

Wise Ways

School Leadership actively models and fosters a positive school environment where staff members feel valued and are challenged to be engaged and grow professionally. (CL5)

Evidence Review:

Relational trust is foundational for school professionals, parents, and community leaders to initiate and sustain efforts at building the essential supports for school improvement. When relational trust is present and school personnel feel supported, they feel safe to try new practices and reach out to parents (Bryk, et. al, 2010). A longitudinal study of over 400 elementary schools in Chicago found that relational trust can be established through respectful interactions, personal regard for others, and the demonstration of competence in core role responsibilities and personal integrity. The following behaviors were present in schools with high levels of relational trust:

- genuine listening to what each person has to say and taking other people's views into account in subsequent actions;
- when disagreements occur, opinions were respected;
- people extending themselves beyond the formal requirements of a job definition or a union contract;
- transparency;
- reaching out to others;
- competency in core role responsibilities; and
- follow through on commitments.

Source: Anthony S. Bryk and Barbara Schneider, *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for School Reform*. March 2003 | Volume 60 | Number 6, *Creating Caring Schools* Pages 40-45.

Evidence Review:

Research shows that learning-focused leaders employ the following structural activities to facilitate the development of staff collaboration: developing schoolwide goals and objectives and clearly articulating the rationale and foci of new programs; establishing and using formal mechanisms for professional interchanges (e.g., staff meetings, professional development activities, common planning periods); promoting staff stability; providing resources and a supportive work milieu for cooperative planning; giving faculty a formal role in communication and decision making; and using a variety of methods of decision making. On a less formal level, learning-focused leaders promote staff collaboration by discussing instructional issues regularly in informal exchanges with teachers, by soliciting teachers' opinions, by showing respect and consideration for staff and their ideas, and by encouraging direct, informal communication among staff.

Source: Joseph Murphy, *Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement*.

Evidence Review:

Another aspect of the learning-focused leadership role in creating a positive learning climate involves setting up a work structure that rewards and recognizes teachers for their efforts. Principals have few discretionary rewards to use with teachers. The single salary schedule and the tenure system severely limit principals' ability to motivate teachers. However, research has begun to show that money is not the only way to reward high levels of performance. Specifically, principals can provide recognition to teachers by distributing leadership, showing personal interest, providing public acknowledgment before colleagues and parents, and giving private praise and encouragement.

Source: Joseph Murphy, *Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement*.

Evidence Review:**Collegiality**

As Christine Villani (1996) notes:

Collegial behavior is demonstrated by teachers who are supportive of one another. They openly enjoy professional interactions, are respectful and courteous of each other's needs. (p. 44)

Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) warn that collegiality cannot be "contrived" by requiring teachers to plan together or consult together, to engage in peer coaching, or the like. Rather, collegiality is characterized by authentic interactions that are professional in nature. According to Fullan and Hargreaves, these behaviors include:

- openly sharing failures and mistakes,
- demonstrating respect for each other, and
- constructively analyzing and criticizing practices and procedures.

In effect, collegiality is characterized by tacit norms of professional behavior (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Lortie, 1975).

Source: Marzano, What Works in Schools, pp. 61-62, 2003

Evidence Review:

According to Shulman, "authentic and enduring learning occurs when the teacher is an active agent in the process...Teacher learning becomes more active through experimentation and inquiry, as well as through writing, dialogue, and questioning. Thus, the school settings in which teachers work must provide them with the opportunities and support for becoming active investigators of their own teaching."

One effective strategy is a mentoring and induction program which facilitates professional conversations with beginning teachers about their practice and allows for novice teachers to reflect honestly, without fear. Some questions that may promote self-assessment and reflection include:

- Did you depart from your plan?
- If so, how and why?
- How did the modification improve the lesson?
- If you had to teach this lesson again to the same group of students, what would you do differently?

Mentors also find value in the process and report that their own teaching has improved as a result of focusing their attention on effective teaching practices.

Schools can further promote professional growth by engaging teachers in an annual process of self-assessment and goal setting which is critical to the development of their individual professional development plans. The results of this annual process can also guide schools and districts in the identification and coordination of professional development, including the creation of study groups or professional learning communities that focus on areas of interest.

Source: Danielson, C. A Framework for Learning to Teach
Online June 2009 | Volume 66 Revisiting Teacher Learning

References and Other Resources:

Shulman, L. S. (2004). *The wisdom of practice: Essays on teaching, learning, and learning to teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.