]//This one right here. Is that what you're looking for?
P: So any questions about next week? You all set?
MT: I did - [unclear talk to TT]
P: That's [TT]s! There's [MT]'s.
AP: School leaders, yes, that's me.
TT: No, I did not get one.
P: Okay, I got it.

P: We'll be putting it in your box.//AP: Did you make a copy//Did you see the email I forwarded with, I don't know if they were released items, but they put it on the district curriculum base, for math?

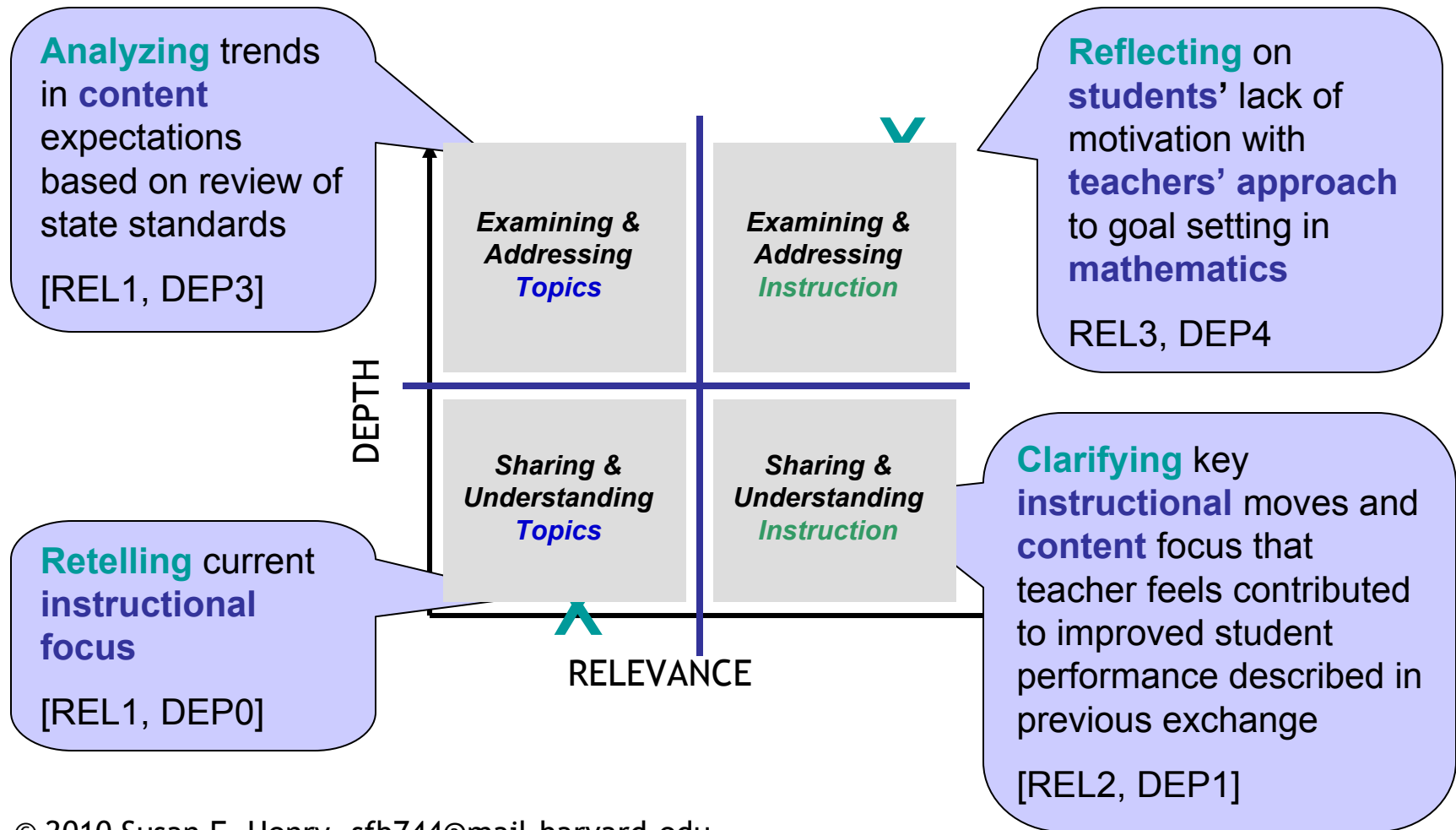
Dimensions of Relevance



Dimensions of Depth

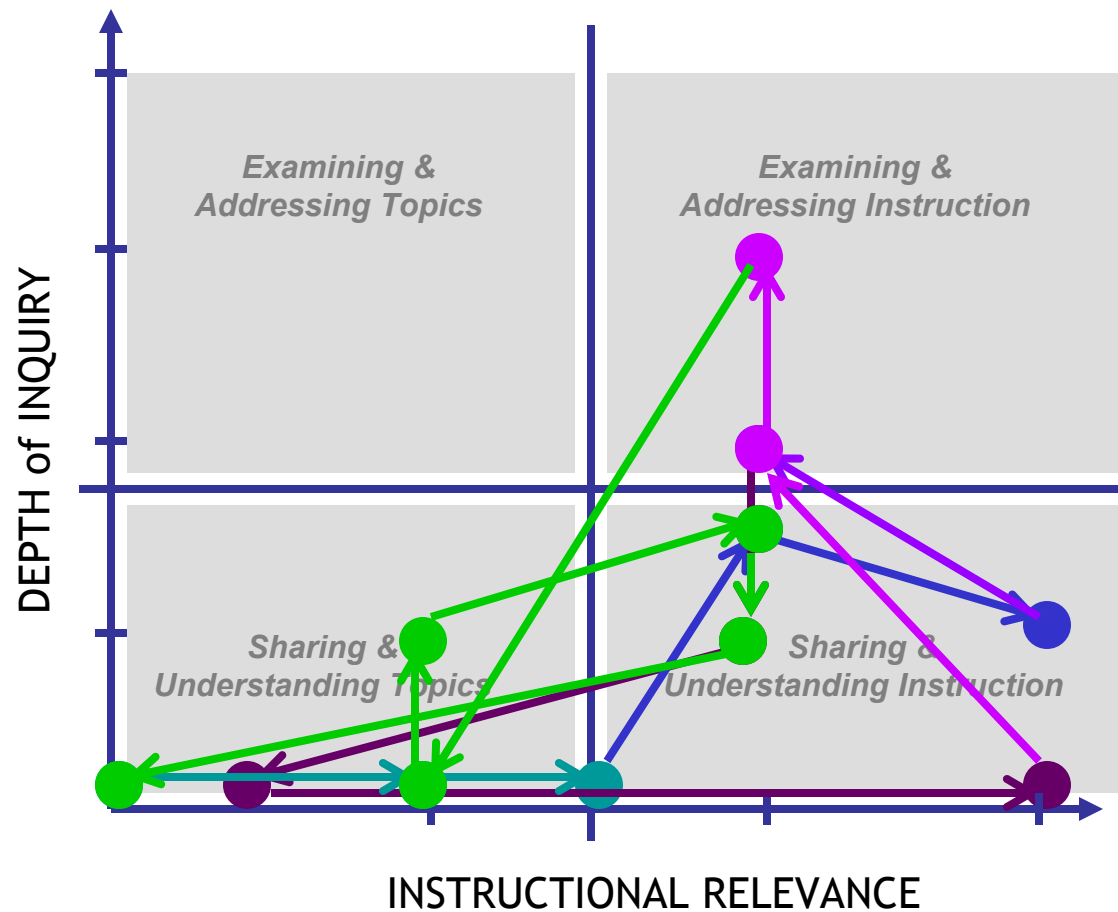


Co-occurring & Independent



Dynamic (specific view)

Grades 4-5 Data Team Meeting, January 29, 2009



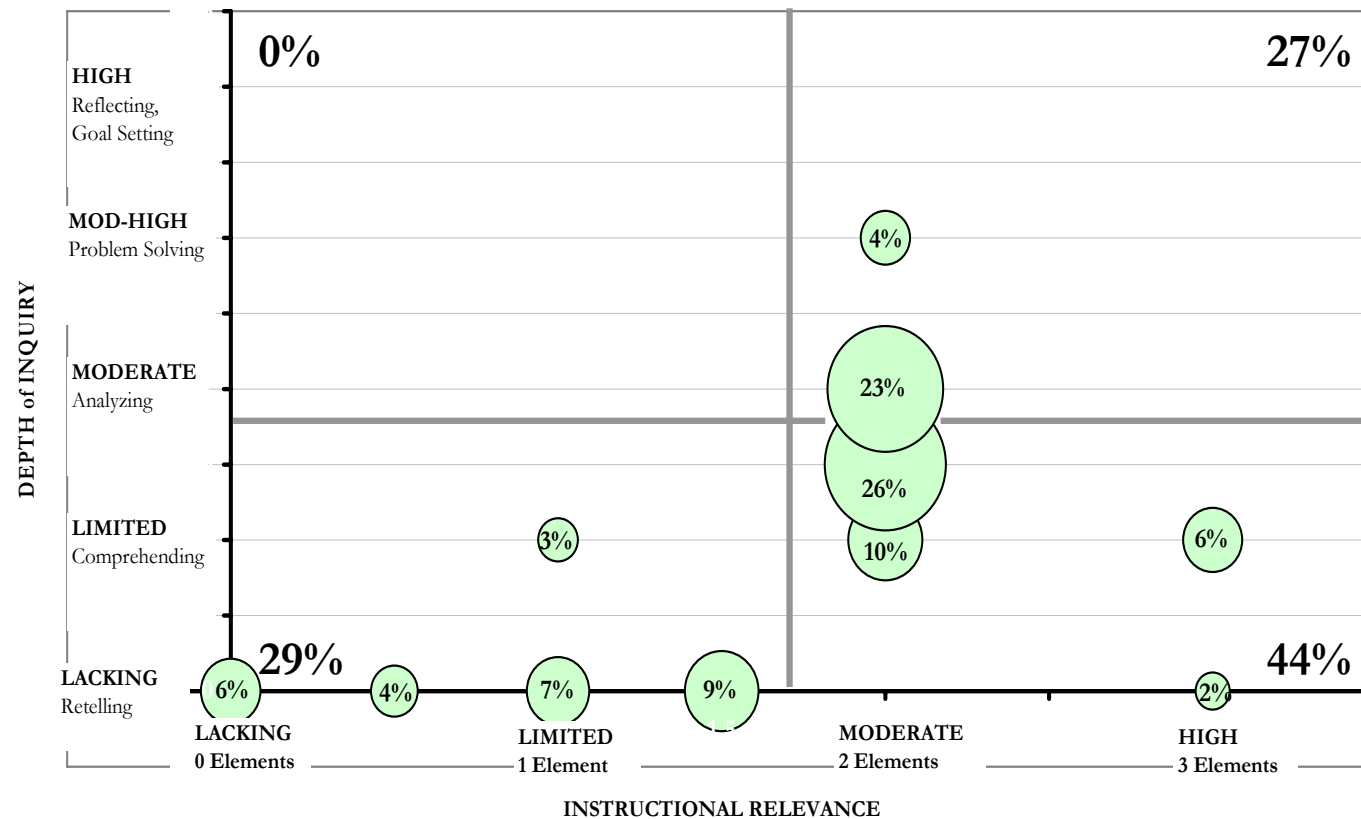
Dynamic (summary view)

Approximate % of Discussion Time at Each Gradation of Relevance & Depth

Paint Creek Elementary, Grade 5 (Math Session, 32 minutes)

Mtg #1, January 29, 2009

32 minute meeting



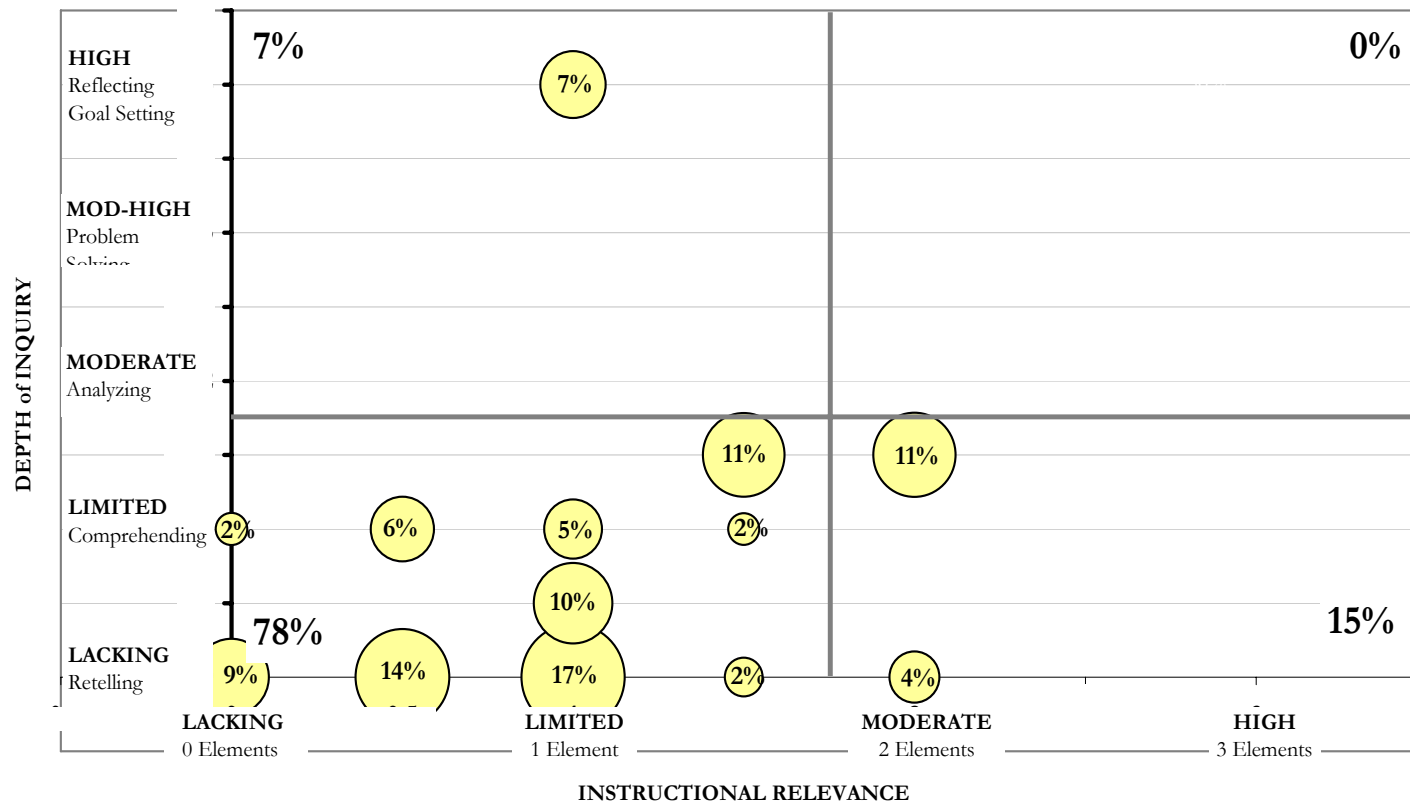
Dynamics (summary view)

Approximate % of Discussion Time at Each Gradation of Relevance & Depth

Island Elementary, Grade 4 (30 minutes)

Meeting #2, February 5, 2009

30 minute meeting



Emerging Factors (data analysis in process)

- Purpose
- Membership
- Artifacts/documents under discussion
- Facilitation & Guidance
- Group records
- Expectations & Accountabilities
- Interplay among these

Connections to Our Work

- To what extent do our team conversations tend to be Instructionally Relevant? Do we tend to gain a Depth of Inquiry?
- What do we gain and what do we lose from the ways that Relevance and Depth occur in our conversations?
- What factors may contribute to the Relevance and Depth of our conversations?
- What is our team's next level of work?



Clarifying Questions



Identifying Relevance & Depth

Timer

3 Handouts:

- ✓ Identifying Instructional Relevance
- ✓ Identifying Depth of Inquiry
- ✓ Excerpt 2

Steps

- 1) Orientation to the excerpt (1 min)
- 2) Read silently (5 min)
Consider extent of Relevance, then Depth
- 3) Turn & Talk; consider evidence & agree (4 min)
- 4) Share out; brief discussion with large group (5 min)

Thinking Back-Thinking Forward

Timer

Steps

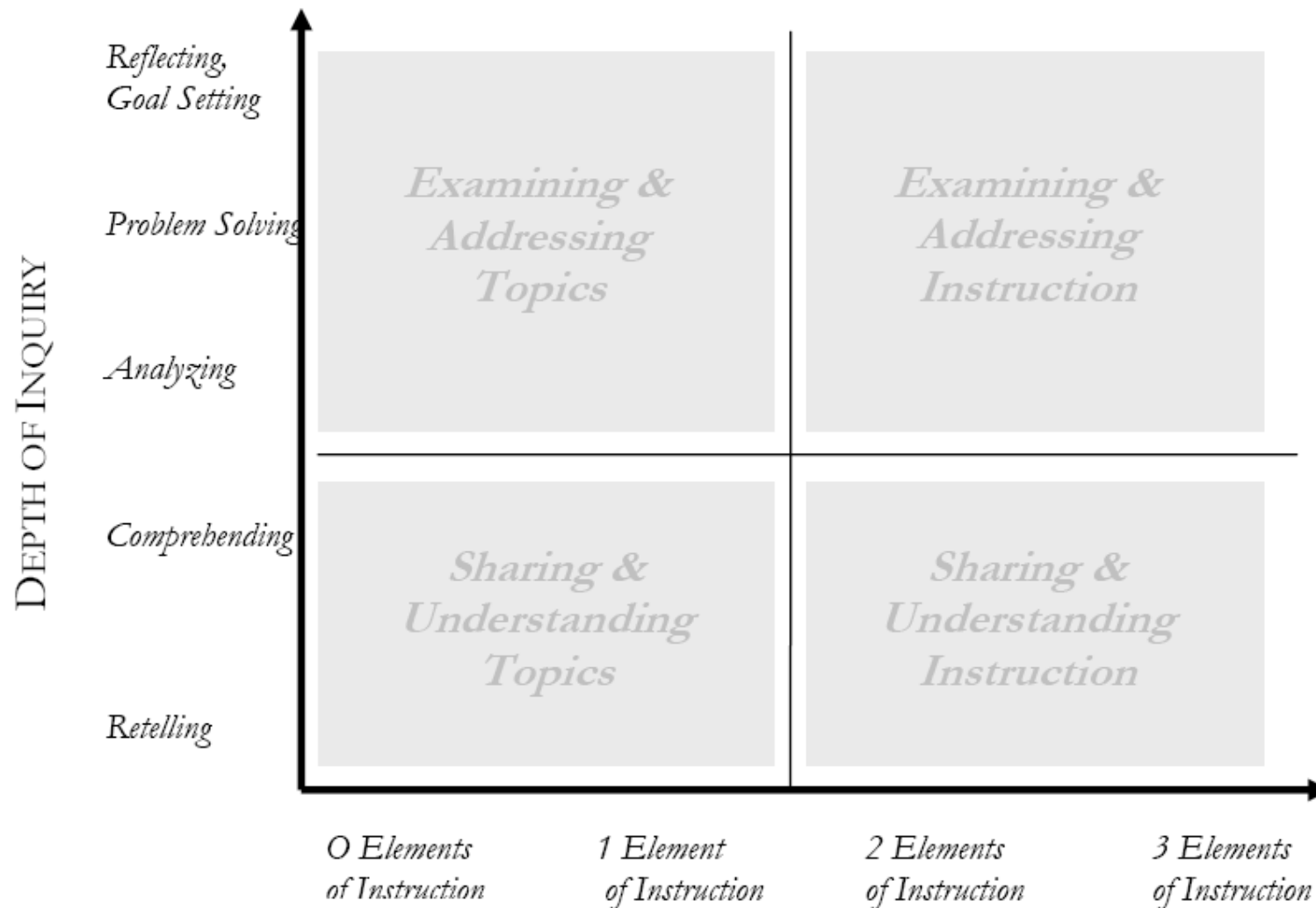
2 Handouts:

✓ Thinking Back Sheet

✓ Thinking Forward Sheet

- 1) Thinking Back - complete both pages (4 min)
- 2) Brief share out & comments (5 min)
- 3) Thinking Forward - complete 1st page (4 min)
- 4) Brief share out & discussion (5 min)
- 5) Thinking Forward - complete 2nd page (4 min)
- 6) Brief share out & closing comments (5 min)

Team Talk Framework



INSTRUCTIONAL RELEVANCE

Checking WG Conversations

- ✓ Are we building a shared knowledge base and vocabulary?
- ✓ Are our conversations examining the connections among teachers, students, and content?
- ✓ Are we digging in to analyze and problem solve what's happening with critical instructional dynamics?
- ✓ Are we taking time to reflect on the usefulness of our team processes? Are we addressing factors that undercut our conversations?
- ✓ Am I doing my part to move the team to the next level of work?



Exhibit A: Data Form Template, Week 1

WEEK 1		WEEK 2	
Step 1: Collect & Chart Data	Step 2: Analyze & Explain Data	Step 3: Plan Instructional Strategies & Set Goals	Step 4: Determine Results
Step 1: Collect & Chart Data Data Source (attach related charts, tables, graphs to this form):			
% (#) Advanced/Proficient	% (#) Partially Proficient	% (#) Unsatisfactory	
Step 2: Analyze & Explain Data			
<i>Observations:</i> What patterns of similarity and difference do you see in the data? Record factual statements about the data, including identified areas of strength and need.		<i>Explanations:</i> How do you explain these patterns, strengths, and needs in student performance? What do students need to achieve proficiency? What other data sources do you need to support your explanation?	

Exhibit A: Data Form Template, Week 2

WEEK 1	WEEK 2
Step 1: Collect & Chart Data	Step 2: Analyze & Explain Data
Step 3: Set Goals & Plan Instructional Strategies	
Step 4: Determine Results	

Step 3: Set Goals
 Target Students/Group:

Goal: The percent of _____ (group) scoring *proficient and higher* on _____ (skill) will increase from _____% to _____% as measured by _____ (assessment) administered on _____ (date)

Plan Instructional Strategies

<i>Essential Learning Objectives</i>	<i>Specific Action Steps</i>	<i>Frequency/Location/Timeline</i>

Step 4: Determine Results
 Data Source (attach related charts, tables, graphs to this form):

% (#) Advanced/Proficient	% (#) Partially Proficient	% (#) Unsatisfactory
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