

Teacher Help-Seeking Beliefs and Help-Seeking Networks

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Teacher Help Seeking

- Teaching places exceptional demands on educators' skills and resources
- Fortunately, teachers practice within a network of teachers at their school whose members can be a source of help (Spillane, Kim, & Frank, 2012)
- Understanding teacher HS networks may inform schools' promotion of professional communities of practice

What impacts teacher HS?

- **Organizational Factors:** Ample research on factors that foster teacher networks such as subject specialization and PLCs (Spillane et al.)
- **Personal Factors:** Beginning teachers seek help from friendly experienced colleagues (Tellez, 1992)
- **Psychological Factors:** Teachers' achievement goals & HS (Butler, 2007)
- Current study brings together these potential factors influencing teacher HS

Aims of the Current Study

- Combine social network analysis perspective with HS perspective to examine teacher HS patterns in a US secondary school
- Examine how HS network patterns differ by beliefs about HS, years of experience, gender, and curricular domain



Procedure & Participants

- All teachers in a US public secondary school were invited to participate in an online survey
- School demographics: 20% eligible for free or reduced lunch, 44% non-White
- 80 teachers participated (75% out of 107)
 - School had 90 full time faculty and 17 assistants
 - No admin participated but were included as sources of help
- 59% female, $M = 12.9$ years experience, $SD = 7.87$, Range = <1 to 44

Measures

- Instrumental beliefs (4 items, $\alpha = .82$)
 - “Asking for help with my teaching is a good way to learn to be a better teacher”
- Expedient beliefs (4 items, $\alpha = .61$)
 - “Getting help with my teaching would be a way to avoid doing some of the work”
- Cost/threat (5 items, $\alpha = .84$)
 - “Others might think I’m incompetent if I asked for help with teaching”

Rated 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

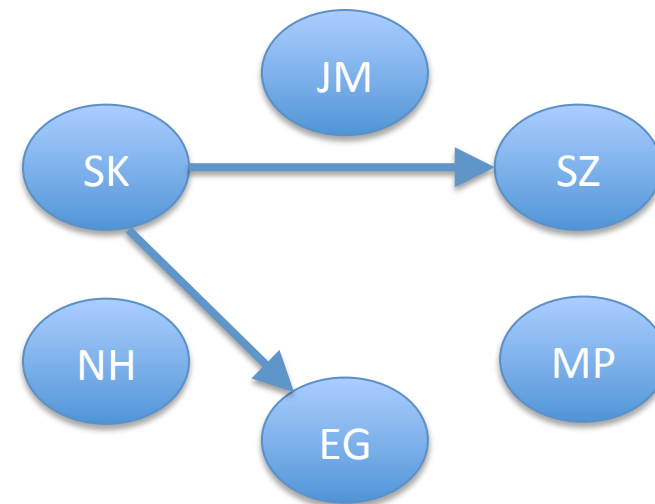
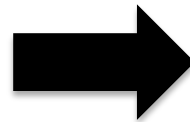
Measures

- HS network measure adapted from Pitts and Spillane (2009): “During this school year, which staff members did you regularly turn to for advice or information about teaching?”
- Could select as many as they want

Stuart Karabenick

Which staff members.... ?

- Julie Mulet
- Sabine Zorn
- Minna Puustinen
- Eleftheria Gonida
- Nathalie Huet

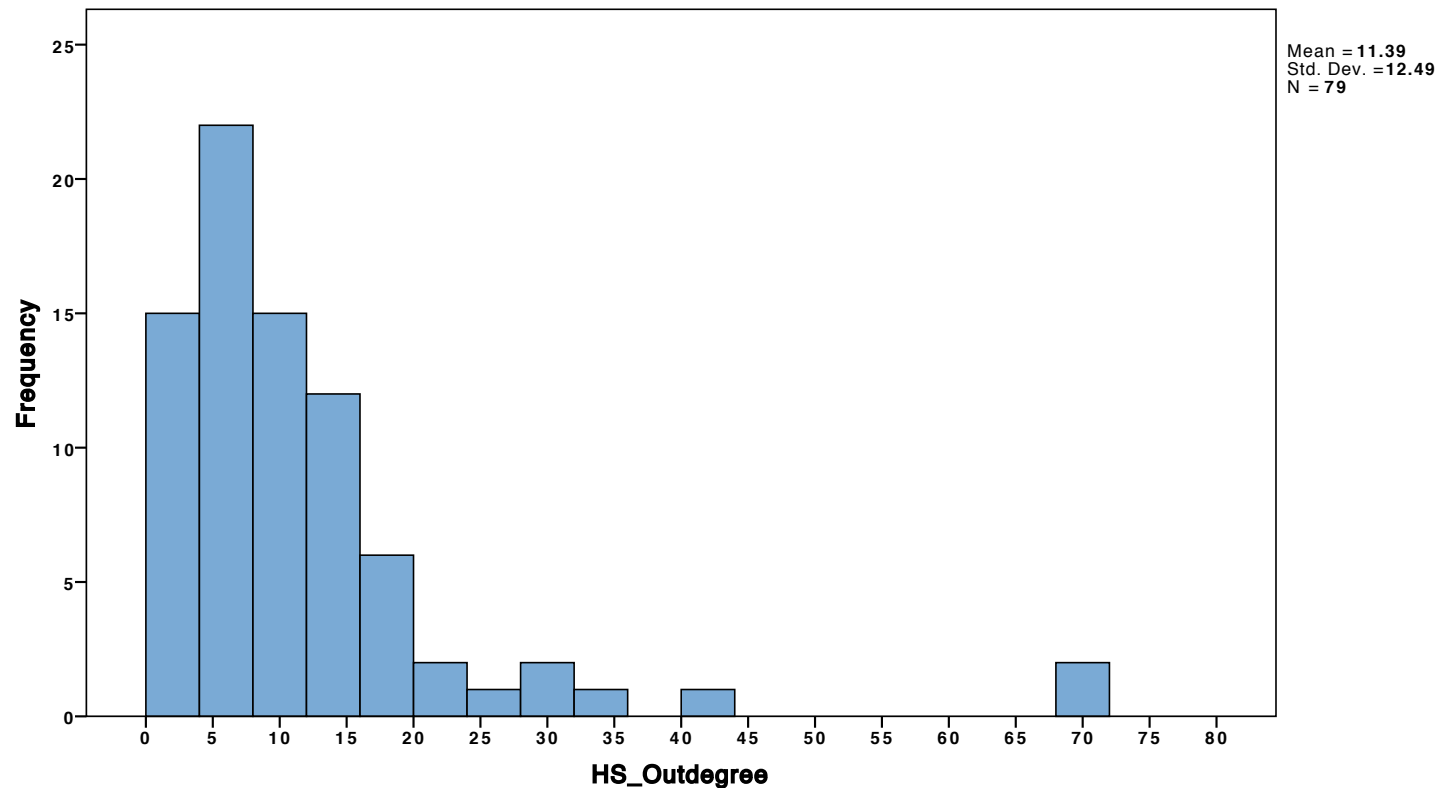


Beliefs about Help Seeking

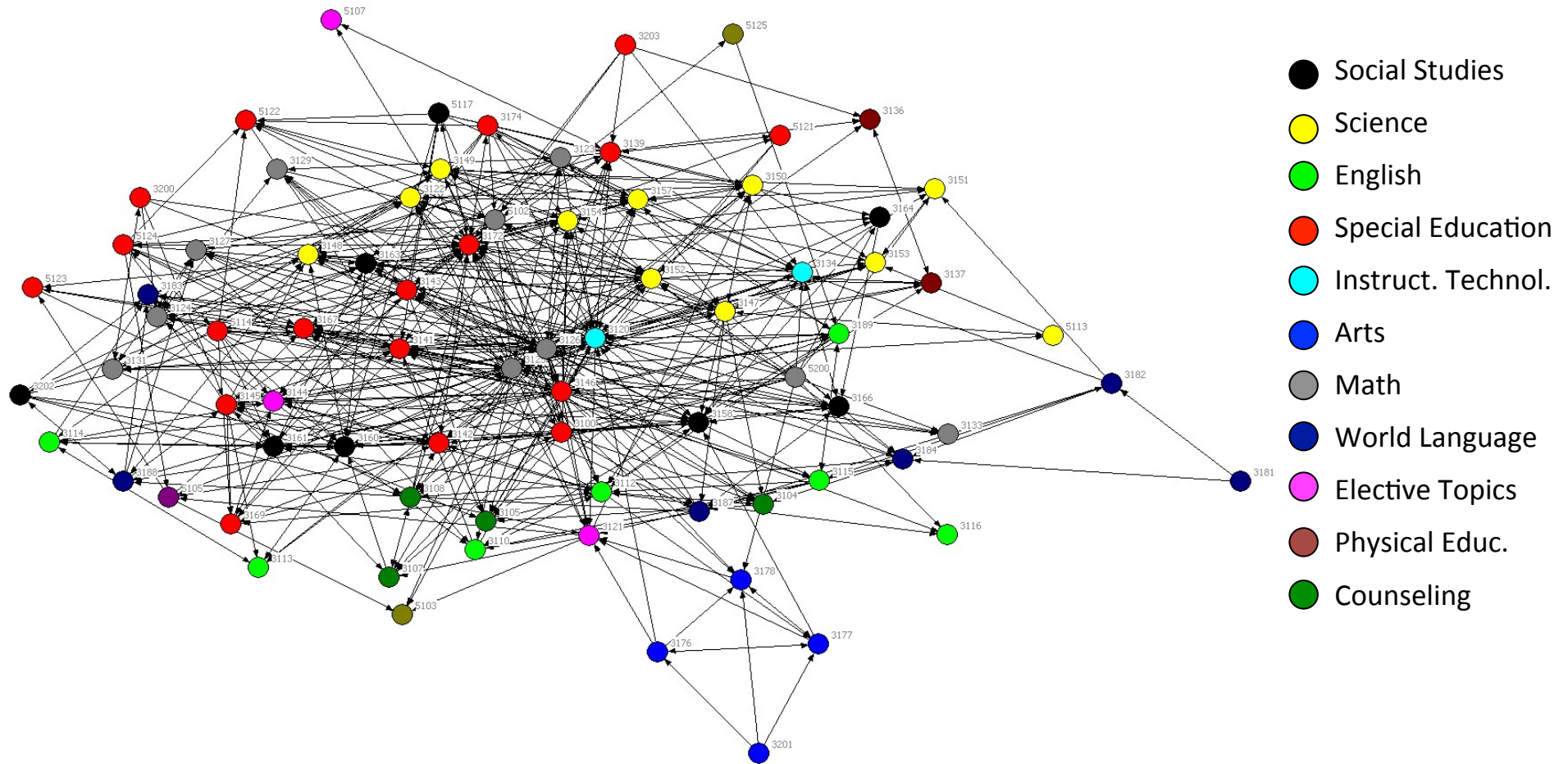
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Costs	Inst.	Exp.
Costs <i>HS is threatening</i>	1.78	.65	-		
Instrumental <i>HS helps me learn</i>	4.52	.55	-.46***	-	
Expedient <i>HS gives me the answer</i>	2.49	.73	.31*	-.11	-

Seeking Help from Colleagues

- How many colleagues do teachers go to for help (outdegree)? $M = 11.4$, $SD = 12.5$, Range = 0-70

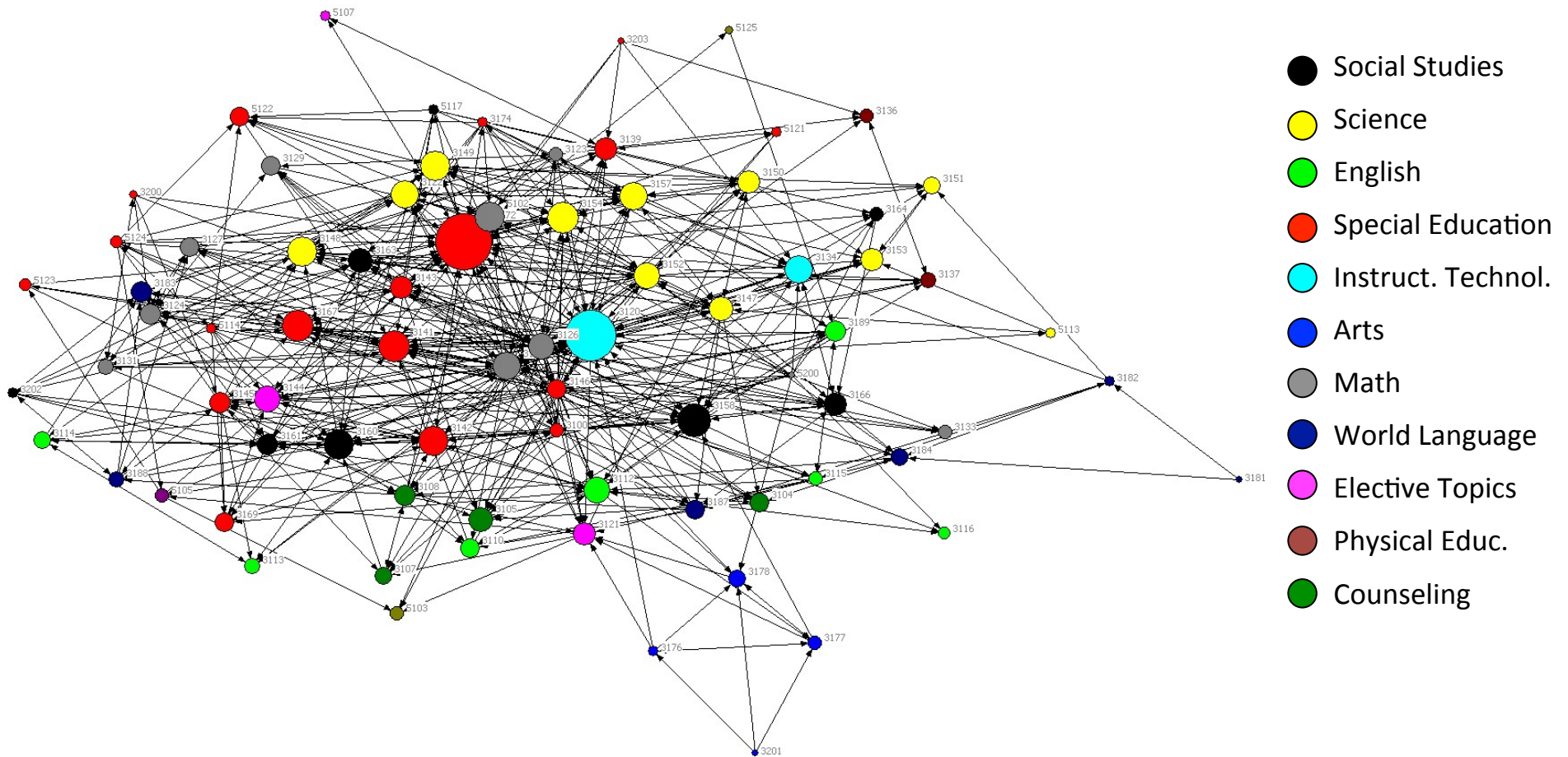


HS Network



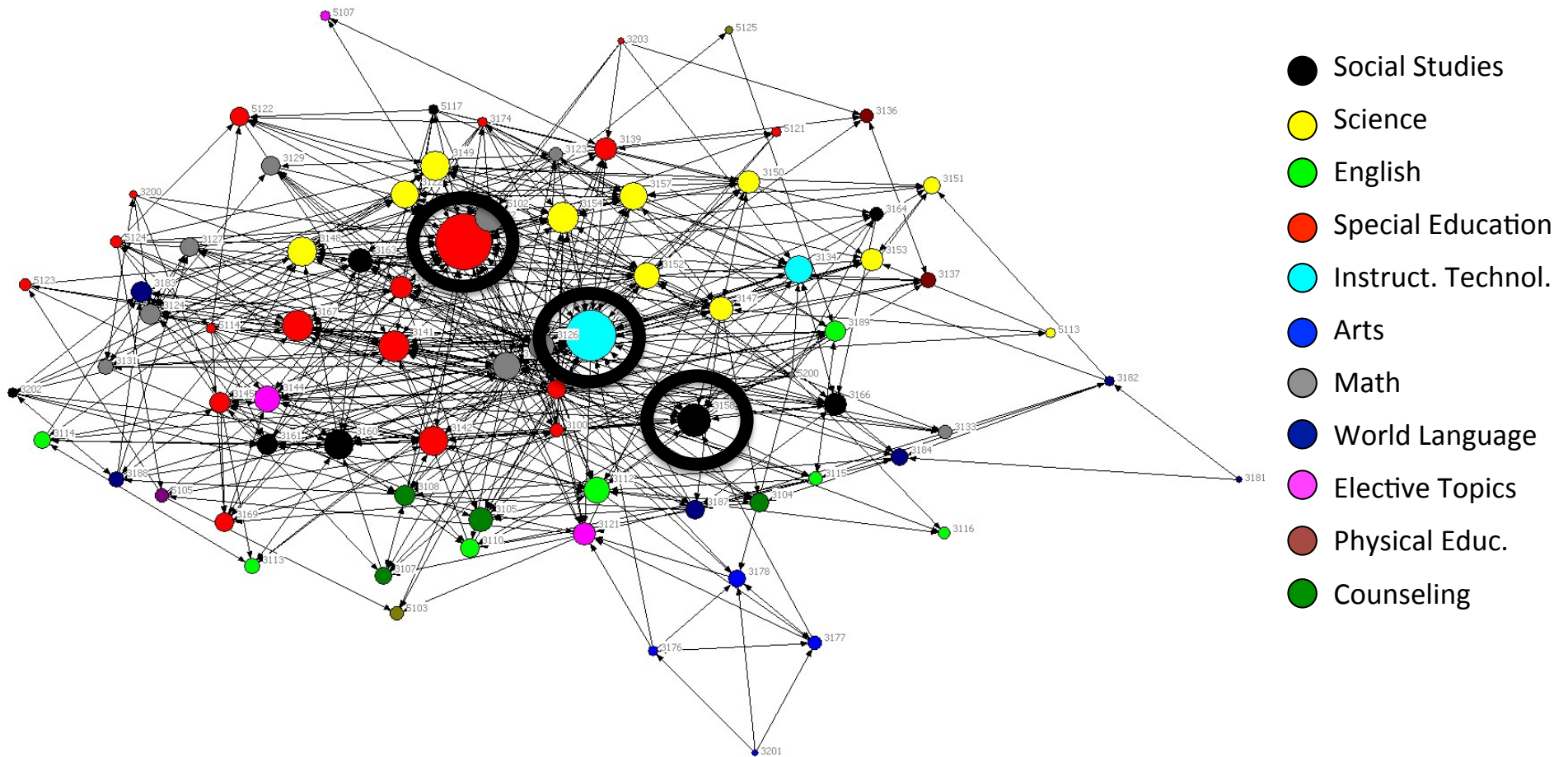
Help seeking nominations between teachers

HS Network



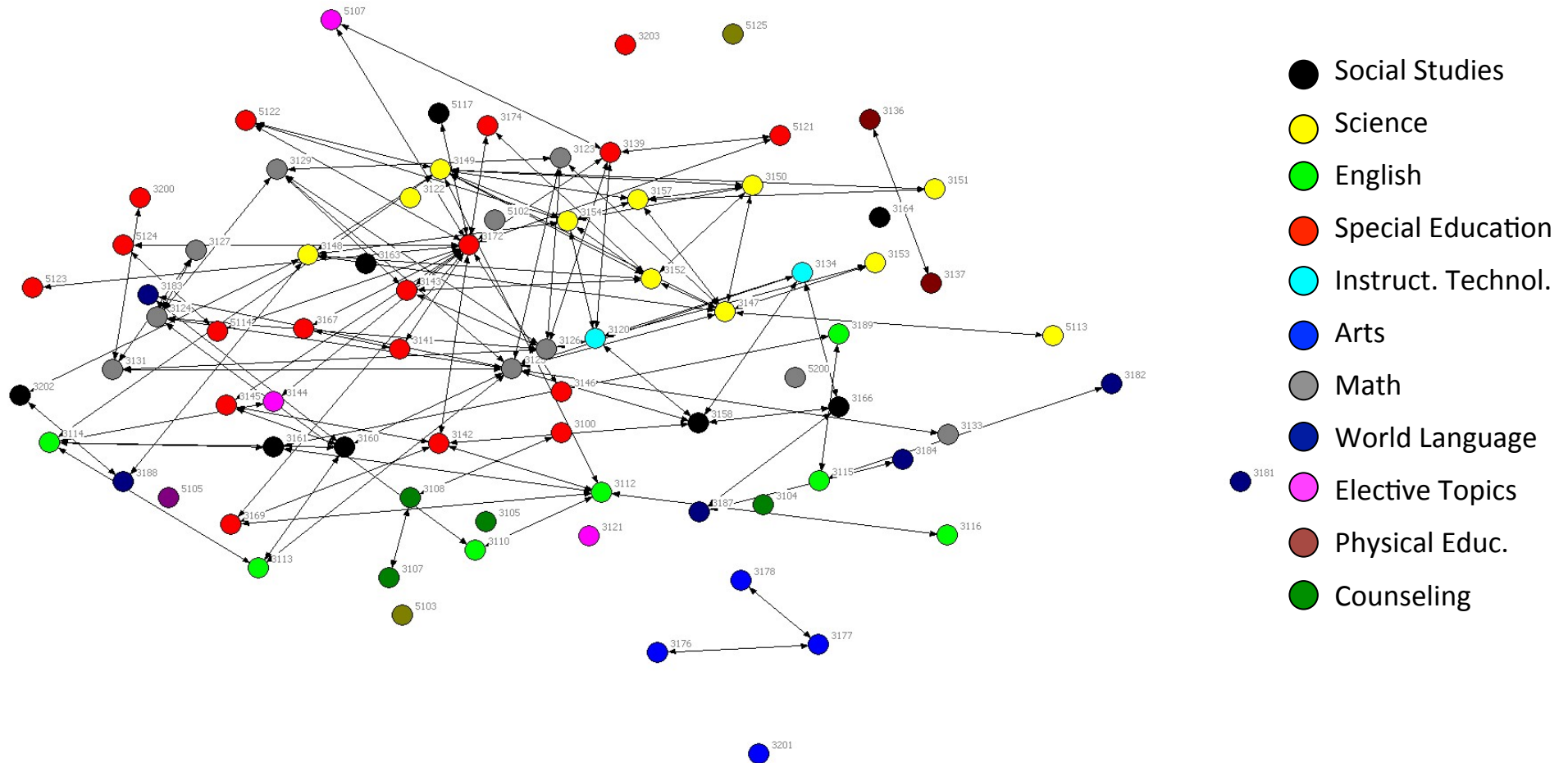
Nodes resized by number of requests for help (indegree)

HS Network



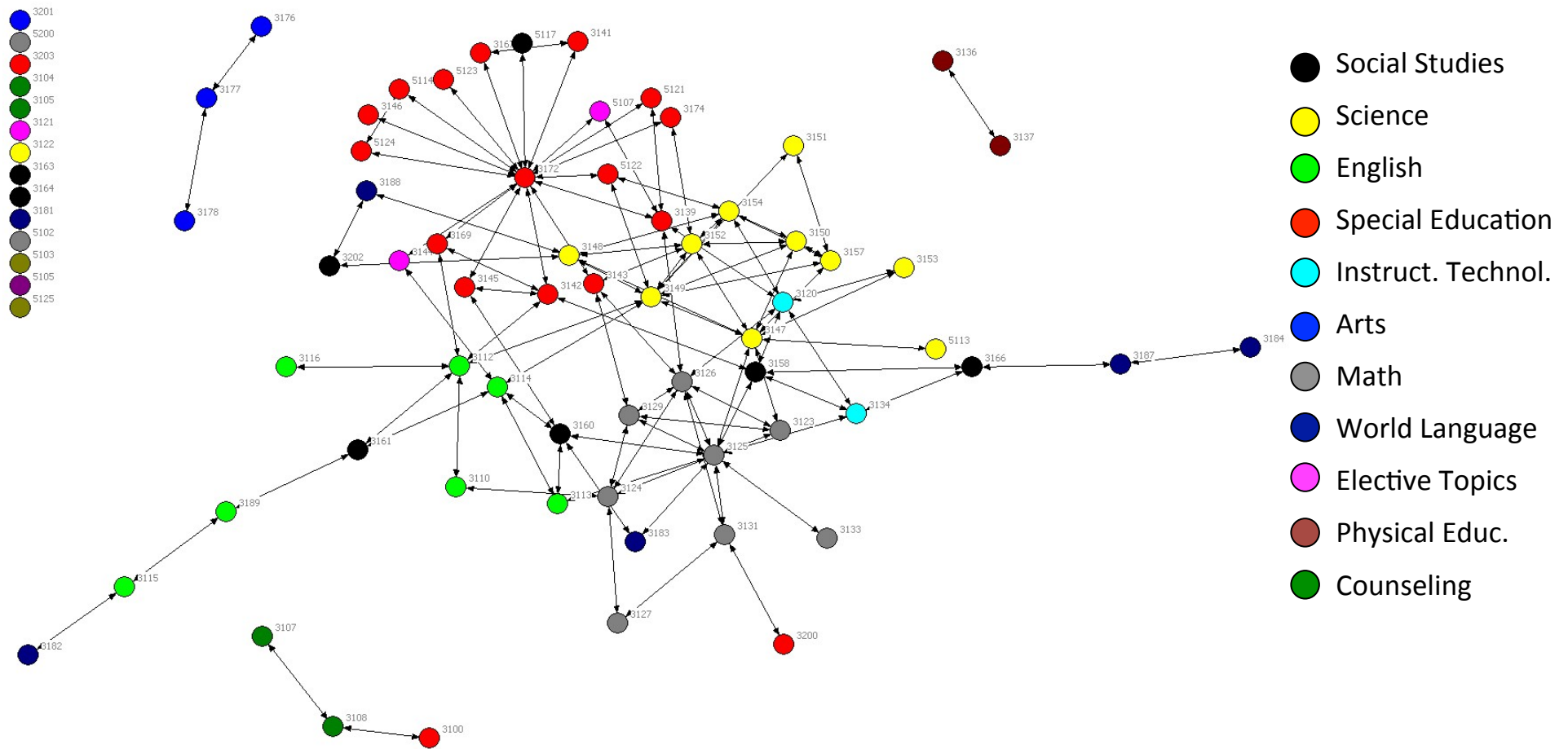
Nodes resized by number of requests for help (indegree)

HS Network – Reciprocated



Reciprocated Help Seeking Among Teachers

HS Network – Reciprocated



New Layout - Reciprocated Help Seeking Among Teachers

Beliefs about HS & Network Patterns

- Instrumental beliefs about HS positively related to the number of colleagues that staff went to for help (outdegree) ($r_s = .26^*$)
- Costs of HS and expedient beliefs not related to how many colleagues were sought for help or location within the HS network
 - Trends in the right direction (those with higher costs slightly less likely to seek help, less central)

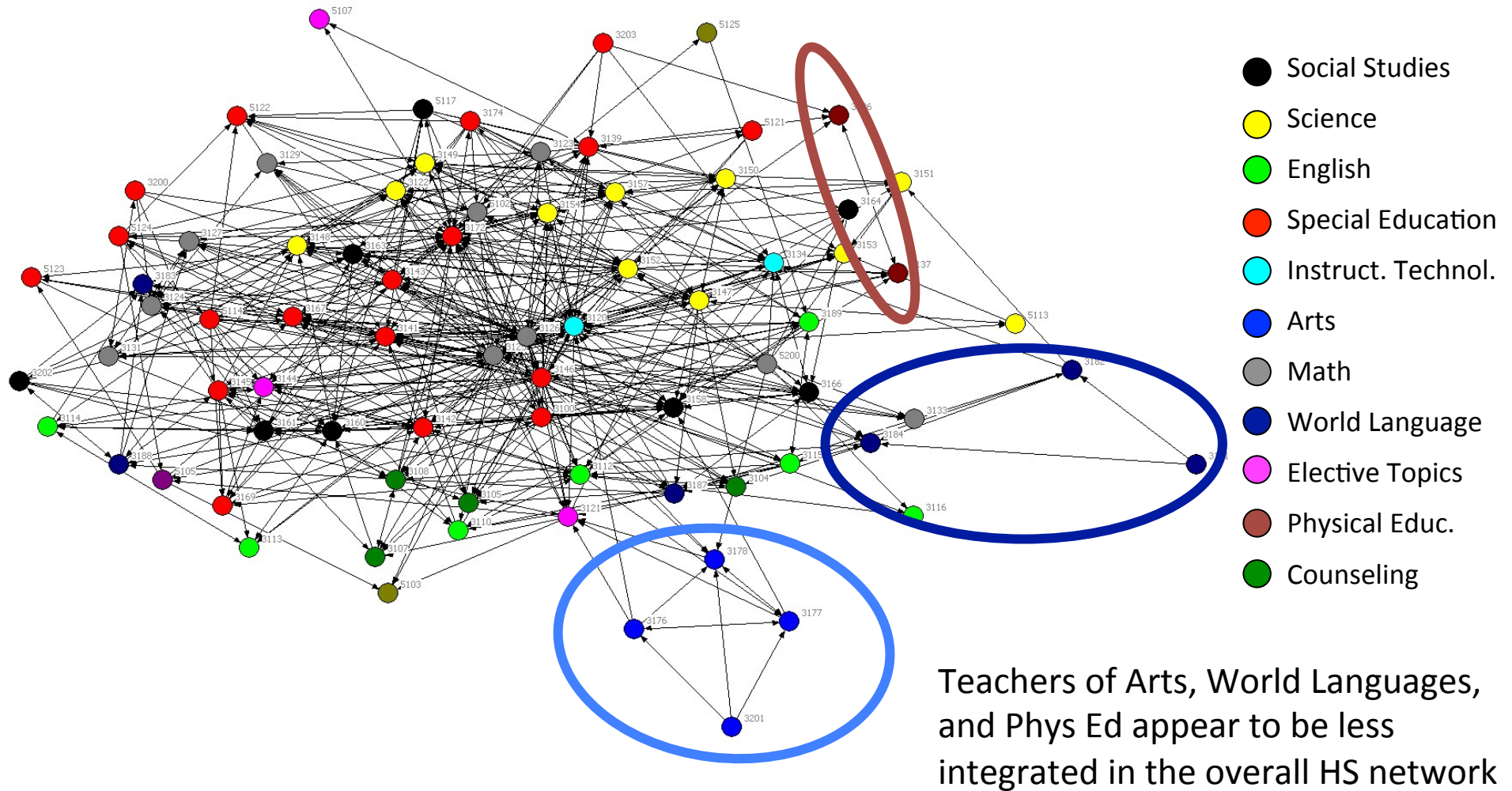
Spearman's Rho correlation due to nonparametric data

Differences Across Teachers

- No gender differences
- Staff with greater experience were sought for help by more colleagues ($r_s = .35^{**}$) and were more centrally located in the HS network ($r_s = .27^*$)
- Years of experience not related to instrumental or expedient beliefs, nor to beliefs about costs

Ran Spearman's Rho correlation due to nonparametric data

Curricular Departments



Curricular Departments

- **Heterogeneity:** In general, SPED, Math, & Technology sought greatest proportion of help outside of department, English & PE were lowest
- **Centrality in Network:** Technology, Math, SPED, & Science had highest centrality scores; while World Language, PE, Arts & Music had lowest

Summary

- Staff in this school had adaptive HS beliefs
- Little connection between HS beliefs and position in the HS network, with the exception of instrumental beliefs being positively associated with HS from greater number of staff (outdegree)
- Suggest school leaders promote instrumental HS beliefs and time/space for staff to seek help from one another

Summary

- No gender differences—surprising?
- Staff with greater experience were sought for help by more colleagues (indegree) and more centrally located in the HS network (betweenness)
- Interesting differences by department
 - Technology, math, and special education seem to be most integrated & adaptive in terms of HS

Implications & Future Work

- SNA useful for understanding teacher HS networks, comparing across schools
 - School organizational factors, e.g., leadership, interdisciplinary magnet programs
 - May want to limit number of nominations to those colleagues that teachers go to the “most” for help
- Explore other elements of the HS process:
 - Teachers’ need for help
 - How they ask for help
 - What type of help is sought

Thank you to Sabine Zorn & Julie Mulet for organizing the symposium, and to our discussant, Eleftheria Gonida



Questions & comments welcome!

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Extra Slides

Additional Information by Dept

	% in Sample	% Ties Outside of Dept	Avg # of Noms Received	Centrality Score	Instrumental Belief (M)
Special Ed	23	73	7.6	232	4.46
Science	14	68	10.2	202	4.36
Social Studies	13	68	8.3	163	4.83
Math	10	73	7.4	394	4.66
English	09	60	6.4	143	4.46
World Language	08	70	4.7	64	4.33
Arts & Music	05	63	3.3	89	4.63
Electives	05	63	5.8	121	4.63
Technology	03	72	19.5	692	5.00
Physical Educ	03	25	4.5	85	4.00

Gender Differences

- No gender differences in beliefs that HS is instrumental, expedient, or in costs of HS
- No gender differences in number of colleagues go to for help, number of colleagues who asked for help, or how central in the HS network

Ran nonparametric independent-samples Mann-Whitney U Test