

# Professional Capital

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**“ . . . Transforming our public school system isn’t magic: It comes from supporting all educators to ‘Teach like a pro’ ”**

---Randy Wingarten, President

American Federation of Teachers

## PREFACE

- ✓ Our book is **about a collective transformation of public education** . . . And it’s about how to secure this through *a new strategy* that harness the commitments and capabilities of the many: the power of professional capital.
- ✓ In our original book . . . we said that **teachers must be treated with dignity**, as people who have lives and careers and administrators who must produce results And we ***urged teachers and administrators to break down*** the walls of classroom isolation and convert teaching into a more collaborative and collegial profession. . . .
- ✓ **Teaching is at a crossroads**: a crossroads at the top of the world . . . The good news is that there is now a sense of urgency in politics, in the teaching profession, and also among the public about the need to get more high quality teachers . . . and it’s putting teaching at the forefront of change.
- ✓ There is a lot of argument about what high quality teaching looks like and what’s the best way to get it and keep it:
  1. One road is a flat out assault on teachers’ pensions and security.
  2. A second false road is a monetary one (pay for performance).
  3. A third false road is just to make teaching (prescribe and pace instruction).
    - In the face of all these threats, teacher and their organizations are right to defend their profession—sticking up for their hard earned pensions, resisting bureaucratic standardization . . .
- ✓ To **‘teach like a pro’** is a personal commitment to rigorous training, continuous learning, collegial feedback, respect for evidence, responsiveness to parents, striving

for excellence, and going far beyond the requirements of any written contract.

Teaching like a pro is a collective and transparent responsibility—one which governments and teacher unions or federations must set aside their differences and start to lead the way.

- ✓ Teams can fall prey to **“groupthink”** where the group has unwavering mind of its own. . . Group thinking manifests itself in three forms of behavior that impair the group’s ability to problem-solve and grow:
  1. **Dependency** (look to leaders to lead the way)
  2. **Fight-flight** (attack or avoidance)
  3. **Paring** (splintering off into subgroups).
  
- ✓ Need to **seize the crucial moment**, confront the core problems, present and develop clear alternatives, and turn those alternatives into an energizing reality. It is time to change the game.
  
- ✓ Professional Capital- the systematic development and integration of three kinds of capital- human, social and decisional. . . It’s about **collective responsibility**, not individual autonomy, about **scientific evidence as well as personal judgment**, about being **open to one’s clients** instead of standing on a pedestal above them;
  - And ultimately about being **tough on colleagues** who, after every effort and encouragement, fall short of their professional mission and let their peers as well as their students down.
  
- ✓ Professional Capital, by definition, means having an building a system that will be truly great. **When McKinsey and Company found that advance systems relied more and more on peers as their source of innovation and deep improvement,** they were saying just that—you can only be great by having an outstanding teaching profession.
  
- ✓ Our job is to set out the evidence, articulate the idea, and indicate the direction. The resulting actions must eventually begin with you. . .
  
- ✓ In the end, nobody can give you professional capital. It’s an investment, not a donation, handout, or gift. **Governments (and school leaders) can create good or bad climates** for investing in professional capital, by praising teachers or attacking them, increasing resources for schools or slashing their budgets, and trusting that

teachers will usually do their best or micromanaging everything in case they don't. .

- ✓ **Building professional capital is therefore an opportunity and responsibility for all of us** – from supporting and working with the teacher in the class next door, to transforming the entire system. **Whole system change, we have learned, is not a kind of magic:** it involves and absolutely requires individual and collective acts of investment in **an inspirational vision and a coherent set of actions** that build everyone's capability and keep everyone learning as they continue to move forward.

## CHAPTER 1: A CAPITAL IDEA

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.”*

--Margaret Mead

- ✓ Capital adj: relating to or being assets that add to long-term net worth.
- ✓ Capital relates to one's own or a group's worth, particularly concerning assets that can be leveraged to accomplish desired goals. . . and governments are crucial in creating the conditions and the levels of confidence that can stimulate or discourage capital investment.
- ✓ This book . . . takes the basic and powerful idea of capital and articulates its importance for professional work, professional capacity, and professional effectiveness – particularly in the teaching profession.
- ✓ **Two kinds of capital:**
  1. **Business capital: driven by ideas about business capital:**
    - The primary purpose of education is to serve as a big new market for investment in technology, curriculum, and testing materials, and schools themselves as for profit enterprises (this is a \$500 billion market).
    - Quick returns/low investment: favors a teaching force young, flexible, temporary, inexpensive to train . . .

- The human widget image of the profession: hunt for talented individuals, work them hard and move them on when they get restless or become spent.

## 2. Professional Capital:

- Education spending is a long-term investment in developing human capital from early childhood to adult life.
- Getting good teaching requires: highly committed, thoroughly prepared, continuously developed and properly paid teachers.
- PC is made up of three kinds of capital: human (talent), social (group) and decisional (judgment).
- While the goal is to increase human capital (talent), you can't get much human capital by focusing on the capital of individuals. Capital has to be circulated and shared. **Groups, teams, and communities are for more powerful than individuals when it comes to developing human capital.**
- Carrie Leana, a business professional at the University of Pittsburgh, shows that the group is far more powerful than the individual. You need individuals, of course, but the system won't change, indeed individuals won't change in large numbers, unless development becomes a persistent collective enterprise:
  - Teachers with high social capital increase their students' math scores by 5.7% more than teachers with lower social capital scores.
  - Low ability teachers perform as well as teachers of average ability "if they have strong social capital in their school".
- **If you concentrate your efforts on increasing individual talent, you will have a devil of a job producing greater social capital.** There is just no mechanism or motivating to bring all the talent together. **The reverse is not true. High social capital does generate increase human capital.** Individuals get confidence, learning and feedback from having the right kind of people and the right kinds of interactions and relationships around them.

- Consider what happens when a talented individual enters a school low on social capital. **Although it is possible to make a difference through heroic effort, eventually the overwhelming likelihood is that the person will leave or burn out in the process.**
- **Now consider the reverse:** A teacher who is low on human capital has poor initial confidence or undeveloped skills enters a highly collaborative school. **Chances are high that this teacher will be socialized into greater teamwork and receive the assistance, support, ideas and feedback to help him or her improve.**
- This is dramatically powerful when you stop and think about it. Imagine that you would become a better teacher just by joining the staff of a different and better school.
- Think of professional capital as the product of human capital, and social capital, and decisional capital. Making decisions in complex situations is what professionalism is all about.
- The pros do this all the time. They come to **have competence, judgment, insight, inspiration, and the capacity for improvisation as they strive for exceptional performance.** They do this when no one is looking, and they do it through and with their colleagues and team.
- They **are not afraid to make mistakes** as long as they learn from them. They have pride in their work. They are respected by peers and the public for knowing what they are doing.
  - They **strive to outdo themselves** and each other in a spirit of making greater individual and collective contributions.
  - When the vast majority of teachers come to exemplify the power of PC they become **smart and talented, committed and collegial, thoughtful and wise.**

- *Their **moral purpose** is expressed in their relentless expert-driven pursuit of serving their students and their communities, and learning, always learning, how to do better.*
- Those few **colleagues who persistently fall short of the mark**, even after extensive assistance and support, will eventually not be tolerated by their peers because they let their profession and their students down by not teaching like pros!
- ✓ **Teachers can only teach like a pro when they want and know how to do so**—when they have the right knowledge and background, have colleagues around them who will keep them performing at their peak, and the time and experience that underpin the ability to make wise judgment and decisions . . .
- ✓ In the US there is large-scale evidence that 40% of K-12 teachers are currently “disheartened” with their job.
- ✓ **People are motivated by good ideas tied to action; they are energized even more by pursuing action with others**, they are spurred on still further by learning from their mistakes; and they are ultimately propelled by actions that make an impact—what we call **“moral imperative realized”**
- ✓ These first steps are the hardest: dangers, risks, opposition, and disappointment all lie in wait. But **PC can be both your armor and sword**. It can cut through misunderstandings and misrepresentations of teaching. It can protect you against attacks on your profession. If you bring others along with you, your strength and influence will multiply – especially if you include a few skeptics and even some naysayers along the way. Be determined that it can be done, by all of you together, and you will not be defeated in your quest.
- ✓ *In Join the Club: How Peer Pressure Can Transform the World*, author Tina Rosengber shows how small groups have banded together . . . **Their power came from the need for individuals to belong to something greater than themselves** and to do something that would transform society for the better.

- What Rosenberg uncovers is how these fragile groups ended up “**persuading**” to take action that is crucial to their long-term well-being but appears unpleasant, dangerous, or psychologically difficult today”. Rosenberg calls it “**the social cure.**”
- ✓ Mary Parker Follet, showed how ‘**power with us**’ as apposed from ‘power over’ is the source of new breakthroughs.

## CHAPTER 2: COMPETING VIEWS OF TEACHING

- ✓ Good learning comes from good teaching. More and better learning and greater achievement for everyone require being able to find and keep more good teachers.
- ✓ The most abused educational research finding these days is this: “**the quality of the teacher is the single most important determinant in the learning of the student.**”
  - Wiliam Sanders, agricultural economist, using value added evident took two hypothetical students starting equally at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of performance, and demonstrated what happens when student A receives 3 years of learning from a high-quality teacher (top 20%), while Student B experiences 3 years with a low-performing teacher (bottom 20%). At the end of 3 years, Student A performs at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, while Student B is a the 37<sup>th</sup> percentile. The answer in the US in response to this data is to get tough on those at the bottom and reward those at the top.
  - This approach seems logical until we see what our competitors are doing. **These competitors know that the main point is not the effect of the individual teacher**, for better or worse, here and there, that counts, **but rather how you maximize the cumulative effect many, many teacher over time for each and every student.**
  - Students do well because they have a series of very good teachers—not by chance, but by design. In other words, you have **to transform the entire profession**- not just the bottom 20% and top 20% but the whole 100%.

- In the face of solutions that haven't worked, some people's answer is to simply to push these solutions harder. Perhaps we just need better measurement, they say:
  - **How motivated would you be** by an evaluation system that rates what your work will look like, whether you are at the decreed point in the Literacy Teachers Manual, or whether you have posted the lesson's standards on the board—but doesn't account for how you inspire your students, whether you detect specific learning disabilities, or how you've helped a distraught child lead with a bereavement?
- Beyond a minimum level, it's not the metrics that drive most people, but the work itself—whether it **inspires you**, what it feels like, what it's for, and how you and your colleagues become energized by striving to solve difficult learning problems
  - *Change the culture and develop professional capital, and good appraisals systems flourish*; throw a good appraisal system into a negative culture, and you get nothing but further alienation.
- **IGNORING THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**: Judging teachers according to their individual performance has one more fatal flaw: **ignores the school environment**. Teaching, like any other profession, doesn't come down only to individual skill or will. It's also profoundly affected by the environment—by the culture of the workplace where the job is being carried out.
  - If the teaching in a school is all over the place, we shouldn't so much be asking questions about the abilities or commitments of individual teachers. We should be wondering what is wrong with the school.
- **Just because there is one outstanding pioneer** in a school where everyone else has settled for an easier existence, **doesn't mean that by will and effort alone, all or most of them in that school can be pioneers as well**—not unless we do something about the school as a whole.
- This is true in just about any line of work. When you walk into a fine restaurant, you don't expect the maître d' to ignore you, the sommelier to be indifferent to your preferences, and the waiter to be downright rude. You don't expect airline crew member to be courteous or cranky depending on which particular individual you get. If one hairdresser in a salon makes you

look like a fashion model, while the next colleague turns you into a scary clown, there's something wrong with the salon.

- In any good airline, restaurant, salon, or school you would expect quality and consistency that is personalized for you. If you have no way of predicting how different people in an organization will deal with you, something is profoundly amiss with that organization. And rewarding the good people, while removing or intervening with the poor ones, will not give you greater consistency or turn the whole organization around. You need the group working on this solution—the very professional capital we advocate for in this book.
  - Like a hotel or car rental service, you can tell what a school is going to be like the moment you walk in. Is the office staff kind and courteous or do they make you feel like a stranger? Do students welcome and acknowledge you or push you out of the way? Are classroom doors shut, walls bare, and children grimly concentrating on the next passage in their textbook? Or are classrooms buzzing hives of activity with actively engaged children immersed in challenging learning? This is called culture—and in schools and other organizations, it's everything.
  - Culture shapes the experience you are likely to have when you fly with a high or low performing airline just as much as when you enter a school! **At its best, culture doesn't give you a good teacher here and a weaker teacher there, but many strong and capable teachers working passionately together, under visionary leadership, so all of their students succeed.** And not just in a few schools, but in all the schools across the system.
- ✓ Teaching like a pro is about undertaking difficult, inspiring work; constantly trying to improve practice; and working with all the collective might and ingenuity of professional colleagues to do so. **Teaching like a pro is about improving as an individual, raising the performance of the team, and increasing the quality across the whole profession.** This means three things (pg. 22):
1. **Teaching like a pro** means continuously inquiring into and improving one's own teaching
    - It means constantly developing and reinvesting in PC
    - All teachers need to become not just good, but excellent at teaching
    - Driving up standards, narrowing achievement gaps, engaging young minds and preparing young people to live successfully in the 21<sup>st</sup> cent.

2. **Teaching like a pro** means planning teaching, improving teaching, and often doing teaching not as an isolated individual **but as part of a high-performance team**:
  - It means developing shared PC within an organization and community.
  - Professionals understand the **power of the TEAM**, promote development of the TEAM, and become integral parts of the TEAM themselves.
  - It's not about yet more individual accountability, **but about powerful collective responsibility**.
  
3. **Teaching like a pro** means being part and parcel of the wider teaching profession and contributing to its development. This means:
  - Rethinking how teachers work with, support, and also challenge their colleagues
  - The union becomes inspirational agents of change
  - The schools need to become less isolated from each other

## CHAPTER 3: STEREOTYPES OF TEACHING

- ✓ Stereotypes of teaching:
  - A precious gift possessed by a few “born” teachers
  - A practical craft that can only be learned over thousands of hours of practice
  - A laundry list of simple techniques that can be prescribed and paced
  - A precise science, like medicine, grounded in quantitative evidence and clinical trials
  - A data-drive enterprise, like business, where key performance indicators (KPI's) drive up standards and eliminate waste
  - An ineffable art of sublime, yet mysterious practice.
  - A sacred calling of service and sacrifice to a community, like Mother Teresa
  
- ✓ There's not one stereotype, but many. All part of the truth and part fiction.
  - Caring is an admirable ethic, but caring teachers can easily overprotect children and fail to challenge them.
  
- ✓ **Failed Solutions**: Each silver bullet is based on one of the flawed or partial stereotypes of teachings. Many are missing the target and most often are duds:

- Close down all bad schools
  - Hire smart and inexpensive young teachers (Teach for America)
  - Replace principals
  - Relentless timelines for yearly improvement (NCLB)
  - Charter schools
- ✓ Many of current US policy strategies are based on a foundation of wrong drivers and flawed fallacies (sinking bag of silver bullets):
- Negative accountability
  - Individualistic solutions
  - Fascination with technology
  - Piecemeal or fragmented solutions
- ✓ **Better alternatives** produce more transparency and responsibility. They **transform the hearts, mind and cultures of the profession**:
- Professional capacity building
  - Collective responsibility, teamwork, and collaboration
  - More commitment and inspiration
  - More rather than less professional discretion
  - Personally engaging curriculum and pedagogy
  - Better and broader performance metrics (common core)
  - School-to-school assistance (PLC with HTM, MOM and CPH)
  - Systematic policies that are coherent
- ✓ If you want to change teaching, you have to understand it, and very often appreciate it. **You have to understand the teachers who are responsible for the teaching—what motivates them and makes them tick—rather than forcing through simplistic solutions based on or justified by one-sided stereotypes of what the job entails.**
- ✓ When the classroom door is close, the teacher will always remain in charge. Where students are concerned, the teacher will always be more powerful than the principal, the president, or the prime minister. **Successful and sustainable improvement can therefor never be done to or even for teachers. It can only ever be achieve by and with them.**
- ✓ This still requires leadership, but it is the kind of **leadership that reconciles and integrates external accountability with personal and collective professional responsibility**. It is leadership that focuses on developing teachers' *professional capital*- as individuals, as teams and as a profession.

- ✓ **If we want to improve teaching and teachers, we must therefore improve the conditions of teaching that shape them**, as well as the cultures and communities of which they are a part.

## CHAPTER 4: INVESTING IN CAPABILITY AND COMMITMENT

- ✓ SO WHAT EXACTLY does it mean to **teach like a pro**?
  1. Capability (expertise),
  2. Commitment
  3. Career
  4. Culture
  5. Context or conditions of teaching
- ✓ If you don't know the difference between good and bad teaching, if you aren't aware of the strategies that succeed with students and haven't learned to use them, if you do things that you like or are fun but that don't really get students to learn more, then you will sell your students short.
  - Even with the best intentions, even if you seem like a "natural" as a teacher, unless you deliberately learn how to get better so you can teach the students of today for the world of tomorrow, you will not be teaching like a pro. You will be just an enthusiastic amateur.
- ✓ There needs to be a **mix of committing to best-practices** (existing practices that already have a good degree of widely agreed effectiveness) **and having the freedom, space and resources to create next practice** (innovative approaches that often begin with teachers themselves and that will sometimes run out to be the best practice of the future). **PC is about communities of teachers using best and next practices together**( pg. 50).
- ✓ Expert teachers are always consolidating what they know to be effective, testing it, and continuously adding to it. It's not just the evidence, but what you do with it, how you evaluate it here and now, how you connect it to other evidence, including the evidence of your own collective experience, that matters.

## ➤ CAPABILITY

- ✓ Capability is more than competence. Competence refers to having “adequate ability”. Capability is more than this. **To be capable means “to have attributes require for performance and accomplishment”**. Capability is a higher bar for performance than simple competencies.

- **Winning streaks work in sports, and they work as upward spirals of confidence and success in schools too.**

- Example: What do you do when teachers in high-poverty schools believe their children can't learn? Show them they can. And do so in a way that includes the teacher as part of the solution, equipped with new experiences that enable him or her to realize success of a kind that hadn't been thought possible.

- **Cold shower vs. hot Jacuzzi**

- **Cold shower:** uncomfortable confrontation with what other teachers have achieved with similar students
- **Hot Jacuzzi:** inspirational vision, collective determination, innovative teaching and learning strategies.

- ✓ Professionals, especially teachers, might be drawn to the second example (hot Jacuzzi). It validates inclusion, inspiration, and innovation—**the idea that inspiring people and drawing them into change must precede the action of bringing change about**. These alternatives prompt many pointless arguments about how to make change happen. But the reality is that both of them are true.

- It's the cycle of synergy that matters—new expertise, emotional high, more expertise, greater highs, leaders and peers mixing it up, and so on. Like a Finnish sauna, the sequence of hot sweats and cold wake-up calls stimulates the greater professional invigoration of all.

- ✓ The truth is whatever the route, teachers must experience the moral passion and depth of learning and achievement in their own classrooms and schools – *“it's not so much about using a list of techniques, but about having a lust for success”*.

- Some teachers with a passion for teaching and success are thwarted by bad working conditions or by poor leadership—in effect waking up daily with moral purpose they cannot use.

- Others may be missing some of the expertise or may have had insufficient or misplaced professional passion, but **they can rise to the occasion when inspired and supported—when the positive pressure and support to do good kicks in.**
  - **When the pressure and support is embodied in one's peers, it is an irresistible force for most people.** For the few remaining immovable objects who cannot or will not respond when all the circumstances start to push and support them, it's probably time to leave.
- ✓ Two conclusions:
1. In teaching, impassioned commitments and moral causes are just pious posturing unless they come with experiences of success. Teachers soar not just when they want success but when they also know *how* to get it, and when they know it's achievable.
  2. Expertise alone is equally inadequate without the desire and the drive of teacher' purpose and passion. **Knowing what to do and how to do it is of little value if you don't care about what you do or whom you're doing it for. . .**

## ➤ COMMITMENT

- ✓ How do you sustain and renew teachers commitments to their work over time? For value-added economists, it's monetary incentives and rewards but the evidence points to other factors:
- **Leadership:** More than three quarters of teachers who demonstrated sustained commitment said that **good leadership helped them sustain their commitment over time.** These teachers mentioned the importance of having a "clear vision," treating them "like an adult", being open and approachable, trusting teachers, and demonstrating personal care for people.
    - On the flipside, **among the 25% who said their commitment was declining, 58% said that poor leadership was a key factor.** These leaders didn't "appreciate what teachers were doing", made teachers feel "unsupported" and "picked on" and "on their own"
  - **Colleagues:** 63% with sustained commitment felt their colleagues were crucial. **They valued "teamwork", someone to talk to when things went wrong, and a feeling that everyone was pulling in same direction.**

- A few teachers can still be resilient and maintain commitment in the absence of collegial support—they can be eccentric outliers, heroic iconoclasts, and courageous lone warriors in the face of indifference and adversity.
  - But in general, you get more good teachers by having more great colleagues who are able and willing to work together for the same cause.
- ✓ Commitment is an emotional state as well as a moral value. It is purpose plus drive and direction. It has consistent effects on perceived and actual effectiveness in relation to student achievement.
- For most teachers, commitment is not just a personal virtue but something that is profoundly affected by what happens at work and what happens in their life.
  - For commitment to flourish and for teachers to be resilient and effective, they need a strong and enduring **sense of efficacy**—the ability to handle new situations confidently, believing that they will make a difference.—and they feel the need to work in external and internal environments which are less bureaucratically managerial, less reliant on crude measure that sap rather than build morale.
  - They need to work in schools in which **leadership is supportive, clear, strong and passionately committed to maintaining the quality of their commitment.**
- ✓ When expertise is imposed and elevated as the only answer to improving teaching, it promotes and perpetuates a passive view of the teacher, who is seen as empty, deficient, and lacking in skills—needing to be filled up and fixed up with new techniques and strategies. It develops things for teachers, not f by them or with them.
- Running roughshod over teachers' purposes and undermining their discretionary judgment only leads to resistance and resentment.
- ✓ **Commitment- a combination of purpose and passion**—has a direct effect on self-efficacy (teachers' belief that they actually can make a difference) and in turn on student achievement.

## ➤ **CAREER**

- ✓ Teachers are more than performers. Teachers are people too. You can't switch teachers on and off like a computer. You can't understand the teacher or his or her teaching without understanding the person the teacher is.
  - **And you can't fundamentally change the teacher without changing the person the teacher is, either.** This means that meaningful or lasting change will almost inevitably be slower than nonteachers want it to be. **Human growth is not like producing hydroponic tomatoes. It can be nurtured and encouraged, but it cannot be forced.**
- ✓ One thing that helps us get to know teachers, or anyone for that matter, is to understand what stage of life they are in. When teachers become more and more jaundiced about reform strategies over time, this sometimes has to do with the reforms themselves. But it also has to do with how teachers experience changes and change as they progress through the job. And all this affects their commitment.
  - Some people think it comes down to the stage of life teachers are in. Some think it comes down to career stage. The most recent research points to a third factor—the generation teachers belong to and how that whole generation travels through life and work with its own distinctive way of looking at the world.

## CHAPTER 5: PROFESSIONAL AND PROFESSIONALISM

- ✓ **Being a professional is about what you do, how you behave.** It's about being impartial and upholding high standards of conduct and performance. Being professional is about quality and character—not getting too personally involved with children, refraining from gossiping about parents, and learning to challenge colleagues' actions without criticizing them as people.
- ✓ To have status and autonomy to be trusted and able to make informed judgments effectively: To plan, teach, diagnose, execute, and evaluate.
- ✓ **The McKinesy report How the World's Most Improved Systems Keep Getting Better found that as school systems developed greater educator capacity it was peers who became the strongest source of innovation:**

- This speaks to: how teacher work together, how what they do is transparent to each other, how the profession is collectively responsible as well as externally accountable, how professional knowledge is continuously being developed and consolidated.
- ✓ **High –quality peer interaction among professionals doesn’t evolve from nowhere or emerge by chance.** It depends on peers being of high quality to begin with—well prepared and well qualified and also depends on: Conditions for professionals to meet, expectations and frameworks, timely data, outstanding leadership, opportunities/incentives to learn from colleagues.
- ✓ All this constitutes the climate for investing in professional capital. In poor conditions of high fear and low support, teachers will be unlikely to invest in each other or even in themselves. In confident climates that encourage growth and even a little risk because they provide an essential underpinning of security, the chances of teachers investing in their own development and reaping the rewards of high quality in their practice are considerably greater (pg. 88).
- ✓ Effective teaching for the whole profession is a product of three kinds of capital amplified: Human, Social and Decision Capital.

### 1. Human Capital: Individual talent

- In the human capital view of education and economies, investing in people’s education and development brings economic return.
  - It is now accepted wisdom that the sooner people start their education in early childhood, at home or at school, and the longer their period of schooling, then the more economic returns a nation will get on this investment in its people.
- Human capital in teaching is about having and developing the requisite knowledge and skills:
  - It’s about knowing your subject and knowing how to teach it, knowing children and understanding how they learn, understanding the diverse cultural and family circumstances that your students come from. . .

- It is about **possessing the passion and moral commitment** to serve all children and to want to keep getting better in how you provide that service.
- You cannot increase human capital just by focusing on it in isolation. Some of the most powerful, underutilized strategies in all education involve the deliberate use of **teamwork**--- enabling teacher to learn from each other within and across schools—and building cultures and networks of communication, learning, trust, and collaboration around the team as well.
- IF YOU WANT TO ACCELERATE THE LEARNING IN ANY ENDEAVOR, YOU CONCENTRATE ON THE GROUP. THIS IS SOCIAL CAPITAL.

## 2. Social Capital is about the TEAM

- Social capital exists in the relations among people. It a resource for them. And like economic and human capital, it contributes to productive activity.
  - For example: a group within which there is extensive trustworthiness and extensive trust is able to accomplish much more than a comparable group without that trustworthiness and trust.
- Groups with purpose that are based on trust also learn more. They get better at their work.
- Social capital refers to how the quantity and quality of interactions and social relationships among people affects their access to knowledge and information; their sense of expectation, obligation, and trust; and how far they are likely to adhere to the same norms and codes of behavior.
- The decline of public schools in the US has also weakened social capital in urban communities, as connecting with others in those communities through one's children is a prime way to build relationships with neighbors.
- Tony Bryk and Beverly Schneider in their book Trust in Schools show that among public schools in Chicago that deal with similar kinds of students, the ones that reach **greater achievement level have higher levels of trust between teachers, students, parents, administrators, and colleagues**--- levels that precede the gains in achievement. **It's not just a correlation**---

**it's cause and effect. Trust and expertise work hand in hand to produce better results.**

- For us, social capital strategies are one of the cornerstones for transforming the profession. **Behavior is shaped by groups much more than by individuals—for better or worse.** If you want positive change, then get the group to do the positive things that will achieve it.
- Students from disadvantaged homes especially who are often lacking the networks of trust, information and support, and advocacy that can help them succeed.
- Every time you increase the purposeful learning of teachers working together, you get both short-term results and longer term benefits as teachers learn the value of their peers and come to appreciate the worth of constructive disagreement.
- **Cohesive groups with less individual talent often outperform groups with superstars who don't work as a team. We see in sports all the time.** With professional capital, you get both because the expertise of the both individuals and the group develop in concert.
- Cited in Chapter 1 was research by Carrie Leana makes the point powerfully about social capital (students of teachers who reported higher social capital had higher math scores). Contrast this with rather perplexing research that claims professional development (PD) does not make much difference in student outcomes.
- PD has little or no impact when it relies on “individual learning” and does not focus on follow-through support for teams of teachers to learn together:
  - Garet and colleagues examined the **impact of PD in middle school** math and reading with teachers who had 8 full days of PD. They found that while teachers retained some knowledge of the PD this knowledge **did not result in change in practice and no change in student achievement.**

- What is crucial is what happens between workshops. Who tries things out? Who supports you? Who gives you feedback? Who picks you up when you make a mistake the first time? Who else can you learn from? How can you take responsibility for change together?
  - The key variable that determines success in any innovation, in other words, is the degree of social capital in the culture of your own school. Learning is the work, and social capital is the fuel. If social capital is weak, everything else is destined for failure.

### 3. Decision Capital

- The essence of professionalism is the **ability to make discretionary judgments**. When you put a difficult question to an employee and he asks you to wait until he consults his supervisor, you know that person is not professional because he can't exercise any discretion
  - If a teacher always has to consult a teacher's manual or follow the lesson line-by-line in a script, you know that teacher is not a professional either.
- The capacity to judge and judge well depends on the ability to make decisions in situations of unavoidable uncertainty when the evidence or the rules aren't categorically clear.
  - **Decisional capital** is the capital the professionals acquire and accumulate through structured and unstructured experience, practice and reflection—capital that enables them to make wise judgments in circumstances where there is no fixed rule or piece of incontrovertible evidence to guide them.
  - **Decisional capital** is enhanced by drawing on the insights and experiences of colleagues in forming judgments over many occasions. In other words, in teaching and other professions, social capital is actually an integral part of decisional capital, as well as in addition to it.
- Practice, deliberately pursued, really does make perfect. In his best-selling book *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell brought this simple principle to widespread popular attention:

- **Ten thousand hours**, Gladwell says, is the figure that comes up time and again as the number of hours it seems to take the brain “to assimilate all that it needs to know to achieve true master.” This is true in music, professional sports, or any other especially accomplished area in life. It’s what separates the professionals from the rest.
  - According to Chris Day teachers on average hit their stride at about 8 to 10 years into the job (approximately 10,000 hours).
  - So it’s practice and a great deal of it that develops your decisional capital, that makes you a skilled professional and not just a keen amateur. Accor
- Reflective Practice
    - Reflective practice has two aspects:
      - **Reflecting in action:** the capacity to walk around a problem while you are right in the middle of it, to think about what you are doing even as you are improvising it.
      - **Reflecting on action:** is reflecting after the fact, once the practice has finished.
      - Both are central to professional practice but get the reflection on action right and it enables you to reflect in action more effectively too:
        - The benefit of having a mentor or coach is he/she can help you reflect on action: pull you back, slow you down, give you feedback and cause you to **reflect on what you’ve been doing**.
  - In all of this, you learn more and improve more if you are able to work, plan, and make decisions with other teachers rather than having to make everything up or bear every burden by yourself. This is where professional capital and especially social capital meet professional culture or community.

## CHAPTER 6: PROFESSIONAL CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES

- ✓ Culture is the difference between having bacon and fruit on the same plate in America and regarding this as almost unthinkable in Britain. Culture is about what does together and what should be kept apart. And often, like bacon and fruit, these distinctions are traditional, unquestioned and arbitrary.
- ✓ The arbitrariness of culture is a curse and a blessing. As soon as you grasp that, you realize that it's just when things seem completely fixed that they are actually most open to change. **Culture, in other words, is affected by the conditions and contexts in which it operates.**
- ✓ **What is the key to transforming any culture? The answer lies in bringing into the open the connection between what people believe and who believes it, and thereby making it necessary for people to examine their own culture and its impact—in this case on the development of professional capital and the learning of adults and children.**
- ✓ **Being exposed to other people and cultures** that are different from and sometimes more effective than one's own is an essential part of the development. Culture, in other words, is affected by the conditions and contexts in which it operates.
- ✓ If you spend all your time with people who remind you of yourself—people from a similar race, the same profession, or the same high school subject department or elementary grade level—it's likely that over time, you will all come to think the same way and believe the same things, and that these beliefs will become stable and even stale.
  - But if you mix things up a little—if you find friends from different cultural backgrounds, socialize with people from other walks of life, or communicate with colleagues across departments, grade levels, or different schools—then **your eyes will be opened and your beliefs will be more open to change as well.**
- ✓ **What you believe (the substance of a culture) is, in other words, profoundly affected by your relationships with who does or doesn't believe it (the form of a culture). **Change the form of a culture (the relationships among people) and you have a good chance of changing the content too.****

- ✓ This chapter is about how to reculture the professional relationships of a school or a district in order to improve what educators do there.
  
- ✓ There are six kinds of professional culture in schools:
  1. Individualism
  2. Collaborative Cultures
    - Balkanization**
    - Contrived collegiality
    - Professional Learning Communities
    - Clusters, networks, and federations
  
- ✓ The best kinds of collaborative cultures build the value and compound the interest on professional capital. Individualistic cultures, or superficial and wrong-headed forms of collaboration, undercut the possibilities of developing and circulating professional capital.

#### 1. INDIVIDUALISM:

- Isolation cuts teachers off from the valuable feedback that would help those judgments be wise and effective.
  
- Uncertainty, isolation and individualism are a toxic cocktail.
  
- When teachers are afraid to share their ideas and success for fear of being perceived as blowing their own horns, when they are reluctant to tell others about a new idea on the grounds that others might steal it or take credit for it, when they are afraid to ask for help because they might be viewed as incompetent, and when they use the same approach year after year even though it is not working—all of these tendencies shore up the walls of individualism and isolation.
  
- Isolation and individualism are often attributed to individual personalities “lone rangers” or “independent contractors” but more often than not other factors are responsible:
  - Architecture: separate building and isolated classrooms.
  - Evaluation and self-preservation: associate help with evaluation and/or scrutiny.

- Guilt and perfectionism: mounting pressures, higher expectations and increase responsibilities can cause some to get locked into a spiral of overwork and guilt until burnout finally defeats them.
- Pressure and time: a deluge of work can cause some to retreat to their classrooms.

## 2. COLLABORATIVE CULTURES

- Susan Rosenholtz, drew attention two distinctive kind school cultures in her work: stuck and moving:
  - Stuck schools had lower levels of achievement. Teachers thought teaching was technically easy, they usually worked alone, and they rarely asked for help.
  - In Moving schools, teachers believed teaching was difficult, they always sought help, and they never stopped learning to teach. Support from and communication with colleagues led teachers to have greater confidence and certainty about what they were trying to achieve and the best ways to achieve it.
    - In moving schools It is assumed that improvement in teaching is a collective rather than individualistic enterprise and that analysis, evaluation and experimentation in concert with colleagues are conditions under which teachers improve.
  - Rosneholtz's pioneering research has been supported by study after study. Collaborative schools do better than individualistic ones.
- Two lessons: First, a lot of work of building collaborative cultures is informal. It's about developing trust and relationships, and it takes time. Second, joint work can benefit from deliberate arrangements (contrived collegiality) as long as not in absence of commitments to building better relationships.
- Not all kinds of collaboration are equally effective . . . If collaboration is limited to anecdotes, giving help only when asked, or pooling existing ideas without examining or extending them, she says, collaboration will reproduce the status quo instead of challenging it.
  - It is ultimately joint work that leads to improvement through exploring challenging questions about practice together.

- In collaborative cultures, **failure and uncertainty are not protected** and defended, but instead are shared and discussed with a view to gaining help and support.
  - They require broad agreement on values but also tolerate and to some extent **actively encourage disagreement** within these limits.
  - Ironically, **disagreement is more frequent in schools with collaborative cultures** because purpose, values and their relationship to practice are always up for discussion.
  - But this disagreement is made possible by the bedrock of fundamental security on which staff relationships rest—in the knowledge that open discussions and temporary disagreements will not threaten continuing relationships.
  - Schools characterized by collaborative cultures are also places of hard work and dedication, collective responsibility and pride in the school.
- **It's pointless and expensive putting everyone in a district through a package of workshops** on how to become a PLC if some of the principals have not been able or willing to build trust and respect with and month their teachers.
  - **Walkthroughs and instructional rounds are other quick-fix that will again produce pitiful low returns** unless there has been. prior investment in knowing one's staff and colleagues and building relationships with them
  - **And without underlying trust, respect, or sheer time** to build relationships, leaders who instigate what are now called challenging or **courageous conversations** with teachers about expectations, strategies, or results will learn all too quickly that what is challenging to them **can come across as just downright offensive** to their teachers.
- To sum up, collaborative cultures build social capital and therefor also professional capital in a schools community. They accumulate and circulate

knowledge and ideas, as well as assistance and support, that help teachers become more effective, increase their confidence and encourage them to be more open to and actively engaged in improvement and change.

- Talk together, plan together, work together – that’s the simple key!

## BALKANIZATION

- Balkanization are teacher cultures made up of separate and sometimes competing groups, jockeying for position and supremacy like loosely connected Balkan states.
  - **Teachers in balkanized cultures alter their loyalties** and identities to particular groups of their colleagues with whom they work most closely, share most time, and socialize most often with in faculty lounge.
  - The existence of tightly insulated subgroups in a school often reflects and **reinforces very different outlooks** on learning, teaching strategies, discipline, and curriculum. In balkanized cultures, teachers may not be *isolated* but they are *insulated*.
  - Teachers who **see themselves as being ahead or above their colleagues** can also segment themselves in ways that hinder whole—school development. Indeed, this is one of the classic reasons for the fading and failure of innovative schools and programs over time—a sheer inability to manage envy.
- Balkanization leads to poor communication, indifference, or subgroups going their separate ways. This, in turn, produces poor continuity in tracking and reviewing students’ progress and **inconsistent expectations for their performance and behavior.**
- Balkanization can generate squabbles over **space** (room allocations, storage space, online access), **time** (priority of scheduling), and **resources** (budgets, student members and so on). The urgency and necessity of defending territory and status against claims from other groups explains the great seriousness teachers attach to apparently “petty” disputes over things like cupboard space in a school corridor.

- The search for collective responsibility for student learning across grades is one way to circumvent these dangers of balkanization. So too is flexibility in moving teachers between grades over the years, to widen their networks and extend their empathy and extend their empathy for how other kinds of teachers teach.

## CONTRIVED COLLEGIALLY

- Contrived Collegiality are formal, specific bureaucratic procedures to increase the attentions being given to joint teacher planning and other forms of working together.
  - **Intended to foster greater association and other forms of working together** but is double edged: it has positive and negative possibilities depending on how it is used:
    - **Positive:** Can help kick-start collaborative relationships and disturb collective complacency. This is more accurately called “arranged collegiality”—a stepping stone to deeper forms of working together.
    - **Negative:** can turn into “contrived collegiality” or a slick administrative surrogate for collaborative teacher cultures.
- Examples of Contrived Collegiality include:
  - **Coaching:** Coaching in the context of mandated reform can often fall short of its ideals, therefore, leading to hurried, anxious, and one-sided interactions.
    - Passive resistance results in the form of withholding full attention or not responding to the coaches requests etc. They are not dragging their feet but more like digging in their heels to assert a contrary will . . .
  - **Peer pressure:** Peer pressure of certain kinds can be a highly valuable ingredient of positive professional collaboration (deepen reflection, provoke inquiry, and question existing assumptions) but sometimes it can be just another way to implement another external mandate.

- **Planning time:** many teachers do not see planning time as an effective time to plan (distractions, competing interests, pressure to hurry up etc). For others however planning time during the day is ideal.
  - There is no magic administrative formula for perfect planning time. The important principle, rather, is to set expectations for collegial tasks rather than overmanaging the specifics of collegial time.
  - **It's about setting common expectations for goals, directions, and a collegial culture,** and also about creating additional time that will make it all possible to meet these expectations.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

1. **Communities:** Where educators work in continuing groups and relationships.
2. **Learning** communities: Improvement is driven by the commitment to improve.
3. **Professional** Learning Communities: Decisions are informed by but not dependent on scientific and statistical evidence.
  - Sadly, too often PLC has been imposed simplistically or heavy-handed by overzealous administrators. Too often they have become one more “program to be implemented” rather than a process to be developed.
    - Sociologist Robert Merton called this **goal displacement**—when the original purpose is displaced and the innovation or means to that end becomes the new end in itself.
  - Richard Taylor and Cass Sustein, authors of *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth and Happiness*, argue against two flawed theories of change that underpin many administrative and policy efforts to alter behavior:
    - Unless involving public safety, attempting to alter behavior by compulsion or force usually backfire by generating resistance to and avoidance of change.
      - Force as strong as a shove drives people to game the system and produce the appearance of compliance . . .
    - The opposite of force is unlimited choice. This, too, is a detrimental option. In the *Paradox of Choice*, Barry Schwartz argues and shows that too much choice can be bad for us.

- What the authors of Nudge argue for instead is ways to “nudge” or prod people’s choices and increasing the probability that people will themselves will then choose the behaviors that are in the best interest of serve.
  - In one district teachers are *pulled* into something they find energizing and are given time for; yet they are also *pushed* to review or revise what has been more or less effective for them
    - In the words of one teacher: “pushing people outside of their comfort zone, as difficult as it is, truly is successful because in time we were able to see changes in the content of discussion and the quality of the discussions that were happening around the table, but it took a lot of time.
  - PLC have a clear focus that is collectively and flexibly determined by the community
  - There is a sense of urgency about challenging teachers’ practice
- All in all, the current PLC movement should be reconsidered and reconfigured in terms of how well it can become grounded not in implementing outsiders’ agenda but in promoting professional capital .

## CLUSTERS, NETWORKS AND FEDERATIONS

- Collaboration across schools can be highly effective but only if you go about it in the right way.
- Alan Boyle recently chronicled how in the London borough of Hackney, a cluster of three schools improved significantly: from the worse on “special measures” to the top rating of “outstanding”.
- Other countries and jurisdictions have also employed the same principle of schools learning from each other in systematic designs that promote win-win relationships, focused inquiry, and widespread development.
  - Sanger Unified School District near Fresno, California has every one of the 15 schools in small clusters of 3 or 4 schools that meet regularly and learn from each other.

- These forms of learning together can be powerful system builders leading to the mutual development of new capabilities and commitments, or they can become the system-level equivalent of comfortable collaboration (shared practice) or excessively contrived collegiality . . .
  - When you circulate professional capital freely, energetically, and inclusively, you get wholesale professional improvement at its best.
- This can be true in systems that are competitive. This competitiveness we believe, is not just an obstacle that can be overcome, but a force, when it is not of a win-lose nature, that can actually be capitalized upon. This occurs when two powerful forces come together: collective responsibility and collaborative competition—or what the business literature call co-opetition.
  - Collective responsibility: is not just commitment; it is the exercise of capabilities on a deep and wide scale. It encompasses positive competition: challenging the limits of what is humanly and professionally possible.
  - Collaborative competition: The spirit of how to outdo ourselves and each other, for the good of the whole, or even the good of the game. Collaborative competition or co-opetition, is a friendly rivalry that combines collaboration and competition to form an unbeatable combination.
- ✓ IN CONCLUSION: we have learned that a professional culture and community that develops and circulates professional capital that raises achievement, improves learning, and propagates innovation by connecting the way people perform their work to the people they, the purpose they pursue and the colleagues they have . . .
- ✓ Professional cultures are places where teachers share ***collective responsibility for all their students*** . . . they are places where teachers don't just endure but actively enjoy challenging and being challenged by their colleagues and administrators when:
  - Results are disappointing, levels of commitment and standards of the professionalism start to wane, old habits are not supported by the evidence of what's effective, change efforts seem headed in the wrong direction etc.
- ✓ Policies are being passed left, right and center that school leaders must spend stipulated percentages of their time in classrooms, use checklists in observing teaching, engage in walkthrough's, participate in instructional rounds, and the like.

- The disturbing news is their impact on school-wide student achievement is at best questionable.
- Recall Leana's study of impact of social capital in New York City schools. **She found that principals who spent their instructional time monitoring and mentoring individual teachers had no impact on school-wide student achievement.** The more effective principals were those who defined their roles as facilitators of teacher success in terms of accessing resources, focusing on teachers teamwork, and building relationships with parents and the community.
- Other research supports Leana's conclusions. Two of the world's most prominent researchers on school leadership found that principals don't need frontal lobotomies or any other strategy that might convert them into instructional leaders. **They need to know how to identify, develop, select, and connect their people**—a leadership challenge that is more powerful yet also more doable.
  - The role of the principal, in other words, is indirect but nonetheless explicit: to build the professional capital of the school's teachers and community.
- In brief, the effective principals were successful because they went about systematically developing internal and external social capital.

## CHAPTER 7: ENACTING CHANGE

- ✓ *Every so often a new idea comes along that changes the existing terrain.* We believe that professional capital is such an idea. This book issues the Johnny Appleseed challenge of propagating the land with professional capital seeds of thought.
- ✓ PC is a balanced idea that includes empathizing and empowering the teaching profession while simultaneously pushing, prodding and pulling the professional capital agenda.

✓ Professional Capital has offered up the powerful concept that includes developing individual human capital by unleashing the power of social capital as well as decisional capital.

- **If you want to get big things done, get the group to do it and invest in the process (it will take time).**

✓ Rosenberg's book *Join the Club: How Peer Pressure Can Change the World* **dismisses what she calls the approach to solving a social ill, which focuses on giving people more information and attempting to motivate them through fear.**

- Rosenberg's alternative, is that if you want to change human behavior you need to "help . . . obtain what they most care about: the respect of their peers. Thus, professional capital, once you get it started, acts like a bootstrap that pulls up greater change. It has its own generative power because peers are positively influencing peers through transparent, purposeful, energizing interaction.
- She observes that successful social movements **persuade people to act in support of a shared common cause in the future**, even though the immediate steps are psychologically difficult or dangerous in the beginning.
- What pulls people in, teachers all the more so, is doing important work with committed and excited colleagues and leaders engaged in activities that require creativity to solve complex, problems that make a real difference. Obstacles are expected, but they inspire determination rather than inflicting defeat.
- The goal is to change the thinking of others in a way that generates more positive peer power and leads to partnership with former adversaries. **The ring of fire expands as people experience success on a scale never before obtained.**

✓ ACTION GUIDELINES

- Begin with yourself:
  - Seek power with, and possible integration with, both sides of a polarity

- Instead of outside experts, use information to advance transparency of operations
- Use effective leadership so it is not about commanding obedience but rather about “giving expression to external realities and the interior aspirations of others”
- Acknowledge and embrace polarities
  - It is mistreatment or perceived mistreatment that results in polarization over time, when it eventually takes on a life of its own.
  - The fundamental goal is to do things that bridge the chasm, reach for partnership, and replace polarization with integration—in ways that make every effort to respect each other’s positions without capitulating to them.
  - To make headway in the beginning both sides will need to give each other more “respect than they have earned”
- Guidelines for teachers:
  1. Become a true pro
  2. Start with yourself: examine your own experience
  3. Be a mindful teacher
  4. Build your human capital through social capital
  5. Push and pull your peers
  6. Invest in and accumulate decisional capital
  7. Manage up: help your leaders be the best they can be.
  8. Take the first step
  9. Surprise yourself
  10. Connect everything back to your students
  - 11.