Teacher Research Community

To learn more about TRC and to apply, please visit **cpm.org/trc**

For further questions, please reach out to **lisaamick@cpm.org.**

What You'll Do

Join a national network of colleagues committed to learning together through teacher-led inquiry into instructional practices in CPM classrooms.

- **Investigate** problems of practice that matter to you in your classroom.
- **Work** in small PLC teams (2–4 people) with TRC leadership members, including university professors and CPM's research faculty.
- **Learn** from and build on the findings of prior TRC teams.
- **Build** a national network of CPM colleagues.
- **Share** your findings at CPM's annual Teacher Conference.
- **Share** your findings at regional and national research conferences.
- **$2500** will be distributed as 5 stipends.
- **Support** for travel and related expenses will be provided for in-person meetings.

Commitments

- Twice weekly, teachers will make observations and record important moments occurring in the classroom using a shared reflections document.
- Teachers will create a mid-project product detailing the research discoveries to date.
- At the conclusion of the study, each teacher will work with their cohort and contribute to a final project product capturing the findings, detailing successful innovations, and addressing any shortcomings that prompt further investigation.

Meeting Commitments

- Four-day in-person summer institute. Small PLC teams will develop project proposals and implementation plans for their selected area of investigation.
- Twice monthly virtual meetings with small PLC teams, one including the TRC leadership team, to discuss data, share insights, and make adjustments to the investigation. Teams take ownership of the meetings, including producing meeting minutes to record what is discussed, what is learned, and what is planned.

The Benefits of Practitioner Inquiry

What better way to model inquiry-based learning in the mathematics classroom than to turn the act of teaching itself into an area for self-reflection and investigation? Each year, a small number of educational explorers invest time reflecting on their instruction with the goal of improving pedagogy. They stand out from the crowd.

Studies indicate that learners can reap benefits from teacher research. This includes learners in the teacher researcher's classes, students in the classes of colleagues, and in some cases, entire school populations. However, the central beneficiary is the teacher researcher. The book *Impactful Practitioner Inquiry* (Nichols & Cormack, 2017) outlines 10 impactful changes in practice reported by teacher researchers. After researching their own practice, teachers reported that they:

1. Viewed the curriculum differently
2. Developed new resources
3. Saw new connections between practice and theory
4. Increased the diversity of learning activities
5. Modified existing resources
6. Viewed students differently
7. Made more use of information and communication technologies for learning
8. Incorporated more opportunities for student choice
9. Increased the range of assessment practices
10. Integrated inquiry practices into teaching

By asking questions about areas for improvement, teacher researchers refine their metacognitive awareness about the types of instructional behaviors that they engage in. Indeed, without time for this type of reflection, the original rationale for an existing practice can get lost in the repetition of daily teaching. Only when teachers have the chance to step out of their routine, take stock in what they are doing, and share their observations and insights with fellow teacher researchers are they able to see their personal practice with fresh eyes.

Critical to the inquiry process is the act of reflecting on student behavior following a planned change in instructional practice. Part detective and part artist, teacher researchers look for those subtle, significant moments that indicate student learning has been impacted. Recording observations of student behavior as raw data provides investigators with a record to reflect on as well as a benchmark for comparison with data collected in the future. As studies progress throughout the school year, these growing records provide teacher researcher teams the opportunity to pinpoint innovations that have proven to be successful. Such innovations often become valued additions to the teacher's pedagogy. Chronicling strategies that had little or no impact is equally important. Examining a failed instructional action under a collective microscope provides teams a chance to use their wisdom to rethink the innovation and adjust its implementation.

The payoff for all of this effort is an increase in student learning and an increase in teachers' sense of flourishing. Indeed, many teacher researchers begin the undertaking to find a way to assist the students who struggle the most; the unexpected result is that for many practitioners, the act of inquiry changed how they viewed their students. More often than not, a newfound, asset-based perspective emerged, even for those students with the deepest feelings of academic despair. As teachers scrutinize their own assumptions about learning and instructional practices, student abilities and interests are viewed with a new perspective.

Practitioner inquiry offers a powerful lens for teachers to examine their own practice and discover new strategies that make a difference for their students.