

ESSAY 2

*The Significance of
the Geographical State and
the Ten Processes of
Education Reform*

Executive Summary: Fix the Broken Supply Chain

The central problem in American education is a personnel problem: the supply chain for the teacher and leader workforce is disregarded, disconnected and dysfunctional. Thus, we do not have enough teachers with enough teaching expertise to reach all our children or enough leaders with enough capacity to build high functioning teams. This is especially visible in schools serving urban and rural poor. Since teaching expertise is the *most significant variable in student achievement*, these personnel problems are a cap to all other improvement efforts.

You can't fix a problem if you don't define it properly. The problems in our schools cannot be fixed by working on school structure, on school governance, on school accountability, on school privatization, or on school size. It is not even primarily a matter of school funding.

The central issue is this: there is a common core of knowledge about teaching and learning for good professional practice that gets results for students. Large segments of it are missing in action from each of the ten subsystems that form the supply chain for our teacher workforce. No one is accountable for seeing it even shows up in these sub-systems, much less in an integrated way. This is eminently fixable; but only if we redefine the problem and radically refocus our resources. (The same can be said for the knowledge and skills of school leadership.)

The ten sub-systems of the educator workforce supply chain are:

1. University preparation programs
2. State licensing requirements
3. School district hiring processes
4. School district induction programs
5. School district supervision and evaluation systems
6. School district professional development systems
7. State recertification requirements
8. School district salary, promotion and advancement policies
9. Individual school working conditions and structure
10. Individual school organizational culture

These ten operate collectively as a SYSTEM that produces the teacher and leader workforce we have today. They need to be yoked together and integrated with one another. Since they aren't, the work force we have today is exactly what the system is designed to produce—random pockets of high quality and large numbers of under-prepared and under-skilled teachers. There's nothing wrong with most of the *people* we have. And legions of our 3 million educators manage to function personally at a high professional level anyway. But there are also legions who don't, and it's not their fault. They work in a broken system. Fix the system. State law, state policy, and local commitments of school boards have a significant influence on all ten of these sub-systems. Seven of them can be reshaped at the district level alone with insight, ability and will. Good legislation and state policy could kick-start all ten.



The Ten Processes of the Personnel System

In *Reengineering the Corporation* (1993), Hammer and Champy make the point that efforts for improvement classically focus on tasks, jobs, people, and structures, but not on processes, and that as a result reform programs often fail or matter little. This has been true in 20th Century Educational Reform efforts as well.

The previous essay made the point that teaching expertise is the highest leverage and the missing focus of educational reform. There are ten processes, ten levers if you will, to push if we are to systematically improve teaching expertise:

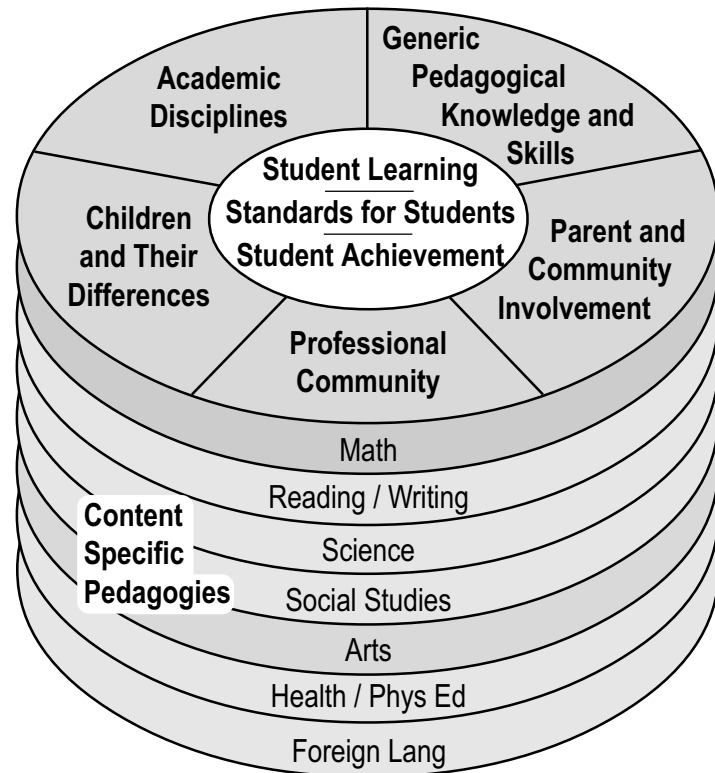
1. Process for Teacher Education
2. Process for Teacher Licensing and Certification in Each State
3. Process for Recruitment and Hiring
4. Process for Teacher Induction in a Teacher's First District
5. Process for Teacher Continuing Education and Professional Development
6. Process for Determining and Meeting Standards of Teacher Performance (Teacher Evaluation Systems)
7. Process for Recertification
8. Process for Teacher Advancement
9. Process of Structuring the Workplace for Professional Working Conditions
10. Process of Building a Growth Oriented Culture in the Workplace for Adults

The ten processes above have great influence over teacher learning, teacher capacity, and teacher efficacy. What we need to do is *tie these ten processes together, align them with one another* if we wish to wind up with high capacity teachers for all our nation's children. This is to say that the formula for success in improving schools is to approach all ten processes for increasing teacher capacity *together and simultaneously* with an integrated cohesive plan so that each system or process reinforces the effectiveness of the others.

Ten Processes That Influence Teaching Expertise

(What Ties Them Together is the Map of Pedagogical Knowledge)

1. Teacher Education (Graduate and Undergraduate)
2. Licensing and Certification
3. Recruiting and Hiring
4. Induction
5. Continuing Education and Professional Development
6. Teacher Evaluation
7. Recertification
8. Teacher Advancement
9. Structure of the Workplace
10. Culture of the School and Professional Community



Research for Better Teaching and *TEACHERS*²¹

The smallest unit in which this kind of integrated change effort can take place is the state. The geographical state, not the individual school and not the district will be the operational unit of enduring change—emphasize *enduring*—in American education. I am not talking narrowly about the State Department of Education here, but the state as a *geographical unit and a system of districts operating* within certain structures, a few of which are, indeed, primarily influenced and controlled by the State Department of Education.

It is, of course, true that the school and the district is where the action takes place. That is where improvement is visible and only there do we see effects on children. The argument of this essay is that school and district change does not *endure* unless it is supported by elements in the larger system that surround it; and the smallest viable unit size in which to build the supports for enduring change is the governmental unit we call a state.

I will argue that the proposition above is true because the changes that affect teacher learning and knowledge in an enduring way are rooted in statewide practices and systems and also in State law and regulations. They *could* also be rooted in statewide collaboratives with strong ties and commitments between districts—somewhat antithetical to the individualistic ways American school districts participate in collaboratives now. Instead of interacting like trading partners at the rural outpost, an ethos I would propose guides the relationships between districts in today's collaboratives (and between districts and universities, too), districts need to be more strongly interdependent... actually dependent on one another. They need to operate from the understanding that they are part of a larger "system" that influences what teachers know, believe, and can do through the ten processes.¹⁷

Successful changes are, indeed, actualized through districts and schools. They often originate there, but history has shown that they rarely can be preserved there. The rotation of school boards and the career moves of key leaders in the ranks of teachers and administrators make restructuring and improvement efforts at the school and district level vulnerable to the gigantic back pressure that the "ten processes" currently exert *against* reform, not in behalf of it. The way we have been going about educational reform in this century is tantamount to trying to grow lilies in the desert: the ecosystem doesn't support the garden, even if we get a few plants to live for a while with intensive tending.

Because we have failed to see the significance of the state as a system that includes districts, universities, and collaboratives as well as the regulatory Department of Education, we have doomed wonderful school and district improvement programs to short lives. It is time to "reengineer" our concept of reform and focus on the state as the unit of change and the ten processes as the instrumentalities of enduring reform.

In the previous essay, I made the case that we have a huge professional knowledge base on which to base successful practice; we have, however, failed to acknowledge it and failed to build it into rigorous performance assessments for licensure, certification and recertification. The purpose of that essay was to profile the knowledge base and argue that the most significant (and most neglected) lever on school improvement is to make teaching a true and rigorous profes-

¹⁷ This might be accomplished through State sponsored collaboratives such as the B.O.C.E.S. structure in New York State.

sion based on knowledge and skill. In this essay, we are playing that recommendation out.

Base each of the ten processes that affect teacher quality in the knowledge and skill of the profession, and then align them with one another across a state. This means aligning legislation, state policy, university education, and district practice with a knowledge-based view of proficient teaching. And it means doing so planfully for each of the following processes.

1. Teacher Education

Given the complexity of the knowledge and skill required for successful teaching, it would be as unrealistic to expect university graduates to be prepared to teach as it would to expect medical school graduates to commence independent practice of medicine. They simply don't know enough. In education it is even worse, because we expect candidates to be acquiring the rudiments of a liberal education at the same time as preparing for professional practice. Candidates for teaching need a minimum of a fifth year with intensive focus on planning and curriculum skills and a specialization in teaching their academic area. For example, the technology of teaching primary grade literacy is very sophisticated. And children in disadvantaged communities need beginning teachers who can land in the classroom running with these teaching skills. A liberal arts college education followed by an intensive year of preparation in content-specific pedagogy is a bare minimum of preparation. Missing is the essential foundation of classroom management, which cannot be learned in the university classroom. One's first year of teaching should be an internship year in which one is placed with a team of teachers and paced through the formal steps of creating classroom climate, setting limits, learning the body language of meaning business (Jones 2000), and creating meaningful school-home communication. Most important of all, graduation from such programs must be marked by successful passage through performance-based assessments where the candidates have to show, by actual performance, that they have competence at the relevant teaching skills.

The curriculum and assessments within teacher education institutions need to be congruent with the standards for knowledge-based practiced referenced above. Currently they are not. There is no agreement across teacher education institutions about what graduates should know or be able to do to enter classrooms as competent novices. Hence, there is no consistency across teacher education institutions about

the experience candidates have. Upgraded certification for teacher training institutions (National Council for Accreditation for Teacher Education—NCATE) is a force in this direction, but is meeting strong opposition from many institutions that wrongly see the teacher standards movement as a threat to their autonomy. The time has come for this to end. The voice of the state legislature can be brought to bear through the higher education approval process by which each teacher training institutions' charters are renewed. *Teacher training institutions can be required to make their programs reflect the common knowledge base and be performance-based.*

2. Teacher Licensing and Certification

The process of teacher licensing and certification has begun to change in the U.S. — and it is about time. The licensing process for any profession establishes standards for knowledge-based practice upon which public trust is ultimately based. Doctors must be board certified; lawyers must pass the bar; but teachers don't need to demonstrate specific knowledge or skills to practice. Teacher licensing and certification in the U.S. has been based on passive criteria throughout this century — meaning one doesn't have to prove one can do *anything* at the performance level to get a license. One has only to passively survive seat time and finish courses. The national movement for professionalization is seeing the creation of independent state licensing boards¹⁸, national standards for beginning teachers (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium—INTASC) and accomplished teachers (National Board of Professional Teaching Standards—NBPTS). We are also seeing legislated state performance standards that all districts must apply in their teacher evaluation systems (Massachusetts). Of the ten processes described in this essay, this one is receiving the most attention and making slow but steady progress.

But we are still far from a standard that calls for performance-based assessment to get a license to teach. Connecticut had the most developed program in the 1990s where external assessors, operating with state funding, visited the classes of beginning teachers and assessed their proficiency by actual observation of performance. The assessors were well trained and the assessment instrument was knowledge-based and well structured to collect data on teacher decision making

¹⁸ 11 states now have independent licensing boards: California, Oregon, Minnesota, Nevada, Iowa, Kentucky, Georgia, Indiana, Wyoming, N. Dakota, W. Virginia. Source: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, Washington, D.C.

from repertoires of skills rather than implementation of “effective” behaviors. Observation by state assessors using the Connecticut model is not the only way, but it is certainly a rigorous way to structure licensure. And it is part of a 15-year commitment that the state has made to developing workforce excellence. The payoff, incidentally, has been among the best test score gains in the nation despite increase in number of children living in poverty and number of children from diverse language backgrounds.

3. Recruitment and Hiring

False starts abound for making the recruitment and hiring process more effective at attracting and retaining high quality teachers. Signing bonuses; TV ads that highlight the inspirational effects of good teachers; alternative (easier) certification programs that bring career changers into the classroom with minimum requirements (and minimum teaching skills). These approaches fail because they do not address the two key issues: working conditions and support for developing expertise.

Support

Beginners flock to districts that can offer comprehensive induction programs, districts that showed an aspiring teacher that they will not be overloaded with a stripped room, too many preps, and the most problem laden students (a common experience); districts that can show they will provide on-going seminars, coaching, and problem solving help for novices; districts that can show they value mentoring by making the criteria selective and the training rigorous (Saphier, Aschheim, and Freedman 2001).

Better salaries are not irrelevant to this picture, as Dallas and New York both found when they eliminated their teacher shortages in a stroke with pay hikes (2002). But as personnel directors are discovering, applicants are shopping for districts that will support them, and they know what to ask for.

Working Conditions

The working conditions that attract quality candidates are working conditions that have true professional characteristics that are described in other parts of this essay: joint work, shared responsibility, high opportunity for professional learning, and differentiated career options.

When we are attracting more qualified people to apply for teaching positions, then the hiring process can use technologies such as Haberman's (1995) for identifying beginners who are willing to persevere and believe in the capacity of all their children to learn despite disadvantages. This and other key beliefs can become part of hiring processes that are much more knowledge-based and tied to demonstration of performance.

4. Teacher Induction

Quality induction programs for new teachers are rare in the United States. We still plunge novice teachers into the water without adequate preparation or adequate support. Thus we lose 50% to 60% of new people within five years (Grissmer and Kirby 1987, 93, 94) and an even high percentage of entering teachers under the age of 24. Results from the California Beginning Teacher Program show that retention can go above 90% and student learning is positively impacted immediately when induction programs are thoughtful and long term (Garmston and Gless 1993). Elements to address in a complete teacher induction program would include screening and hiring procedures (Haberman 1995), rigorous mentor training, and placement of newly hired teachers in high functioning teams where the newcomers become enculturated to professional norms of collegiality, collaboration, accountability, and constant learning (Saphier 1994.) Comprehensive induction programs would include more than mentoring and enlist the whole faculty in having a stake in the beginning teacher's success, along with a belief that they all had something to offer (Saphier et al. 2001). State law would require comprehensive induction programs be developed by each district and state Department of Education would provide technical assistance on how to design and staff such programs. State legislatures would make it a priority to provide supplementary funding to districts to support these programs. Since there are few investments with more leverage to secure and retain quality teachers than good induction programs, these funding packages would remain intact even in hard budget times when other cuts had to be made.

5. Teacher Development

Teacher development is random, individualistic, and sadly inequitable across the country. Adequate and equitable teacher development would be based in part on a common map of professional knowl-

edge (see Essay 1) held in common by licensing boards, institutions of higher learning, and school districts. Using this map as an organizer, Regional Collaboratives or Centers would make available to teachers and administrators the resources for professional study and individual skill development that individual districts, especially small and poor districts, cannot and do not offer today. They would offer inviting centers for teachers to share their Personal Practical Knowledge (see section 8 on Culture of the Workplace.)

Creating regional networks or accessible resources — ideas, things, and people — is absolutely essential and sadly missing. With some notable local exceptions most areas of the country are barren of coordinated and networked resources for teacher learning that approach equity. This is an area where federal funding could play a very constructive role.

6. Standards for Teacher and Administrator Performance

The development of standards is well underway and has been profiled under the “Teacher Certification” section above. The process I want to consider here is teacher and administrator evaluation as performed in school districts. These processes can be designed to either foster or impede learning and capacity-building for professional educators. In many districts they are, at best, neutral; that is, they have no great effect either positive or negative on teacher and administrator learning: they are pro forma processes that absorb time and consume forest products. In some districts, teacher evaluation systems clearly obstruct teacher learning by (1) devaluing teaching by paying scant attention to evaluation; (2) attempting to quantify teaching with checklists and scores; (3) putting teachers in competition with one another through merit pay schemes; and (4) creating a culture of inspection and mistrust by poorly designed evaluation systems.

But evaluation systems can be constructed to actively sponsor teacher (and administrator) learning; and they can do so in a way that does not dodge the need for organizations to be able to identify and respond decisively to unsatisfactory performance. Such processes emphasize multiple year Professional Growth Cycles (Saphier 1993) where traditional “evaluation” is done only once every three or four years (see Essay 3) though an administrator can put a particular teacher into the evaluation year at any time if there are concerns. In such an evaluation system there are no “years off”. In years when formal evaluation by administrators is not done, teachers are required

to choose from a menu of rigorous options for professional growth, do goal setting, plan projects, and report on their learning progress at the end of the year. In some districts these reports go to panels of peers, not to administrators. In other districts frequent peer observation is required in one of years between evaluations.

During the evaluation year itself, a growth-oriented process produces detailed data-oriented observation notes and narrative write-ups, no ratings, rankings, or points that add up to a teacher “grade”. And administrators, who have far fewer teachers to evaluate in a given year, can observe more frequently and use good coaching skills where appropriate—which is most of the time—to assist teachers in analyzing their lessons and making plans based on data about how the lessons went (Costa and Garmston 1994). All the same principles should be applied to processes for evaluation of administrators. To be certified as an administrator, an individual should have to show by performance that they have proficiency at the skills above. This is, once again, a key lever of the state on influencing teacher quality. Finally, student results should be included in a responsible way in teacher evaluation systems (see Essay 3).

7. Recertification

We have already made the case for performance-based certification tied to the main categories of the knowledge base. Recertification is a process maintained by true professions in which members must show they have maintained their skills (airline pilots) or have updated and expanded their knowledge and skill (medical doctors). Either approach would be appropriate for teachers. We recommend the latter through the satisfaction of a distribution requirement every 5 years. To be recertified, teachers would have to show they had added an increment of knowledge or skill to their repertoires in each of the six areas of professional knowledge profiled in essay one. State PDP or course credit systems tied to performance assessment in the courses could be adapted to meet these requirements.

8. Teacher Advancement

In a fully aligned system, the process for moving up the ladder in teaching would give incentive for educators to learn new skills. We are some distance from being able to set this redesigned process in motion. The first part of the process, the development of performance

assessments for teachers and administrators, is on the action agenda in many states at the current time. And precedents exist already for such assessments as the Connecticut Competency Instrument (CCI) and the National Principals' Assessment Centers (Hersey 1986).

“Skill-based pay” is already an operating process in certain industries (Firestone 1994) and is being piloted in a few school districts (“Excellent Teachers Rewarded” 1995). In skill-based pay, people get raises when they show evidence they have acquired new skills or capacities. As opposed to evaluation-based merit pay, which pits educators against each other to beat out their peers in competition for a limited pot of “merit” money, skill-based pay is tied to authentic performance assessments and gives teachers incentives for increasing their capacity; and it does so from a level playing field where all have equal opportunity to be rewarded for investing in their own efficacy. Skill-based pay is not a zero sum game where only a few can win at the expense of others.

But “advancement” should mean more than pay raises. The absence of positions to aspire toward in teaching (i.e., positions of increased responsibility requiring experience, judgment and high levels of specialized skills) saps the initiative of many senior people in education and causes others to leave. This is the place to bring back creative proposals of the 80s (Devaney 1987) for positions such as Lead Teacher and to add others: for example, Mentors with high levels of training and significant responsibility in new teacher induction programs; or Team Leaders who have superior skills in curriculum design and development. In this role, individuals would be responsible for curriculum integration efforts across grade level teams, within middle school teams, and for high school teachers who share common courses. With the great wave of new teachers coming into the business over the next decade and the attendant cost savings as 2/3 of our high salary teachers retire, *the money is already in school district budgets to create these positions.*

9. Workplace Structure – particularly schedules and groupings of teachers and students

Teachers' opportunity for learning is significantly influenced by working closely and collaboratively with colleagues to deliver daily instruction. Physical proximity does not do it; doing joint work with colleagues does (Little 1988). This joint work can take the form of side by side team teaching (the best form of teaming in my opinion) It can

take the form of co-development of assessment tasks and rubrics to use in common with students. It can take the form of designing and implementing integrated curriculum for a joint group of students. But for any of this to happen, the organization of time (long blocks in high schools) and the grouping of students and teachers into teams jointly responsible for the progress of the youngsters is essential.

10. Culture of the Workplace

“Overall, if we compared two average students, one in a school with low professional community, and the other in a school with high professional community, the students in the high community would score about 27% higher on the SRS measure. The difference would represent a gain of 31 percentile points.”

– Newmann and Wehlage

In the 1990s, powerful research showed beyond question that schools that succeeded for children, especially poor urban children, had strong organizational cultures (see bibliography). As more and more work was done to understand these cultures, they came to be called Professional Learning Communities. The reason Professional Learning Communities (PLC) increase student learning is that they produce more good teaching by more teachers more of the time. Put simply, PLC improves teaching, which improves student results, especially for the least advantaged students.

It is, therefore, particularly important to understand what these cultures are like and how they are created. This was the focus of Big Rock #2 in the previous essay.

We have already made the case that the prime characteristic of powerful relationships is honest, open communication where conflict can happen in healthy ways, out in the open, and where the undiscussable can be made discussable. This position in the literature is well represented by such authors as Michael Fullan and others who write about the importance of collaboration.

The type of collaboration found in strong professional communities means a lot more than working cooperatively with others on committees or at meetings. It means five specific observable norms among staff members:

- High frequency of teacher talk about teaching in increasingly concrete and precise language
- High frequency of teachers observing one another
- High frequency of teachers making materials and planning lessons together
- Teachers teaching each other about the practice of teaching (Little 1982)
- Teachers willing to ask for and provide one another with assistance (Rosenholtz 1989)

Together, these five observable patterns define “Collegiality,” now a word in our professional vocabulary with precise meaning.

Professional isolation carries profound consequences for teachers’ opportunities to learn and solve classroom problems. “However, to the extent that teachers believe that anyone, even the most capable colleague, might need help in a similar situation, it becomes unnecessary for them to draw causal inferences about their own teaching inadequacy. That is, if teaching is collectively viewed as an inherently difficult undertaking, it is both necessary and legitimate to seek and to offer professional assistance. This is exactly what occurs in instructionally successful schools, where, because of strong administrative or faculty leadership, *teaching is considered a collective rather than an individual enterprise* (italics not in original); requests and offers of assistance among colleagues are frequent, and reasoned intentions, informed choices, and collective actions set the conditions under which teachers improve instructionally.” (op.cit.)

High stakes tests have invited, if not forced, another behavior into the domain of collaborative work: systematic examination of data about student performance, and further, systematic examination of student work itself. This joint practice is so important we have included it as a separate norm in our map of professional community (Essay 1, p. 32). The analysis is done together by teachers of common academic content. It should become the starting point for the concrete talk about teaching, the planning and making of materials together, and the peer observation that comprise Little’s definition of “collegiality”.

Rosenholtz’s findings challenge us to invent structures, reserve time on agendas of existing structures, and build a behavioral norm of asking for help and of taking the risk of giving it too. Contemplating what such a norm would be like brings us to the final point about PLC: how comfortable do we feel being honest with one another about

our feelings, about our doubts, and about our disagreements? Do our relationships allow us to make the undiscussable discussable? Now we are beyond the structures and the protocols for teacher talk. We are into the D.N.A. of powerful professional learning communities and the quality of conversations between staff members. Are they courageous?

If this is the right cast for what school culture is, (or its 21st century update, Professional Learning Community) then we need to act on it. We already know that schools with strong Professional Learning Communities improve instruction rapidly and thus, get better student results. Building and strengthening these features of the school organization and its human environment constitutes the main job of leadership. Therefore, the education, certification, and evaluation of leaders must be designed around how to lead in this way — the knowledge and skills of cultural leadership. And that has been the point of this section.

Alignment at the State Level

It is easy to conjure a vision of these ten systems operating in alignment with one another. It is yet another thing to design a change process to *get* them in alignment. Let's look at the vision first. The vision:

Teacher Certification and Teacher Education

State teacher certification requirements, administered through the Department of Education, are knowledge-based and granted through performance assessment keyed to the INTASC standards. The performance assessments are complex, multifaceted, and demanding. Teacher education programs have aligned themselves with the requirements so their graduates are prepared for meeting entry level standards. Part of teachers' assessed knowledge includes how to act as a positive force for school culture building.

The scenario above contains three aligned processes: Certification; University education; Culture of the workplace.

Teacher Induction

High quality three year induction programs are available for new teachers in all districts. Large districts train their own mentors. Small districts have equally well trained mentors who are educated and

supported through regional collaboratives, perhaps subsidized by the state (and in a future life, by the federal government.) New teachers are placed for one to three years in special induction schools. These induction schools are organized with the attributes described below under “Workplace Structure.” Continuous learning experiences are provided to new teachers formally and informally through district resources and the Regional Center for Professional Teaching Knowledge.

The scenario above contains four aligned processes: Induction; Culture of the Workplace; Teacher and Administrator Development; Workplace Structures

Teacher and Administrator Development

The state Department of Education has provided startup funding and organizational resources for Regional Centers for Professional Teaching Knowledge. These electronically networked Regional Centers for Professional Teaching Knowledge make available on-line to every teacher (and administrator) in the region two kinds of downloadable resources: (1) lessons, materials, analogies, tasks, rubrics, samples of student work for teaching specific concepts or areas of content; (2) digitized video segments illustrating the items in (1) as well as illustrating trans-disciplinary teaching techniques (e.g., classroom management moves; instructional strategies like how to do “reciprocal teaching,” etc...) (3) an index of human resources within the region ... i.e., names of people with times and places where workshops, study groups, or seminars are being offered; names of people who are willing to offer other kinds of learning experiences (e.g., teaching a demonstration lesson in your class or having you visit to witness a demo lesson in their class).

The map of professional knowledge from which the “Center” operates is congruent with the framework of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and actively represents a view of professional knowledge as “repertoire” and “matching,” not “effective behaviors” (Saphier, 1994). This more professional view of teaching knowledge acts to support the culture of collegiality, collaboration, and constant learning that ground the healthy workplace culture described below.

The scenario above contains two aligned processes: Teacher and Administrator Development and Culture of the Workplace.

Teacher Advancement

Salary raises are tied to two processes: (1) demonstrated mastery through performance assessment of new knowledge-based teaching skills, and (2) extra pay for extra responsibility in a differentiated position such as Mentor Teacher, Team Leader, Curriculum Leader...

The scenario above contains four aligned processes: Teacher and Administrator Development; Teacher Standards; Teacher Advancement; Workplace Structure.

Teacher and Administrator Standards

Individual district teacher evaluation systems are nested in a Professional Growth Cycle where the emphasis is on professional growth; yet a clear, decisive, fair performance-based accountability system exists for identifying and dealing with sub-standard teaching. Administrators are trained through the state Leadership Academy, and accountable in their districts for implementing this evaluation system. Teachers are responsible for implementing the professional growth cycle. The state standards for administrators support these practices and the state Leadership Academy offers annual training in supervision and evaluation keyed to the state standards for teacher performance.

The scenario above contains two aligned processes: Teacher Development and Teacher Standards.

Workplace Structure

Schools are small enough for personal caring and knowledge of students. Teachers are organized into teams that consider themselves jointly accountable for student results. Differentiated staffing gives senior, qualified teachers curriculum leadership and mentor responsibilities. Block scheduling and longer more flexible school days and years make possible more motivating integrated curriculum, student apprenticeships, and "reteaching loops" for students who need extra time to master rigorous material at high standards. These changes are supported by recommendations recently made by the Massachusetts State Commission on Time and Learning (1995) and the Federal Report "Prisoners of Time" (Kane 1994).

The scenario above contains three aligned processes: Induction; Teacher Advancement; Workplace Structure.

Workplace Culture/Professional Learning Community

School leaders are trained and evaluated on their ability to nurture conditions of collegiality, experimentation, and reaching out to the knowledge base by faculty. Administrators are also evaluated on their ability to support teachers taking initiative to do things for the good of the school. “Culture building” is in the state standards for administrators, built into the training delivered by the state Leadership Academy and into Degree Programs in Educational Leadership offered by universities.

The scenario above contains four aligned systems: Teacher and Administrator Standards; Workplace Culture; University Programs; Teacher and Administrator Development.

With the ten processes above aligned as described, enduring and increasing teacher capacity would impact the achievement of all learners. How do we get these ten processes aligned in congruence with the vision above? Clearly no single agency has the clout to accomplish this kind of integrated change by itself.

The vision above can only be accomplished with coordinated movement across a common front by such players as a State Licensing Board, University degree programs, regional collaboratives, the state legislature, local school boards, and decision makers in individual districts. Forging such an alliance is a political task-based on constant discussion, networking, and bringing people together from these different constituencies. Each of the ten processes has primary players and physical sites. These players need to see that their cause is common and their relationship needs to be one of interdependence and reinforcement in the way they operate.

Alignment at the District Level

A common view of the knowledge base on teaching is shared between the teacher evaluation system and the Department of Staff Development of the district. In fact, staff development is recast as career development, with a menu of offerings across the knowledge base always available either through the districts own trainers or through partnerships with regions colleges and other school districts. The induction program has been built around the components of professional knowledge most needed by beginning teachers, especially those related to classroom management, planning skills, and content fo-

cused pedagogy in literacy (literacy across the curriculum for secondary teachers in the disciplines) and math. So the map of professional knowledge serves as an anchor and developmental menu for staff development planning for all district staff members.

When hiring teachers, the Human Resources (HR) Office is tuned into knowledge-based aspects of teaching that are particularly important. For example, interviews probe a candidate's belief about innate ability vs. effort-based achievement and ask "what if" questions that assess a candidate's willingness to persevere. HR is looking for people who believe in collaboration and are willing to have their teaching viewed by colleagues (Professional Community).

Because of the district's belief in the complexity and importance of teacher capacity to student achievement, it has developed and the school board funds a wide array of structures to support teacher learning including lesson study groups, intervisitation projects and professional development schools. Schools are structured and schedules are planned so these activities are possible, as well as common planning times for groups of teachers who share a grade or a subject. District policy continually focuses leaders on these priorities, as does the evaluation system for principals and department chairs.

The knowledge-based view of successful teaching has led to differentiated staffing and multiple points of entry into direct work with children, including models that resemble the Milken Family Foundation's design (1999). Teachers advance by demonstrated competence into leadership positions for supervision of grade level teachers and aides.

The in-house Leadership Academy brings many into the role of principal and assistant principal with a strong knowledge of how to build Professional Community. No one, in fact, from inside or outside the system can get a building leadership position without showing commitment and competence as a culture builder. Small districts have collaboratives to provide the services that larger districts provide through in-house academies.

The Future

While individual schools and districts can influence the seven processes that are district-based, we need a broader-based conversation among policy makers and opinion leaders through any and all fo-

rums available to us as educators. We need to talk explicitly about the interdependence and need for integration of these ten processes. Avenues include local school board information sessions; state school board meetings; state conventions of discipline-based associations; state conventions of leadership and teacher associations; university colloquia; radio talk shows; Chambers of Commerce; Rotary and other business clubs; church groups; legislative lobbying groups. Ultimately, the power of state law and the authority of state licensing boards must be in alignment with the standards for teacher and administrator performance. What we have to do is get the actors in each of the ten systems to be aware of the other systems in which they don't directly participate and cause them to see themselves as interdependent with those other systems.

School improvement is a combination of resources, insight, strategy and will. We have arguably been weak on all four.

Resources

The first premise of this essay has been that we have been dividing, even scattering, our resources for educational improvement instead of focusing on the most important lever for change — people, and increasing their capacity through knowledge. Let's focus our resources on our people, our professional educators.

Insight

Second, let us use the insight that the geographical state will be the enduring unit of change; and the state is a system of players and agencies whose efforts need to be aligned in purpose and coordinated in design to influence teacher learning.

Strategy

Third, let us use the strategy of networking and persuasive argumentation to have key players and agencies come to first understand and then contribute to and *own* a new vision of educational improvement through the ten processes.

And that leaves "will."

Do we have the will as a state (as a nation) to commit the time, energy, and resources it takes to reengineer the ten processes?

Will

There is significant evidence that the American public believes: (1) our educational system is in poor shape, (2) getting worse, and (3) that no efforts at reform are really making much difference.

Our public ignores demographic shifts, increased enrollment and graduation rates, and actual standardized test scores that counter the conventional wisdom of school decline (Koretz 1986, 92; Linn and Dunbar 1990; Bracey 1994). They lump the problems of schools with the problems of society, and become accusatory and non-supportive.

They think the productivity problems of schools are due to a combination of incompetence and mediocrity that is remediable through merit pay, competition between schools (schools of choice) and better management. "Just get some good people in there, for God sake, and put some capitalistic competition in the education market and good schools will start to emerge," goes the thinking. They believe at bottom that teaching is easy work that any literate and reasonably decent person can do well.

If we do not change this image of teaching as easy work, we will have a hard time mobilizing the public will and public commitment we need as pressure to change the ten systems. Elsewhere (Saphier 1994) I have made the case that many of us educators need to seek out skilled media partners and educate the public about the complexities of good professional teaching. We need, furthermore, to show convincingly the concrete difference it makes in people's daily lives — including senior citizens and people with no children in school¹⁹ — if today's youngsters are working with high capacity teachers on a daily basis.

The gist of this essay is to suggest a role shift for educators who up until now have been devoting their careers to learning how to teach and administer better, and then trying to apply their new learnings with students in their own schools and districts. I, myself, have been such a person until now.

I first wrote this essay in 1993. It fell on deaf ears. What has changed since then, however, is the implementation of the standards movement, the passage of the federal law "No Child Left Behind," the demographic change to a near-majority non-white student population, and an on-rushing global economy that is leaving the United States

¹⁹ In 1970 there were 4 million more children than adults in this country. In 1995 there were 33 million more adults than children. Source: James Pusely, Virginia Beach Public Schools.

at a competitive disadvantage for skilled workers. High stakes test and accountability have not given us the schools we want and need. Frustrated voters have increased their support of charter schools, which have not performed any better than public schools. “Programs” that seek superior approaches to instruction through teacher-proof curriculum have continued to yield null results. Now, finally, there is beginning acceptance in the conventional wisdom of the significance of good teaching and that support for good teaching is what we’ve left out of the picture. But who can explain what good teaching is but educators themselves who turn their attention to educating our public?

We can’t stop working with children or cease working to improve our own institutions. But a great many of us need immediately to begin looking for forums to address our communities, our public, and our legislators to reeducate them about the importance and complexity of good teaching. Otherwise, even the most successful of us will each end our careers with individual accomplishments that do not impact the systems in which we worked — individual trophies, as it were, for teams that have ceased to exist or be cared about. We could do better. Instead, we could have our names on plaques commemorating the creation of new integrated processes for teacher learning that endured many generations and ultimately moved an entire country.



The next essay is a case study of the implementation of many of the ideas presented so far in this monograph. It is a study of a large district with a significant urban and multi-ethnic population, Montgomery County, MD. It is, of course, an unfinished story, but it is also seven years of continuous and successful work to recognize the significance of teaching expertise and build that recognition into the operating processes of the district. The case study highlights the processes of teacher evaluation, professional development, administrator development and principal evaluation.

What will be particularly interesting to school practitioners is the enduring partnership that has been forged between the teachers’ union and the school administration, and now replicated between the principals’ union and the school administration, to take joint responsibility for student learning. It has been indispensable to the outstanding results this district of 192 schools is achieving and is a focus of the case study.

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