The Myth of the Hundredth Monkey
Creating Learning Communities in Schools

By Thomas Many, Ed.D.

It is the same everywhere. Teachers and principals are working harder and harder to meet growing expectations for student success. Principals are looking for ways to ensure their schools make adequate yearly progress. Teachers are looking for ways to respond to the increasing demands that all children learn to high levels. The challenge is real, and it is not going away.

Many principals are turning to learning communities as a means to improve teaching and learning. According to William Ferriter and John Norton, "Open any educational journal and you will likely find material endorsing school-based collaborative learning communities as a cure for the ills of underperforming schools."

The argument for creating professional learning communities was effectively articulated by Rick DuFour and Bob Eaker in their book, *Professional Learning Communities at Work*, but they are not alone in their support of the idea. Milbrey McLaughlin writes, "The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is building the capacity of school personnel to function as a professional learning community." Likewise, DuFour states his position: "The path to change in the classroom lies within and through professional learning communities."

Andy Hargreaves, who has worked with schools across the country, reported that the idea of the professional learning community represents an "ethos that infuses every single aspect of a school's operation." He found that "when a school becomes a professional learning community, everything in the school looks different than it did before."

What happens when teachers and principals come together to form a professional learning community in their schools? This simple, frequently asked question begs a complicated answer that is aptly illustrated by Ken Keyes' story of the hundredth monkey - a wonderful little parable based on the scientific observation of a monkey colony located off the coast of Japan.

.... The Japanese monkey Macaca Fuscata had been observed in the wild for thirty years or more. In 1952, on the island of Koshima, scientists were providing monkeys with sweet potatoes dropped in the sand. The monkeys liked the taste of the raw sweet potatoes, but they found the sand and dirt unpleasant.

An 18-month-old female named Ito found she could solve the problem by washing the potatoes in a nearby stream. She taught this trick to her mother. Her playmates also learned this new way, and they taught their mothers, too.

VIEWPOINT

Learning is always an on-the-job phenomenon.

— PETER SENGE
AUTHOR AND FOUNDING CHAIR OF THE SOCIETY FOR ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

> **Becoming a professional learning community is about acting differently in our schools. It requires persistent action, starting with a single principal or team of teachers determined to make a difference.**

This cultural innovation was gradually picked up by various monkeys. Before the eyes of the scientists and between 1952 and 1958, all the young monkeys learned to wash the sandy sweet potatoes to make them more palatable. Only the adults who imitated the children learned the innovation, however. Other adults continued eating the dirty sweet potatoes.

In autumn of 1958, something startling took place. A certain number of Koshima monkeys were washing sweet potatoes. Although the exact number is not known, suppose that there were 99 monkeys on Koshima Island who had learned to wash their sweet potatoes. THEN IT HAPPENED! One morning, the hundredth monkey learned to wash potatoes.

By that evening almost every monkey in the tribe was washing sweet potatoes before eating them. The added energy of the hundredth monkey had somehow brought about an ideological breakthrough!

The *Myth of the Hundredth Monkey* illustrates how a single individual can initiate a change that spreads and is eventually adopted throughout the entire "community." In this story, washing potatoes slowly gained wider and wider acceptance until, one day, the hundredth monkey adopted the behavior, thereby creating the critical mass needed to make washing sweet potatoes a permanent part of the island's culture.

The same holds true for schools, where, as in the *Hundredth Monkey*, individual principals or teams of teachers at the building level can be catalysts for change and begin to influence others to behave and think differently. But as DuFour writes, "The challenge for principals who want to change the culture of their schools is not to find the one teacher or team of teachers who will be a positive deviant and try something new, but rather to persevere and nurture an idea until it reaches the critical 'tipping point' and is accepted as the norm." In other words, the practice continues until it becomes "the way we do things around here."

Is it worth the effort? Is becoming a professional learning community a reasonable goal? Many believe so, and as Mike Schmoker writes, "Learning communities offer proven, affordable structures that exist right now and could have a dramatic, widespread impact on schools and achievement - in virtually any school. Such structures are probably the most practical, affordable, and professionally dignifying route to better instruction in our schools." Add Linda Darling-Hammond's statement that "these structures can be established by *any leader,* not just the rare individual with charisma" and it is clear that a principal's interest in creating learning communities is well founded.

But too often principals are impatient. Why is it when an idea is not universally embraced, when

Why Data Retreats Are Key to Improving Results

By Jan O'Neill

Ten years ago few school leaders were taking the time to lead their schools through an intensive evaluation of their school's data in order to identify opportunities for improvement. But times have changed, and with the new requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and pressure on even high performing schools to make "adequate yearly progress" in every sub-group, school leaders are very focused on using data to improve results. Unfortunately, we often make two mistakes in the process, either of which alone or combined will inevitably lead to disappointing results. Fortunately, both mistakes are easily remedied, and getting involved in data retreats is a first step.

What is a data retreat? Aimed at school improvement leadership teams, many states are adopting this workshop format for schools to examine their own data, identify priorities for improvement, and develop plans for action. Over a course of two to three days, these workshops can be convened with other entities including state departments, regional service agencies or independent consultants. Title I schools applying for "Comprehensive School Reform" (CSR) grants[1] *must* conduct annual data retreats as part of their grant obligations.

However, attending a data retreat as a school improvement leadership team is just one piece of the accountability puzzle. Those involved in the data retreat will learn a lot about their school, and will probably leave feeling very committed to their priorities and action plans. But this is where leadership teams often make the first mistake: Believing that involving the other teachers in the data reflection process is too time consuming, and besides, "We've done it already so why bother them?" Teams will simply announce to the rest of the school staff what they've learned and what they've decided the school should do to make improvements. (And indeed, most staff will at first breathe a sigh of relief: "Thank goodness I don't have to get involved in looking at the data—they've decided what we need to do!")

While it is certainly true that it takes more time to involve staff than to simply analyze the data oneself and tell others where to focus, the purpose of examining data is to create the motivation to change instructional practices, curriculum and programs. We know from the research (O'Neil, 2000; Calwelti, 1999; Newmann & Wehlage, 1999) this requires the deep and broad commitment of the entire school community. To create such commitment requires processes that fully engage people in "learning themselves through change" (Lambert, 2003). We've all had the experience of telling others the "truth" only to meet resistance in the forms of denial, bargaining, even anger. You may initially hear the sighs of relief, but you will ultimately experience what it feels like to "push noodles up a hill" if you don't engage your staff in the very process your leadership team learned in the data retreat. If we don't engage teachers in the reflection process, we have simply replaced "decision by one" with "decision by several" and we've done little to grow teachers' commitment, skills and knowledge in using data to make improvements.

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[1] Title I schools can apply for three-year CSR grants which fund as much as $125K per year for school improvement. For more information, visit the Texas Education Agency's Division of NCLB Program Coordination at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/nclb/QandA2002/policyguide.htm.

> **...the purpose of examining data is to create the motivation to change instructional practices, curriculum and programs. We know from research this requires the deep and broad commitment of the entire school community.**

The second mistake lies in assuming that by looking at test scores alone we'll be able to make significant improvements that can be sustained over time. The purpose of a data retreat should not be to improve test scores! If that were the case, all staff need to do is simply align all curricular and instructional practices to "teach to the tests." The research is clear that when that happens, test scores eventually hit a plateau and then decrease (Hoff, 2000). The purpose of examining data should be to continuously improve student learning; rising standardized test scores are just one of many important measures of success. The highly re-garded effective schools research (Lezotte, 1997) indicates that in order to achieve and sustain excellence, a school needs to look at wide variety of factors, including the learning environment (safe and orderly, time on task), climate (high expectations, sense of community), home-school relations (parent satisfaction, attendance), and other factors along with student achievement. Further, standardized test scores as summative end-of-year measures, provide single snapshots about the school's capacity to produce "proficiency" over time. But more frequent district and classroom-based measures provide validation about the skills

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Data Retreat Checklist

Use this checklist to determine whether the data retreat you're considering takes into account all these factors:

☑ Two or three day workshop (enough time to really dig into the data)

☑ **Teams** work with their own school data

☑ Focus is on multiple measures: student achievement and learning, climate, behavior, etc.

☑ Teams are provided methods for disaggregating their data

☑ Teams are provided methods for triangulating their data (looking at multiple measures for themes)

☑ Teams are provided methods for prioritizing areas for improvement

☑ Teams are provided tools for turning their data into specific, measurable, time-bound goals

☑ Teams are provided processes for engaging their school community in data reflection, goal setting, action planning processes

☑ Teams learn processes and tools for improving their collaborative skills in order to be more productive given limited collaborative time

☑ Process is based on solid research (presenters can provide evidence that they are familiar with the research on high performing schools)

☑ Proven effective process for making meaning from the data (presenters can provide evidence of the data-driven decision making process working in schools)

needing work as well as diagnostics about which students need help. A data retreat should help school teams examine all these forms of data, so they get a comprehensive view of their school. Rick DuFour calls this "painting a school portrait." It is important to ask schools to examine "Where are we now?" in relation to their mission, vision and values. Title I schools are required to conduct "comprehensive needs assessments" as part of their application for CSR funds. *Any* school desiring to apply for additional funds, either through foundations or public monies, will need to paint a comprehensive picture of where they are currently.

By engaging teachers fully in the process of analyzing multiple forms of data about "where we are now," schools eliminate the risk of both mistakes—assuming we shouldn't "bother" teachers with examining the data and looking at just test scores. In the process of engaging teachers, they will help create "cognitive dissonance" – a shared understanding of the "gap" between what we believe to be true about ourselves and what the data say is true. As a result, teachers will become committed to working together to change their practices and approaches to helping all students learn.

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Distributed Leadership: What's All the Hoopla?

By James P. Spillane

There is a new flavor in the education business; no surprise, fads are plentiful in the education industry. This time the flavor of the month concerns school leadership, namely, distributed leadership. The notion of distributed leadership has garnered the attention of many policymakers and practitioners (see *Education Week*). The term is often used interchangeably with "shared leadership" or "democratic leadership" (among others), raising the question as to whether there is really anything new about distributed leadership. Is distributed leadership simply a re-labeling of familiar phenomena? At least in my understanding, there is much that is new about taking a distributed leadership perspective.

Below, I take up this question: What is distributed leadership? The short answer is that it depends; it depends on what one reads and with whom one talks. My intention is not to offer the "one best" definition of distributed leadership. Rather, I describe how I have come to understand distributed leadership, based on a five-year research project in elementary schools in Chicago (see http://www.distributedleadership.org). I begin with a brief overview of the distributed leadership perspective, introducing and defining key terms and ideas. The main section of the article unpacks these ideas in three sub-sections – leaders, followers and situation. The final section takes up the uses and misuses of distributed leadership.

Overview: Getting to the Heart of the Matter

A distributed perspective on leadership argues that school leadership *practice* is *distributed* in the interactions of school *leaders*, *followers* and their *situation*. Two issues need to be underscored here. To begin with, distributed leadership is first and foremost about leadership practice rather than leaders, leadership roles or leadership functions. Leadership practice is the core unit of analysis in trying to understand school leadership from a distributed perspective.

A second critical point is that practice is defined or takes form in the interactive web of leaders, followers and their situation. We will examine these three core elements of leadership practice below. The issue to grapple with is that leadership practice is not equivalent to the actions of the principal or some other school leader. Simply, leadership practice is *not* a function of what a leader knows and does. From a distributed perspective, leadership practice takes shape in the *interactions* of people and their situation, rather than from the *actions* of an individual leader. Some readers might argue this is little more than semantics. If you are one of those, consider the performance of a dance, let's say the 'Texas Two-Step' for argument sake. Now, while the actions of partner one and partner two are important, the practice of the Texas Two-Step is in the interactions of the partners. In a sense, the dance is *in-between* the two partners. Hence, an account of the actions of both partners fails to capture the practice; the account has to focus on the partners in interaction. Moreover, the music – part of the situation – is also essential to the creation of the practice in order to get the 4 steps to 6 beats of music rhythm. Indeed, we might say that the practice of the Texas Two Step dance is in-between the two partners and the music. The same holds for leadership practice, though frequently there are more than two leaders, and of course followers, and aspects of the situation are also critical and relevant considerations. Perhaps square dancing begins to capture the depth of the complexity.

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Distributed Perspective on Leadership Practice

The aspect of distributed leadership that has garnered most attention is the recognition that school leadership involves multiple leaders, both administrators and teacher leaders. As a principal in one of our research sites put it most aptly, "I just couldn't do it all." I suspect that no one individual could, and recognizing that is essential. The preoccupation with the principal in the school leadership literature is problematic and has contributed to making the job an impossible one. Others, besides the principal, can and do take on leadership responsibilities.

Our research in Chicago elementary schools illustrates that the execution of most leadership functions and activities involve multiple leaders. Principals rarely go it alone. Who leads and the extent to which leadership is distributed over multiple leaders, however, depends on the leadership function or activity. As one might expect, monitoring instruction and teacher evaluation tends to be the purview of principals and assistant principals, while teacher development tends to involve more leaders ranging from the principal to teacher leaders. The extent to which leadership is distributed over two or more leaders in a school also depends on the subject area. Specifically, leadership activities for literacy instruction tend to involve more leaders and are more likely to involve the principal compared with leadership activities for mathematics or science instruction. The subject matters when it comes to the distribution of leadership for instruction.

At one level, then, a distributed perspective presses us to ask who takes responsibility for which leadership functions and activities in a school. One approach might involve examining who is responsible for which leadership functions (e.g., constructing and selling an instructional vision, building norms of trust and collaboration) in a school. Another approach might focus on key leadership activities or routines in a school, identifying the key leadership tasks involved in the execution of this routine, and then investigating who is responsible for executing these tasks.

Regretfully, many discussions of distributed leadership end prematurely at this point. As a result, both scholars and practitioners wonder what is new about distributed leadership. If this is the ending, little indeed is new. But, in my view of distributed leadership this is only the beginning. After all, savvy principals the world over could have told one that they depend on others for the execution of key school leadership functions and activities. Moreover, scholars have long argued for moving beyond those at the top of organizations in order to understand leadership.

The critical issue, from a distributed perspective, is not that leadership is distributed but *how* it is distributed. And, *how* it is distributed over leaders, followers and their situation. Hence, the importance of keeping leadership practice front and center. A distributed perspective presses us to consider how leadership practice is defined in the interaction of two or more leaders, followers and their situation.

Leadership Practice: Leaders and Followers

From a distributed perspective, a core challenge involves figuring out how leadership practice is distributed over leaders and followers. It involves unpacking the interdependencies among leaders and followers in leadership practice. Leadership is typically thought of as something that is done to follow-

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ers. From a distributed perspective, this is problematic because followers co-produce leadership practice in interaction with leaders.

While individual leaders act, they do so in a situation that is defined in part by the actions of others – their actions are interdependent – and it is in these interactions leadership practice takes shape. Sitting in on any one of the numerous leadership activities for literacy instruction at Adams Elementary School on Chicago's Southside one is immediately struck by how the leadership practice takes form in the interactions of the leaders and followers. These leadership activities typically involve some combination of four leaders – the principal, the school's literacy coordinator, the African American Heritage Coordinator, and a teacher leader. Sometimes these leaders act in similar ways, other times they do not. The principal usually presses the big picture in terms of overall goals and standards, she moves the meetings along, synthesizes what has been said by others, and constantly reminds teachers of what is expected of them in their classrooms. The Literacy Coordinator does some of this, but she is also the detail person, identifying problems with literacy instruction, suggesting solutions and resources to address these problems, and getting teachers to participate. Leadership practice for literacy at Adams gets constructed in the interactions of these leaders' actions. But, teachers are also critical in defining leadership practice in these meetings. For example, they often offer descriptions of how a particular teaching strategy suggested by the Literacy Coordinator played out in practice that are sometimes taken up by the leaders to press a point about improving literacy instruction.

Leadership practice in the above example is stretched over leaders and followers. We term this collaborated distribution to underscore the reciprocal relationship between the actions of the leaders and followers that gives rise to leadership practice. Reciprocal interdependencies involve individuals playing off one another, with the practice of person A enabling the practice of person B and vice versa. It resembles the interdependencies between partners in the Texas Two-Step or perhaps, considering the number of people, square dancing is a better comparison.

We have identified two other types of distribution – coordinated distribution and collective distribution. In a "coordinated distribution" situation leaders work separately or together on different leadership tasks that are arranged sequentially. For example, some schools in our study use a routine called the five-week assessment cycle to identify instructional problems and establish instructional improvement priorities. This cycle involves a number of interdependent sequential steps – student test data and other information has to be analyzed before instructional needs and priorities can be defined. In this situation, the leadership practice is stretched over the different activities that must be performed in a particular sequence for leadership practice.

In a "collective distribution" situation leadership practice is stretched over the practice of two or more leaders who work separately but interdependently. The actions of two or more leaders working separately generate leadership practice. Consider Ellis Elementary where both the principal and assistant principal see evaluating teaching as a critical leadership activity for instructional improvement. The principal believes that the legally required biannual visits are grossly inadequate to evaluate teacher's practice. Together with the assistant principal, they have developed a more elaborate approach to evaluating teach-

ers' practice. The assistant principal, who has a friendly and informal rapport with teachers at Ellis, visits classrooms frequently, engaging in formative evaluation with regular feedback to teachers about their practice. As he describes it, he "makes the rounds" two or three times a day, often sitting in on a lesson and giving the teacher immediate feedback. In contrast, the principal engages in summative evaluation. Teachers at Ellis see her very much as an authority figure referring to her as "Doctor." She visits classrooms once or twice per year and makes final determinations about the quality of teachers' instructional practices. Through formal and informal meetings the assistant principal and principal pool their information to develop an understanding and evaluation of teachers' practice.

Leadership Practice and the Situation

Organizational routines and structures, material artifacts, and tools are an important part of the situation of school leadership. School leaders, like the rest of us, rarely work directly on the world. Instead, they work with tools, routines, and structures of various sorts that fundamentally shape leadership practice. From a distributed perspective, tools and organizational routines along with other aspects of the situation are not simple accessories that allow leaders to practice more effectively or efficiently – they contribute to defining the practice in much the same way that the actions of different leaders and followers do. In our study sites, aspects of the situation that contribute to defining leadership practice include the School Improvement Planning Process, Five Week Assessment routines, grade level meetings, and student assessment data, among others.

Key aspects of the situation in interaction with leaders and followers define leadership practice. Of course aspects of the situation such as tools and organizational structures can be made and remade in leadership practice. A quick example is illustrative. At Hillside School in Chicago, the principal used appropriate students' "writing folders" (a tool designed for classroom writing instruction) as a leadership tool and developed the monthly writing folder review around it. Believing that writing and communicating clearly was critical to the success of the Mexican American student population at Hillside, the principal set out to transform writing instruction. The key leadership routine in this effort was the principal's monthly review of students' writing folders: every teacher submits a folder that contains one composition written by each student in the class. The principal reads each student's work and provides the teachers and students with written feedback.

The leadership practice in the above example is defined in the interactions of the principal and the writing folders (and of course teachers, also). The writing folder was redesigned by the principal as a leadership tool through her monthly writing folder review routine. In turn, the writing folder fundamentally shapes the leadership practice, grounding it on what students were learning and not learning about writing and engaging both teachers and students simultaneously in the task of improving writing instruction.

Conclusion

A distributed perspective on leadership involves more than identifying and counting those who take responsibility for leadership in a school. It also involves more than matching particular leaders with particular leadership functions and activities, though that is an important initial step.

A distributed perspective on leadership presses us to examine how leadership practice gets defined in the interactions among leaders, followers, and key aspects of the situation; it urges us to examine the interdependencies among these three defining elements. In doing so, we explore whether and how things like better designed tools, new or reworked organizational structures and different combinations of leaders on particular leadership activities might transform the interactions, and thereby, potentially improve leadership practice. In this way, distributed leadership is a diagnostic tool that principals and others can use to think about the work of leadership and a set of ideas that can guide efforts to revise leadership practice. It is not, however, a blueprint.

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it runs into opposition, or when the early results are not phenomenal, do we give up and go in search of something different? If the monkeys in the story had had an impatient principal, when the idea of washing the sweet potatoes didn't catch on with all the monkeys immediately and some resisted the change, many principals would have gone to a conference in search of new strategies, rather than sustaining the implementation of a promising practice. It takes persistence and effort to become a professional learning community.

How, then, can principals avoid these pitfalls and move forward to create learning communities in their schools? According to Ferriter and Norton, the successful ones keep the idea of collaboration "on the front burner" of their schools. Dennis Sparks assigns responsibility for this role to principals when he writes, "Leaders effect change by shaping the conversations in their organizations."

What strategies can principals employ as they seek ways to keep collaboration on the "front burner" and attempt to "shape" the conversations that take place in their schools? On a global level, principals can support job-embedded collaboration, carefully allocat-ing precious time, money and other resources. Fortunately, principals are uniquely positioned to create the conditions that support learning communities.

More specifically, principals can arrange the daily schedule to provide teams with common planning time, establish the parameters within which teams work, and make certain that teams are equipped with skills to build an agenda, set norms, brainstorm alternatives, and reach consensus on their ideas. Principals can create an expectation that teams share their curriculum ideas, support each other's attempts at innovation, encourage the development of common assessments, and participate in the design of interventions to assist students who are not learning.

Many principals have been successful in changing the format of their faculty meetings from "verbal memos" to opportunities for professional inquiry that promote collaboration. In these schools, time during faculty meetings is devoted to reviewing data, looking at samples of student work, or employing a critical friends approach to gather results-oriented feedback on classroom-based initiatives.

Other principals have found that leading book studies, sharing articles in faculty meetings, and attending workshops with teams of teachers are powerful ways to model collaboration. The important point is that when principals promote professional dialogue about collaboration, they find that conversations about becoming a learning community – especially discussions that focus on results – actually build the momentum that leads to the creation of learning communities.

An additional benefit: principals who encourage lively and open conversation about learning communities find it inevitably leads to deeper discussions of teaching and learning. According to Hargreaves, one of the benefits of the model is that professional learning communities "bring teachers together to talk about how they can improve the learning of all students as they challenge and question each other's practice in spirited but optimistic ways."

With the best of intentions to create a professional learning community, how can the effort go wrong? A common mistake is to expect too much too soon. Indeed, the axiom "think big but start small" applies here. Principals need to focus initially on small, short-term goals such as creating team norms or writing quarterly common assessments in order to build credibility. These changes may seem insignificant taken individually, but small successes early pave the way for big success later.

It would also be a mistake to expect that schools will reach their potential as learning communities simply by declaring their intention to "become" a learning community, by making public pronouncements that the staff development goal for the upcoming year is something called "professional learning communities," or by directing teams of teachers to "go forth and collaborate." Learning communities need to be nurtured and it is a reality that, while time and support alone are not enough to ensure development of learning communities, without them professional learning communities will not flourish.

Will teachers be willing to work together and create learning communities? "In traditional schools," William Ferriter and John Norton report, "teachers have not been rewarded for collaboration, and many schools remain places where teachers are isolationists, reluctant to share responsibility for the success of the entire school." While this may be true in some schools, it doesn't always have to be the case. As learning

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> ## " The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is building the capacity of school personnel to function as a professional learning community.
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> ## - Milbrey McLaughlin "

communities develop, Ferriter and Norton have observed, "People who are not initially motivated can become strong collaborators as results emerge – usually seeing positive changes in and for their students."

That was certainly the case in Kildeer Countryside CCSD 96, where there is clear evidence that student achievement improved when faculties began to behave in more collaborative ways. In that suburban Chicago elementary district, schools that reported increasing levels of professional collaboration in turn showed increasing levels of student achievement. The opposite was also true: student achievement declined in schools in which faculties reported declining levels of collaboration.

Likewise, the same dynamic was present in Alberta, Canada, where student achievement improved when the Peace River School faculty began to embrace the idea of working in collaborative teams. For two years, teams of teachers worked to identify exactly what students were expected to learn and created common assessments to gauge their progress in meeting clearly defined, results-oriented goals. The faculty saw their efforts result in consistently improving levels of student achievement in every subject area as measured by the provincial examinations.

So, how do principals begin to create learning communities in their schools? Noted staff developer Tom Gusky sums up the strategy: "You don't change people's minds, you change people's practices, which changes people's minds." Principals start by framing out the necessary structures and by consciously organizing the schedule, assignment of teachers, and allocation of resources to support collaborative teams. They make a deliberate effort to look at using time in creative ways and to create a daily schedule that clearly demonstrates that the primary purpose of their school is learning.

As principals begin to build the framework, they also focus on creating the culture of a learning community. They spend time creating team norms and really driving home the school's mission, vision, values and goals. They actively engage teachers in conversations around the critical questions of learning, they support the creation of common assessments, and they help teachers take responsibility for creating effective interventions when students are not learning.

The *Myth of the Hundredth Monkey* illustrates how, while the action of a single individual can initiate a change, becoming a professional learning community requires passion and persistence. Allen Wheeler said, "Since we are what we do, if we want to change what we are, we must begin to change what we do." Becoming a professional learning community is about acting differently in our schools. It requires persistent action, starting with a single principal or team of teachers determined to make a difference.

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