

## DePaul Center for Urban Education Research Base

### School Development through Connected Professional Development that is Embedded and Ongoing

| Core Element  | Connections Structure   | Basis in Research  | Relevant Research   |
|---|---|--|---|
| School Development through Connected Professional Development | School workshops emphasize school-year priorities that are developed through applications of workshop content<br>Teachers take leadership in planning and instructional modeling and coaching as “Connectors” | Effective school development stresses the importance of teachers learning and changing together, as they reflect in their practice and implement new teaching strategies | Taylor, Pearson, Clark, and Walpole, 2000; Bacharach, 1986; Loucks- Horsley, 1989. Loucks- Horsley, 1997. |

The following research supports the emphasis on this element of the Connections structure:

An investigation of factors related to primary-grade reading achievement with moderate to high number of students on subsidized lunch in 14 schools across the United States and 2 teachers in each of the grades k-3 found that teachers in all four of the most effective schools reported collaboration within and across grades as a reason for their success. Factors such as peer coaching, teaming within and across grades, and working together to help all students and program consistency were mentioned as aspects of collaboration that teachers valued in these most effective schools (p. 141). Collaboration played an important role in the delivery of reading instruction in all of the most effective schools (p. 142).

B. M. Taylor, D. P. Pearson, K. Clark, and S. Walpole, “Effective Schools and Accomplished Teachers: Lessons about Primary-Grade Reading Instruction in Low-Income Schools”, Elementary School Journal, 101(2), 2000.

Peer coaching is one of the most powerful helping relationships for teachers. Embedded in this approach is the belief that teachers are their own best resource. When teachers see themselves as learners, they understand better how their students learn. In a report to the National Education Association, Bacharach (1986) concluded that schools that build and sustain a culture of cooperation, that encourage the sharing of job knowledge, are precisely those schools that stand out from others and do a particularly effective job in educating students (p. 72).

S. Loucks-Horsley, “Developing and Supporting Teachers for Elementary School Science Education”, National Center for Improving Science Education, 1989.

In 1997, Susan Loucks-Horsley reflected on the research she had continued and on significant implications for actual school development through professional development.

In my new role in thinking about the science education standards [I am constantly struck by] how many people think that you can hand a standards document to teachers, and they will have what they need. This is about the stuff. This is about programs. Between policies and what goes on in the classroom between teachers and students, there have to be [many] kinds of programs; [this] equals school district programs, curriculum instructional materials, teacher preparation programs. [The full range of] professional development programs, are such a critical ingredient in moving from policies to practices. We have to stop talking about implementing the standards and start talking about implementing both the materials that are needed to support standards-based education, and the kind of moves that we can help teachers make to help their kids learn in the ways that we think are important.

The second point [is that] investment in people as the primary agents of change is critical. If you think about where we intervene in our systemic reform initiatives, in some places there is an imbalance between our efforts at the policy level, and our efforts at the people level.

We're seeing in California, where a number of different policies were already in place when the SSI came about, is that as those policy components such as curriculum frameworks and assessments are being threatened. What is maintaining and sustaining the reform are the people. They are the people [in roles] that have resulted from a concentration on developing an infrastructure. An infrastructure that involves teacher leadership, involves structures across the state, involves focusing on whole schools as well as individual teachers, and involves not only the networks involved in the SSI, but also a number of different professional development networks. [It is because of those networks that reform is thriving.] I think it's very instructive for people who are working at the state level [to be aware] of how important and critical that infrastructure building and getting to the people is.

S. Loucks-Horsley, "Research on Systemic Reform: The Role of Teaching and Learning in Systemic Reform", presented at the 1997 NISE Conference