

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of Education

**CONTEXTUALIZING PEDAGOGICAL CAPACITY:  
THE NEXUS BETWEEN TEACHING AND LEARNING**

A Thesis in

Educational Leadership

by

Jacob Easley II

© 2004 Jacob Easley II

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

August 2004

This thesis of Jacob Easley II was reviewed and approved\* by the following:

J. Daniel Marshall  
Professor of Education  
Thesis Advisor  
Chair of Committee

James F. Nolan, Jr.  
Professor of Education

Debra M. Freedman  
Assistant Professor of Education

John W. Tippeconnic III  
Professor of Education

Patrick Shannon  
Professor of Education  
Coordinator of Graduate Studies

\*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School.

## ABSTRACT

This case study takes place in an inner city, urban elementary school that has and continues to undergo various reforms. One of these is reconstitution, a drastic comprehensive school reform approach in which incumbent teachers and administrators in a chronic, low-performing school are replaced with new teachers and administrators in hope of spurring new working conditions and raising student achievement. Another is the 2001 reauthorization of the 1965 federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), more popularly known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA). Each act of reform has promised to bring about certain changes that would/will in return improve this particular school. The measure for improvement has and continues to be the results of students' performance on some sort of standardized assessment. The implementation of these high-stakes accountability reforms has directly shaped the context of schooling within this site.

This study makes the claim that the core of education exists at the classroom level and is represented by the teaching and learning process, as mediated through relationships between teachers and their students. Teachers, however, hold particular perceptions about the extent to which top-down reforms affect their capacity for innovative teaching within the teaching and learning process. This study explores these perceptions.

The results of this study affirm the idea of an educational core and demonstrate that teachers' capacity for innovative teaching within the core is influenced by broader educational decisions and relationships beyond the classroom level. Such a finding

highlights the reality that schools exist within and are responsive to larger socio-political systems such as school districts and local communities (Sarason, 1990, Noguera, 2003; Lipman, 1998). As a result, capacity is made complex, evolving from multiple levels (e.g., national, state, local, and building levels). Because the complexities of capacity directly affect teachers' innovative teaching and in turn their teaching influences students' learning, capacity becomes the nexus between teaching and learning.

Implications include an examination of the language of student achievement, public deliberations about the current processes of schooling and school reform, and an interdisciplinary research approach toward understanding capacity as the dynamic nexus between teaching and learning.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
Chapter One CONTEXTUALIZING PEDAGOGICAL CAPACITY: THE NEXUS BETWEEN TEACHING AND LEARNING.....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
The Contemporary Context of Urban Schools.....	1
Background.....	3
The Context of Teaching and Learning .....	3
Rationale .....	7
The Purpose Statement .....	11
Research Question .....	11
Definitions and Conceptual Connections.....	11
Reconstitution .....	12
No Child Left Behind Act.....	12
Pedagogical Capacity.....	13
Engagement in Teaching and Learning Innovation.....	14
Theoretical Framework.....	17
Summary and Study Organization .....	21
Chapter Two METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN .....	24
Selection of Site .....	25
Selection of Participants .....	26
Time Schedule and Introduction to the Site.....	26

Participant Observation.....	31
Supporting Data Collection Techniques .....	32
Data Management and Analysis .....	33
Ethical Researcher .....	38
Limitations .....	39
Strengths and Delimitations .....	40
Chapter Three INTRODUCTION TO THE SITE.....	41
Politics of Finesse .....	41
Mr. Thachery's Leadership at Hillside .....	44
Ms. Abbey's Leadership at Hillside .....	47
Changes in Context.....	49
Changes in Curriculum .....	50
Discussion.....	54
Chapter Four TEACHERS' DEFINITIONS AND CONNECTIONS .....	57
Teaching and Learning Innovations.....	58
Teacher Commitment .....	61
Nurturant Relationships .....	64
Discussion.....	69
Chapter Five CRITICAL CORRESPONDENCES OF PEDAGOGICAL CAPACITY.....	73
Critical Correspondence of Assessment .....	75
The Compounding Critical Correspondence of Assessment and Curriculum .....	87

Curriculum in Context .....	90
Curriculum and Student Motivation .....	92
Nurturant Relationships as Motivation .....	95
Curriculum and Academic Readiness.....	98
Curriculum and an Instructionally Supportive Home Life .....	103
Discussion.....	108
<b>Chapter Six DOUBLE PLANNING, CHANGES IN CONTEXT AND AND COLLABORATION.....</b>	<b>112</b>
Collaboration and the Double Planning .Period .....	114
Divergence in Perceptions .....	118
A Politics of Forgetting.....	120
Romanticizing One's Work.....	122
Increasing Instructional Capacity through Collaboration.....	125
A Climate of a Standardization of Practice.....	127
Leading Teachers to Collaborate .....	132
Discussion.....	137
<b>Chapter Seven INSTITUTIONALIZED TEACHING AND LEARNING INNOVATION .....</b>	<b>140</b>
Institutionalized Instructional Practices and Paradoxes of Capacity .....	142
The Capacity to Leave No Child Behind.....	148
Discussion.....	152

Chapter Eight ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL CAPACITY AND TEACHING AND LEARNING INNOVATIONS .....	155
Classroom Level Pedagogical Capacity.....	156
Local Community as Pedagogical Capacity .....	159
Building Level Capacity .....	163
Public Ideology and Policy as Capacity.....	166
The Complex Relationships between Pedagogical Capacity and Teaching and Learning Innovations.....	168
Implications and Recommendations .....	174
A Pedagogy of Blame .....	175
The Language of Achievement.....	178
A Pedagogy of Diversion.....	180
Suggestions for Further Research .....	183
A Call for Interdisciplinary Research .....	183
A Call for Mixed Methods Research .....	184
REFERENCES .....	186
APPENDICES .....	200
Appendix A INITIAL TEACHER INTERVIEW (DIALOGUE) POTOCOL.....	201
Appendix B ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW (DIALOGUE) PROTOCOL .....	202
Appendix C SAMPLING OF PARTICIPANTS.....	203
Appendix D SAMPLE FIELD NOTES.....	204
Appendix E CHARACTERISTICS OF KEY PARTICIPANTS.....	206



Appendix F	OBSERVATIONS AND DIALOGUES WITH KEY PARTICIPANTS .....	207
Appendix G	TEACHER FORM.....	208
Appendix H	PRINCIPAL FORM.....	210
Appendix I	DEFINING AYP .....	212

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure A.	The Context of Serial Reform Implementation and Teachers' Perceptions.....	16
Figure B.	Case Study--Data Collection, Management, and Analysis.....	37
Figure C.	Pedagogical Capacity that Defines Contextualized Teaching and Learning Innovations.....	72
Figure D.	The Complex Relationships Between Pedagogical Capacity and Teachers' Engagement in Teaching and Learning Innovations.....	173

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project is the result of many teachers and two principals' willingness to speak candidly about issues that affect their work. Its inspiration comes from my many years of working in urban schools, particularly one reconstituted school, and the teachers and students I have come to know through those experiences.

At the academic level, each committee member has been most helpful in providing honest and important critiques and feedback. A special appreciation is dedicated to Dan Marshall for the many re-reads and the extended conversations during the development of this project. Thank you, Dan!

My family and friends have been an anchor of support, even when my hope, faith, and energy waned. To my mother and sister, I say thank you for reading my manuscripts and for your words of encouragement. To my cousin, Iris, thank you for your prayers. I have to thank my friends for the many distractions and for never tiring to hear about my work. Michael Sciaretti has been an invaluable wonder for reading this project, chapter by chapter and for lending his candid reactions. To Federico Ferrari, thank you for your technical assistance and heated discussions about the logic of diagrams and tables.

This thesis is not simply a research project, but an advocate for a better educational system for the many low-income, urban students who are the objects of incessant school reform and for the teachers who work with them daily. My hope is that the findings from this study are taken seriously in conversations and considerations for urban school improvement.

# CONTEXTUALIZING PEDAGOGICAL CAPACITY: THE NEXUS BETWEEN TEACHING AND LEARNING

## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Contemporary Context of Urban Schools

In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education released *A Nation at Risk*. This report brought to the forefront of contemporary American politics the need to seriously focus on the improvement of schools. Goodlad (1984) supported the report's claims by declaring that, "American schools are in trouble" (p. 1). A national assault on the failure of American schools ensued. Yet, nine years later, Finn (1992) explained that many American parents have continuously expressed an approval of their own children's education and their local schools. However, this approval rating was and still is truer for certain schools than others. Many middle and upper class families have been able to maintain the sentiment that "The nation may be at risk, but 'I'm all right, Jack'" (Finn, 1992, p. xii). Thus, the prognosis of *A Nation at Risk* can be better understood by reconceptualizing American education as existing within the context of two American school systems. Preceding *A Nation at Risk* by more than twenty-two years, Conant (1961) referred to these two American schools systems as metropolitan slums and their suburbs. This means that schools are divided along class lines to include those that serve "secure" families and those that serve families "placed at-risk" economically, socially, politically and otherwise. In this regard, the reform of American schools is actually a reform of the socio-economically impoverished metropolitan schools typically described

as "inner city," urban schools. These schools stand in stark contrast to their suburban and more (economically) stable metropolitan (not classified as "inner city") counterparts.

For generations "inner city," urban schools serving minority students have been categorically and continuously labeled inferior to suburban white schools. The gauge has been students' test scores on standardized tests as well as other markers including grade point averages, college attendance and college graduation rates. For example, standardized test scores have been used as the primary source for the following claims about student achievement and the quality of instruction in urban, high poverty and minority populated schools: compared to their suburban counterparts, students in urban schools, particularly urban high poverty schools, face greater challenges to overcome regarding student achievement (National Center for Education Statistics, 1996); and, the lowest levels of student achievement come from the 25 largest (urban) metropolitan school districts which educate approximately one fourth of the nation's African American students and one third of the Nation's Hispanic students (Education Week/Pew Charitable Trust, 1998; Orfield & Eaton, 1996). Meier (2002) explained that, "We are witnessing a radical redefinition of the task of public education, driven by the widespread belief that by focusing our attention on externally imposed tests we can both produce higher [student] achievement and restore public trust in our schools [, particularly urban schools]" (p. 95).

In reaction to such claims, a myriad of reform models have been proposed and initiated in order to improve schools. More specifically, the language of school improvement is often inextricable from that of reform, and reform (whether externally

implemented or from within the school) is often the context for school improvement. Moreover, reform (e.g., Site Based Management, Charter School Movement, class size reduction, and Character Education) has come to be known as the tool of /for school improvement. Hence, the belief prevails that in the absence of reform (particularly for urban schools), schools improvement is compromised. The need for urban school reform has come to shape the language, policy, and research of educational stakeholders who seek to discover the innovations needed to improve the function(s) of schools as measured by student achievement outcomes.

## **Background**

### **The Context of Teaching and Learning**

Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, national attention toward school improvement and many comprehensive reform models (e.g. Success for All,<sup>1</sup> The Edison Project,<sup>2</sup> and reconstitution) has gained momentum. For example, Leonard Haynes, Special Assistant, Office of the Secretary, United States Department of Education (personal communication, July 18, 2002) explained that because of the 2001 reauthorization of The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (commonly know as President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act),<sup>3</sup> education and educational change have

---

<sup>1</sup> Success for All (SFA) is a comprehensive school reform model developed during the 1980's under the direction of Robert E. Slavin and Nancy A. Madden, Johns Hopkins University. As of 2002, the program has grown to serve about 1,500 schools in 48 states and assists in related programs in five other countries.

<sup>2</sup> The Edison Project, a for-profit, corporate management system. The company operates under contracts with local districts and charter school boards.

<sup>3</sup> This act is often referred to in this text as either No Child Left Behind (NCLB) or the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA). These terms and abbreviations may be used interchangeably.

moved to the forefront of conversations among the broader American (U.S.) public. This growing, public interest in school reform developed at a rate tantamount to which contemporary political leaders have been able to gain voter support by advancing the notion that America's schools are in a state of decline. And, each (re)authorization of federal educational policies suggests that its executive author has the solution for improving schools and increasing student achievement by fixing the problem at its core--inside the classroom where teaching and learning occur by way of financial support for factors that immediately influence schools' instructional programming.

The primary strategy at the federal level has been to build capacity for change through policy actions. For example, the federal government has defined teacher quality from a policy perspective, thereby creating a particular language and a particular reference for conceptualizing particular factors that define what effective classroom practices might look like. As a result of the 1998 reauthorization of Title II of the Higher Education Act, the secretary of education is required to issue an annual report to Congress on the state of teacher quality nationwide (U. S. Department of Education, 2002b). This report is known as *The Secretary's Annual Report on Teacher Quality* and focuses on certification for pre-service teachers. This report, along with many others associated with the NCLBA,<sup>4</sup> has linked school reform and school improvement to the notion of teacher quality. A recent Secretary's Annual Report on Teacher Quality (U. S. Department of Education, 2002b) contended that, "In order to leave no child behind, we need a highly qualified teacher in every classroom" (p. viii).

---

<sup>4</sup> See also (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

For practicing teachers, professional development is commonly recognized as the capacity source for supporting and improving teacher quality. Without question and supported by research, "Professional development [for practicing teachers] is considered an essential mechanism for deepening teachers' content knowledge and developing their teaching practices" (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002, p. 81). Therefore, staff development<sup>5</sup> that aims at deepening teachers' content knowledge and developing their teaching practices simultaneously supports reform efforts to improve schools by enhancing what Prestine and McGreal (1997) called *the core technology of schools*.

The core technology or educational core (Resnick & Hall, 1998) of schooling is commonly thought of as the connections between teaching (e.g. teachers' instructional practices) and learning (e.g. student learning and student achievement). Thus, the essence of student achievement occurs as a result of the core technology of schooling, in the classroom, and through a relationship that suggests that teachers' instructional capacities and the quality of their classroom practices have a direct effect on students' learning. Hence, the theoretical and practical positions of policy driven school reform, teacher quality, and teaching and learning converge. This point of convergence is conceptualized as school improvement and is traditionally measured by the rise or fall in student achievement.

A discussion of these positions reveals that federal policy has had an increasingly important role in the efforts to build capacity for the improvement of schools, primarily at the school's core. Yet, its impact is felt at all areas of the school workplace. This is

---

<sup>5</sup> Profession development, staff development and in-service education are used interchangeably.



particularly true for inner city, urban schools. For example, the NCLBA's Title I impacts the funding for school reform options designed to serve high poverty and minority populations; Title IV impacts the ways in which schools address the needs of Limited English Proficient students; and Title II influences the ways in which schools approach teacher quality. As schools make changes to meet the required regulations for compliance upon the receipt of federal reform dollars, policy directly shapes the context of schools, the context of school improvement, and the context of teaching and learning.

Reconstitution, for example, is understood as a state/district level policy driven, comprehensive school reform (CSR)<sup>6</sup> option for school improvement. Reconstitution is also formally and nationally recognized by the NCLBA as a viable comprehensive reform model. Reconstitution shapes the context of schools by seeking to remove incumbent teaching, administrative and support staff for the purpose of starting the next school year with a new personnel composition (in whole or in part). School reconstitution is considered by some to be the most drastic form of CSR, and has historically occurred only in urban--low-income and minority populated--schools (NEA, 1998) beginning with the San Francisco Unified School District in 1983 (Goldstein, Kelemen, & Koski, 1998). The aim of reconstitution is to increase a school's capacity for quality teaching and learning by re-staffing a school with more committed educators (Malen, Croninger, Redmond, & Muncey, 1999; Malen, Croninger, Muncey, & Redmond-Jones, 2002; Jones & Malen, 2002).

---

<sup>6</sup> While the terms "comprehensive" and "school-wide" reform are often used interchangeably, for the purpose of this literature review, "comprehensive" school reform is used in order to avoid ambiguity. Also, CSR refers to both the federal program as well as the concept "comprehensive school reform" as implemented at the State Educational Agency and Local Educational Agency levels.

In the business of CSR (whether locus of change is curricular, structural, instructional, or managerial) the trend has been for states/districts to support the capacity for quality teaching and learning by offering additional financial support to schools (Goldstein et al., 1998; Hart, 1997; Borman, Rachuba, Datnow, Alberg, Iver, Stringfield, & Ross 2000; Malen et al., 2002). Similarly, NCLB earmarks federal monies to support the improvement of student achievement through high quality and continuous teacher/staff development and the recruitment and retention of highly qualified core subject teachers. More specifically:

Schools identified for improvement must spend at least 10 percent of their Title I Part A funds on professional development for the school's teachers and principal that directly addresses the academic achievement problem that caused the school to be identified for improvement. (U. S. Department of Education, 2002c)

These monetary provisions are significant in view of political platforms that make claims about the inferiority of public schools and the need for a high quality teaching force (i.e., a change in teachers' content knowledge and instructional practices). These monetary provisions serve as a source of capacity for school change/reform/improvement, particularly in support of the school's core where teaching and learning occur.

### **Rationale**

Prior to the 2001 reauthorization of ESEA (NCLB) and its formal recognition of reconstitution as a viable CSR, one principal of an urban reconstituted elementary school

also held strong beliefs about the need for a high quality teaching and learning. This principal believed that in order for school reconstitution to yield success toward school improvement, the staff development program, working relations among teachers, and instructional practices would have to be reconceptualized in a particular way (Mr. Thachery, personal communication, April 3, 2003).<sup>7</sup> His beliefs were directly and intricately linked to the notion of particular strategies needed for increasing teacher quality and for unraveling ineffective teaching and learning practices. For example, Mr. Thachery actively sought to hire teachers who “would be receptive to what may have been perceived to be unconventional ways of teaching in the elementary environment” and for teaching within an urban context (personal communication, April 3, 2003). Because of this principal's specific belief that the capacity for quality teaching and learning was needed to guarantee the success of a reconstituted school, this case study focused on this particular reconstituted school as the context for exploring issues regarding teachers' perceptions of capacity for innovative teaching and learning.

Four years after the reconstitution of this school, the implementation of the NCLBA also promised to turn the same school around (and many others like it across the country) by ushering in its own set of rules and regulations. In comparison to former reauthorizations, President Bush's 2001 reauthorization of ESEA, enacted the most intensive policy guidelines around standards and accountability. According to a report issued by the Office of the Secretary of Education, "No Child Left Behind is designed to highlight success and to shine a light on failure" (U. S. Department of Education, 2002c).

---

<sup>7</sup> The name here is a pseudonym to protect the anonymity of this study's participants.

The theory-of-action guiding NCLB aims at raising the achievement level of all students (specifically targeting low performing students from poor and minority communities)<sup>8</sup> in a number of ways by: (1) holding schools accountable for making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), as measured on standardized test scores; (2) utilizing scientifically-based programs that strengthen the core academic subjects; (3) making their yearly results available for public scrutiny through state report cards; (4) and by the threat of a reduction in funds and the option for families to transfer their children from schools that fail to produce AYP.

However, research has also shown that policy driven reform as well as professional development agendas aimed at building the capacity for quality teaching and learning practices also bring about a fair amount of stress on the daily work lives of teachers (Little, 2001; Lieberman, 1996; Malen et al., 2002). These stresses make the context of reforms unstable, particularly as related to the reforms' ability to build the capacity for teacher quality within the teaching and learning process. In other words, reform can oftentimes roll out as a double-edged sword, one that is as likely to, in part, build capacity while simultaneously diminishing other aspects of it (See also Chapters Six and Seven).

While a paucity of research has focused on the theory-of-action that guides reconstitution and the reform's effects on the working lives of educators, research in this area is underdeveloped (Malen et al., 2002). A small body of research explored issues of

---

<sup>8</sup> PUBLIC LAW 107-110 State's Plan section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v). Adequate Yearly Progress for the achievement of economically disadvantaged students; students from major racial and ethnic groups; students with disabilities; and students with limited English proficiency. See also appendix I.

social and human capital regarding reconstitution (Rice & Croninger, 2001; Rice & Malen, 2002); yet this research is primarily limited to the intensification of the reform as explained through social norms and resource alignment. Moreover, less is known about the daily realities and results of schools that experience a series of reforms that include reconstitution. Goldstein et al. (1998) reported that in 1993 the SFUSD implemented the Comprehensive School Improvement Program (CSIP), "a probationary status for low-performing schools that provides them with an incentive to improve and thus avoid reconstitution" (pp. 11-12). Between 1993 and 1997 eight schools experienced serial reform implementation of both CSIP and reconstitution. Yet, research on the effects of serial reform implementation (particularly inclusive of reconstitution) is underdeveloped in school reform literature.

Published research that brings together the notions of capacity for teaching and learning as existing within, derived from and/or shaped by the context of serial reform implementation (inclusive of reconstitution), is also sparse and underdeveloped, at best. This study becomes increasingly more important in light of the notion that teachers' use of knowledge (i.e., perceptions about their capacity) has been weak as well. More specifically, Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon (1996) contended that, "Despite . . . interest in knowledge utilization in the social sciences, researchers in education have not dealt with the issue of professional knowledge [i.e., teachers' perceptions about their capacity] and the way teachers use it to inform their [teaching and learning] practices" (p. 187).

### **The Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to systematically uncover the relationships between teachers' perceptions<sup>9</sup> about pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations within the context of an urban elementary school that has experienced serial reform implementation.

### **Research Question**

Within an urban elementary school that has experienced serial reform implementation, which is inclusive of reconstitution, what relationships, if any, do teachers perceive between their individual and collective pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations?

### **Definitions and Conceptual Connections**

School reform, pedagogical capacity for teacher engagement, and the notion of teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations are defined in particular ways. The following definitions are used in this study to demonstrate the contextualized interconnectedness between these elements.

---

<sup>9</sup> Perception is defined as teachers' understandings, thoughts, beliefs, reflections and ideas about their pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations.

## **Reconstitution**

Reconstitution is defined as a policy based CSR strategy aimed at improving schools. Reconstitution involves removing incumbent administrators, teachers and staff (in part, if not in whole) and replacing them with more capable and committed educators (Malen et al., 1999; Malen et al., 2002).

Reconstitution was first enacted as a policy decision to turn around low-performing schools in San Francisco, CA. Occurring in 1983, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) was court ordered into a Consent Decree with the San Francisco Nation Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Since the onset of reconstitution in the SFUSD, many other school districts have implemented reconstitution in some form. Chicago, Baltimore, Atlanta are examples of school districts with reconstituted schools.

## **No Child Left Behind Act**

The No Child Left Behind Act is the 2001 (re)authorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), originally authorized in 1965 under President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" social agenda. The initiative sought to equalize educational opportunities for poor and minority students. For this reason, the act delineated provisions that would provide funding to state educational agencies (SEAs) based on a state's population of disadvantaged students living in poverty. SEAs could

then distribute grants to local educational agencies (LEAs). The theory-of-action was to eliminate poverty by enhancing the educational opportunities for poor and minority students (Mitchell, 2000). Since then, ESEA has undergone three major reauthorizations under different political administrations: 1988 (Bush, G.H.W.), 1994 (Clinton), and 2001 (Bush, G.W.). Each of these reauthorizations followed the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk* that incited public education as failing to produce learners who are competent enough to ensure the United States' status as a world economic power.

### **Pedagogical Capacity**

Pedagogical capacity is defined as any and all conditions (e. g., political, social, ideological, and economic) that deny/grant, impede/support and influence the potential for teachers to engage in the formal and informal processes of schooling. Pedagogical capacity recognizes the conditions that define schools as dynamic systems of individuals undergoing change--systems that exist within larger social systems (Sarason, 1990). All schools undergoing change exist within and are influenced by districts. Simultaneously, district policies are influenced by agendas at the federal, state and community levels. And, each of these echelons imposes its own agenda(s)--agendas that are mediated through social, political and economic conditions.

"Pedagogy," in this context, does not reference teaching practices alone but acknowledges schools as existing within the above conditions (political, social, and economic) that work in complex ways. Pedagogy, within this context, is defined as



"both a political and practical activity" that "attempts to influence the occurrences and qualities of experiences [in schools]" (Giroux & Simon, 1989, p. 222).

### **Engagement in Teaching and Learning Innovations**

Engagement<sup>10</sup> in efforts that yield teaching and learning innovations is defined as the acts of teachers' participation in (doing, talking, thinking, feeling and belonging) and implementation of formal and/or informal activities that they identify as "innovative teaching" regarding their own instructional/classroom practices. Teaching and learning innovations encompass the notion that innovative teaching (as defined by teachers)<sup>11</sup> supports students' learning.

While teachers' practices are often considered pedagogical practices, these are influenced by the broader notion of their pedagogical capacities. Teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations is directly affected by their pedagogical capacity (e.g., social, political and economic) for engagement. For example, a particular teacher may express the desire to learn more about new reading strategies that have not been used in her school/district. This teacher would need the pedagogical capacity--to attend a conference, purchase literature and resources, and the time needed to practice and to reflect upon the results of her new skills. However, the relationships between teachers'

---

<sup>10</sup> Wegner (1998) defined participation and engagement in a circular fashion. In this regard and in order for people to participate in social interactions, they must agree to mutual engagement. Furthermore, Wegner defined participation as both a personal and social process that combines "doing, talking, thinking, feeling, and belonging" (p. 56).

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter Four for teachers' collective definition of teaching and learning innovations.

perceptions of their pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations may prove to be dynamic within the context of a high-stakes reform like reconstitution. This study is situated in a reconstituted school where the principal believed in the need to reconceptualize teachers' working relations due to the complex nature of reconstitution. Since this principal believed strongly in the need to rethink and redesign working norms to meet the particular goals of school reconstitution, then teachers' pedagogical capacity for engagement would have also needed to be rethought and redesigned. Here again, teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations is directly influenced by their pedagogical capacity for engagement.

While numerous factors may influence teachers' perceptions about their pedagogical capacity to engage in teaching and learning innovations, the above definitions are working definitions unique to this case. They are used here to conceptualize a particular urban context that has undergone serial reform implementation. Figure A. suggests the possible relationships between school reform, pedagogical capacity, teaching and learning innovations, as well as the numerous other factors that may contextually define the work realities of real teachers.

## District Policy and District Culture

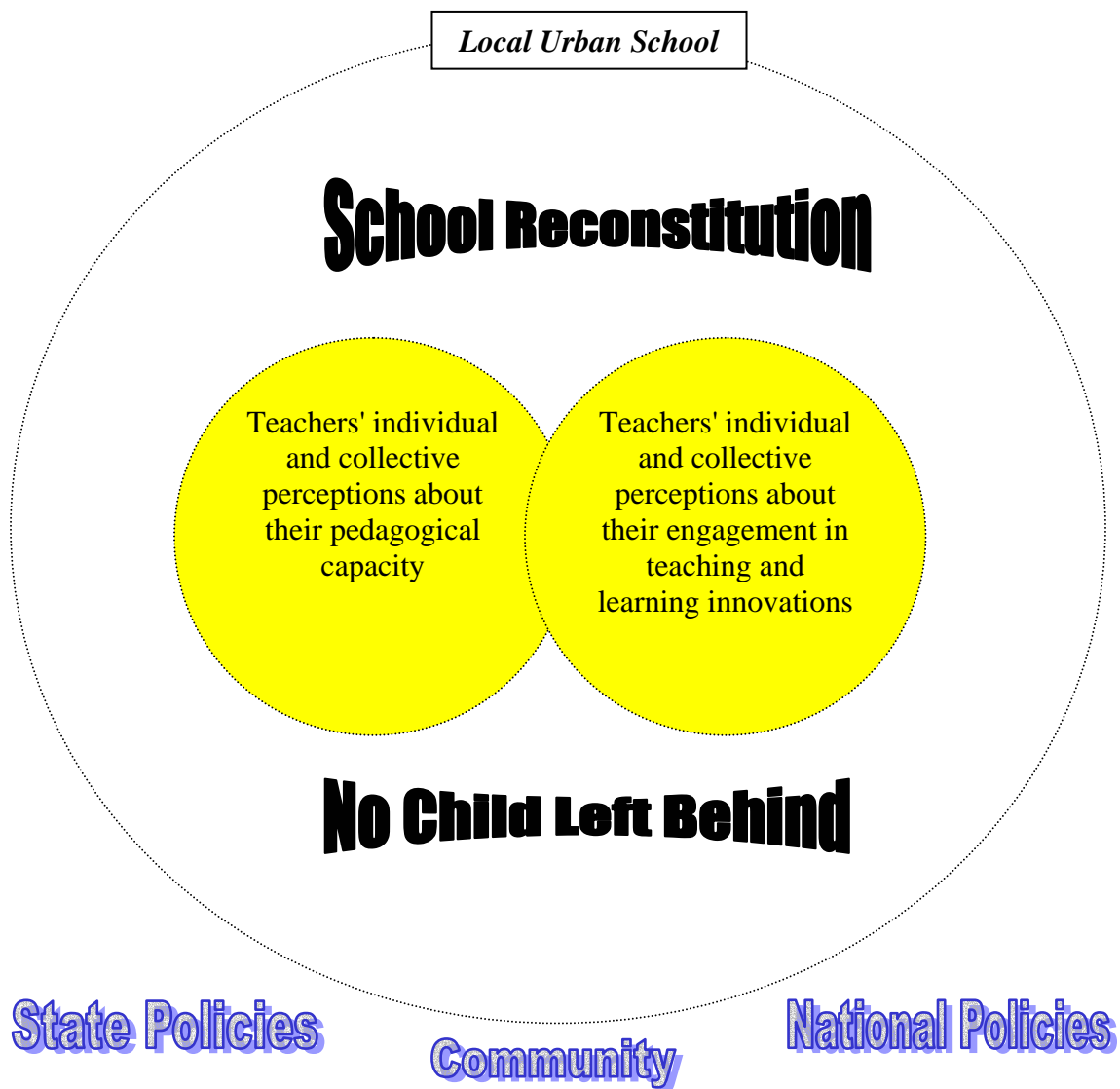


Figure A. The Context of Serial Reform Implementation and Teachers' Perceptions.

## Theoretical Framework

This study evolves from an intersection of various historical, theoretical, political and practical understandings about urban schools, policy driven school reform (as a source of capacity), and teaching and learning. These understandings have led to an array of commentaries, studies, policies and assumptions that all produce bodies of literature that not only contextualize issues of urban schools, policy driven school reform and teaching and learning in particular ways but also problematize them as well.

*A Nation at Risk* (1983) represents a marker for contemporary school reform agendas. This report ushered in a belief that the quality of U.S. public education was quickly falling behind that of foreign nations. A major concern toward maintaining the strength of the United States' global economic power ensued. The document declared that, "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war" (p. 5). An interest in the state of affairs for school reform began to take a national focus-- a focus that prompted greater national control over public school reform. This end was achieved through the means for national policy, particularly the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Educational Act.

New demands for educational change birthed various waves of reform. Each of these various waves brought with them a new language to describe school change as well as new approaches toward school change. Each approach toward school change also brought with it its own "theory-of-action." These theories-of-action attempt to explain, predict, or control human behavior, and make certain assumptions about these behaviors

as contained within the conditions in which these behaviors are to take place (Argyris & Schön, 1974). As such, each approach toward school reform makes assumptions about and affects the daily lives of teachers' work.

One assumption is made that staff development is needed to improve the quality of practicing teachers. Griffin (1987) contended that, "staff development is school improvement and professional growth" (p. 33). Therefore, staff development, school reform and school improvement all become important variables that affect the quality of teaching and learning. Thus, staff development that attempts to bring about some level of change in teachers practices needs to be context sensitive, paying attention to the context of teachers' work (Griffin, 1987). The assumption that staff development is needed to improve the quality of practicing teachers simultaneously suggests that, as part of the reform process of schools, teachers also need to undergo some sort of change. In this regard, staff development programming becomes a vehicle that manages and encourages changes in teachers' behaviors and practices and a change in the quality of the core technology of schooling--teaching and learning.

These variables of school reform, policy driven reform and teaching and learning are made even more complex within the context of urban schools. Literature has built a case that describes inner city, urban schools as places filled with racial, ethnic and language minority students; students who come from low-income families; and students who perform poorly on standardized tests. Kozol (1991) described these schools as places with limited resources. For example, in Newark Public Schools during the early 1990's

(threatened by a state takeover), unannounced visits to 50 of 82 schools lead independent evaluators to conclude:

Children in the Newark public schools . . . endure degrading school environments that virtually ensure academic failure . . . . [In many classrooms] there is nothing . . . . Science laboratories lack basic equipment. (Anyon, 1997, p. 144)

In addition, urban schools are more likely to suffer from higher teacher attrition rates than suburban schools. Fifty percent of urban teachers leave the profession within the first five years of hire (Chase, 1998).

These understandings of and theoretical positions about policy driven school reform, urban schools, and teaching and learning intersect in complex ways. These intersections support the conceptual framework described in Figure A. in a way that connections can be made between policy driven school reform designed to build capacity and teachers' perceptions about their pedagogical capacity to engage in teaching and learning innovations. The context of these connections consists of an inner city, urban elementary school's experience(s) with policy driven reform that has experienced serial reform implementation. More specifically, both school reconstitution and NCLB operate within the design of their unique theories-of-action. Each of these variables has been studied, written about, and problematized in ways that are not always complimentary; therefore, understanding the relationships between teachers' perceptions about their pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations within

the context of serial school reform (inclusive of reconstitution) is made even more complex, more provocative, and more meaningful.

Furthermore, as an educator who has taught in suburban, inner city and even urban reconstituted schools, the researcher has come to believe and understand that schools are sites of cultural production. As such, schools are sites of cultural and ideological production that not only support relationships that legitimate dominant society (Giroux, 1981), but schools also produce certain cultural and ideological relationships that define the ways in which school districts are organized, the power relationships between schools and the districts in which they exist, and the working relations of those who work in schools. Ideology also guides the belief that American schools are in need of reform (Paris, 1995). These ideological positions also shape the working relations of educators.

These understandings are steeped in a tradition of critical theory and critical pedagogy that examines, critiques, and problematizes the notions of power, ideology, culture and social relations. In order for critical theorists to better understand these notions as forces that shape and inform the practices of schooling--practices that are pedagogical, Giroux (1983) called for a reconsideration and reformulation of "how human beings come together within specific social practices and historical contexts to make and reproduce the conditions of their existence [in schools]" (p. 120). For educators, researchers and critical theorists, this means coming to understand those social practices that are informed by hegemonic ideologies and traditional practices--practices

that define the "grammar" of schooling (Tyack & Tobin, 1994) and those theoretical perspectives that inform how structure and agency presuppose each other (Giroux, 1983).

The researcher's position is one that seeks to understand how the dynamics of culture, power, ideology, structure, and agency are played out in the working lives of teachers within a particular context of serial urban school reform implementation. The researcher's position is to understand how these dynamics, within this context, shape teachers' perceptions of pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations in ways that are historical, theoretical, political and practical.

### **Summary and Study Organization**

Chapter one serves as a foundational organizer for this study that seeks to uncover teachers' perceptions about their pedagogical capacity to engage in teaching and learning innovations. Chapter one introduces the problem to be studied along with the key interrelated elements of school reform, pedagogical capacity, and engagement in teaching and learning innovations. Definitions for each of these elements are presented in chapter one.

Chapter two provides an overview of the methodology and research design conducted in this study. This chapter presents both the limitations and delimitations of this study.

Chapter three introduces the site by unveiling the historical context of the school's reconstitution and the implementation of NCLB. This chapter is particularly dedicated to



an exploration of the instructional leadership and curricular program of the school as defined from an administrative perspective.

Chapter four unveils teachers' collective (contextualized) definition of teaching and learning innovation and begins an exploration an overarching form of pedagogical capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations. This chapter simultaneously serves as a first step toward uncovering the relationships between these two concepts.

Chapter five introduces the critical correspondences of reform in relation to teachers' perceived pedagogical capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations. This chapter explores the contextualized critical correspondences of assessment and curriculum as influencing pedagogical capacity.

Chapter six explores teacher collaboration as a source of pedagogical capacity. This chapter discusses how collaborative ties are modified as a result of the changes in Hillside's reform and administrative context. Introduced in this chapter is the notion of teachers as leaders and explores the ways in which teacher leadership provides the pedagogical capacity for teachers to engage in teaching and learning innovations.

Chapter seven reveals the paradoxes of an institutionalized teaching and learning innovation in relation to the context of teachers' classroom practices. This chapter also explores the notion of human capital as capacity for teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations.

Chapter eight presents a macro analysis of the relationships between teachers' individual and collective perceptions of their pedagogical capacity and their engagement

in teaching and learning innovations. This chapter also addresses the complexities of pedagogical capacity as produced through the myriad interrelated elements of schooling. Implications are introduced regarding the bureaucratic and political nature of schooling, as exemplified in the context of serial reform implementation. Each reflection represents a consideration for reconceptualizing certain practices and ideologies that currently inform school reform, urban schooling, pedagogical capacity and teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations. This chapter also includes suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter Two**

### **METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

This is a case study. This study is bound by a particular case, within a particular school, and reflects a particular concept (i.e., teachers' perceptions about their pedagogical capacity in relationship to their teaching and learning innovations). Because of these elements, this study is not a cross-case or multi-case study but focuses on a "single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries" (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). The unit of analysis in this study is represented by teachers' individual and collective perceptions about the relationships between their pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations. This unit is bound within an urban (K-5) elementary school that has experienced serial reforms, including reconstitution.

More explicitly, this study takes place in a particular urban elementary school in an Eastern U.S. state. This site is shaped by certain conditions that influence its culture. This school is located 2.1 miles east of the city's downtown area and is minutes away from three well-known universities. Its immediate neighbors, however, are poor, African Americans whose living conditions appear to have been lifted from the pages of Kozol's (1991) "Savage Inequalities."

The school boasts of a 275 student population, down from 390 in 2000. The recent redevelopment of the local neighborhood, in which many of the housing projects have been/are being demolished, is to blame for the dramatic decline in student enrollment. The reduced student population is made noticeably dramatic by the number

of empty classrooms on the second and third floors of this three-story structure--a building which structurally appears more like a high school than an elementary school. Classrooms which were once filled with desks, students, and teachers now serve as office spaces for support staff. The district has referred to the additional classroom space in many of its schools as "excess capacity."

The amount of technological resources abound. There is a newly constructed robotics lab, an electrical organ lab, one computer lab as well as a library with more than ten additional computers. Each classroom is equipped with more than six student Waterford and Josten's computers. This site is a Title I school and hosts both a full day kindergarten and a Head Start program. More than 99 percent (99.9%) of the student population consists of African American students from the immediate neighborhood. Over 90 percent of these students are classified as low income on the state report card.

These factors influence the day-to-day working lives of teachers, administrators, and staff members--working lives that help to define the context of a school as well as teachers' perceptions about their pedagogical capacity as derived from this context. This case study seeks to make explicit and to problematize factors identified by teachers as having an impact on their pedagogical capacity (i.e., perceptions about pedagogical capacity that may influence teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations).

### **Selection of Site**

This study takes place in an Eastern urban elementary school that reopened its doors as a reconstituted school in 1997 and began to experience the implementation of

NCLB in 2001. Various considerations were taken into account for the purposeful selection of this site: (1) informal interviews with school officials and board minutes revealed that this site was reconstituted (by the local board); (2) informal interviews with the principal hired to open the school under reconstitution revealed that he held specific ideas about organizational change that influenced the context of teachers' work within the newly restructured school; (3) his informal interviews also revealed that most of the original staff members hired after reconstitution are still in place;<sup>12</sup> (4) the school is classified as Title I school receiving funding under the 2001 reauthorized guidelines of ESEA (NCLB); (5) the current principal expressed a willingness to support this study; and (6) the site's proximity to researcher's home university.

### **Selection of Participants**

The key-participants in this study consist of on-site, certified teachers who worked in an instructional capacity (e.g., classroom teacher, resource teacher, specialty area teacher) during the time of this study. The sampling process began with the researcher interviewing the former and current principals of the selected site (See Appendices B and H). The purpose of these interviews was to (1) understand the historical and contemporary contexts of the school from an administrative perspective, and (2) to ascertain a confidential list of teachers as potential participants, based on three categories. These were teachers the principals identified as (1) exhibiting innovative teaching practices that advance student learning, (2) possessing the potential to

---

<sup>12</sup> Research on school reconstitution cite a high incident of teacher attrition (Malen et al.,1999; Malen et al., 2002).

demonstrate innovative teaching but have not yet done so, and (3) least likely to demonstrate innovative teaching in the future.

Of the twenty-one possible certified teachers in this school, seventeen names appeared on each of the principals' lists for a total of thirty-four names. Thirteen of these were duplicates appearing on each of the lists in varying combinations from the above categories. These thirteen duplicated names were considered as the primary sample pool for this study. Names in this pool were the first potential participants to be contacted by the researcher on a one-on-one basis in order to extend an invitation for participation. This process of purposeful sampling aimed at increasing the likelihood of an array of teachers' perceptions--a greater potential for diverse perspectives from the three categories above (Creswell, 1998).

While these qualities are based on Spradley's (1979) suggestions for ethnographic interviews,<sup>13</sup> eight key-participants were selected according to the following factors: (1) the participants' willingness and ability to open their classrooms for observations and to participate in frequent dialogues<sup>14</sup> (interviews) about their perceptions of their pedagogical capacity and engagement in teaching and learning innovations, upon the researcher's receipt of their signed consent form (See Appendix G); (2) their ability to clearly articulate their perceptions about pedagogical capacity (e.g., their understandings of the factors within and around the school that affect their understandings of their daily

---

<sup>13</sup> These suggestions include (1) the participants' level of enculturation in relation to the cultural context being studied, (2) the participants' current involvement within the cultural context being studied, (3) the researchers' familiarity with the cultural context being studied in relation to the participants' level of enculturation, and (4) the analytic potential of the participants

<sup>14</sup> Dialogue engenders the non-obtrusive, dialogic, and relational dynamic between the participant and the participant observe.

work); (3) their ability to clearly articulate their ideas about their teaching and learning innovations (e.g., teacher quality, teaching and learning); and (4) their ability to make connections between their perceptions of pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations. The researcher's judgment regarding criteria 2, 3, and 4 were based on teachers' responses during an initial dialogue (See Appendix A).

Non-duplicated names constituted a secondary sample pool of potential participants. Potential participants from this sample pool were invited to participate only after fewer than eight key participants met the above selection criteria and whose composition did not represent the three categories presented to the principals. One teacher from this secondary sample pool was selected as a key participant.

Potential participants from both the primary and secondary sample pools who were not selected as key participants (those who participated in only in the initial dialogue/interview) became classified as non-key participants. One teacher from the primary sample pool became a non-key participant after consenting to limit her participation to observations. In total, data from eight key participants and four non-key participants are represented. Data from non-key participants were used to corroborate and/or inform data revealed through observations and dialogues with key participants. The results from this purposeful sampling of key and non-key participants are shown in Appendix C.

### **Time Schedule and Introduction to the Site**

This study occurred over a six-month period, beginning near the end of the fall semester of an academic school year. The researcher made several informal visits to the school during the prior year, volunteered in the reading center, met with the principal, toured the building under her guide (while being introduced to several classroom teachers and other staff members), and gained her informal consent to conduct this research on-site. The researcher was formally introduced to the entire faculty and staff at a regularly scheduled in-service during the fall semester in which the study took place. This venue served as an opportunity for the researcher to introduce himself and to outline the purpose of the study to the entire faculty. The intent of this act was to make familiar the name and face of the researcher who would frequently visit the school during the length of this study.

During the three weeks following the formal introduction, the researcher made arrangements to speak one-on-one with potentials participant identified as the primary sample pool (as generated from the principals' referrals). These meetings enabled the researcher to further explain the purpose, scope, and duration of the study as well as to invite teachers' participation and to present them with a consent form. Each teacher's participation was voluntary. After the receipt of signed consent forms (See Appendix G), the researcher scheduled an initial dialogue based on the formal protocol identified in Appendix A. The purpose of this dialogue was twofold: (1) to uncover preliminary data regarding teachers' perceptions of their pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations, and (2) to identify key participants based on the above



criteria. Each of these dialogues was audio recorded and transcribed (within a 48 hour of the dialogue). During this three-week period, dialogues occurred with eleven potential participants and one literacy coach (whose semi-formal dialogue followed a fusion of the initial teacher dialogue protocol and the administrative protocol of Appendix B and helped to contextualize the purpose, design, and implementation of the school's reading curriculum). A second round of initial dialogues occurred (over a two-week period) with three teachers whose names appeared on the secondary list of potential participants. In all, fourteen potential participants from both the primary and secondary sample pools were interviewed to yield eight key participants, based on the criteria above (See Appendix C).

Following a one-week period of open coding (Creswell, 1998) these transcripts, findings from the initial round of dialogues informed the design of subsequent dialogue and observation protocols. Over three months, a series of formal/informal dialogues and observations occurred. While dialogue and observation protocols were either administered across all key participants, individually, or across a select group of participants, each of these protocols was designed from previously coded dialogues and/or observations. The variability of these protocols was important because while some findings from these protocols represented the perceptions and engagement of multiple key participants, others revealed uniquely specific perceptions of individual participants.

All observations allowed the researcher to better contextualize participants' perceptions. All observations focused only on teachers' roles in the process of (innovative) teaching and learning and related activities/conditions that were attributable

to the notion of pedagogical capacity. For example, initial observations focused on broad categories such as: (1) teachers' attempts to monitor students' understanding, and (2) teachers' efforts to engage students in lessons. All formal dialogues were tape recorded and transcribed. All informal dialogues and observations were recorded in the researcher's field notes (See Appendix D.). The subsequent two months consisted of data analysis, member checking and creating a final report.

### **Participant Observation**

While dialogues with key participants served as the primary data collection technique, participant observation was also employed to inform the dialogues and to corroborate findings from these dialogues. For example, one study demonstrated that while teachers in a reconstituted school reported satisfaction for classroom techniques and procedures introduced by external partners, the researchers revealed (through observations) that such assistance did not yield significant improvements in teaching or learning (Hess, 2003). These findings demonstrated that teachers' perceptions about helpful teaching techniques do not always translate into desired teaching and student learning results. Furthermore, Patton (2002) explained that there are limitations to what can be learned from what people say; he contended that in order to "fully understand the complexities of many situations, direct participation in and observation of the phenomenon of interest may be the best research method" (p. 21). Jorgensen (1989) explained that, "Through participant observation, it is possible to describe what goes on, who or what is involved, when and where things happen, how they occur, and why--at

least from the standpoint of participants--things happen as they do in particular situations" (p. 12).

Observation protocols were developed from the open-coded finding derived from previous dialogues and/or observations (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Easley, Henning & Bradley, 2003). All observations allowed the researcher to better contextualize participants' perceptions. All observations focused only on the teachers' role in the process of (innovative) teaching and learning and related activities/conditions that could be attributed to pedagogical capacity. For example, the teachers at this site all participated in weekly grade level planning for a two-period duration. During the process of making entry into the site, the current principal asked the researcher to observe one of these planning meetings. Hence, the research was better able to contextualize and to probe for teachers' understanding of their perceived purpose and benefit of such planning sessions.

The technique of participant observation also included assisting key participants in their classrooms. This usually entailed working one-on-one with students, per the request of teachers. For a calculation of incidents of formal observation and other contact data See Appendix F.

### **Supporting Data Collection Techniques**

Supporting data collection techniques included confidential dialogues with administrators in order to further contextualize and understand participants' perceptions as derived from a particular school context. These dialogues addressed administrative

definitions and goals of teaching and learning innovations. They also provided data regarding the process of planning and implementing efforts to support teaching and learning innovations by addressing, such issues as: (1) who had/has a voice in the planning process, (2) what expectations administrators had/have of teachers, (3) how were/are those expectations conveyed, (4) what were/are the consequences of these expectations, etc.

Field notes were systematically employed to record the researchers' developing analysis of data, to capture important elements of observations and informal dialogues, and to organize emergent themes. An example of these notes is found in Appendix D.

### **Data Management and Analysis**

While formal dialogues were audio recorded for transcription, others, along with observations, were systematically documented and recorded in the researcher's field notes. For example, informally structured dialogues immediately following and based on an observation were not audio recorded, but were recorded as data in the researcher's field notes. All dialogues, transcripts, observations and field notes were systematically and descriptively coded for organizational purposes. For example identifiers were used to indicate the date of contact, type of contact as well as the particular participant.<sup>15</sup> The researcher also recorded rudimentary analysis (Merriam, 1998) of these data by systematically recording, thoughts, wonderings, and reactions to emergent data in field

---

<sup>15</sup> The coding system is as such: "D" Dialogue/Interview; "O" Observation; "P" Primary grade level, K-2; "I" Intermediate grade level, 3-5; and "S" Specialty Teacher (i.e., resource persons, art, music, PE, etc.). The date is represented by the day, month and year. (Ex. D/I/1Dec99).

notes. These notes were used to move between raw data, emergent data analysis, and intensive data analysis that aimed at capturing "the real world view" of teacher's perceptions about their pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations.

Data collected in this study employed a constant comparative cycle of inductive analysis and member checking. Questioning participants for clarification during dialogues as well as the presentation of the researchers' understandings of data to participants (for review of accuracy) achieved the goal of data verification.

Emic (Creswell, 1998) categories (based on insiders' perceptions) developed from transcribed dialogues, field notes, and documents were helpful for producing an initial open coding system of raw data. This open coding system allowed for the study of comparisons and contrasts in data. Patterns based on frequency, particularly from cross sample analysis of dialogues with individual participants were classified into categories.

Cross comparison of categories helped to inform interpretations of teachers' perceptions of their capacity to engage in teaching and learning innovations. This intensive data analysis resulted in etic (Creswell, 1998) categories (based on the researcher's interpretation of data). Data analysis at this level relied on the theoretical frame of critical theory/pedagogy. Critical theory engenders the analysis of data around the notions of ideology, power, agency, culture, social relations, etc. For example, high stakes, policy driven reform such as reconstitution and NCLB often exerts a fare about of stress on schools, as exemplified through the demands placed on schools to demonstrate measurable improvement based on externally designed benchmarks. These demands are

often accompanied by an externally conceptualized and imposed timeline that does not necessarily compliment teachers' concept of and/or utilization of time (Hargreaves, 1994). As such, this incongruence may be interpreted and understood through a critical lens that problematizes notions of power, social relations, and the contextualized tensions that occur during policy implementation.

Furthermore, many educational theorists and researchers have employed critical theory as a means of understanding and problematizing the beliefs, actions and behaviors of persons in and around schools, particularly as related to issues of school reform (Giroux, 1981, 1983; Lipman, 1998; Paris, 1995; Apple & Weis, 1983). Their subjects included students, teachers, building level administrators, parents, central office personnel, and a broader community. Interpreting data through etic categories (outsider's perceptions) organized around critical theory provides understandings that are pedagogical. In relation to this study, such understandings help to clarify the capacity for teachers to engage in teaching and learning innovations within the context of serial reform implementation.

The coding and categorization of data at this level were also guided by Merriam's (1998) guidelines for determining the efficacy of categories derived from the constant comparative method of data analysis. These guidelines are:

- (1) Categories should reflect the purpose of the research.
- (2) Categories should be exhaustive.
- (3) Categories should be mutually exclusive.
- (4) Categories should be sensitizing.
- And, (5) categories should be conceptually congruent. (pp. 183-184)

The research design for this case study including the data collection and data analysis techniques are represented in Figure B.

## District Policy and District Culture

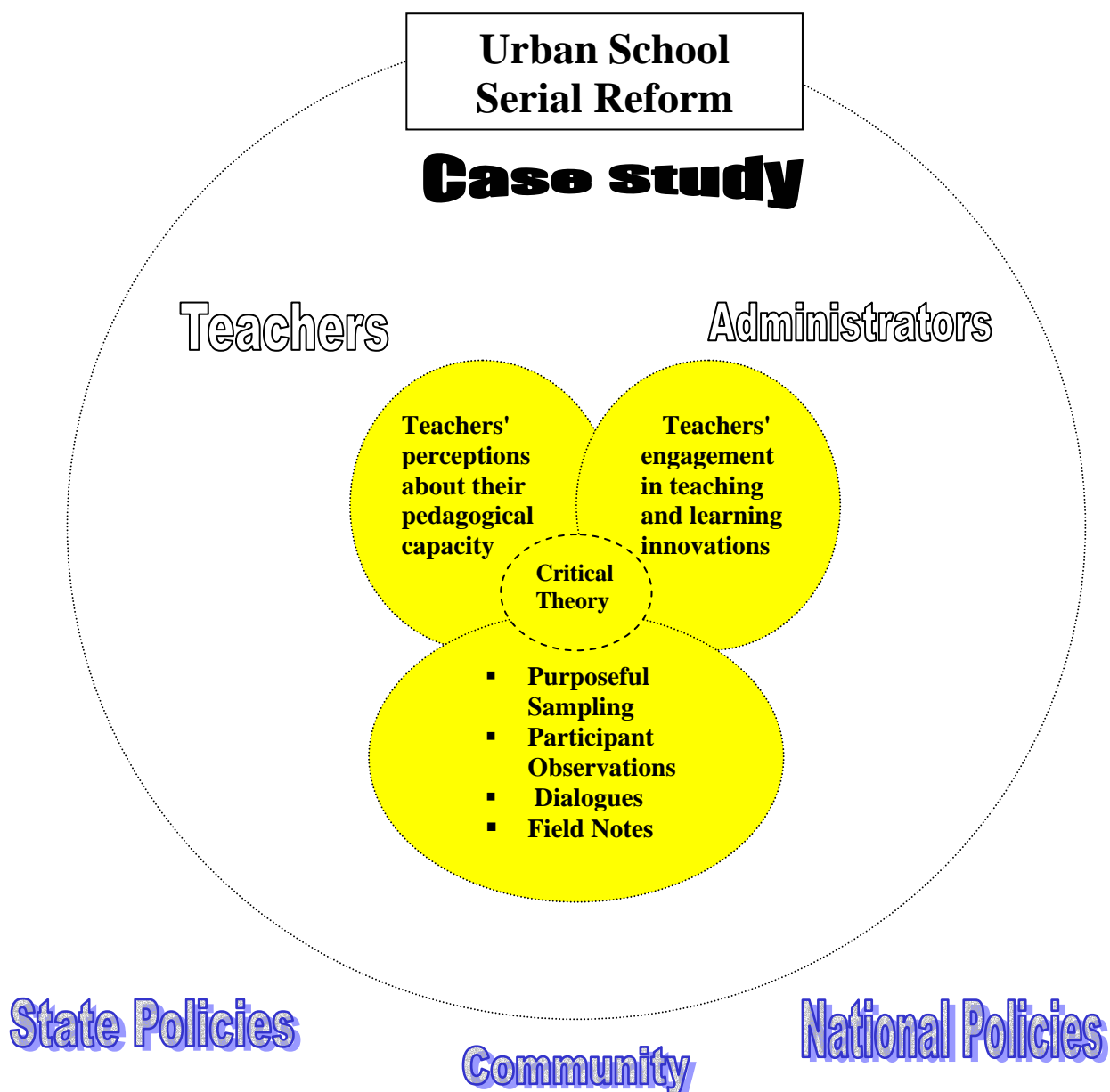


Figure B. Case Study--Data Collection, Management and Analysis.



## **Ethical Researcher**

The role of the researcher was one of a solo participant observer. As an ethical researcher, the researcher sought to conduct non-obtrusive research, represent participants' perspectives in an accurate and ethical manner, and to remain courteous to all field participants. The researcher occasionally volunteered time in the classrooms of participating teachers as well as participated in several school-wide programs and activities.

All participants were assured protection of confidentiality. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant in order to ensure confidentiality, and a coding system was constructed to ensure the confidentiality of teachers' grade levels.<sup>16</sup> Also, data recorded during observations focused solely on the actions, comments and perceptions of the participants and not their students nor their colleagues who were not participating in this study. All participants were provided an informed consent agreement (See Appendix G). Their signatures were required prior to their participation. This form, as well as verbal explanations from the researcher, clarified for participants the purpose and scope of the study as well as provided an assurance that their perceptions would be reported accurately and ethically.

All informed consent forms, field notes, recorded dialogues, transcripts, and survey data were and will be kept in a locked, safe and secure location to further ensure

---

<sup>16</sup> The coding system is as such: "D" Dialogue/Interview; "O" Observation; "P" Primary grade level, K-2; "I" Intermediate grade level, 3-5; and "S" Specialty Teacher (i.e., resource persons, art, music, p.e., etc.).

the participants' protection of confidentiality. These documents will be destroyed after five years from the date of this study's completion.

All university and district clearances were completed prior to formal data collection. All university and district guidelines regarding this study were met in compliance. These practices ensured that participants were/are not placed at professional nor ethical risk as a result of their participation in this study.

### **Limitations**

Since this case study occurred within a particular (bound) site of serial school reform, its generalizability for larger audiences may not prove possible. Teachers' perceptions, in this study, were informed by particular events, relationships, and experiences. Furthermore, assumptions about teachers' perceptions of their capacity to engage in teaching and learning innovations outside the urban school environment or a school undergoing comprehensive reform may to not be transferable due to the specific context of the study.

This study did not include any techniques for measuring teachers' perceptions beyond the number of times particular concepts/ideas were mentioned by participants. Furthermore, the researcher's findings of teachers' perceptions were limited by what participants were willing to verbalize.

### **Strengths and Delimitations**

Data reveal through participant observations, dialogues and field notes were triangulated in order to draw trustworthy conclusions about the intricacies of teachers' perceived capacities for and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations. Member checking also served to triangulate data by confirming with teachers the accuracy of written representations of their perceptions.

Through participant observation, the researcher gained a certain amount of trust among teachers to the extent that he was frequently invited (by teachers) to join them for lunch, to attend school ceremonies that highlighted the talents of students, and to join them in out-of-school functions. Participants also demonstrated a willingness to share ideas that may have been perceived negatively by some of their colleagues or by district level stakeholders. Also, participants demonstrated a willingness to share their individual struggles/concerns related to their daily work.

While, case studies are not considered to be generalizable beyond the site and conditions in which they occur, the findings from this study may be of benefit to administrators and other school leaders/developers who work closely with the teaching and learning process, particularly for elementary level, urban school undergoing reform. The findings from this study will greatly impact theoretical, political, administrative, social and practical understandings of urban schools, teaching and learning (innovations), and school reform alike.

## **Chapter Three**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE SITE**

Hillside Elementary School, by board decree, was scheduled to become a technology focused,<sup>17</sup> reconstituted school in September 1997.<sup>18</sup> The school had a recent history of low performance on standardized test scores, and to this day, struggles to undo the image painted by chronic low performance on the statewide assessment. Reconstitution was just one option the district's board of education took in order to turn the school around--a school located in one of the district's poorest communities and a school with a 99.9% African American student population.

#### **Politics of Finesse**

Similar to findings from research on reconstitution that describe the rigid time schedule designed for reconstitution implementation (Rice & Malen, 2002), the board announced the policy change in January 1997, thereby allowing seven months for transition. Furthermore, the board had aborted its plan to redistrict the school as a technology magnet in 1996, but wrote in a provision that would allow for continued discussion about the possibility of phasing in a magnet program in years to come. Such action would allow the school to be converted to a technology magnet school in the future--a change that was expected to draw in children from families throughout the

---

<sup>17</sup> Hillside Elementary is the only elementary level "technology" school in the city.

<sup>18</sup> Hillside Elementary was reconstituted five years prior to the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) federally recognizes reconstitution as a viable comprehensive school reform model for continuously low performing schools.

district, regardless of their home proximity to the school. Just as the San Francisco Unified School District felt the direct pressure of court order to reconstitute certain schools in order to achieve racial balance among its student populations in 1983 (Goldstein et al., 1998), the policy enactment to reconstitute Hillside Elementary also arose from similar political positions around the school's racial composition. According to both the former and current principals, the board's decree and discussions about the school's future arose from a highly race-based political position. According to Ms. Abbey, the current principal: "At the time [of the board's decree] there was a great deal of discussion in the district around revisiting desegregation" (D/5Nov03). Mr. Thachery, the former principal, recalls that the plan to phase in a magnet program that would attract white families from other communities in the district was unexpectedly foiled by the school's physical appearance. He explained that, upon being transferred from within the district to become the principal of Hillside,

The extent of what [information] I was given as a principal about what this [school] should look like or what it would involve was that it was going to be a technology school. This is what they [district officials] said: 'We re-wired the building, put in another computer lab and that all the classrooms would have computers.' And, that's what made it a technology institute. (D/5 Nov 2003)

However, no major changes had been made to the physical appearance of the school in preparation for its reconstitution in 1997. According to Mr. Thachery, when middle class (mostly white) families visited the school in consideration of their children attending a technology magnet school, the physical state of the school left these parents will little desire to transfer their children. To date, Hillside Elementary has not yet become a technology magnet school. Instead, the school remains a technology *theme*

school with a 99.9 percent African American student population from the surrounding low-income community.

At play within the district during this transition period was a politics of finesse. Jones and Malen (2002) drew from their research on reconstituted schools to define a politics of finesse as occurring when certain groups seek to enact policies through the savvy use of internal negotiations. Regarding the racial composition of Hillside, Ms. Abbey explained:

Some reorganization sessions were going on [in 1997], and some of the discussion made me feel very uncomfortable that parent and community others--some, not all, certainly not all--were advocating that African American children should stay in their own communities and not come into other communities. (D/5Nov03)

A politics of finesse directly affected the implementation process of reconstituting Hillside Elementary, even beyond race issues. Informal conversations with the former principal revealed that his decision to move to Hillside was limited by district constraint. In fact, several searches for a principal had taken place prior to his appointment. The first of these was a national search, followed by a local search, both of which failed to yield a board-approved candidate. Mr. Thachery, who was the principal of another elementary school within the district--a school on the rise from being a chronic low-performing school, which had recently won a national award for its performance as a Title I school--had not applied for the job. Yet, the board chose to offer him the head administrative position for Hillside with the intent that he would turn the school around. Mr. Thachery recalled that he was surprised by the offer because he had only been a principal for a few years. He was also reluctant to take the position because of the newly initiated changes at

his then current school; however, the Hillside position was non-negotiable. Mr. Thachery explained that the board's offer was presented under conditions that seemed to influence whether or not he would be able to continue his employment within the district as a principal (Personal Communication, April 1, 2003). Thus, Mr. Thachery's relocation highlights the board's use of savvy internal negotiations. These examples demonstrate how the implementation of school reform, particularly the reconstitution of Hillside, often emerges through a politics of race and a politics of internal negotiations that exert power and control (i.e., a politics of finesse).

### **Mr. Thachery's Leadership at Hillside**

With little direction beyond the charge to go forth and create changes at Hillside Elementary, Mr. Thachery was left, by and large, to his own devices to create a mission for the school while focusing on the creative use of technology as a tool to raise student achievement scores. Other than to turn the school around from its chronic low performance, no deadline for such success was given, nor was he told what direction he should take in order to do so. In many ways, reconstitution ushered in a grass roots reform in which Mr. Thachery was given leeway to design the internal network, goal, mission, and vision of Hillside (See also Chapter Six). As a first step toward bringing about change, Mr. Thachery explained:

There were a number of discipline and other issues [at the school] too; so, the idea for me was to hire people who understood the challenges of working in a low performing, all African American, low-income school and community, and, to hire people who clearly understood the dynamics of the demands that they would have been expected to meet [, based on these conditions]. One thing that I looked for were people who would be

receptive to what may have been perceived to be unconventional ways of teaching in the elementary environment. I really wanted people who wanted to be there, who knew what they were getting into and who would be up for the challenge. (D/5Nov03)

Consistent with reconstitution research that explains the reform's theory-of action as being steeped in the expectation that a reconstituted school's new teacher composition will ignite new and inventive teaching practices (Malen et al., 2002), Mr. Thachery also envisioned Hillside as a school where teachers would begin to perceive urban teaching in non-traditional ways. Drawing from his experiences as a principal of another school within the district, Mr. Thachery elaborated:

I believe very much in the value of teaming and working in an interdisciplinary fashion . . . also in developing more of a data orientation to what you would do to improve student performance, and what that would mean in terms of staff development needs for teachers. (D/5Nov03)

In short, this principal's plan was to reconceptualize staff development as part and parcel of the teachers' daily work fiber. This meant building into teachers' weekly schedule a double planning period in which they would be able to meet routinely for two class periods as a grade level team. According to Mr. Thachery, these meetings--meetings, which to this date are still a core part of teachers' weekly schedule--were designed to build collegial relationships among teachers and to break traditional thinking about the onus of student learning as residing within a single classroom. His vision was to help teachers "start thinking that they are collectively responsible for all of the kids at a particular grade level" (D/Nov03). This type of thinking about school design and school reform supports what Darling-Hammond (1994) refers to as the essential recognition of time needed to build trust among teachers throughout the process of developing



collaborative relationships--relationships that unsettle isolation and a “keep it to yourself,” or “closed-door ethic” among teachers whereby “one's work stops before infringing upon the space of others” (Easley et al., 2003, p. 59).

Mr. Thachery not only believed in the value of collegiality and a unified focus on student learning, but he also held a high regard for reshaping teachers' traditional thinking about teaching. He explained that an even greater need to unsettle what might have been teachers' instructional "theories-of-acceptability" (Sergiovanni, 1997)--traditional thinking about schools that go unquestioned--rested in the fact that, like other reconstituted schools (Malen et al., 2002), approximately 75 percent of Hillside's new faculty consisted of first-year teachers and many others with less than three years of teaching experience. In order to unsettle their theories-of-acceptability, Mr. Thachery conceptualized teachers' double planning time as an opportunity for systematic support and collaborative professional development. These sessions were designed to shape teachers' thinking about teaching and learning to the extent that they would be expected to openly discuss instructional issues and student learning from a central focal point, that being student assessment data (primarily classroom generated data). Mr. Thachery understood existing student achievement as both a jumping off point for teachers to discuss their teaching practices as well as a means to an end--a rise in student achievement. Thus, the prime goal of these meetings was for teachers to learn to become more effective with the population of students they served through a process of *informed collaboration*. Mr. Thachery explained:

It [the double planning time] was devoted to data analysis, using data to plan lessons. It was to get feedback and allow them time to do

observations in other classrooms or other schools. It was an [professional development] opportunity for me to bring in other people to work with them around instructional issues. And that proved to be very helpful. It really was a good way for me to be able to tie the data we had to what they were doing. The teachers did all of their grade reporting electronically. They had a requirement to turn in those [student achievement data] reports every other week. I wanted to see the results of their classroom assessment, and we had an efficiency target, and I checked to see what percentage of kids were making progress on assessments. And, if kids didn't make it, they [the teachers] had to re-teach and re-test. And, I looked for that. So, the basis of that double planning period was to discuss issues like that. (D/5Nov03)

### **Ms. Abbey's Leadership at Hillside**

Ms. Abbey's relationship with Hillside Elementary also began in 1997 when she was hired as the school's technology coordinator; yet, she left the school in 1998 for a promotion elsewhere in the district. Ms. Abbey returned to Hillside as its principal in 2000, following Mr. Thachery's decision to accept a high-ranking position in another school district.

Ms. Abbey inherited a school in the throes of physical renovations (begun under the former principal's tenure) as well as a school on a path of declining student enrollment. Many of the original (1997) staff members were still present, despite the fact that some had been displaced, in part, because of budget cuts associated with decreases in student enrollment. To her delight, she found that the technology expansion and renovation plans remained under way. Ms. Abbey acknowledged that these were important factors regarding her transition because she was witnessing the manifestation of many changes she helped to invite back in 1997.

Ms. Abbey believes that many of the public's perceptions of the school in 1997 continue to prevail. These perceptions include a very "high needs" student population, socially and economically. Ms. Abbey's dedication to the school and its population of students, in particular, is grounded in her ideal that "education is the only clear path to change conditions and to make a break in the poverty cycle in order to improve life" (D/5Nov03). Her ideal is consistent with the belief that, "virtually everyone in America agrees that a good education is an essential foundation for success in terms of the material, social and civic aspects of American life" (Hirschland & Steinmo, 2003, p. 334). Ms. Abbey grew up in the same neighborhood as the children of Hillside and recalls that a committed and passionate African American teacher made a difference in her life. This teacher gave her the vision and the desire to do well in school and to achieve in life. Ms. Abbey is driven by her belief that "too many times our kids, African American kids, are written off and are not expected to excel academically" (D/5Nov03). In this respect, she agrees with the connotative tenet of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA) that promises to do just that--to leave no child behind academically. To ensure that the administration and teachers at Hillside make good on the promise to leave no child behind, and understanding that achievement also rests in the efforts of children and their parents as well, Ms. Abbey explained: "We tell our students to cooperate, work your hardest, and put your effort into school because you are only helping yourself when you do well" (D/5Nov03). Yet, in order for children to excel academically, Ms. Abbey contends that students have to find value in school. She believes that the work of

educators should be guided by principles that motivate students to want to attend school and want to do well academically. In her words:

They [the children] need to know that we care about them. We also have high expectations for them and in this area where it's considerably depressed--there's a lot of gang activity, drug activity, parents are missing in action, grandparents are doing the rearing--they need people who believe in them and can, everyday, say, 'Hey, it's worth coming down here to this building because we've got something really good for you.'  
(D/5Nov03)

### **Changes in Context**

Since its reconstitution in 1997, Hillside Elementary has withstood various significant changes--changes that affect the nature of teaching and learning. Examples of these changes have occurred within student enrollment, curriculum, and national policy (NCLB). Hillside Elementary is a community school that is heavily populated with children from several surrounding public housing projects. Yet, due to the gentrification of central city areas, as in Chicago and Atlanta, many of the public housing projects have been/are being slowly evacuated, demolished and replaced with smaller, mixed income, family developments. Hillside has undergone a steady decline in student enrollment since 1997. Ms. Abbey elaborated:

When the projects were filled to capacity, the families had lots of children. This is a walking neighborhood. We at one time, I understand, had as many as 600 students in the building. When I came we were close to 390; three schools years later, we're at 275, and families are continuing to move and are encouraged to move because they are tearing down the housing projects.

This steady decline in student enrollment has translated into fewer operational dollars for the school. Fewer operational dollars has meant/means fewer resources for the children

who remain at the school--resources that are instructional, and curricular, as well as human. Cuts of this nature often force teachers and administrators to rethink their work to meet the demands of raising student achievement in the context of diminishing capacity as related to a decline in resources (even when the reduction of resources is tantamount to the rate of student attrition). They are forced to make decisions that oftentimes reshape their teaching practices or instructional emphases. Ms. Abbey illustrated how resource reduction places a strain on building level decision-making:

The spring of 2003 when I did my budget, I was down to teachers and textbooks. That was it. We lost, in terms of staff, four positions because of cuts. And in a building of this nature where we are trying to extend technology but we also have needs around discipline and extra help in the classrooms, there are not a lot of choices to make. (D/5Nov03)

### **Changes in Curriculum**

Significant curricular changes at Hillside began during the tenure of Mr. Thachery with the adoption of Everyday Mathematics (McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.), a pre-packaged, inquiry-based math series as its mathematics curriculum. Also, in order to support teachers' instructional practices across content areas, Mr. Thachery redefined the role of Instructional Teacher Leaders (ITLs) as designed by the district. Understood as generalist positions assigned at the primary (grades K-2) and intermediate (grades 3-5) levels, he turned these positions into content specific appointments that resulted in the assignment of a reading ITL, a mathematics ITL, and a writing ITL. One role of these ITLs was to assist in coordinating building level professional development programs for teachers in their respective content areas.

According to Ms. Abbey, mathematics and reading have become the curricular "mantra" for Hillside. This is due, in part, to the core areas on the state assessment, students' previous performance on this assessment, and district demands to increase student achievement as measured by said assessment. While the Everyday Mathematics curriculum has remained the same, the school has adopted a new Harcourt reading curriculum.<sup>19</sup> Ms. Abbey recalled:

When I came we were getting ready to adopt a reading curriculum, and after consultation with a couple of people in the district and with the staff, we decided to go ahead with the Harcourt reading curriculum. This curriculum is a phonics approach that focuses on word decoding. This curriculum was like a goldmine, compared to what we were using, realizing that our students needed explicit and systematic curriculum that provides a type of structure for decoding and word attack. (D/5Nov03)

Nevertheless, she expressed some concern regarding the resulting incongruencies between the taught curricula and students' performance outcomes (based on standardized assessments). More specifically, the principal explained: "When I'm in the classrooms and coaches [ITLs] are around and [district] people come to visit, we look like we're implementing the program the way it should be, but we are not getting the results that we expect" (D/5Nov03). Ms. Abbey reported that the current curricular landscape in both reading and mathematics is being resurveyed to decide what lies at the heart of these curricula in terms of what students must know and what parts of these curricula have the greatest impact on (measurable) student learning.

---

<sup>19</sup> The Everyday Mathematic of The University of Chicago School of Mathematics Project (McGraw-Hill Publishing Company) had been adopted and implemented as Hillside's mathematics curriculum. Trophies (grade K) and Collections (Grades 1-5), both part of the Harcourt reading/language arts program, were adopted as the school's reading curriculum. Teachers tend to refer to both series by the incorporated name, Harcourt. For this reason, both are referred to in this study as the Harcourt reading curriculum/series.

Decisions to redesign the curricular and instructional foci reflect the school's attempt to navigate between the core content of the school's curriculums and the content areas of the state assessment. More specifically, these decisions may represent the school's attempt to prioritize essential teaching and learning elements that will be rewarded (Robertson, 1996) by district and state officials based on student assessment outcomes. This means aligning central curriculum components with the demands of the statewide test (English & Steffy, 2001).

These decisions to reconsider school curriculum can be understood as resulting from the intensification of school change and reform. Such intensification bears down on building level decision-making and teachers' work in response to the demands of district, state and federal policies--policies that oftentimes restrict teachers' decisions about educational change while simultaneously imposing increased measures of accountability. For Hillside Elementary School, the NCLBA has produced an unexpected impact as the state and district have made adjustments in order to comply with the 2001 federal regulations. In a "trickle-down" effect, new federal policy has rewritten the codes for which schools define their own achievement and their internal practices that aim to yield said achievement. As stated by Easley (2003):

NCLB[A], in its attempt to improve public education, seeks to hold states and schools accountable for closing the [student] achievement gap by wedding performance and budget. For schools that fail to continuously produce AYP over a two-year period and in regards to increased

student achievement across disaggregated student populations, these schools run the risk of losing federal financial support. (Context of Culture section, ¶ 2)

Feeling the unexpected intensification brought on by the implementation of the NCLBA,

Ms. Abbey remarked:

Our goals though, have remained the same here at Hillside. We remain a school where children not only have exposure to state of the art technology, but that technology supports student learning at a high level. In a large sense, that's still our goal [as during the beginning of reconstitution]. However, we have another, more immediate goal, and that's with the state assessments. We are on the [state's] list for improvement, which means that we have to meet Adequate Yearly Progress this year. We now have to follow more rigid, district-driven curricular guidelines that focus on basic skills and students' universal proficiency of these skills. As a result, the technology ideas have not been set aside, but the ideas around the fullest implementation of the math and reading curricula are paramount, and, of course, any-thing that we can do to support that with technology, we are continuing to do. (D/5Nov03)

Not only does the "trickle-down" effect of policy pose an impact on curricular decision-making at the building level, but this effect also impacts resource allotment at this level.

Ms. Abbey explained some of the ways in which federal policy has had an unexpected strain on building level resources:

It hasn't turned out to be additional resources for us [as related to the NCLBA resource allotment for Hillside Elementary School]. The faculty has taken on the mission to leave no child behind. It's just that when I'm saying we need all children proficient, teachers are looking at me saying, 'Ok, we have the curriculum; we are here every day, but we need some assistance in terms of having smaller class size, in term of having after school programs that are of quality and that really connect with our work and other programs.' We're just getting small measures of that. We have, for example, a [Reading First] grant through the state and federal



government that targets K-3 children.<sup>20</sup> My concern is for the fifth grade students who take the state assessment. There is no additional assistance for fifth graders.<sup>21</sup> (D/5Nov03)

### **Discussion**

From these examples, it becomes clear that the context of Hillside Elementary reflects a cornucopia of change. Like most contemporary schools defined as low performing (particularly those inner city, urban schools serving large numbers of students placed at-risk), change has come to define their contexts. Hillside underwent reconstitution in 1997, a leadership change in 2000, a change in its reading curriculum, and is currently experiencing the demands of the NCLBA. While reconstitution (at the building level) represented a grassroots type reform in which Mr. Thachery hand-selected teachers and orchestrated the school's overall instructional focus, NCLB superimposed a more centralized and standardized instructional control directed by the district in a top-down fashion. As discussed in chapter one, reconstitution has been officially recognized under the NCLBA as a viable comprehensive school reform (CSR) model eligible for federal funding. In many ways, particularly in the conversations of teachers and the current principal of Hillside, NCLB has not only reoriented their understandings of reconstitution but has co-opted many of the instructional support structures introduced by

---

<sup>20</sup> A benefit of the NCLBA comes in the way of Reading First (a federal reading intervention grant program). The district has received a six-year appropriation of \$16.2 million, the largest such grant the district has ever received. Hillside is one of thirty Title I schools in the district allotted Reading First money due to its low test scores and large low-income student population. This means that the school is able to fund a full-time literacy coach (Reading ITL) as well as secure specialized reading diagnostic tests for primary level students.

<sup>21</sup> Student assessment scores on the statewide test measure whether or not a school has met Adequate Yearly Progress. This is currently determined by fifth grade scores on the state assessment.

Mr. Thachery during the initial stages of reform (i.e., the Reading ITL position and using student data to inform instructional practices).<sup>22</sup>

As illustrated in the stories of Mr. Thachery and Ms. Abbey, top-down policy changes often alter the design, management, curricular, and instructional decision-making processes of schools. Conversely, the relationship between building level schools and their larger educational contexts (i.e., district, state and federal) are left intact. For example, districts, states and even the federal government (under the direction of NCLB) judge the quality of schools and their teachers by measures developed beyond the building level. Moreover, externally imposed accountability measures (e.g., the allotment of financial resources based on students' scores on standardized tests) that simultaneously act as policy compliance incentives, impair building level decision-making. These relationships represent a tension between externally imposed policies and a school's capacity for self-governance. This tension characterizes the context of schooling for many inner city, urban schools like Hillside. This context, in turn, influences the quality of teaching and learning--quality as shaped by the pedagogical capacity for teacher engagement in teaching and learning innovation. Yet, because of serial reforms and the many changes (i.e., in policy, curriculum, and administration) occurring since reconstitution, Hillside teachers' contextualized perceptions are both historical (marked by reconstitution and Mr. Thachery's tenure) and contemporary (marked by the NCLBA and Ms. Abbey's tenure). Their perceptions about contextualized pedagogical capacity and engagement in teaching

---

<sup>22</sup> See also Chapter Six.

and learning innovations are also individual as well as collective. These perceptions are to be revealed, discussed and problematized throughout the following chapters.

## Chapter Four

### TEACHERS' DEFINITIONS AND CONNECTIONS

Teachers' perceptions about their pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations are made complex and rich by the context of schooling, particularly in the context of a reform/ed/ing urban school influenced by continuous policy (district and federal) directives, diminishing resources, and a history of low student performance on standardized tests. Within the context of schools and schooling, teachers, like students, function at two levels--individual and collective. Such levels form the basis of organizational dynamics as discussed by organizational theorists like Senge (1990) and Wegner (1998). This chapter seeks to set a foundation for teachers' contextualized, individual (idiographic) and collective (nomothetic) perceptions about pedagogical capacity and teaching and learning innovations, and to explore the relationships between pedagogical capacity and engagement in teaching and learning innovations defined by teachers.

Eight key-participants, four non-key participants<sup>23</sup> and two administrators engaged in a series of dialogues with the researcher and opened their classrooms/offices and meetings for frequent observations. Of the eight key-participants, all were women (five White and three African American). This racial/ethnic composition directly reflects the school's 63 percent white and 37 percent African American faculty, of which 12 percent are males (three certified teachers and one learning support educational assistant).

---

<sup>23</sup> Key- participants represent those teachers who have been selected to participate in a series of dialogues with/observation by the researcher. Non-key participants participated in a single (initial) dialogue. One non-key participant agreed to participate in observations only.

All key-participants have worked at Hillside for at least five years (See Appendix E) and have experienced a multitude of changes in the school's context--changes in curriculum, administration and staff composition, to name a few. More specifically, they each have worked at Hillside during the school's initial stage of reconstitution as well as the implementation of the NCLBA. What follows is a discussion of these teachers' contextualized perceptions of their pedagogical capacity to engage in teaching and learning innovations.

### **Teaching and Learning Innovations**

In a commonsense manner, the notion of innovative teaching connotes an element of teacher quality. While teacher quality (at least at the federal level) has come to be understood in quantifiable measures of professionalism (certifications, college degrees, etc.), this study reveals that teachers have their own language and descriptors for the notion of teacher quality, particularly as related to teaching and learning innovations. When asked, "How would you describe your teaching as innovative," these Hillside teachers collectively describe actions taken to differentiate their teaching. Congruent with Miles' (1964) definition of innovation as a deliberate and intentional act used for (a) particular purpose(s), with anticipated consequences, teachers explain that instructional differentiations and calibrations are necessary to meet the varied needs of the students in their classrooms. A majority of them add that this is achieved in creative and/or "inventive" ways. While their descriptions are diverse, the beliefs about what makes their teaching innovative are consistent. Teachers unanimously define teaching and learning

innovations as the differentiated/calibrated instructional and classroom practices that address the diverse learning needs of students (e.g. learning styles, functional levels, motivation). For example:

My teaching is extremely innovative because I deal with so many students learning at different levels . . . . I have to teach the same thing to each one of them, but all at a different level. (Ms. Jefferson/D/I/12Nov03)

I try hard to address all the different areas of teaching, all the different needs of the children, the auditory, the visual. And I know that I am innovative in the fact that I come up with new techniques [to meet these different needs/modalities]. (Ms. Adele/D/P/19Nov 03)

These examples represent teachers' thoughts about differentiated instructional practices that address the diverse learning needs of multiple students. Teaching and learning innovations also include calibrated practices that address a collective need of students. Ms. Smith, a veteran teacher of thirteen years, describes how being innovative requires a great deal of creativity to meet the learning needs of students. She equates innovation with creativity and explains how she calibrated her teaching/classroom practices to meet the learning needs of multiple students who shared the same need to associate orthographic symbols of letters with their corresponding phonemic/phonetic systems:

I'd say that for me being creative is trying to take from the curriculum and building from that, trying to do something different. For instance, I was trying to get the students to learn letters and sounds, and I was having a hard time doing that. So, in the phonics lesson, I taught them a song according to the tune "Who Let The Dogs Out." [singing] "Who let the "A" out [singing the short letter sound] a, a, a, a? Who let the "B" out b, b, b, b?" I thought that was very innovative. To me that's creative, trying to think of something that's going to gain their attention, to motivate them, to energize them. That [song] did it. They are now remembering those letters, remembering those sounds. They can make the connections through that tune. Those are the things I have to do--using the curriculum

but yet adapting it so that the students can understand it a little bit better, [adapting it] to their own lives, [adapting it] to their own experiences. (D/P/19Nov03)

From these examples (and others to follow), the reader is able to see that the teachers in this study believe that differentiating/calibrating their practices in creative and inventive ways is necessary in order to support students' learning and, in some cases, to jump start students' learning. As demonstrated by Ms. Smith, these aims are also achieved by calibrating her traditional practices--as existing within and defined by the confines of Hillside's text book driven curriculums--for the purpose of making the curriculums conceptually obtainable and meaningful and to make the curriculum come to life (i.e., using media/popular culture as a source for motivating students and connecting classroom skills to the outside world which is familiar to the children she teaches). Literature on teacher quality links such innovations to teacher efficacy. Research reveals that effective teaching is a complex task that employs a range of teaching styles (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Clark & Peterson, 1986). This research also reveals that effective teachers readily adjust styles to meet the needs of their students. Darling-Hammond (2000) asserts that, in research on effective teaching, there is no single, silver bullet, instructional strategy that meets the diverse learning needs of students. She contends that effective teachers skillfully use a broad range of approaches (e.g., direct and indirect instructions, experience-based and skill-based approaches).

Moving between instructional strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of students is just one example of teaching and learning innovation. Effective teachers also calibrate/differentiate non-instructional practices that support student learning. These too

are teaching and learning innovations. Yet, In order to employ these innovations, effective teachers purposefully make connections between the curriculum, the learning needs of their students, and the impact their instructional/classroom practices have on students' learning.<sup>24</sup>

### **Teacher Commitment**

For these teachers at Hillside, their willingness to tailor teaching according to students' needs speaks directly to their commitment to the particular student population they serve, and their commitment serves as a one level of pedagogical capacity for their engagement in teaching and learning innovations. Firestone and Pennell (1993) contended that while teachers' objects of commitment may vary considerably, "committed individuals should be internally motivated" (p. 491). Various teachers explained how their commitment emerges from within:

I knew that I wanted to work with African American children, and, in particular, African American children who are described as high risk. During my college years, I decided to become a teacher because I had part time jobs working with children, and I discovered that I loved it. My undergraduate degree was in business. I worked in the industry for three or four years, and I hated it. But, I always went back to the part time jobs working with young people, elementary-age children, and I also worked with this age group in my church. That all played a part in my becoming a teacher. (Ms. Campbell/D/I/2Dec03)

I didn't come into teaching until after I had been a stay-at- home mother for a while. So later in my life I came into teaching, and this is the kind of place where I wanted to teach, with this student population. (Ms. Adele/D/P/19Nov03)

---

<sup>24</sup> For a richer discussion of teachers' understanding of teaching and learning innovations in relation to curriculum related and non-instructional practices, see Chapter Five.



Teachers' commitment to children can be understood, in part, by the number of years each key-participant has remained at Hillside Elementary. All of these teachers have taught at this school for at least five years (See Appendix E). In fact, Ms. Adele taught at Hillside two years prior to reconstitution and reapplied for her position. She explains, "I loved it here. The kids. The atmosphere. The fact that it was going to be a technology-based school really interested me as well. And, I loved the fact that if I stayed, I would teach the same [primary] grade level" (D/19Nov03).

Attracting and securing a committed teaching faculty is just one theory-of-action guiding school reconstitution (Malen et al., 2002). For the participants in this study, commitment appears strong. Their commitment challenges the argument that the majority of African American students receive instruction from teachers who lack the motivation and/or the enthusiasm to effectively engage students in the learning process (Kozol, 1991; Cooper & Jordan, 2003). Commitment for many key-participants in this study evolves from an intrinsic ethical/moral desire to make a difference in the lives of the students they teach. This finding is consistent with the belief of many teachers and has been captured in books like *To Become A Teacher: Making A Difference in Children's Lives* (Ayers, 1995). When asked why he deliberately chose to teach at Hillside versus another school with a different type of student population, Mr. Parr, reflected:

Each day as I go home, I feel as though I have accomplished something. I feel as though I am making a difference in the lives of children, and I feel like I'm working toward a better society because these children are the future of our society. Making these accomplishments [enhancing student learning and lives] here makes me feel a little bit more alive.  
(D/S/10/Nov03)

Firestone and Pennell (1993) posited that, "A commitment to students may contribute to [teachers promoting] a warm, supportive [classroom] climate . . ." (p. 491). For these Hillside teachers, commitment to students (and their diverse needs) fosters an environment for nurturant relationships. Nurturant relationships evolve from teachers' understandings about how their work influences the lives of others, namely the children in their classrooms. Thus, as teachers ponder ways in which to engage in teaching and learning innovations, ethical/moral purpose simultaneously becomes an issue (Adelman, 1989). This reasoning suggests that teachers deliberately consider the impact their actions have on the lives of students. Fullan (2001) contends "moral purpose is about both ends and means. In education, an important end is to make a difference in the lives of students. But the means of getting to that end are also crucial" (p. 13).

The teachers in this study also clearly acknowledge students' broader social and emotional needs--needs that directly affect their learning.<sup>25</sup> Thus, a commitment to children and an ethical/moral purpose that guides one's interactions with children are part and parcel of the crucial means (the pedagogical capacity) for making a difference in students' lives. Ms. Appleyard explained how the social/emotional needs of students are recognized and addressed in her class:

Some of the students in my classroom come to school from difficult family situations, and we all know that personal situations [that are social and/or emotional] always factor into things that you are doing. But these kids are little kids who are still learning to deal with and resolve problems that happen outside of school and may not have anything to do with here, but "How do I deal with it? I am a child." I know that if something bad happens to me outside of work, I know how to keep myself going. That's a life lesson that these kids are still struggling to learn. It is today's life,

---

<sup>25</sup> See also Chapter Five for other examples.

today's society . . . . It is my job to help these kids realize that any situation can be turned into a positive situation. (D/P/25Nov03)

By addressing students' social and emotional concerns, teachers identify nurturant relationships as an ethical/moral practice. They recognize these relationships as a means that supports their engagement in teaching and learning innovations. Nurturant relationships between teachers and students not only provide the pedagogical capacity for teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations but also axiomatically make students' learning needs central to such innovations.

### **Nurturant Relationships**

Reflecting upon research on the contextualized workplace relationships between students and teachers,<sup>26</sup> McLaughlin (1993) explains that, "Students were the basic referents as teachers talked about their schools, colleagues, classrooms, and commitment to teaching" (p. 81).<sup>27</sup> This finding is particularly significant when compared to the workplace context of Hillside's teachers. McLaughlin's report revealed that:

Teachers' comments about the aspects of their students that had the greatest impact on their classroom practices focused on the cultural diversity of students in their classrooms and on the demands, difficulties and [socio-economic] pressures associated with today's [culturally diverse] students [such as family dysfunctions and lack of support from the family and/or the larger community]. (p. 82)

Like those in the McLaughlin study, these teachers also work with students who face similar pressures. As well, the majority of key-participants at Hillside work with

---

<sup>26</sup> This research was conducted for the Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching (CRC) at Stanford University with funding from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Research and Improvement. This three-year research project involved fieldwork and surveys in 16 public and private secondary schools located in eight different communities in two U.S. states.

<sup>27</sup> Hillside teachers talk about the school, colleagues and classrooms in Chapter Six.

students whose racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds are different from their own. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, teachers at Hillside readily talk about their relationships with students in ways that recognize the despair in their students' home lives. Yet, unlike many of the secondary teachers in the McLaughlin study, they speak candidly about supporting the academic growth of students by offsetting some of the perceived ills of the children's home environments. In this regard, the classroom represents a caring, safe and "warm" place. These classrooms are testaments of nurturant relationships. Several teachers described their nurturant relationships with students:

My philosophy as a teacher is a lot like that of a mother. I set my goals very high for my students, but not so high that they can't obtain them. I know that the goals I have for them are all obtainable by each one of them, though at different levels. But I do expect the best out of them. (Ms. Jefferson/D/I/12/Nov03)

I talk to my students a lot. We talk about their tests, their grades, how they feel, school, and things at home if they want to talk about that. We talk about these things because I think it is important that I build a relationship with them. Then if something is bothering them, they are able to come to me and we can talk about it. They know that I'm here [for support].

She continued:

I think my classroom is a pleasant place, a comfortable setting. That's what I try to provide for the children--a comfortable, relaxed, low stress, environment. They have enough stress at home. (Ms. Day/D/P/17Nov03)

Ms. Lenora summarized:

Especially since they are coming with so many different things at home or whatever might be affecting them, I have had kids who were low performers in the morning. Sometimes this is because they come to school hungry and/or they just weren't interested in what's going on. Getting to know each and individual kid, and trying to understand what motivates them and what they have going on, and understanding these things, lets me know how to deal with each child. But, I can't deal with all them in the same way. (D/I/8Jan04)

While each of these voices registers compassion for students' academic achievement, each captures teachers' deep commitment for students. This level of commitment embraces students' need for support--support that not only recognizes students as individuals, each with his/her own specialized learning needs, but support for their basic social/emotional needs as well. These voices explain the importance of calibrating ones classroom practices (e.g., building nurturant relationships with individual/collective students)--a teaching and learning innovation.

These voices also convey an important, yet generally unspoken constitution that fuels nurturant relationships between students and their committed teachers. This is a constitution of care and trust. Trust between students and teachers, however, does not occur spontaneously. Teachers have to care for and respect students in order to seek their trust. In turn, students have to recognize teachers' care and respect in order to extend their own trust to teachers. Some educational theorists propose that care is established through a relationship between the "carer" and the recipient (Noddings, 1992; Danielewicz, 2001); Danielewicz further explains that "caring relations 'cannot be achieved by formula' but follow unique paths forged by individuals involved in the encounter in response to each other and the social setting" (p. 165). The same holds true for trust. For these teachers, care is inextricable from, yet helps to form, trusting relationships with students. A constitution of care and trust, however, takes time to develop as relationships between teachers and students are formed within a social context. This constitution comes to define nurturant relationships.

In an effort to demonstrate their care for children and in an effort to build the trust necessary for nurturant relationships, teachers often have to make ethical/moral decisions about their use of time. For example, Ms. Campbell (an intermediate teacher) explained one way in which she fosters nurturant relationships by describing how she often deals with students' social frustrations:

I try to get a handle on things [the social problems among students] before they become too big. For example, kids might have problems with other students. I make sure that I let them know that they should come and tell me what the problem is so that we can talk about it and get it settled before it turns into a fight. Some of the girls have come to me with "He said, she said," which may seem petty to other people, but to them, that's a real thing and that's important. So, I listen to them and bring all the parties together, and I listen to all sides [of the story]. By doing this and by letting them know that they can talk to me helps [keep] things from escalating.  
(D/2Dec03)

Informal observations captured Ms. Campbell talking with individual students after class, during times that are generally scheduled for teachers to plan lessons. At first glance, one might assume that these sessions are for the sole purpose of maintaining classroom order by "handling" students' social problems before they became worse; however, these sessions of counsel represent much more.

Ms. Campbell's talks with students represent a particular view of time. In this context, time is recognized as an essential part of the process for building trust--an element of nurturant relationships. These talks convey to students that their well-being is important and that their teacher cares enough to invest her own time to support their well-being. Simultaneously, these talks represent a common conflict between teachers and educational leaders (at the federal, state, district and even building levels), for time has long been a predominant barrier to school change. This is particularly true for schools

undergoing drastic reform efforts to improve student achievement. Hargreaves (1994) explains that school administrators and teachers have often conceptualized time incongruently, particularly the demands placed on teachers' time. As such, teachers often find themselves in a race against externally imposed time constraints. These constraints often dictate how teachers should spend and account for each minute of the instructional day. Reforms that dictate to teachers how to use their time simultaneously impose bureaucratic control over teaching. Rowan (1995) describes these reforms as employing mechanistic strategies of practice. For example, school districts may implement behavior controls such as increased teacher evaluation and/or student testing, which operate(s) as an output control to determine the rate of teachers' instructional effectiveness. Within said reforms, teachers' time is regarded as a commodity that can be controlled by instructional demands (e.g., direct instruction, teaching to the text, and attending district approved workshops on effective teaching). These reform models tend to disregard teachers' time as existing outside of a fixed instructional template. Yet, in order for teachers to develop relationships with students, time needs to be conceptualized as a resource that accompanies teachers' ethical/moral attention to students--attention that recognizes and is responsive to the unexpected (social/emotional and academic) needs of students. The reconceptualization of time, within this perspective, honors the movements, interactions and struggles that teachers and students engage in together throughout the academic process. In fact, nurturant relationships that support other teaching and learning innovations do not take time away from instructional demands in a destructive manner.

Time, in this regard, is managed from a teacher's ethical/moral reasoning to enhance the learning process for students.

### **Discussion**

For teachers in this study, their definition of innovative teaching is contextualized by the social/emotional and academic needs of their students. Their commitment to the students at Hillside defines a level of intrinsic pedagogical capacity. Teachers' commitment to students also shapes their ethical/moral reasoning regarding nurturant relationships, as mediated through trust and care. Reciprocally, as teachers learn more about the social-emotional and academic needs of students through nurturant relationships, their commitment to students is impacted/deepened. Hence, correlations between teachers' commitment to students and their nurturant relationships characterize a level of pedagogical capacity for engagement in contextualized teaching and learning innovations (See Figure C.). However, research shows that "teachers' sense of efficacy is not a global trait" (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 81) and that their attempts to rethink and align their teaching practices around the needs of students are not only idiographic but are also contextually variant. These variants include (but are not exclusive of) the racial and socioeconomic status (SES) of students (Metz, 1993), the cultural diversity of students (McLaughlin, 1993), and the content areas taught by teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Nor is their sense of instructional efficacy static. This wavering sense of efficacy is likely to be reflected in the decisions guiding as well as the outcomes of their calibrated practices. For example, Ms. Lenora explained that as she



learns the conditions affecting individual students' motivational needs, her interactions with students are calibrated accordingly (D/I/8Jan04).

What surfaces from these findings is an awareness that teaching and learning are contextualized by relationships between students and teachers. As revealed through dialogues with teachers at Hillside, these relationships are defined by the academic and social/emotional needs of students and teachers' ethical/moral decisions to calibrate their work around these needs. Yet, the relationships between students and teachers are mediated through conditions that define the formal process of schooling as well as those conditions that shape students' needs. When the social/emotional and academic needs of students impose upon the prescriptive processes of schooling, schooling is made dynamic. When teachers' ethical/moral decisions to build nurturant relationships with students challenge the prescriptive processes of schooling, such as teachers' use of time, understanding teachers' contextualized perceptions about pedagogical capacity and teaching and learning is made invaluable.

This chapter reveals teachers' concerns for the diverse learning needs of students as central to their perceptions about pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations. In response to these needs, pedagogical capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations is garnered through teachers' commitment and their nurturant relationships with students. However, these findings lay a foundational connection between teachers' perceived pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations. The following chapters further develop the understanding of these individually and collectively perceived connections. The

subsequent chapters explore broader concerns regarding students' needs, the interpretations of these needs, teachers' instructional calibrations in response to these interpretations, as well as the ways in which these (and other factors) have been/are contextually mediated through conditions in and around Hillside Elementary School.

# District Policy and District Culture

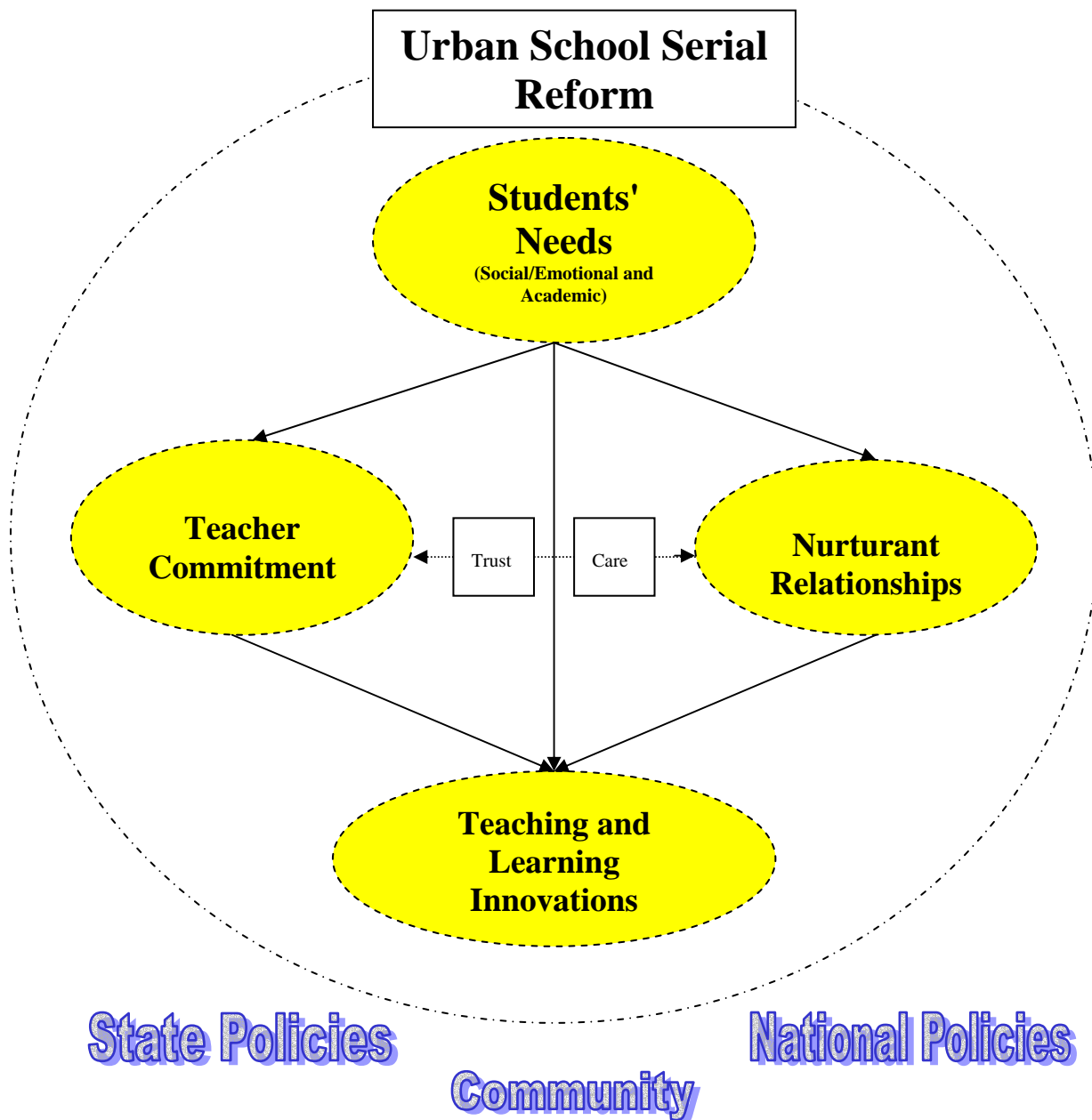


Figure C. Pedagogical Capacity That Defines Contextualized Teaching and Learning.

Innovations

## Chapter Five

### CRITICAL CORRESPONDENCES OF PEDAGOGICAL CAPACITY

Rosenholtz (1991) asserts that because teachers in different schools work within different conditions, they understand schools differently. Teachers who work with different groups of students whose needs vary may come to understand teaching differently as well. Following this logic, teachers' perceptions about their pedagogical capacity to engage in teaching and learning innovations are likely to differ from classroom to classroom, even within the context of a single learning institution like Hillside Elementary School. These divergent perceptions may reveal contradictions. For example, a vast majority of the teachers in this study explicitly expressed a commitment to the school's particular student population. Yet, Firestone and Pennell (1993) explain that commitment to students may result in a supportive climate "but may not contribute much to [their] academic achievement, while a commitment to teaching may have the opposite effect" (p. 491). Herein lies a critical correspondence (Robertson, 1996) in that the teachers at Hillside expressed a commitment to students; yet, the school continues to remain a low achieving on standardized assessments. Ms. Abbey, the current principal explained that, "when I'm in the classrooms and coaches [ITLs] are around and [district] people come to visit, we look like we're implementing the program the way it should be, but we are not getting the results that we expect" (D/5Nov03). This is just one critical correspondence occurring within the reform of Hillside. Robertson (1996) defines critical correspondence as the contradictions within reform and that the possibility for social

change is made possible when such contradictions are made explicit. In the case of Hillside, critical correspondences more accurately reflect a relationship/correspondence between issues such as intended outcomes and the failed capacity for said outcomes as well as the inconsistent use, availability, and outcomes of a particular capacity source (e.g., policy, economic resources, intellectual capital, and human capital).

School reform is usually initiated vertically, from the top down, and from the outside inward, as is the case for school reconstitution and the implementation of NCLB in which schools are acted upon by (state/district) policy juggernauts. Elmore (1997) observes that this vertical process traditionally begins at the top, delineates the processes of implementation, and identifies measurable outcomes. He refers to this process as forward mapping. This process is thought to provide schools with the capacity to actualize particular outcomes identified within the process. While forward mapping may delineate particular expectations for implementation and outcomes, policy often is constructed beyond the consideration of local school contexts. Yet, context directly shapes the ways in which individuals interpret policy and respond to its regulations. For classroom teachers, policy implementation generally refers to curricular and teaching demands. Outcomes are usually measured by student achievement on standardized assessments.

This chapter explores the critical correspondences of the top-down, forward mapping process of policy enactment and implementation--a process that often disregards the contexts of local schools. By doing so, this chapter simultaneously explores the meanings and functions of top-down curricular and assessment mandates as interpreted by

teachers within the context of Hillside Elementary School. The findings from this chapter aim to highlight the contextualized relationships between teachers' individual and collective perceptions of their pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations.

While the themes and categories presented here are derived from an analysis of teachers' collective perspectives, in some instances the voices of certain teachers are presented more frequently because of the clarity of their comments. Their frequent comments, except when identified as an individual or unique perspective, represent the shared perceptions of their colleagues.

### **Critical Correspondence of Assessment**

Ms. Abbey reported that Hillside Elementary School failed to meet NCLB's AYP for 2002-2003, as measured by student outcomes on the state assessment. Along with thirty other schools in the district, which also failed to meet AYP, Hillside is experiencing what she calls "district-driven curricular guidelines that focus on basic skills and students' universal proficiency of these skills." These top-down guidelines include mandatory assessments that were administered at the beginning of the 2003-2004 school year. These assessments are diagnostic instruments used to identify students' particular skills deficiencies in reading and mathematics. Regarding the reading diagnostic instrument, Ms. Brown, Hillside's Literacy Coach (Reading ITL), explained that "[the district] want[s] these tests so that all children in every school in our district are measured by the same tool" (D/6Nov03). In other words, the district mandate for a standardized

diagnostic assessment supports curricular alignment across schools (See also English & Steffy, 2001), particularly for low-performing schools participating in the national Reading First Program for grades K - 3. As teachers in this study began to discuss assessment issues, a dichotomy arose between formal and informal assessments. From her perspective, Ms. Brown made clear that the district expects teachers to use formal reading diagnostic results as a beginning point for instructional planning, but added that not all teachers seem to follow this plan. She explained that some teachers may not clearly understand this purpose of the standardized reading diagnostic assessments. Ms. Brown speculated that, "Many teachers may see them as just an additional test" (D/6Nov03). Herein lies Ms. Brown's perception of an incongruence between the district's and teachers' perceptions of standardized assessments.

Teachers, however, expressed a different perspective of formal (standardized) and informal assessment practices. Beginning with formal assessment, Ms. Day, who speaks from nurturant positions, noticed that students (at the primary level) seem not to like school as they did in years prior. She explained that because of the new demands for the school to make AYP, the workday has intensified for both teachers and students:

I think because the [achievement] target that the school has been put on, demands have trickled down from the state, to the district and to the school. I think it puts a lot of pressure on us as teachers, but it also puts a lot of pressure on the children because they don't have any down time, per say, and I guess I'm thinking too when I was in this grade. I didn't have to do all this stuff. The pressure is unbelievable preparing for standardized tests.

She continued to express concern for her students' well-being in relation to standardized assessments:

We started out the year with the students having to do two major assessments when they walked through the door. Is that the way you want to start the year off? I don't agree with that. (D/P/17Nov03)

Ms. Adele expressed concern over standardized assessments through a critique of federal education policy (NCLB). She contended that the federal demands to leave no child behind are adversely affecting children's self-esteem. She explained at length,

I had an educational psychology class when I was in college, and the professor was great. I remember him saying to us, your job as a teacher is to think of a child's brain as a beaker. Fill that beaker as full as you can get it. That's your job. But, sometimes the beaker is only so big. We are not all nuclear scientists. We are not all nuclear physicists. Some of us do the service work, but that's what makes the world go around. You cannot have all the children on the same level because they are individuals. If they have achieved everything that they can possibly do, I think we make them feel bad because they haven't done more. And I think it is very depressing for children. Instead of celebrating their achievements, all we are doing [through standardized assessments] is looking at what they can't do. That really bothers me. You want to get the beaker full, but not all of us have the same things in our heads. If we did, we would all look the same, we would all act the same, have the same ideas, but we are not all the same. And you can't expect students to be measured on the exact same scale.

Ms. Adele's position may stem from her current classroom context as the inclusion teacher for her grade level. She continued:

My special education children are measured by the same standard as the child who is not special education. You cannot expect them to do the same as a child who does not have the problems that they have. I have students who are already identified at a very young age as mentally retarded. Am I going to make that boy feel bad because he can't write that complete sentence or he can't do what everyone says he has to do [on a standardized assessment].<sup>28</sup> (D/P/19Nov03)

---

<sup>28</sup> Under NCLB guidelines, all children are administered an annual assessment according to their assigned grade level. For special education students with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) that make concessions for their learning struggles, they may be taught through modified instructions according to their functional level. For example, they may be assigned to a third grade classroom, but receive reading instruction at a lower grade level in accordance with their IEP. However, no such modifications are recognized on standardized tests regarding students' grade level abilities. This dichotomy has stirred some concern by educational leaders who contend that NCLB assessment regulations violate children's IEP rights.



Though in different grades, both Ms. Day and Ms. Adele are both primary level teachers. While Ms. Adele's concerns may appear more related to standards than assessment, her comments reflect an unease with the process in which standards are made real to students--through administering standardized tests that reinforce standards--and the ways in which students are emotionally affected by the public results of these tests. She clarified, "It just bothers me that in all this testing, this [students' emotional well-being] is not taken into account. The children are achieving as much as they possibly can, yet are still made to feel as though they are lacking [knowledge] when they are not" (D/19Nov03). Both of these teachers articulated their concern for the emotional needs of children and highlighted their nurturant positions to support children throughout the learning process. Their concern highlights a critical correspondence that questions the purpose of standardized assessments as a benefit for students. While a commonsense understanding of these tests suggests that standardized assessments may be used as a tool to guide instructional planning for the enhancement of students' academic growth, a minority group of teachers challenge the effects of these tests. Ms. Day and Ms. Adele, for example, questioned the extent to which these tests affect students' emotional well-being, particularly for their lower performing students.

Even though the district may place unwavering value in standardized assessments, a majority of teachers expressed an interest elsewhere. They freely talked about the importance of informal and classroom-based assessments as contextualized tools to guide the calibration of their instruction. For example, Ms. Jefferson reported that she does use the results of the diagnostic test given at the beginning of the year to plan for

heterogeneous ability grouping in language arts. Yet, it has been her experience that informal assessment plays a greater role in her *daily* instructional planning. Unlike standardized assessments, informal assessments provide the capacity for teachers to frequently modify their instructional practices on a daily basis. Teachers' perceptions reveal that informal assessments are more likely to provide daily capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations. This is a critical correspondence of formal assessment. More specifically, Ms. Jefferson explained that the diagnostic and standardized assessments do not show "movement" or the nuances of learning gains among the students as the academic year progresses. While state and district stakeholders conceptualize formal assessments as instruments to determine the success of reform and to measure AYP, Ms. Jefferson continued:

[through informal assessments,] I can see that the children have progressed, even if it is by one or two percent, which may seem small to the state and others who collect the data, but that is huge for many of our kids. So, [because of the significance these small gains for some children] that means more to me than the 10 percent the state would ask for.  
(D/I/8Jan03)

From this example and others to follow, informal assessments measure continuous growth throughout the year and more directly shape teachers' daily instructional planning.

In order to frequently check the pulse of students' growing knowledge base throughout the instructional planning and implementation process, Ms. Adele often informally asks students questions. She advised that, "when you start into a lesson and start asking questions, and once you realize that the students have no idea [about what you are asking of them], that's then you have to back off and find more resources . . . "

(D/19Nov03). Ms. Williams, who teachers across grade levels, concurred:

I look to see what they already know and what I can add to that. I take surveys and ask questions. I go about planning lesson for the children by finding out what they already know by asking them before planning a lesson. Just by questioning and answering helps.(D/S/7Nov03)

Ms. Campbell talked about her experiences teaching math at the intermediate level:

If there is a concept that I see the students really did not get, and I've taught it according to how the book says I should do, that's when I start thinking up other activities that will help them. (D/2Dec03)

She explained that her discovery of students' comprehension occurs through careful attention to their physical and paralinguistic expressions during a lesson, expressions such as blank stares. These examples demonstrate how informal assessment practices require teachers to remain keenly aware of students' immediate understandings. Ms. Campbell also reported on the manner in which informal and classroom-based assessments may be used together as a check-and-balance to gauge student learning. She elaborated:

. . . there are other times when I thought the students understood a lesson based on their oral responses during class. They take a quiz, and I see that everybody bombed. That's when I begin to reflect on some of the other things that I can do with the lesson. We go back to that concept. I try not to move on until I at least see a light bulb. (D/2Dec03)

Unveiled through dialogues with teachers is their value in the immediacy of informal and classroom-based assessments. These assessments are contextual, which allows teachers to make judgments about the discreet needs of students, collectively and individually. For Ms. Jefferson, these assessments report the results needed for her to value her student's continuous academic growth, regardless of how small these gains may be perceived by outside forces, and regardless of the fact that while she witnesses gains in student achievement, collectively these gains are quantifiably too small to meet Annual

Yearly Progress. Informal assessments provide the pedagogical capacity for teachers to immediately engage in teaching and learning innovations during a lesson sequence. They also impact innovative teaching by providing teachers with the capacity for autonomous decision-making (a form of teacher professionalism). As such, teachers are able to utilize informed instructional discretion within their own classrooms. Such discretion represents the artistry of teaching in which teachers make immediate adjustments in their practices, as derived from the myriad instructional decisions that occur almost simultaneously. More specifically, Rait (1995) posited that, "teachers make about 200 pedagogical decisions per class. Each decision may shift the focus of the class and its activities; hence active implementation is accompanied by continuous cycles of planning and evaluation" (p. 93).

For example, in a primary level classroom and just before grouping students for an enrichment reading lesson, Ms. Hooks used observational data gathered from a whole group activity to rethink the grouping arrangement. She informed the students that they would be working at the tables, in small groups, following the lesson's discussion. Using a form of self-talk, Ms. Hooks explained to her class that she wanted to make changes to her previous decision about grouping them. She then called students' names and directed them to sit in small groups at the rear of the room. This process resulted in a purposeful seating arrangement different from the teacher's initial plan (O/P/7Febr04).

Teachers' dependence on informal and classroom-based assessments as tools to guide their instructional practices also exposes a dynamic that melds teachers' commitment to teaching and their commitment to students. This amalgamation explains

teachers' commitment to continuously vary their instruction according to the learning needs of students. Their persistent nature can be understood through the voice of Ms. Campbell, who proclaimed, "I try not to move on [to another concept] until I see a light bulb" (D/I/2Dec03) or, in the words of Ms. Adele, who addressed the emotional and academic well-being of students by advising teachers, "Don't give up on them. Never let them quit" (D/19Nov03).

Teachers' dependence on informal and classroom-based assessments is consistent with research on systemic teacher-driven instructional design (Huberman, 1993). While teachers may initiate lessons following an instructional plan, their teaching often becomes artistic through improvisation. When teachers and students come together for instructional purposes, teaching and learning become dynamic. Teachers often have to (re)craft their lessons while "in-action." These artistic instructional movements occur in response to the vicissitudes of students' needs, the availability of resources, as well as the depth and breadth of teachers' own instructional repertoires. Yet, such artistry is made difficult in the absence of teachers' ability to engage in skillful and continuous diagnostic judgments regarding the processes of students' learning. Research on the functional units of planning for primary teachers reveals that, "In actually executing the lesson, primary in teachers' minds [is] . . . the task of keeping the lesson flowing and the capitalizing on one of the several opportunities that might emerge [from informal assessment] to introduce, reinforce, or transfer a core skill or content area" (Huberman, 1993, p. 20). In short, as Cohen, Raudenbush and Ball (2003) explain, teachers and learners are thinking beings who make judgments about each other, their context, and resources. As such, these

judgments affect their contextualized actions. More specifically, "Some teachers judge with great care and seek evidence with which they might revise [their instruction], but others judge quickly and with little care. In either event, teachers calibrate instruction to their own view of students' capabilities, and their own capabilities to teach" (p. 132). These judgments and instructional calibrations, particularly when occurring "in-action," are not only informed by, but also make credible the use of classroom-based and informal assessments as providing the pedagogical capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations.<sup>29</sup>

While all key-participants explicitly expressed value in informal assessments, some participants questioned the value of externally mandated standardized assessments. Yet, this critical correspondence of formal assessment in no way suggests that teachers ignore the results of standardized tests all together. As an example of how the two converge in the classroom of an individual teacher, Ms. Johnson shared that, "I use classroom assessments for grades, but being cognizant that everything evolves around whether or not your children are proficient on the state test, that's always in the back of my mind." At the building level, however, standardized test results tend to be used as a quantifiable measure for the purpose of making school-wide, curricular decisions. One reason teachers may not too strongly revere annual (state administered) standardized tests as an instructional guide lies in the fact that these tests are administered in late spring of each year. The results are not reported back to the schools until after the start of the next school year. Hence, teachers have already planned their initial lessons and are well on

---

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of teachers' collective use of classroom-based assessments during grade level, double planning sessions, see Chapter Six.

their way to engaging students in the curriculum by the time these scores are confirmed by the district and disseminated to the schools. For example, Ms. Jefferson explained:

We don't usually get the test scores back early enough in the year to use the test information for the previous year; so we have already made decisions . . . by the time the previous year's test results come back.  
(D/I/8Jan03)

Simply stated, teachers may perceive standardized test scores reported from the previous academic year as lacking an immediate usefulness. Furthermore, two teachers contended that standardized test results only confirm what they already know about students' academic accomplishments (as informed by informal assessments). Nevertheless, district leaders and teachers use(d) annual student assessment results during the process of school wide curricular decision-making.

During the time in which the building level administrative role transitioned from Mr. Thachery to Ms. Abbey, Hillside was also in the process of adopting a new reading curriculum. However, students' persistent low performance on standardized reading assessments and teachers' observance of students struggling to phonetically decode words (using informal assessment) were factors leading to the adoption of the school's current reading curriculum. Ms. Abbey explained, "We realized though 'in-house' [informal and site based] assessments that our students needed explicit and systematic curriculum that would provide the type of structure for decoding and word attack." She added that the state test results for reading have also remained low. Ms. Abbey continued to describe the process in which these data influenced school-wide decision: "and after consultation with a couple of people in the district, with the staff, we decided to go ahead with the Harcourt reading curriculum [a textbook series]" (D/5Nov03). Hence, standardized and informal

assessments were collaboratively employed in this particular school-wide decision regarding the procurement and utilization of new reading resources. Interesting enough, the school's decision to adopt a new reading curriculum also coincided with the districts' test pilot of various reading curriculums.

By all accounts, the teachers shared Ms. Abbey's satisfaction with the current curriculum mantra regarding both mathematics and reading. In fact, Ms. Smith testified, "I feel the curriculum is excellent, excellent. It's what they [the students] need right now" (D/19Nov03). Ms. Jefferson clarified that the children are responding well to the language arts curriculum, in part, because it exposes them to new cultural contexts. She explained, "We read a lot of stories about Latin American children; so, they get to see how children in different countries react to situations similar to their own. I think they enjoy the curriculum as a whole" (D/I/8Jan03). Ms. Campbell agreed that, overall, the math curriculum is effective, because it teaches students how to "break down the concepts into numbers that the kids will be easier to work with, like the long division method. It helps them to see the numbers in multiples of tens so that they are easier to work with" (D/2Dec03).

According to Mr. Thachery, the mathematics curriculum was district selected without input at the building level. However, the teachers at Hillside were key players in the district's adoption of the language arts curriculum, as mentioned earlier by Ms. Abbey. Hillside Elementary was one of the school sites within the district chosen to pilot the Harcourt reading series. Ms. Jefferson explained:

We [teachers] had a lot of input because two teachers were part of the district curriculum committee. They would come back and talk to us to



get feedback. I felt comfortable with the choice of our curriculum because it is one that I liked as well. There were teachers, parents and board members on the curriculum committee. They discussed several different curriculums. Our school actually piloted the Harcourt curriculum that was chosen. (D/I/8Jan04)

The faculty's feedback regarding this series was considered by the district during the adoption process; yet, this decision may simultaneously represent a district's attempt to erase the stigma of low student achievement that has prevailed throughout many of its schools, including Hillside. As such, the mathematics and reading curriculums (like standardized assessments) represent a district-driven mechanistic strategy of practice (Rowan, 1995). More specifically, the district's adoption of a standardized curriculum may be interpreted as an input control over teachers' instructional decision-making--an input control that could influence teachers' capacity to engage in teaching and learning innovations and an input control as part of the forward mapping process.<sup>30</sup> Giroux (1988) and Apple (1982, 1986) identify such practice as an attempt to deskill teachers' work. Giroux (1988) explains that, "Teacher decisions about what should be taught, how it might meet the intellectual and cultural needs of students, and how it might be evaluated are rendered unimportant in these packages [packaged curriculums], . . ." (p. 4). In the case of both the reading and mathematics curricula at Hillside, a certain amount of rigidity restricts decisions around instructional delivery. For example, the Every Day Math curriculum is designed around a paced sequence that dictates the rate at which all teachers should cover the curriculum. Similarly, the Harcourt reading curriculum requires 90 minutes of daily, uninterrupted reading instruction. Paradoxically, teachers have

---

<sup>30</sup> See also Chapter Six for further discussion on a district-driven standardization of practice.

identified such restrictions as having an affect on their pedagogical capacity to engage in teaching and learning innovations. These restrictions also represent a critical correspondence with which the district's effort to reform teachers' instructional practices (i.e., forward mapping that pushes for implementation purity of adopted curriculums in order to ensure pre-determined outcomes) simultaneously challenges teachers' ability to calibrate their instruction while in-action and in response to the learning needs of students.

### **The Compounding Critical Correspondence of Assessment and Curriculum**

While the critical correspondences of assessment and curriculum that impact teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations are distinct and independently unique in many ways, top-down mandates that attempt to increase student achievement result in an intensification as assessment and curriculum converge. For example, the 90-minute literacy block is designed around weekly units. Each week teachers are scheduled to introduce a new vocabulary list, to introduce new literary devices such as alliterations (at the intermediate level), and to continue reinforcing reading skills previously covered. A specific thematic narrative, as described earlier by Ms. Jefferson, contextualizes all these acts. Yet, by the week's end, teachers are required to bring the text to a close in preparation for a new week. Ms. Jefferson added that even though many children tend to respond favorably to the content of the curriculum, Harcourt lacks a grammar component that teaches valuable skills tested on the state assessment. Teachers are left to find inventive ways to include grammar instruction outside of the mandated 90-minute

language arts block in order that students attain the necessary grammar skills needed to pass the state test.

The Everyday Mathematics curriculum observes a similar pacing. This curriculum is organized according to units and, like the Harcourt reading curriculum, is aligned across the district so that theoretically, every day, in every school, and in every classroom, instructional practices should be focused on a particular range of skills. Because of the pacing, teachers are forced to make strategic decisions about their instructional practices in accordance with the curricular designs. Ms. Campbell explained:

We have a chart that indicates what lessons should be taught by the end of each month. Also, each lesson is broken down into sections. There is a specific time requirement for each section. For instance, the mental math and the math message should take only ten to fifteen minutes, and the whole meat of the lesson, teaching a new concept, should take forty-five. To do the math boxes and to play the math games that should take another fifteen to twenty minutes. So, we have to make sure that we stay with the pacing. Do we get through everything in every lesson? No! (D/I/2Dec03)

Curricular and assessment demands converge as Hillside (and the district) attempts to improve student achievement scores on the state exam by aligning its curricula with specific skills to be tested on the state assessment. Ms. Abbey explained that while she believes the Hillside student population might benefit from supplemental materials that may also increase their learning, liberties for her to make curricular decisions at the building level are narrowed by a (national/state/district) charge to raise student performance outcomes on the state test. Because of chronic low-test scores, Ms. Abbey pondered:

We need to do some of the alignment that some of the other districts have done in terms of finding the core of the curriculum, what has to be taught, what children must know, and what they need to know . . . , pulling out the redundancies and the parts of the curriculum that just don't have [measurable] impact, or that have the same impact. (D/P/5Nov03)

Ms. Campbell described how the emphasis on alignment between the curriculum (pace and content) and the state test affects her teaching of mathematics:

We have to pick and choose and decide where we are going to stop. But the main components of the lessons we need to cover. Some things are sent home for homework. For example, if it is a review, if the math boxes are a review, then we will give it to them for homework. (D/I/2Dec03)

Represented in this alignment model is a technical-rational approach to schooling, one which reduces teachers' curricular decision making in a significant way. As demonstrated in Ms. Campbell's experience, the teachers' curricular and instructional decisions are limited by bureaucratic demands to align the curriculum and his/her work around particular skill sets identified on a high stakes assessment--the state test. Teachers are prevented from maximizing their intellectual or professional capacity to question what students should know and learn (Robertson, 1996; Giroux, 1988) beyond the constraints of standardized testing. This technical-rational model perpetuates schooling as a system that values certain bodies of knowledge over others and reduces teachers' role to that of a technocratic worker whose instructional responsibility is to transmit the knowledge and skills that can be aligned between the curriculum and the state accountability measurement. Within this system, standardized tests operate as a control mechanism (Rowan, 1995) and a panopticon of surveillance (Foucault, 1979; Bushnell, 2003) that monitor, measure and make teachers accountable for a certain level of instructional efficiency. Hence, curricular alignment is reduced to a practice of

coordinating instructional content and practices with accountability demands (See also English & Steffy, 2001). Curricular alignment of this sort produces a critical correspondence, which appears to restrict teachers' capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations as the temptation not to "teach to the test" grows evermore challenging. Ms. Day explained, "You're not supposed to teach to the test, but that's how you are evaluated. So, the choice is difficult" (D/P/17Nov03).

### **Curriculum in Context**

By exposing the intensified critical correspondences of both the mathematics and reading curriculums, what emerges is an understanding that curriculums (though possibly supported by research on cognitive learning and effective teaching practices) often evolve from certain "zones of wishful thinking" (Hill & Celio, 1998). A zone of wishful thinking assumes that reform efforts will fall into place as desired without the ability or planning to account for all conditions needed to make such efforts successful. As such, assumptions are made about effective implementation and anticipated outcomes. Top-down policies assume that policymakers control the organizational, political, and technical processes that affect implementation (Elmore, 1997). Textbook writers tend to make similar assumptions about the contexts of schools. Even when textbooks and curriculums are designed in response to educational debates such as culturally sensitive instruction for minorities vs. teaching a common culture (Delpit, 1995; Smith-Maddox, 1998; Nieto, 1997) and whole language vs. phonics (Dahl, Scharer, Lawson & Crogan, 1999; Manning & Kamii, 2000), certain generalizations about the contexts of schools

prevail, particularly for inner city, urban schools like Hillside. More specifically, the assumptions are that children come to school ready to learn and that students come from homes in which there are instructionally supportive structures. These assumptions reflect a hegemonic ideology that traditionally shapes, not only the design of public policies, but also educational policies that are quick to implicate teachers and schools with significant blame for low student achievement scores.

As found in the context of Hillside, textbook series adopted by districts are often translated into the core curriculum of many schools. Cohen et al. (2003) contend that, "The designers and publishers of materials also frame content to manage the environments of instruction, as when texts intended for sale in Southern states fail to mention evolution" (p. 127). Yet, designers and publishers simultaneously make erroneous assumptions about the contexts of schools. These assumptions are often formed from generalized data about schools and present schools with a technical recipe for instructional delivery--a recipe that purports academic success for all children, as long as teachers follow the teacher's manuals. Here again, such claims move teachers into a position of blame when achievement scores do not rise. Though the attempt may be made to shape and account for the context of schools, textbook and curriculum architects are unable to predict *all* contextual variables that affect teaching and learning (e.g., the social/emotional needs of students). This inability to predict contextualized variables represents an inherent critical correspondence of curriculums. The teachers at Hillside identify several critical correspondences of curriculum that impact their engagement in teaching and learning innovations. These critical correspondences problematize the

textbook driven curriculums that assume: (1) students are intrinsically motivated to learn and will find relevance in the proposed curricular content; (2) students are academically ready to engage the curriculum; and (3) students will receive instructional support/reinforcement at home.

### **Curriculum and Student Motivation**

While Ms. Jefferson highlights the reading curriculum's attention to culturally diverse representations of children as a plus, she speaks from a singular perspective. For her, the children are responding well to the curriculum, in part because of its attention to cultural representations. However, other teachers at Hillside take notice that many children appear to lack a fair amount of intrinsic motivation for engagement in the current reading and mathematics curriculums. Like Ms. Abbey, many teachers and the broader public tend to believe that education is for the purpose of bettering one's life (Mathews, 1996; Hirschland & Steinmo, 2003), but several Hillside teachers explained that numerous children do not share this same belief. Ms. Johnson declared, "we have a lot of kids who don't place any value on education. They don't understand its importance" (D/I/18Nov03). It has been her experience that many students do not see education as a valuable investment. For Ms. Johnson, children's value of education aligns not with the ideals promoted by teachers inside the school but with their own communities and certain images promoted by popular culture. She pointed to pop icons as an example of one motivating force for children. Ms. Johnson explained how she understands the ways in which children are reading the world:

We [educators] are up against great odds. Society too, doesn't place a whole lot of importance on education. The kids see sports stars and rap stars who don't speak correct English. 'So 'why do I need to speak correct English because they don't? Look! They are driving around in a Hummer and they have gold chains, and I'm getting me some of those too.' So, we are up against a public force. (D/I/18Nov03).

Ms. Johnson, who teaches mathematics for her grade level, admitted that her students' lack of interest for the curriculum as well as intrinsic motivation to learn both (simultaneously) impede and provide capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations. She attested that motivating students--to work independently, to find joy in solving mathematical challenges through intellectual struggle--has been an every day challenge. As an example, she reported that students in her classroom become frustrated when they are unable to quickly solve problems. They begin to bemoan the assignment and the practices of schooling. Yet, because of their lack of intrinsic motivation, she must continually seek ways to stimulate their interests for learning through engagement in teaching and learning innovations.

As stated earlier, contradictions also occur across classrooms. These contradictions highlight the individual perspectives of teachers. For Ms. Adele, popular culture is viewed as an instructional tool with the potential for motivating students to find interest in learning the curriculum and for engaging in a teaching and learning innovation. She explained that innovative teaching "comes from using techniques relevant to children." For example:

Their world is not the same as ours was. And you have to understand that. If you are using something they see on TV as the symbols in your math problems, that's innovative. They become interested. And, I know we don't like to focus everything on TV, but I'm saying you've got to make lessons



relevant to them. If not, it's not going to make any sense to them.  
(D/P/19Nov03)

Similarly, in the case of Ms. Campbell, she has been able to achieve a certain level of success toward motivating student's capacity for intellectual struggle. Ms. Campbell explained that independent learning and student driven mathematical deliberations are made possible through explicit expectations and continuous practice. She stated that students have to practice making their ideas public. Early in the school year, she informs the students of the classroom expectations she has set and provides structured time for students to practice explaining their answers to the whole class while others practice listening without giggling or interrupting. While occurring infrequently, she described how practice, motivation, and learning come together as an ideal:

For instance when we were doing problem solving one day, practicing for the state assessment, I had one student explain what she did and why she did it. Her explanation was a little off. So, even before I asked a question, one of the students asked her to explain herself a little more. They didn't understand what she was saying. So when she repeated again, the gentleman caught her mistake and corrected her. And she wasn't upset about the correction because of how he said it. And when he did that, she said, 'Ok! I understand, I meant da, da, da, da, da' and corrected herself. Then he chimed in 'you could have also done this' and gave another example. So, for that moment, I was out of the equation, and it was the two students talking about their strategies of a certain problem. That's when you know they've got it, when they are able to explain and have a discussion about a problem. (D/I/2Dec03)

These acts of deliberation represent the actualization of one teacher's anticipated outcomes of a teaching and learning innovation that promotes students' engagement in intellectual struggle. Cohen et al. (2003) clarify that deliberations, like the one demonstrated above, advance the teaching and learning process because "students who have learned to reflect on their ideas, listen carefully, and express themselves clearly are

likely to make better use of materials, teachers, and other students' work. They also are likely to make it easier for other students and teachers to use their work [as well]" (p. 125). Yet, Ms. Campbell is sure that such acts would not occur by fiat or in the absence of routine practice--practice for public reflection on one's thought processes and practice for active listening and the engagement of classmates' ideas. She also made clear, this type of deliberation occurs as a result of a change in her teaching practices over time. Ms. Campbell explained that not only must students learn the process of deliberation, but only over time and through self-discipline has she come to teach in a way that promotes intellectual struggle through independent and group problem solving. Only over time have her instructional practices changed. Only over time has she become skilled and comfortable enough to reduce teacher talk for the purpose of guiding students to engage in acts of deliberation. This process defines a teaching and learning innovation that occurred as a teachers' knowledge and skills base developed. This example reflects the experience of an individual teacher who modified her instructional practices (i.e., teacher talk), over time, in order to motivate students to find interest in the curriculum, to think deeply about mathematics, and to struggle intellectually through a practice of classroom deliberation.

### **Nurturant Relationships as Motivation**

Overall, teachers contended that students are not necessarily motivated by the textbook designed curriculum. Yet, their commitment to and nurturant relationships with students may function as an immediate motivating force for children (i.e., a form of

pedagogical capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations). For a majority of teachers, their nurturant interactions with students are intentional and demonstrate their commitment to meeting students' (academic and social/emotional) learning needs. Their interactions are deliberate attempts to engage students in the learning process. Ms. Adele explained that she continuously encourages students to always do their best. For her, a teacher should interact with children, thereby creating an active classroom. Ms. Adele explained:

You can't be behind a desk and interact with your children in order to accomplish what they need. They need reinforcement. They need to see a teacher who is looking and praising and positively reinforcing and correcting and saying, 'No, don't say you can't. No, you can do better. Yes, you can. Ok, let's see it. Is that your best?' I'm constantly questioning the children about what they are doing, 'Is that the best you can do?' And they are honest. They'll look at you and they will say, 'No.' I'll say, 'Don't we always say we will do our very best?' [The student replies,] 'Uhu.' And, they will try again. You have to keep encouraging them. You have to keep pushing them. They don't have a lot of confidence in themselves. And, they don't have a lot of joy for learning. And, that's what they need to have. They need to have that enthusiasm. And it's a round of applause if you get something right. And 'Can you believe you did that!' It has to be about an excitement for what you are learning. And, I don't care how old you are, learning has to be a goal in and of itself, . . . supported by a desire to learn. (D/P/19Nov03)

While their styles may vary, Ms. Lenora also exhibited a fervent commitment for motivating students to learn. In her math class, students are expected to come to class prepared and to actively participate in each lesson. Ms. Lenora persistently challenges students to explain their work on paper (in writing) and verbally, during class sessions. She questions, "I want to know how you got the answer?" "Did anyone solve the problem in a different way?" And she rephrases, "How would *you* figure this problem out?" No one in her class is given the opportunity to hide behind mindless excuses. Making

examples of children who fail to complete required homework assignment(s), Ms. Lenora further advances her standard of engagement. She gives a gentle directive to work the problem(s) out now, in class. She even reassigns tasks for homework a second time (O/I/Classroom/21Jan02).

Research on cultural and environmental factors that influence African American students' academic performance buttresses the judgments of these teachers (that teachers must care enough to express high expectations and encouragement). Delpit (1995) postulates that African American students often understand authority as a teacher's ability to earn their respect by controlling the classroom environment, believing that students can learn and by "pushing" them to succeed academically. Wilson and Corbett's (2001) research with minority, inner city, urban students reveals that students respect teachers who not only modify their instruction so that lessons are meaningful (teaching and learning innovations) but who also express a high expectation for students' engagement and achievement. Thus, authority and encouragement, in this regard, connote caring teachers and a certain level of teacher efficacy/quality. The assertion of authority and encouragement (as classroom practices) act as teaching and learning innovations that motivate students to learn. Noguera (2003b) drew conclusions based on his own research (and others') with African American students to posit that students' perceptions of and feelings about their teachers influence their academic performance. More specifically, "[African American] students do not believe that their teachers care about them and are actively concerned about their academic performance, the likelihood that they will succeed is greatly reduced" (p. 119).

## Curriculum and Academic Readiness

Besides assuming that students will automatically find curriculums intriguing and stimulating, textbook driven curricular architects often take for granted that students entering a grade level are able to engage the curriculum at that level. This is not to take away from the fact that classroom teachers, administrators, and anyone familiar with the American educational system understand that each school year begins with a review of previously learned concepts, skills and classroom routines. Savvier textbook driven curriculums are even designed on spiral models that attempt to accommodate students who might need additional help by routinely reviewing previously introduced concepts. Yet, by and large, the assumption is made that third graders read within a third grade range. Herein lies a critical correspondence that some teachers experience on a regular basis. Campbell explained that:

a lot of the curriculum is written assuming that student come to school or come to this grade level with certain background knowledge and experiences. But with the population that we are working with, the kids don't have a lot of that background. So, a lot of times I have to go backwards and build that background before we can move forward.  
(D/I/2Dec03)

She clarified that not only do many students lack knowledge of basic skills but also the cultural competency needed to engage certain texts. In response, teachers at Hillside frequently engage in teaching and learning innovations that set out to build students' cultural competency by making instruction relevant to their lived experiences or by coaxing students to extend their imaginations beyond their own physical surroundings.

For example, when reading a story about a young man traversing the snowy mountains (during a wintry storm) while being pulled on a sled by a dog, the teacher asked students, "Can you imagine what's going on? What does it look like? Close your eyes and think about this" (Ms. Jefferson/O/I/ Classroom/10Nov03). Observational data reveal that other teachers often take a direct instruction approach to introducing and reviewing basic skills, particularly at the primary level. These lessons are generally teacher directed. The teacher instructs the students to stay together by putting a finger on a particular problem in their drill book. The students individually provide an answer to a problem. The teacher writes the correct answer on the board and directs the children to do the same, leaving no room for error. While such a practice may not appear creative, direct instruction may be classified as a teaching and learning innovation to the extent that the (collective and generally lower order) learning needs of students are met.

Delpit (1995) explains that African American children often struggle with curriculum because of a lack of cultural competency and an unfamiliarity with the codes of power from which progressive education is fashioned. She provided an example in which students who do not come to school primed to engage in curriculum are quickly labeled remedial. Hence, teachers at Hillside, in order to meet the academic needs of students, have to find ways to teach children basic (lower order) skills (e.g., through direct instruction) and to generate a level of cultural competency while simultaneously preparing them for higher order and critical thinking literacies.

Ms. Williams, who has taught for many years in non-minority and middle class schools, explained how her teaching has changed in order to teach even the most basic of skills:

In my other building [of middle class white students] I would be able to teach a lesson differently, whereas here I recognized the need for a lot of repetition and the use of chants. They learn a lot better in this environment through repetition and always reviewing. In the other building I might have had to review a skill once or twice and children were able to retain information, whereas here that is not case.

She further explained how working at Hillside has been an investment in the expansion of her teaching repertoire (i.e., the development of knowledge and skills that provide the capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations):

Now, I have bettered my teaching because of this environment.  
Here I am learning different teaching styles. (D/S/7Nov03)

As mentioned earlier, teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations is further intensified by the paced sequence of both the Every Day Math and Harcourt curriculums. Several teachers expressed concern with their abilities to adequately address students' learning needs while simultaneously maintaining an instructional pace equal to curricular demands. Again, textbook and curriculum architects assume that children at each grade level come to school ready to engage the curriculum at that level. Ms.

Campbell critiqued the Everyday Mathematics curriculum:

I don't feel that it provides enough repetition with certain things, the practice and drill that our kids need and the basics like multiplication, subtraction--borrowing and trading. And I also know that other teachers in the district have that same complaint. So, we have to use other supplements that provide the repetition.

She and other teachers expressed a discomfort with the curriculums' paced sequence. Ms. Campbell reiterated how students' lack of background knowledge influences the rhythm of her teaching and engagement in teaching and learning innovations:

Often I see they have no prior knowledge of anything that I am talking about, that the book says that they should. That's when I know that I have to go back and review some things just so we can get to the point where the book wants us, so that we can move on. So, a lot of times, yes, we fall behind [in the paced schedule]. So I have to steal time from other things like Social Studies and checking the homework. (D/I/2Dec03)

These responses represent teachers' critical read of curricular pacing as a practice that impedes student learning in relation to their academic readiness. These responses illustrate the ways in which teachers modify their instructional routines in order to accommodate the diverse learning needs of their students.

Ms. Abbey reported that several intermediate level teachers questioned the value of the curriculum's pace. Yet, due to district demands, she encouraged them to follow the curriculums as designed (D/5Nov03). By "stealing" time away from other content areas to focus on the school's curricular mantra of mathematics and reading, teachers purposefully prioritize their engagement in teaching and learning innovations according to those practices that are rewarded (Robertson, 1996) by school administrators and district leaders (i.e., they intentionally focus on concepts to be assessed on the state test while ignoring others as a practice that promises to raise students' achievement on this assessment). Still, teachers' deep concern for the emotional well-being of students permeates their daily work.

An informal observation of two participants' lunchtime discussion reveals that the curricular pacing also challenges their ethical/moral beliefs about teaching and learning--



beliefs steeped in an ethic of care (Gillian, 1982; Noddings, 1992). These teachers (in the presence of a university volunteer and a student teacher) verbalized their common concern for the trickle-down effect of high stakes testing, its influence on curricular design, and the well-being of students. They discussed their perceived disconnect between the two curricula, their pacing, and the academic readiness of many students. Ms. Adele and Ms. Smith questioned the developmental appropriateness of such pacing. They explained that only a small number of students are able to continuously demonstrate mastery of standards at the rate demanded by the paced curriculums. Yet, these teachers made clear that they are required to press forward with instruction and to move on to the next lesson, even though far too many students continue to struggle with partially learned standards and skills from previous lessons. What results is a mass of low-performing students who become frustrated from a lack of success. In order to compensate for students' frustrations, these teachers explained that they persistently praise students for the smallest of achievements. They continuously remind students of the progress they have made, individually and collectively. (O/P/Classroom/14Nov03). Herein lies an example of engagement (i.e., thinking, talking and doing) in teaching and learning innovation in which teachers discuss and reflect on the calibration of their instructional/classroom practices in response to their understanding of the critical correspondences between the paced curricula and the learning needs of students.

## **Curriculum and an Instructionally Supportive Home Life**

Not unlike other textbook driven curricula, the teacher's guide for both the Every Day Math and Harcourt reading series provide teachers with certain suggestions regarding the assignment of homework tasks. Textbook architects, teachers, and anyone who has attended school understand homework as a common practice of schooling. This understanding portrays homework as an instructional tool that advances students' learning through repetition and practice at home, outside of the regular school day. This understanding also contains the assumption that homework assignments function as a bridge between the classroom and home. What resonates in the minds of many Americans, particularly with respect to children at the elementary level, are memories and hopes of parents sitting with their children at the kitchen table assisting them with some project or assignment.

Research in this area reveals positive correlations between parents' involvement and student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Yet, this research is broad and often fails to make explicit the meanings and functions of parental involvement (Lawson, 2003; Bailey, 2002). Also, research on parental involvement varies by race, ethnicity, and class. Moreover, research on low-income communities explains that parental involvement is often non-existent or greatly strained (Noguera, 2003; Lawson, 2003).

Teachers at Hillside explained that parental involvement with homework affects their pedagogical capacity to engage in teaching and learning innovations. They

explained that many students lack the needed assistance to complete homework assignments--assistance that would make their jobs easier (Lawson, 2003). They also contribute parental involvement to socio-economic markers. For example, when asked to reflect on one factor that influences her work at Hillside, Ms. Campbell responded:

The population that I have to deal with, knowing that a majority of the children are from low-income families.

She continued:

Unfortunately a lot of the parents may not work with the children as we would like them to, particularly with their homework. I have asked many students if there is someone at home to help them with their homework or to help them with their multiplication facts. And many times, the students will say no.

Ms. Campbell compared Hillside's context to other schools:

At many of the other schools of different economic backgrounds where the parents are more involved, you see a big difference. (D/I/2Dec03)

Though not made explicit, captured in this statement is an awareness that schools and families are connected. The teachers in this study speak of the connection(s) between the school and families as joined by a narrow pathway that is open in only one direction. Students cross this pathway, homework pages cross this pathway, and messages to parents cross this pathway. Conveyed in Ms. Campbell's statements (and others to follow) is a sentiment that the school is overwhelming impacted by family issues (and the community in which students live) that affect students' learning. Conversely, data from informal dialogues with teachers depict families as being unmoved by the steps teachers take to advance children's academic growth. Observational data also reveal that, more often than not, parents visit the school in response to behavioral problems with their

children, or concerning issues in which a parent perceives mistreatment on their child's behalf. And, with the exception of the one parent who coordinates tutors for the reading center, and another parent who works as an aide, parents visiting the school to discuss their children's grades and/or academic progress is a sight rarely seen. Teachers sense that their work is intensified by a school-family connect that fails to fully support students' academic advancement. Only one teacher made mention of inroads taken by the school to bridge the relations between Hillside and the community as a way to help parents to more fully assist students with homework assignments. Ms. Jefferson mentioned:

I know that for a lot of parents it is difficult [to help their children with homework] because they don't understand our math curriculum, for instance. But, we have offered numerous parent workshops on how to provide support at home. I don't think many of our parents take advantage of what's out there for them to use. (D/I/8Jan03).

Missing from this argument and these dialogues with teachers, however, is a critical questioning of what actions Hillside can take to repair the pathway between the school and families in order to ensure that communication, problem solving, instructional support for students, and collaboration are navigated in both directions. Yet, research demonstrates that teachers tend to receive limited, if any, training in communicating with families, particularly regarding homework tasks (Bryan, Burstein & Bryan, 2001; Bailey, 2002). Furthermore, roles for parental participation tend to be defined by the school, in the absence of collaboration with parents.

The notion of healthy school-family relationships (in which parents assist their children with homework assignments) becomes critical as Hillside teachers begin to admit that parents may very well struggle to understand the tenets of the new Every Day

Math curriculum. When asked, "Because the math curriculum is taught differently [than what parents are accustomed to], do you think this poses a problem for parents being able to assist their children at home?" Ms. Campbell candidly responded,

Yes! Especially with some of the algorithms and methods of how to solve problems. Now that does pose a problem, but . . . parents . . . [could] just reinforce the basic facts that do not change--the multiplication, adding and subtracting--because everything in the curriculum is based upon knowing these basic facts. So if the kids have help at home learning the basic facts, then all the other concepts that we are teaching will be made easier for the kids to understand. (D/I/2Dec03)

Yet, Ms. Johnson problematized the issue even further, adding that, "some parents are illiterate. Most parents didn't even graduate high school" (D/I/2Dec03). These perspectives raise a concern about parents' ability to provide instructional support at home due to their own educational inadequacies. Though contrary to the norm in which teachers often blame low-income and African American parents for their children's poor academic achievement (Thompson, 2003), the teachers of Hillside fall short of blaming parent as being apathetic. They do not believe the parents do not care about their children. However, they do draw a correlation between the home and students' value of education as well as students' completion of homework assignments. For example, observational data of a particular primary grade level meeting illustrate these teachers' collective thoughts about homework and parental support. For this group of teachers, homework assignments have been calibrated/designed in a particular way according to the perceived characteristics of their students' collective home support structure. Homework is designed to reinforce skills that students have already been taught in class. Homework is designed for repetition and drill. Homework is designed in such a way that

students will need little assistance. During the meeting, one teacher participant explained to Ms. Abbey and the Reading ITL that students tend not to return homework and that when returned, the work is frequently overrun with errors (O/P/Team meeting/22Jan03). Ms. Johnson clarified how this reality affects her work. She does not always assume that children will have homework support, so she deliberately plans instructional time to reinforce skills that would normally occur through homework assignments outside of class (a teaching and learning innovation). She explained:

I assume that any learning that needs to take place is going to happen here in the school. For example, our math curriculum has what are called home links that are sent home. They turn into small projects where students need to collect things such newspapers or old boxes to talk about numbers, weights and balances and whatever is on the boxes. I tried that in years past and it doesn't work because you will have one or two students who are actually participating in the home component that they need to finish the lesson in class. So anything that requires assistance at home, I do kind of shy away from because I know from experience that it won't be completed. I just assume that any learning that is going to go on is going to happen here. And, if a student does have parents who are willing to help and will work with them, then that's just a bonus. (D/I/9Jan04)

These data affirm the critical correspondence of textbook designed curriculums, which assume that students automatically receive instructional support outside of the school, and highlight how teachers might modify their instructional practices accordingly.

As recognized by Ms. Johnson's comment, parental involvement that takes place within some homes is not completely lost on teachers. In fact, their evaluation of the limited parental involvement noted within their school is consistent with other research in this area. This research explains that even though many conditions of low-income, inner city, urban communities burden parental involvement, such participation, when occurring, does positively impact students' academic success (Ascher, 1988; Wilson &

Allen, 1987). Ms. Abbey described the home life of many Hillside children in which the parents are "missing in action" and that many grandparents have taken charge of rearing their grandchildren. She continued letting it be known that many parents are so preoccupied by their own personal crises that they often neglect paying attention to their children's involvement in school (D/P/5Nov03). Describing a condition in which families are cut off from the formal economic structure and have reverted to an informal economic structure (Noguera, 2003), Ms. Jefferson added that "we have a lot of children who come from single family homes, where parents aren't working or they are doing things of the illegal sort to make money" (D/I/12Nov03). Yet she and Ms. Campbell both explained that for those students who receive assistance with homework, their growth and understanding of the lessons' content are obvious. Ms. Jefferson contended that these students, at minimum, are able to clearly articulate where they are struggling and in what ways they need additional help from teachers. She also pointed to other avenues for instructional support attended by students outside of school. These consist of after school programs, community programs and churches.

### **Discussion**

What can be extrapolated from these perspectives is that teachers' attempt to engage in teaching and learning innovations is made dynamic by the policy demands of forward mapping regarding assessment and curriculum. Their work is challenged by contradictory perspectives--one that values governance over teachers' practices for the purpose of implementation purity vs. one that values teachers' use of professional

decision making about teaching and learning, as guided by student assessment data. Their work is affected by conditions outside of the school, outside of the classroom and beyond the design of policy. Such is the critical correspondence of policy driven school reform.

In order for them to engage in teaching and learning innovations, teachers have to uncover the immediate and ever changing needs of students and reinterpret curricular demands in relation to the dispositions of students, resources, their own instructional repertoires, and other environmental factors. Teaching is more than following procedures for assessment or a textbook driven curriculum guide. Cohen et al. (2003) explain that, "teaching is what teachers do, say, and think with learners, concerning content, in particular organizations and other environments, in time" (p. 124). In order for teachers to motivate students, they must go beyond the curriculum. They must meet students where they are. This chapter reveals that teachers must first recognize the basic needs of students--a need for motivation and a need for academic readiness to engage in policy driven, high stakes instruction. These needs are uncovered and accommodated as a result of teachers' skillful and continuous assessment of students' progress throughout the teaching and learning process.

Bailey (2002) and others (e.g., Comer & Haynes, 1991) suggested that teachers support student learning by engaging parents in the learning process. This means understanding what parents value about education, providing structures in which teachers and parents can construct homework modules, and providing opportunities for parents to help out in classrooms. Yet, teachers' capacity to engage parents in meaningful ways is made difficult by their limited preparation and know how--skills



that are rarely addressed during their pre-service experiences and skills that are under supported through in-service.

Returning to the notion of a one directional pathway between the community and school, Mathews (1996) argues that good schools are the roots of good communities and a good country. He continued to stress that communities are "an essential source of 'social capital,' a necessary form of reinforcement from outside of the school that encourages students to learn" (p. 6). This means that schools and communities are intricately connected. Yet, many low-income African American students living in the inner city, like the Hillside children, live in communities marred by few resources, racial isolation, limited local capital and political influence, crime, violence, drugs, poor public health, teenage childbirth, and intergenerational poverty (Cooper & Jordan, 2003; Kozol, 1991; Noguera, 2003b). A lack of social capital burdens urban communities' potential to access the resources of social networks like schools (Noguera, 2003). When parents know how to make the system work on behalf of their children, the potential for academic success rises. For most low-income, poorly educated, inner city families, such know how (social capital) is limited or non-existent.

These findings suggest that the work needed to leave no child behind extends beyond the reach of forward mapping and policy driven (assessment/curriculum) reforms, far beyond the classroom, and even the school. These findings are a reminder that schools exist within and are responsive to larger socio-political systems such as school districts and local communities (Sarason, 1990, Noguera, 2003). These findings demonstrate that schools do not exist in a vacuum, thereby troubling technical-rationale approaches to

school reform--approaches that seek to make rationale the context of school and schoolings through the application of certain input and output control mechanisms. Particularly for low-performing schools that serve low-income, minority and politically disconnected families, serious discussions are needed to better understand how communities, districts and schools might collectively author a cohesive agenda that is sensitive to the multiple realities of all stakeholders. This means engaging students, teachers, school/district administrators, parents, community leaders, and policy architects in public deliberations regarding the contextual critical correspondences of school policy and the process of schooling (i.e., school-family/community relations, assessment, curriculum, the needs of students, and the pedagogical capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations). Yet, these deliberations will do little to meet this aim in the absence of democratic dialogue in which stakeholders take time to genuinely listen to each other, to "suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine 'thinking together'" (Senge, 1990, p. 10). Simultaneously, such deliberations will do little good in the absence of a system of reciprocal accountability (Goldstein et al., 1998) in which all stakeholders are made responsible for fulfilling their role in the reform efforts and in which passing the blame exists no more.

## Chapter Six

### DOUBLE PLANNING, CHANGES IN CONTEXT AND COLLABORATION

One of the theories-of-action underlying the reconstitution of schools (like Hillside) is the assertion that new working conditions will evolve from the hiring of more talented and committed teachers and administrators, and that these new conditions will be characterized by a high level of collaboration (Malen et al., 2002). Mr. Thachery also believed in the need for a collaborative and collegial culture among teachers. Hargreaves (1994) contends that collaboration and collegiality are the cornerstones of school improvement and are "fruitful strategies for fostering teacher development" (p. 186). For a reconstituted school like Hillside, which re-opened with a faculty of 75 percent new members, building a new culture becomes important. Because many of these newly hired teachers had less than three years of experience, a culture that views collaboration as staff development appears equally important. As Mr. Thachery explained: "Most teachers see themselves as teachers of an individual class. I wanted teachers to start thinking about a collective responsibility for all of the kids in a particular grade level." In order for this to be achieved, he conceptualized collaboration and collegiality as important factors of teacher development. Such a plan supports the notion of engagement<sup>31</sup> in teaching and learning innovations to the extent that teachers are expected to collaboratively consider

---

<sup>31</sup> Engagement is defined as the social process in which teachers participate in (doing, talking, thinking, feeling and belonging) and implement the formal and/or informal activities that they identify as teaching and learning innovations.

the multiple ways in which they might modify their instructional/classroom practices to meet the learning needs of students. Mr. Thachery continued:

I built into the schedule a double planning period. Instead of having staff development time scheduled for thirty minutes for five days a week, such time would occur two or three days a week for an hour, across the school. I built into their schedule at each grade level one day of a double planning period. That meant they got an extra preparation period a week for the purpose of discussing instructional issues. I didn't want them talking about planning field trips and things like that. It was devoted to data analysis, using [student] data<sup>32</sup> to plan lessons. It was to get feedback and to allow the time to do observations in other classrooms or other schools. It was an opportunity for me to bring in other people to work with them around instructional issues. (D/5Nov03)

While Mr. Thachery held a high regard for collaboration and collegiality as factors of teacher development, teachers' ways of understanding the context of their work did/have not necessarily align(ed) with those of administrators. Furthermore, since the implementation of reconstitution in 1997, many changes have shaped and altered the context of Hillside and the function of collaboration. Two important changes have been the hiring of a new principal as well as the federal enactment and implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Today, the teachers at Hillside have their own individual and collective interpretations of how a changing context impacts their collaborative ties and the ways in which the double planning sessions, over time, have had an impact on their capacity to engage in teaching and learning innovations.<sup>33</sup> This chapter explores these interpretations, and further seeks to make connections between

---

<sup>32</sup> Because double planning sessions occurred weekly, much of the student data was classroom based.

<sup>33</sup> All key-participants have worked at Hillside within the first three years (at least the entering during the third year) of reconstitution and a currently working as classroom teachers.

teachers' contextualized perceptions of their pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations

### **Collaboration and the Double Planning Period**

Ms. Smith recalled that knowing that nearly everyone in the newly reconstituted school would be new represented a fresh start. She identified both the notion of a fresh start and Mr. Thachery's clear vision for the school as factors that motivated her to apply for a teaching position at Hillside. Ms. Smith described the first years of reconstitution: "It was tough in the beginning, but everybody did have a lot of energy and enthusiasm. And I think it worked out well. We came together as a team, and that's really what was important" (I/P/19Nov03). However, while energy/enthusiasm and a principal's vision are important, they independently will not bring about coherence among teachers--the coherence needed to define teams as collaborative and collegial relationships.

Problematizing this issue even further, Rosenholz (1991) explains that:

Although principals may initially define school reality as collaborative, its momentum most likely will flag without ongoing teacher support. That is, teacher collaboration is unlikely to stand in the shadow of one powerful actor alone. Instead, norms of collaboration tend to maintain themselves through daily activities led by those who possess such inclinations. (p. 64)

Hence, collaborative relationships that advance purposeful school improvement need both leadership and the collective energy of its (teacher) members. Mr. Thachery envisioned collaboration as a vehicle for fostering staff development practices that would raise student achievement. Yet, the actualization of this vision is/was contingent upon the collective energy of Hillside teachers. Fullan (2001a) warned, however, that such vision and energies should focus on the right things lest they end up producing powerfully wrong results.

For the teachers at Hillside, the double planning period represents specific functions; yet, these representations vary historically and contemporarily. Several teachers explained that during the early stages of reconstitution, the double planning periods were more than moments for instructional preparation. They represented guaranteed times during the week in which teachers could commune, talk about instruction, and learn from each other (i.e., a formalized capacity building structure for the engagement in teaching and learning innovations). When asked, "How were the double planning sessions structured when you first came to Hillside and how were they meaningful?" Ms. Lenora elaborated:

It wasn't just a double planning, but we would have professional development sessions prior to our double planning. So that when we met for the double planning, we would have specific things that we would have to work on to incorporate into our classes. So, there was a direction because the double planning was tied into the professional development. Like when we first adopted the Waterford program (a skills enrichment computer based program for children), we had the training first, and we used the double planning to decide how we were going to use it in the classroom. We talked about different ways to incorporate it [according to the learning needs of students]. (D/I/8Jan04)

These sessions were used to make meaning of new information, as exemplified in Ms. Lenora's response. According to Brown and Duguid (2000), information is mechanical until it becomes knowledge through "social life." Ms. Lenora's statement illustrates a social context in which teachers collaborate about the use of newly acquired information (e.g., the Waterford computer program) within a particular school, within particular classrooms, and with particular students. For the teachers at Hillside, these early double planning sessions represented a network for intellectual engagement about their working context in relation to their teaching and learning innovations. They also used these sessions to discuss information presented during staff development sessions. Such networks transform the meaning of "drive-by" staff development sessions in which teachers are made the objects of expert presentation. In one regard, they become networks of teacher development as information is made into knowledge through meaningful dialogue--dialogue that is teacher directed and teacher owned.

What significantly resonates with a few teachers is that these meetings were context specific. Ms. Day (D/P/18Febr04) recalled that, when instructional initiatives were introduced, teachers were allowed to experiment with the new information in their own classrooms and with real students before discussing their responses during the double planning sessions. For her, these meetings were student centered to the degree that they focused on student learning, and these meetings were data driven. Ms. Day explained that instructional decisions were made based on teacher driven and teacher-tested data regarding "what worked with our children." These interpretations bring into focus

teachers' voices and teachers' insider understandings of their work context, thereby revealing that teachers may hold fast to their own interpretations of a context.

Ms. Johnson (D/I/9Jan04) and Ms. Appleyard (D/P/25Nov03) confessed that they had not thought about many of the issues presented in this study before participating in dialogues with the researcher. Yet, dialogues concerning collaboration and the early double planning periods reveal that teachers and administrators often hold varied and incongruent interpretations of single phenomena. For example, Mr. Thachery recalled a top-down, principal directed reform, particularly for the first year of reconstitution. He explained:

I made it plain when I hired them that I was not in the business of trying to win friends. I was brought in to clean up a very bad situation. And so, I wasn't listening to a whole bunch of "whooha." I know that's not a word, but I had a set way that I believed I could get from point A to B. I wasn't interested in, and I know this is going to sound terrible, a lot of what they [the new arrangement of teachers] had to say about how it was going to get done.

According to the former principal, the initial double planning sessions were directive. The implementation and focus of these sessions were crafted by his own hands. He continued to describe a systematic approach in which teachers collected student achievement data from their classrooms based on a prescriptive instructional design:

I did want teachers to follow the same scope and sequence so that I could review a specific objective to see . . . who had the most consistency in terms of how the students were performing and to look at how that person could serve as a model for the others where there wasn't that level of consistency. (D/3April03)

The early double planning sessions were designed by the principal to focus on student data and teachers' collective engagement in teaching and learning innovations. Yet, when



teachers were asked, "Were the topics for the double planning sessions given to you by the principal or someone outside of your group, or did your group decide the focus of each meeting," unanimous responses revealed that teachers viewed these meetings as being teacher directed and owned. They each explained that the foci of these meetings were generated from within the grade level teams.

These interpretations reveal incongruent (i.e., a critical correspondence)<sup>34</sup> perspectives between teachers and the former principal. What appears to be more accurate is that while teachers may have had control over the "how" of their double planning meeting, administrative forces limited their decisions about the "what." These incongruences, however, may be explained through various postulates, including: (1) a true divergence in perceptions; (2) a politics of forgetting; (3) and a romanticizing of one's work.

### **Divergence in Perceptions**

Administrators and teachers, though sharing a particular school space, may genuinely embrace divergent perspectives of a single phenomenon, thereby resulting in a critical correspondence of perceptions. As presented earlier in Chapter Four, teachers and administrators may conceptualize time, particularly teachers' time, in conflicting ways. Their varied perspectives may challenge whether or not the glass is half full or half empty. Smyth (1991) posits that, "There is considerable tension between the way teachers

---

<sup>34</sup> Robertson (1996) explains critical correspondence as the dynamic of contradictions within reforms and that the possibility for social change is made possible when such contradictions are made explicit. See also Chapter Four.

experience schooling and the way policy makers and others perceive that reality" (p. 84). Thus, Mr. Thachery (acting as the on-site policy maker who required teachers to meet collaboratively to discuss student achievement data and their teaching and learning innovations) may have very well perceived the double planning sessions differently from teachers' experienced reality. Conversely, teachers may not have understood the theories that guide administrative policy decisions. These divergent perspectives may have resulted from the hierarchical structure of many schools that positions the work of principals and teachers within variant realms of concern. While teachers' work may primarily focus on the needs of students and instructional/classroom-based concerns, administrators are responsible for coordinating the multiple functions that support teaching and learning at the classroom level (e.g., budget, curriculum, supervision and evaluation, district accountability demands, and policy). Ms. Lenora alluded to these variant realms of concern during a discussion regarding the uses of informal vs. standardized student achievement data. She postulated that while informal assessments might be used to inform teachers' daily classroom instruction, school-wide, standardized assessment data represent "a wakeup call to the principal" and that "there are some things that are not being done by the administration [to ensure that high levels of teaching and learning innovations are occurring in all classrooms]" (D/I/8/Jan03). Ms. Adele expressed a comment that also supports the notion of divergent perspectives. She made the claim that working closely with *teachers* provides capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovation (emphasis added). For her, other teachers understand "what she is going through in the classroom" whereas administrators and other policy people may

have "forgotten what it is like to be in the classroom." That is, teachers share similar realms of concerns and are better able to relate to each other. Ms. Adele explicated:

You can have all of the administrative support and all this stuff that you want, but they don't know what goes on down at the bottom [in the classroom with children] everyday, day in and day out; So, when you have people who are in the same situation with you, that's your support system. (D/P/19Nov03).

These findings suggest that, because of their variant realms of concern, classroom teachers and administrators are more likely to hold divergent perspectives of schooling. These variant perspectives may also result from what Hargreaves (1994) defines as a culture of balkanization between teachers and administrators that traditionally places these groups in a dichotomy of "them" vs. "us." In this case study, divergent perspectives between teachers and administrators are real, and these perspectives add to the complexity of the social contexts of schools--contexts that impact teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations.

### **A Politics of Forgetting**

Since reconstitution was implemented seven years prior to this study, many teachers may not remember the fine details of events occurring long ago. Through time and changes in space, teachers (have) come to understand a certain reality of schooling. As they manage the vicissitudes of students' individual academic and social/emotional needs on a daily basis and as they navigate through the compounding curricular and assessment demands, teachers may define their work according to the immediacy of their context.

Ms. Smith and Mr. Thachery recalled the first years of reconstitution as being a time of immense stress for both the adults and students of Hillside. The former principal recollected:

I'm not going to say that the first year wasn't difficult, because it was. We were all getting used to each other [students, faculty and administration]. Also, we inherited a lot of student behavioral problems. It was about getting the kids acclimated to a level of order. (D/3April03)

This recollection is consistent with research that describes newly reconstituted schools as sites of intensified work conditions (Malen et al., 2002, Goldstein et al., 1998). Teachers in these schools often reported that learning new curriculums, building new relationships with students, and developing new working relations with fellow teachers and administrators collectively stress their daily work. Such intensification occurring in reconstituted schools often bears down on teachers in ways that eventually define their daily work existence as "surviving the school year." Such intensification may represent a lived experience that traumatizes teachers' memories, leading them into a politics of forgetting. Easley (2003) posits that:

Neither the production of memory nor the act of forgetting is neutral, an apolitical pedagogy. Instead, they offer certain perspectives about what is truth. As a pedagogical practice, they operate in ways that define and position a people within a certain social and political realm. This dynamic is designed and enforced through cultural ideology--a political psychology that informs and shapes a collective consciousness of people. (p. 91)

Thus, forgetting the "old" and the "bad" (e.g., the difficult first year of reconstitution) operates as a mechanism for coping with the immediate.

Teachers at Hillside seem not to dwell in the "what used to be" for the sake of making it through the day and making it through the school year. When dialogues resurrect dormant memories, teachers typically reply, "Oh, I had forgotten about that!" The immediate needs of the students, however, serve as a motivating force for teachers. In fact, Ms. Adele explained that the needs of the students help her to remain focused and committed to students and teaching and learning innovations on a daily basis. She explained how the needs of students counteract the increased intensification brought on by the endless demands for school reform. The immediate needs of students seem to keep teachers focused on the present and not the past. Ms. Adele elaborated:

Sometimes you feel like you are just getting beat down, especially with the new rules and regulations [and] when you feel that you are doing everything that you possibly can. [That's when] . . . somebody comes in and puts one more thing on you. You get tired.

She continued:

The needs are what they are, and they are very great. You come to realize after the first year or so, that you can't lose focus. But, meeting the students' needs is what keeps me going. I know I'm not losing focus, because I am here, because I need to be here. (D/P/12Nov03)

### **Romanticizing One's Work**

Mr. Thachery retold of recognizing that changes at Hillside would occur as a process and over time. He explained that, while teachers initially had little leeway for providing input toward school improvement, their voices were later welcomed. As

teachers began to routinely engage in collaboration focused on student achievement data,

Mr. Thachery adjusted his leadership role accordingly. Mr. Thachery:

They first needed to demonstrate to me that a level of professional exchange could occur [as exhibited through the double planning sessions]. It got to a point where they really took ownership of the process. So, my role became more of one in which I needed to find additional resources for teachers. I needed to find other opportunities for them to shine . . . .  
(D/3April03)

This declaration explains the logic guiding Mr. Thachery's calibrated leadership style.

What is presented here is a principal's recognition that, while change may be ephemerally forced, sustained change results from a leadership of guidance (Fullan, 2001). Guiding school change entails listening to teachers and developing leadership throughout the organization. This includes support for the development of teachers as intellectuals and teachers as leaders.

When asked about the first year of reconstitution, several teachers responded simply that the first year was difficult. As Ms. Smith recalled, "It was tough in the beginning" (D/P/19Nov03). Their recollections of reconstitution were vague, at best. Teachers' vague responses suggest that perhaps they did not fully understand the theory-of-action guiding reconstitution. Their recollections were laden with a tone of distress, reduced to a fleeting memory of a time made difficult by the intensification of reconstitution. In contrast, teachers' memories of the early double planning sessions carried a more positive tone. Their recollections were stated with assurance and fervor. What resonates in teachers' minds is a particular power/knowledge (Foucault, 1979; 1980). This power/knowledge position recognizes teachers as intellectual meaning

makers of their classroom context and as individuals empowered to make decisions based on their constructed meanings about contextualized teaching and learning innovations.

While their memories are incongruent with Mr. Thachery's initial bureaucratized double planning sessions, they are congruent with the "leadership as guidance" style employed by the former principal once teachers became acclimated to a culture of collaboration. This situation suggests that teachers may minimize certain memories by romanticizing their work. If so, then, the teachers at Hillside seem to purposefully romanticize their work (i.e., the double planning sessions) in a way that affirms a particular power/knowledge position. What surfaces from this practice is teachers' expressed value for ownership of the double planning sessions (i.e., being able to choose the focus of these meetings), a high regard for collegial and collaborative decision-making that is informed by their knowledge of students and students' needs, and an appreciation for collaborative--professional learning that both derives from and impacts their "real" classroom experiences.

However, researchers warn that it is important not to romanticize the "golden years" of education by forgetting the bureaucratic control and ideological positions around professionalism that have shaped teachers' work (Robertson, 1996; Hargreaves, 1994). While Mr. Thachery envisioned collaboration as an opportunity for the analysis of student achievement data in order to inform teachers' collective and individual decisions about teaching and learning innovations, Smyth (1991) urges that reflection be taken a step further. He urges that reflection be made critical. As such, critical collaborative

reflection unravels and problematizes romanticized ideals of schooling. Smyth suggests that reflective collaboration be made critical by:

creating conditions under which teachers, both individually and collectively, can develop for themselves the capacity to view teaching historically; to treat the contemporary events, practices and structures of teaching problematically (and not to take them for granted); and to examine the surface realities of institutionalized schooling in a search for explanations of its forms and thereby to clarify for themselves alternative courses of educational action that are open to them. (pp. 91-92)

Thus, critical collaborative reflection troubles romanticized vestiges of teachers' historical work context. By problematizing these romantic images, the past comes into focus for the purpose of better understanding one's current work context and the practices and conditions that shape said context. By critically understanding the context of schools and schooling, teachers are better positioned to "clarify for themselves alternate courses of educational action that are open to them." For teachers at Hillside (and the purpose of this study), this would mean maximizing their capacity to recognize and engage in the myriad opportunities for teaching and learning innovations.

### **Increasing Instructional Capacity through Collaboration**

Whether or not Mr. Thachery and the teachers hold fast to incongruent recollections of the initial double planning sessions, teachers are certain of one thing: collaboration occurring during these sessions afforded them the opportunity to expand their instructional repertoires. Expanded repertoires provide the pedagogical capacity for teachers to calibrate their instructional practices in relation to students' learning needs



(i.e., engagement in teaching and learning innovations). This was particularly valued by the many inexperienced teachers joining the Hillside faculty. Ms. Lenora reflected:

Coming in as a young teacher, I had a veteran teacher on my team. And that was helpful.

She continued:

And this teacher had been around for a while. She had seen curriculums come and go and had built up different strategies taken from all of these curriculums over time. She had built up a background knowledge. And so when I had a problem with teaching phonics or how to teach this or how to teach that, she was able to share with me some strategies she had used in the past. For example, she was able to show me how she incorporated some things from "Open Court" [a previous curriculum] into the word building to help students become more fluent readers. (D/I/8Jan04)

Collaboration yielded learning for veteran teachers as well, both during the early years of reconstitution and today. Such learning results from a genuine exchange of ideas as advanced through collegial relationships among teachers. For instance, Ms. Lenora, though a fledgling at the time, reported that she and a more experienced teacher developed collaborative ties that enhanced the instructional practices of both partners:

We really helped each other out. I'm really into the technology and that's my pet project. And she wasn't too much into it. So, she would help me with other aspects in the classroom. And whenever, she needed help with technology, I would help her. So, even though I was a young teacher, she was able to learn from me and I was able to learn from her. (D/I/8Jan04)

Hargreaves (1994) describes the benefit of collaboration as being multifarious (providing for moral support and situated certainty, increased efficiency, improved effectiveness, increased capacity for reflection, opportunities to learn, etc.). Ms. Johnson captured multiple benefits of collaboration among teachers:

This allows us the time to bounce ideas off of one another and to get some strategies that we may not have thought of for handling a specific part of

our instruction or a specific part of our classroom management that we are having personal difficulties with. It also gives us ideas from another teacher who is in the same position we are [i.e., working in the classroom with students]. In my case, there are two other teachers on the team.

She concluded, "Three heads are better than one" (D/I/9Jan04). Conveyed here is a formula for and a potential benefit of collaborative learning--that being collegiality based on trust and candor. For Hillside teachers to divulge their "personal difficulties" within the collaborative, they rely on a certain level of trust among their team members. These collegial and collaborative relationships provide a certain level of support for teachers and break the tradition of isolation that often defines school cultures. These relationships foster the pedagogical capacity for teachers to better understand their work context, to expand their teaching repertoires, and to engage in teaching and learning innovations. Yet, Ms. Johnson advised that these benefits are best maximized when the double planning sessions are implemented according to its original design that relied on student data and through the ideals of collaboration and collegiality.

### **A Climate of a Standardization of Practice**

Since the district's decision to reconstitute Hillside, many conditions account for changes in the school's context. Teachers and administrators have moved on (voluntarily or involuntarily due to a decline in student enrollment). Curricular changes have occurred. New district, state and federal policies have been enacted and implemented. Yet, the most striking of these has been a shift in reform itself. Reconstitution, at least its onset, represented a grassroots CSR. Mr. Thachery was given domain over the selection of new staff members (along with a team of principals, vice principals, instructional

supervisors and other supervisory personnel within the district). He explained, "I had a hiring panel, but I hand picked teachers" (D/3April03). Mr. Thachery, by and large, was responsible for the vision, the organizational design that would affect new working relations, and the overall improvement (as measured by student achievement scores) of Hillside. Time, however, has changed Hillside's context to the extent that the present reforms are largely driven by district, state and national (NCLB) policies. These new reforms have usurped dialogues and thinking about reconstitution both inside Hillside and among district leaders. What remains unclear is whether or not the school "officially" remains a reconstituted school by district standards. In effect we find a district-driven standardization of practice. Ms. Abbey explained:

We now have to follow more rigid, district-driven curricular guidelines that focus on basic skills and students' universal proficiency of these skills. (D/5Nov03)

This standardization of practice directly affects teachers' pedagogical capacity to engage in teaching and learning innovations. Most apparent in the comments of teachers is the schools' current curricular focus on reading. They openly share their concerns for continued professional growth--capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations--in a climate of standardization of practice.

Consistent responses by teachers reveal that while mathematics and reading might define the stated curricular mantra for Hillside, more emphasis is placed on reading. Two teachers cite the No Child Left Behind Act (and the school's goal to make AYP) as the culprit. Because of the concentrated focus on reading, support for teachers' professional development across the curriculum has waned. Ms. Johnson explained:

To date the professional development that has taken place has focused on communication [reading]. Because of No Child Left Behind, the goal is to get students to a 45% proficiency level [in reading]. And our principal has decided that our main goal is fluency. All of the professional development occurring during our common planning time has been based or geared to communication. (D/I/9/Jan04)

Explicit concerns for professional support in other content areas is limited to those teachers at the intermediate level, as participants who teach at this level either teach mathematics or reading, but not both.<sup>35</sup> These teachers reported feeling left out of an important part of schooling--professional development. Hence, the original design for double planning sessions at the intermediate level is/has been strained due to teachers' varied content areas and the district's unbalanced support for the reading program.

Teachers now meet according to their primary content area. For those who teach reading, these meetings seem to retain a formal structure; those who teach mathematics are often left to their own devices regarding the structure of their meetings. Ms. Johnson shared her thoughts:

So, I've kind of been left out [of the double planning sessions]. I'm not needed there because I'm not teaching communication [reading] this year. So what I do then is end up planning for math on my own, while the other two teachers are involved in the double planning and communications related staff development. (D/I/9Jan04)

Ms. Lenora, however, is undecided about the purpose behind the unbalanced attention to reading. She elaborated:

I think to that this year the whole focus in on the reading and the math is sort of to the wayside. Like all of the professional development is geared toward reading. There really isn't an emphasis on math. I'm not sure why. But, it's just not there this year? (D/I/8Jan04)

---

<sup>35</sup> This section explores the individual perceptions of only four intermediate level key-participants, as they teacher either mathematics or reading.

What resonates from these perspectives is mathematics teachers' concern about the non-existent support for their content area. These statements capture remorse for the lost of a once formally recognized structure, one organized to support teachers' collaborative engagement in teaching and learning innovations across content areas. These statements also bring into focus teachers' interpretations of reform--interpretations that are informed by their own working realities and interpretations that suggest teachers' primary realm of concern lies at the classroom level and in the teaching a particular subject area (i.e., support for instructional efficacy).

While teachers' realms of concern may vary from those of administrators and policy makers, their concerns are deeply steeped in issues that affect the teaching and learning process. For example, even though Ms. Lenora may not know the reason behind certain top-down policy decisions that place an emphasis on the school's reading program, she is concerned about how new instructional demands impact the quality of teaching. She questions the extent to which several new policy decisions will prove effective. When asked to provide an example in which she feels that the work context has become intensified by policy demands, Ms. Lenora explained:

I'm not affected by this so much this year, but the teachers who teach reading are. They are already faced with the emphasis on reading within the 90-minutes block, and now they are going to add a new component. The curriculum was just adopted by the district one or two years ago, and now they are bringing something else in . . . a grammar component. Well, why did you adopt a curriculum that doesn't have everything in the first place? And these things are often done in the middle of the year. Why are you adding new components in the middle of the year? Wait until the summer, have us go to training before school starts. But to start in the middle of the year? Now teachers are forced to learn a curriculum while they are teaching it to the kids. That doesn't make sense. (D/8Jan03)

Her critique implicates policy as a control mechanism that hinders teacher quality to the extent that teachers may find challenge in their ability to adequately teach a new curriculum to their students. Yet, Ms. Lenora's questions do more than problematize the notion of policy intensification as an impediment to the teaching and learning process. Her questions (and those of other teachers) problematize the nature of school reform as existing only for students--(i.e., new curriculums are added in the middle of the school year in order to advance students' learning while disregarding the learning needs of teachers who are responsible for teaching said curriculums). Sarason (1990) posits that schooling is organized around a disarticulated axiom that "schools do and should exist primarily for students, that is, the aims of education are the aims we have for children" (p. 136). As such, education for children (in this case, school improvement) can very well outweigh its means by serving "an improvement agenda which will in the end only meet instrumental policy interests" (Lodge & Reed, 2003, p. 51). That is, the implementation of reforms to improve student achievement becomes an end in of itself when minimal regard is given to the means that support such an aim (e.g., formalized support for teachers' learning needs and their capacity to engage in teaching and learning innovations).

At Hillside, the current reform climate focuses on a rise in children's academic achievement as measured on a single, high-stakes, standardized test. This climate is encouraged through district, state and national agendas to close the achievement gap. Teachers demonstrate how the implementation of reforms to raise test scores in mathematics and reading can ignore the means needed (at least for mathematics) to

achieve desired outcomes. For example, because Hillside is a district appointed recipient of federal Reading First funding, teachers of reading regularly meet with school administrators to discuss student achievement data in this content areas. During an informal conversation, Ms. Jefferson explained that these meetings are required as a provision of the Reading First grant and that they occur at each grade level. These meetings, to a large extent, are akin to the double planning sessions' initial premise in which teachers collaborated around student data in order to make decisions about teaching and learning innovations. Yet, teachers of mathematics report that such support has been nonexistent during the current school year. Hence, these teachers perceive that content area professional support is an important means for sustaining their own capacity to engage in teaching and learning innovations. Their comments suggest that within the teaching and learning process, support for teachers' learning is as important as students' learning. Their comments convey a sentiment of loss and displacement (for supported professional learning) within a climate of policy driven reform--a standardization of practice.

### **Leading Teachers to Collaborate**

The changes in Hillside's context have been greatly impacted by leadership decisions occurring both from within and outside of the school. The teachers in this study also identified leadership decisions as having an influence on their capacity to engage in collaborative professional development. As stated earlier, the former principal set the agenda for many of the double planning sessions during the initial stages of

reconstitution, thereby guiding teachers' collective discussions in a particular direction.

By all accounts, leadership decisions guiding the design of these planning sessions lead to a practice of collaborative professional development among teachers. These early planning sessions were also monitored administratively through an accountability system that is no longer in place. Ms. Lenora:

We also had to turn in a summary of our double planning. That acted as an accountability measure. Even though you would think that we are professional and should be self-driven, at times there needs to be accountability. We don't have to turn anything in now, so there is no one saying 'What did you do? What did you talk about?' That's part of what's lost. (D/I/8Jan04)

Because the current reform emphasis is reading, intermediate level teachers of mathematics are not only left to their own devices, but no accountability system exists to ensure that they regularly collaborate about teaching and learning. Accountability has been supplanted by an honor system that assumes that these math teachers will meet independently to discuss student achievement and teaching and learning innovations. Yet, Ms. Lenora's reflection raises a critical correspondence regarding the role of accountability in relation to teacher professionalism. Her statement suggests that while conditions that treat teachers as "autonomous intellectuals" (Robertson, 1996) may describe teacher professionalism, such conditions need not be in conflict with accountability measures that hold high expectations for and monitor teachers' engagement in collegial and collaborative decision-making. In fact, accountability measures that ensure collaboration about teaching and learning may spur teachers toward new working conditions--conditions that define a culture of professionalism, collaboration, collegiality and learning. Deal and Peterson (1999) claim that in order "to



have success [in school reform], both new structures and a professional culture are needed." Drawing from a five-year study in two schools serving minority student populations, these researchers report that school success flourished in cultures that focused on "student learning, a commitment to high expectations, social support for innovation, dialogue, and the search for new ideas" (pp. 6-7). Though the context differs from Hillside, such findings bring hope to the notion that a professional culture may develop from an accountability system that holds a high regard for collaboration and innovations in teaching and learning. Furthermore, Ms. Smith's assessment of the early years of reconstitution reminded the reader that, "We [the teachers at Hillside] came together as a team, and that's really what is important" (D/I/19Nov03). Thus, the double planning sessions played a productive role in the development of a culture of collaboration and collegiality.

In the absence of an apparent accountability system and a formal leadership structure that encourages continuous collaboration among intermediate level math teachers, it would appear as though the weekly double planning sessions might stray from their original intent. Observational data reveal that teachers in this category continue to meet during the designated double planning time, yet liberties are taken to discuss other issues, including resources, policies and the politics of reform. During one session, two teachers began to question the equity of NCLB's student transfer policy. They talked about the backlash of the transfer policy in which the parents of a former student who had been recently expelled from a charter school petitioned to be readmitted to Hillside. These teachers speculated that while charter schools can turn students away, schools like

Hillside are not afforded the same option (I/7Ferb04). Noguera (2003) explains that for economically disadvantaged families, public schools represent the one social service agency that cannot turn their children away. Their comments reveal that teachers in (reconstituted/NCLB) schools like Hillside have limited control over the context of reform, particularly regarding the population of students assigned to the schools in which they teach as well as other factors that evolve from beyond the walls of their classrooms.

The honor system has sparked an autonomous intellectualism among at least two key-participants as well as other teachers in the school. Ms. Campbell accredited two factors as the primary stimulus for their continued collaborative ties. These are: (1) a friendship among several teachers of mathematics across intermediate level classrooms (who are not all participants in this study); and (2) a shared concern for the paced curriculum.<sup>36</sup> Ms. Campbell retold of conversations among her colleagues who collectively share a concern that the paced curriculum is/has been impeding upon the students' ability to do well on the state assessment. She explained that because only a small number of students are able to master skills at a rate tantamount to the curriculum's pace, teachers are finding that many students fall further behind as they advance to the next grade level. She further expounded on the response she and other teachers have taken to retard the possibility that students will perform poorly on the state assessment in mathematics:

A couple of years ago teachers in other classes really started asking us to tell them about some of the skills on the [state] test that recur every single year. So we gave them a list. And those teachers work on those concepts

---

<sup>36</sup> See Chapter Five for a full discussion of teachers' perceptions about the curriculum's pace and their pedagogical capacity for engagement in teaching and learning.

as long as they feel that their kids are able to grasp them, even if it is just for mere exposure.

She continued:

There have been two concepts so far that I have taught to the more advanced class that they remembered from the previous grade. So with that particular class, I didn't have to spend a whole lot of time on those concepts. I think as long as we keep doing that year after year, . . . it will even help us see the gains that we need. (D/I/2Dec03)

The autonomous intellectualism among these teachers translates into the pedagogical capacity to engage in a teaching and learning innovation that aligns their instructional practices across grade levels in order to ensure the future academic success of students in mathematics. Though narrowly focused around the state assessment, teachers' independent decisions represent a certain level of collective professionalism in which they have been able to negotiate their work around the needs of children, thereby creating a small community of practice (Wegner, 1998; Wegner, McDormott & Snyder, 2002) within the broader Hillside teacher populace.

When asked whether or not this community of practice would have developed in the absence of friendship (i.e., trust, candor, and common interests), Ms. Campbell pondered:

I don't know, because I know that a lot of teachers work in complete isolation. We've been in schools where people barely speak to each other and don't work together, so I don't know.

She is certain, however, of the goal shared among her colleagues:

But I know for a fact that we are [through commitment and collaboration] going to help out our population of students. (D/I/2Dec03)

Her statement corroborates earlier findings (See also Chapter Four) that position the concerns for students' needs central to teachers' perceptions about pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations. Ms. Campbell continued, explaining that conversations among teachers in this group occur informally during the workday as well as in each other's homes, outside of the school context. This community of practice emerged as a result of informal leadership--leadership that is teacher initiated. For this community of practice, administrative accountability measures are replaced by a collective commitment to serving the needs of children. This commitment drives teachers to create and sustain collegial and collaborative ties for the purpose of raising the achievement level of the students in their classrooms--a feat made possible through an investment in teaching and learning innovations.

### **Discussion**

Findings from this chapter reveal that whether contrived by administrative mandate<sup>37</sup> or resulting from a search for intimacy among colleagues, collaborative and collegial relationships among teachers (at least in small groups) are natural occurrences in schools. Brought into focus are two factors that contribute to teachers' willingness to engage in and to sustain collaborative relationships. These are: (1) a commitment to students (their academic and social/emotional needs); and (2) the ideal of collaboration that "focuses on the right things" (Fullan, 2001a) (i.e., students' learning). Such factors, they believe, will yield the pedagogical capacity for teachers to meet the academic and social/emotional needs of students through the engagement in teaching and learning

---

<sup>37</sup> Hargreaves (1994) referred to this concept as contrived collegiality.

innovations. Yet, the goals of and the leadership within the organization influence collaboration among teachers that focuses on the learning needs of students, particularly in the context of Hillside.

This chapter demonstrates that while teachers' realms of concerns tend to rely heavily on the immediacy of their classroom context, the broader organizational goals, however, may lie elsewhere. The individualized experiences of Hillside's intermediate level math teachers highlight this fact. The current district and school level instructional support favors the reading program over other content areas. Thus, the institutionalized realm of concern for a particular content area is divergent from that for the intermediate level math teachers. Moreover, current building level administrative policies and instructional accountability measures have become standardized under the district's watch (and NCLB) to focus heavily on reading. Thus, mathematics teachers have been left to their own devices for content specific collaborations and double planning sessions. Autonomy, in this case, provided the necessary capacity for teachers to develop a teacher leadership and support structure for data-driven collaboration about mathematical teaching and learning. Autonomy also provided the capacity for math teachers to rely on collaborative practices introduced during the tenure of the former principal with little risk of objection from the current administration.

This finding demonstrates that collaboration within teacher level communities of practice is often informed by their classroom experiences, their immediate realms of concern. However, in the absence of a formal network to build coherence between varying realms of concerns throughout the educational system, there is no guarantee that

collaboration within teachers' communities of practice will align with building and/or district level goals. Glickman (1993) notes that within school communities, members may express limited thinking that does not include school/district wide concerns. Yet, systemic coherence among members' realms of concerns may provide additional capacity for teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations across content areas and in ways that support the broader school/district wide goals.

## Chapter Seven

### INSTITUTIONALIZED TEACHING AND LEARNING INNOVATION

Teachers in this study collectively defined teaching and learning innovations as the calibration/differentiation of one's instructional and/or classroom practices according to the diverse learning needs of students. Observational data reveal that this definition is influenced by an institutional culture that promotes a particular practice called "differentiated instruction." This institutionalized culture is the direct result of a district-lead standardization of practice. For example, teachers attended an in-service/staff development workshop focused on differentiated instruction for the teaching of reading.<sup>38</sup> During this in-service (guided by the Reading ITL), teachers were reminded of (1) the district's conceptualized importance of differentiated instruction and (2) the district defined components of such instruction. Teachers were reminded that differentiated instruction is important for the urban classroom under federal (NCLB) and state guidelines it as an instructional model for meeting the needs of *all* children (emphasis added). Teachers were further reminded that the differentiation of instruction "is a teacher's response to the learners' needs," as guided by the following principles: flexible grouping, ongoing assessment and analysis, focused intensity, greater duration, and alignment of these principles according to students' performance level(s) (4Nov03).

The institutionalized definition of and emphasis on differentiated instruction is not only reinforced through in-service training but also through federal mandate, as Hillside

---

<sup>38</sup> Teachers report that the current staff development emphasis has been placed on the teaching of reading. See also Chapter Six.

is a recipient of the Reading First (K-3) grant. During a spring 2004 staff development meeting, teachers were informed of a forthcoming federal audit to be conducted by Reading First evaluators. Teachers were asked to maintain thoroughly documented records of systematic student assessment results along with their correlated instructional strategies fashioned from these data. The Reading ITL announced that the audit would be conducted in schools randomly selected throughout the district during the upcoming 2004-2005 academic year. Ms. Brown warned that the audit would be intense, would be occur randomly in classrooms (K-3) where reading is taught, and would include 90 minutes of observations as well as the examination of teacher's documented records of students' performance. She added that auditors are also likely to interview teachers about their calibrated instructional practices in relation to on going student assessment and analysis data (O/26April04).

In an attempt to explore the relationships between teachers' contextualized perceptions between their pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovation, this chapter seeks to uncover the paradoxes between district defined differentiated instruction and what teachers' identify as differentiated instruction within their classrooms. This chapter simultaneously problematizes the contextual conditions that uniquely define the pedagogical capacity for engagement in differentiated instruction. These paradoxes and conditions are explored from the unique perspectives of individual teacher participants.



### **Institutionalized Instructional Practices and Paradoxes of Capacity**

When asked to provide an example of what (a) teaching and learning innovation(s) would look like in their classrooms, a small percentage of teachers explicitly mentioned the grouping of students (a district-defined principle of differentiated instruction). Not only are these voices few in number, they also represent varied perceptions of pedagogical capacity for the engagement in a particular type of teaching and learning innovation. Ms. Smith described a typical session of flexible grouping that occurred in her classroom:

We had four/five groups going on. We had one group that was doing word building, building words, writing sentences. We had another group that was doing beginning sounds and letters, building words on the dry erase board, using the dry erase marker with three boxes on it so that they could build short words like "cat" and "hat;" they were also building words, but writing words as well. We had another group doing guided reading, tracking the print, seeing if they could sound out the word as a whole. Then, we had another group using alphabet mats, using a phonemic disk on letters, and seeing if they could guess the sound. And, it was great. There was so much going on at one time, and it really works because you are doing it according to their needs and what these children really, really need. Flexible grouping is a great tool, and I absolutely love it.  
(D/P/19Nov03)

Her description identified the planning and implementation of flexible grouping as the engagement in a teaching and learning innovation because instructional activities are organized according to students' varied skill(s) level(s). In Ms. Smith's classroom, like another participant who teaches the same grade level, flexible groups occurs two to three times a week. Ms. Smith explained that in preparation for this teaching and learning innovation, she creatively pulls together supplemental materials that compliment, but extend beyond textbook driven instruction. Thus, for Ms. Smith, flexible grouping also

entails the calibration of instructional tools and techniques as informed by a careful read of curricular limits in relation to the learning needs of students.

In another classroom, students are grouped in pairs as an act of differentiated instruction. Ms. Johnson contended that sometimes students learn best from peer interactions. It has been her experience that students often understand concepts better when explained by their classroom peers, even though she has previously introduced the same concepts in her own words. Allowing students to dialogue in pairs serves as a teaching and learning innovation in Ms. Johnson's classroom. She explained:

We do a lot of partner teaching in here. I have such a gap in ability levels. There are some kids who are really strong and others who are really struggling. Quite often the stronger students are willing to work with the lower kids. And, that seems to work very well. So, I try to use peer tutors. A lot of times we will do something in the whole group and then break off to do an activity. The stronger student will sit with the weaker student.  
(D/I/18Nov03)

The variant approaches to differentiated instruction (i.e., flexible grouping in Ms. Smith's classroom and "partner teaching" in Ms. Johnson's room) are representative of the context diversity occurring across classrooms. These variations are reflective of the fact that, across classrooms, students' needs are different, student dynamics are different, and teachers' responses to students' diverse learning needs are also different. In Chapter five, Ms. Johnson explained that many students in her classroom are not intrinsically motivated by the curriculum and are unwilling to struggle with difficult instructional materials and concepts that involve an uncomfortable level of intellectual challenge. She added that when students begin to feel frustrated, they become restless and begin to invite their friends to engage in non-academic activities. Perhaps such intellectual challenges

are/were not developmentally appropriate according to students' functional level(s) or their readiness level(s) to engage in certain instructional assignments.<sup>39</sup>

In defense of her decision to place students in peer groups, Ms. Johnson explained that many students possess the potential for completing work independently; yet their actions express a certain level of resistance for independent assignments. Herein lies an example of how the dynamics of students' diverse learning needs (including a collective propensity for a particular learning style) influence teachers' capacity for engagement in particular teaching and learning innovations. While peer groups would appear to offset students' discomfort with independent intellectual struggle, the social dynamics and field sensitive<sup>40</sup> learning style of students within Ms. Johnson's classroom pose an instructional conundrum that paradoxically challenges both the desired benefit of peer groups as well as the likelihood that students in this classroom will value independent learning. Ms. Johnson identified students' persistent desire to engage in non-academic dialogues as a force to be reckoned with--a force that infringes upon the capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations aimed to promote independent learning. Using one "gifted" student in her classroom as an example, Ms. Johnson explained:

All the students in here [the classroom] do not need teacher directed instruction. There are some students in here who would be able to take an idea and after showing me that they understood it, they could be off doing things on their own--reading an extra book in that same theme or creating something like a project or researching more information on the internet. I would love to structure my classroom that way. However, even my one student who goes to the gifted program is not an independent learner. I could not say, "You go! This is your assignment for the day. These are the

---

<sup>39</sup> See also Chapter Five for a discussion of students' readiness levels.

<sup>40</sup> Ramirez (1991) referred to "field sensitive" learners as those who enjoy working with others and seek the rewards of relationships.

things you need to do." [I could not plan instruction in this way] and expect her to do it. It just wouldn't happen. She would be talking with her friend or bothering somebody, doing something that wasn't academic related. The students dictate my teaching style my classroom.  
(D/I/18Nov03)

Hence, while the talkative nature of students may fuel the communicative ties needed for pair grouping, peer groups serve as a teaching and learning innovation only to a limited extent. They provide the capacity for lower level students to learn from more advanced students. Yet, peer groups seem not to support independent learning nor supply the capacity for the more advanced students to increase their learning in significant ways.

Observational data reveal that this tension yields a distinct calibration of Ms. Johnson's teaching practices with respect to students' nature to quickly fatigue from independent intellectual struggle. In this math teacher's classroom, the alternate mode of instruction results in a teacher directed classroom. Whether students are asked to complete hands-on activities or tasks from their text/workbooks, Ms. Johnson guides most of these lessons. In order to gauge students' understanding, she continuously poses questions to the whole-class and then selects an individual student to respond. Some questions are procedural while others are conceptual. For example, during a lesson in which the students used drinking straws to create quadrangles, Ms. Johnson posed the following queries to the whole class: "Are they all the same? How many sides do they have? How do you know? What does the prefix 'quad' mean? What if you had a quadrangle in which all of the sides were the same length?" (O/P/classroom/12Jan04).

The above description of Ms. Johnson's instructional response to students' talkative nature offers a particular perspective of teachers' ultimate dependence on their

students. According to Metz (1993), teachers ultimately depend upon students for professional satisfaction in such a way that a sense of accomplishment is intricately linked to students' academic performance. For, Ms. Johnson, the academic and social/emotional learning needs/levels of students (i.e., their learning styles, dispositions, attitudes, and skills) are determining factors that guide her teaching/classroom practices. Students' needs provide the pedagogical capacity for teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations. These needs inform Ms. Johnson's dependence on students as a guide for differentiating her teaching/classroom practices. She explained, "The students [their dispositions and learning needs] dictate my teaching style" (D/I/18Nov03).

District forces that advocate a standardized practice of instruction in the way of differentiated instruction may exert ill-informed mandates that paradoxically compromise the capacity for teachers to make judgments about which instructional practices best meet the needs of the particular students in their classrooms. The district's persistent attention for differentiated instruction is a result of federal Reading First guidelines as well as the theory-of-action suggesting that differentiated instruction will meet the learning needs of "all" children. Yet, the district's concept of differentiated instruction is narrow and assumes that differentiated instruction is always the best instructional practice, particularly for the teaching of reading. This assumption was revealed through an informal dialogue with a primary level teacher who shall not be named here. This teacher participant explained that her classroom population is composed of only lower level learners and is also an inclusion room for students with special needs. She described her students as similar to those of Ms. Johnson's classroom. She explained that most students

are not independent learners and are quick to stray off task in the absence of teacher directed instruction. In an earlier (formal) dialogue, she too expressed that her instructional decisions are cued by students' dispositions for learning and their learning needs.

A district representative observing classrooms, however, was displeased with this teachers' instructional delivery and mandated that all of her subsequent reading lessons be taught by placing students in small groups such that each group would concurrently work on varied assignments. The teacher was also told not to use workbook nor worksheet activities for small group assignments. These directives were given with little knowledge of the dynamics of this classroom (i.e., the readiness level, learning needs, and dispositions of students), and no suggestions nor additional resources to support the expected instructional changes. Simply put, these directives were informed by a district-driven standardization of practice advocating small groups as a particular type of differentiated instruction. In response, this teacher took a stance of resistance. She justified her positions by exclaiming that she knew the learning styles, dispositions, and needs of her students better than any one-visit, district observer, and that her instructional innovations were planned according to the learning dynamics of her students. She proclaimed that students would not remain on task in small groups without adult assistance--assistance unavailable except when learning support instructors were/are scheduled to work with students in her classroom. This teacher explained that she would resist the district recommendations until someone from the district could model and

demonstrate the effectiveness of said mandates within the context of her classroom and with her students.

Giroux (1983) posited that resistance needs to be viewed from "beyond the immediacy of behavior to the notion of interest that underlies its often hidden logic, a logic that also has to be interpreted through the historical and cultural mediations that shape it" (p. 110). Thus, for this teacher participant, resistance is more than a symbol of deviance. Resistance is a critical stance against a district (mandate) may by a teacher due to its lack of an intimate understanding of the contexts of classrooms and the diverse learning needs of students. This sort of resistance is a direct challenge to the historically hierarchical governance structure of schooling in which those at the top are empowered to tell teachers what to do because "we know better than you." This example of teacher resistance represents a form of engagement (i.e., thinking, believing) that problematizes a district level, and often hegemonic, disregard for teachers' knowledge of which teaching and learning innovations are appropriate for the particular context and diverse learning needs of their classrooms.

### **The Capacity to Leave No Child Behind**

Teachers' capacity to engage in differentiated instruction (i.e., flexible grouping, peer/pair grouping, and concurrent small group instruction) as a teaching and learning innovations is not only dependent upon the learning needs of students. Capacity is also

dependent upon human capital,<sup>41</sup> a concept recently broached by the unnamed teacher.

Ms. Jefferson clarified:

I feel as though I need another person in the classroom. Since people are limited as to when they can come to help, flexible grouping does not occur often. I feel like I need an extra adult in the room because, at this point, I only have four kids who are truly independent workers and who don't need my assistance to guide them. By having another person to work with the larger group or a small group, we are able to meet the needs of particular groups. So, three or four times a week someone comes in. While they are working with maybe my low group in the morning, they will take the higher group later in the day. I will then work with the lower group. In this way, the needs of the learners are met--doing the same lesson, just at different ability levels. (D/I/8Jan04)

Thus, for Ms. Jefferson, additional human capital is needed not only to address the diverse skill levels of students in her classrooms, but also to accommodate the prominent lack of independent direction and self-guidance exhibited by students.

In Ms. Jefferson's reading class, flexible grouping is utilized as a teaching and learning innovation that helps all students (who have different learning needs) to learn the same thing. An emphasis on the calibration of instruction in order that all students might learn the "same thing" is perhaps contextualized by what the principal refers to as "district-driven curricular guidelines that focus on basic skills and students' universal proficiency of these skills" (D/5Nov03).

These findings reveal that capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations may not only be affected by the learning needs and dispositions of students. Capacity is also affected by an institutionalized regard for implementation purity of

---

<sup>41</sup> While this finding emerges seven years after Hillside's reconstitution, the notion of human capital threads through both the capacity for reconstitution as well as teachers' capacity to engage in differentiated instruction as a teaching and learning innovation.



federal program guidelines (i.e., Reading First) that emphasize teaching all students the same skills through a predetermined instructional model (differentiated instruction). Yet, Ms. Jefferson's claim that limited human capital hinders the capacity for engagement in this particular teaching and learning innovation simultaneously critiques the notion of leaving no *child* behind at Hillside Elementary.

One commonly expected role of the building level principal is to establish a vision and to set goals that will guide the instructional direction throughout the school. For Ms. Abbey, the No Child Left Behind Act compliments her expectation that every student at Hillside will excel academically. She explained:

I believe in having the expectations that every child can learn and that every child we be instructed to their highest potential is important.

She continued:

So I think NCLB regulations gets everyone up to [say], 'Hey we need to do what we've got to do here, that the [NCLB] goals are good, and the children really can achieve.'

Yet, Ms. Abbey expressed her personal dissatisfaction with the federal policy. She confessed that NCLB has not provided the additional support previously expected, particularly the resources needed for whole-school reform (across all grade levels). She illustrated:

We have, for example, a [Reading First] grant through the state and federal government that targets K-3 children. My concern is for the fifth grade students who take the state assessment. There is no additional assistance for fifth graders. This summer when we ran the summer program it was with the emphasis of [grades] K-3. If a school had money in their budget, they could pay teachers to work with fifth graders. I didn't have any money, so we didn't do it. So, the fifth graders are getting ready to take the test again in a few months, and they haven't had any real additional assistance. And we have a high population of special needs

students here. We are an inclusion school. We're not doing pullout or separate resource rooms. All of our children are together, [in] mixed ability [classrooms], and we're trying to serve them instructionally where they are [according to their current functional levels(s)]. I guess one concern is for the resources to do this in terms of staff and all.

Ms. Abbey, however, is hopeful that the "new [recently appointed] Secretary of Education for the state is a little more sympathetic to public education . . . ." (D/5Nov03) Hence, Ms. Jefferson is not alone in her analysis that additional human capital is needed at the classroom level in order that she might effectively calibrate her instruction for the flexible grouping of students. At the building level, the principal also identified additional (human and financial) resources as capacity builders for school change and school reform--capacity underdeveloped in relation to federal policy expectations.

Observational data gathered during site visits uncover particular conditions that account for the limited human capital available for certain classrooms. Not only are the financial resources for Reading First restricted to grades K-3, the needed human support identified by Ms. Abbey and Ms. Jefferson begins to appear less of a problem for primary classrooms (grades K-2). Much of this support is found in the way of student volunteers and student teachers. As Hillside is located near several major universities, college students often volunteer time to assist the elementary learners in reading. Such assistance is organized through the school's Reading Center. Tutors regularly pulled students from their classrooms in order to work with them one-on-one. During a fall 2003 staff meeting, Ms. Abbey reminded teachers that the university tutors were trained to work with primary students only and with groups of no more than three students at a time (O/4Nov03). Student teachers, too, were more frequently placed in primary level classrooms verses

intermediate rooms. This was particularly truer for kindergarten classrooms in which multiple student teacher placements occurred throughout the year. In fact, it was not uncommon to see both a student teacher and a student volunteer working concurrently in kindergarten classrooms. The same cannot be said for intermediate level classrooms.

### **Discussion**

These teachers' individual and corroborating descriptions of differentiated instruction bring classroom contexts (i.e., the learning needs, dispositions, learning styles of students, and human capital) to the forefront as a source of capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations. Capacity, however, is also shaped by conditions outside of the classroom--conditions institutionalized at the school level as mediated by the district according to federal mandate(s). While differentiated instruction is a required instructional method for teaching reading (a compliance of the federal Reading First grant), the institutionalized attention to and encouragement for such a practice has influenced teachers' instructional decisions for mathematics as well. Ms. Johnson's description highlights this fact. Yet, differentiated instruction is applied differently across classrooms and across content areas. For reading, differentiated instruction is specifically conceptualized as flexible grouping. In Ms. Johnson's mathematics classroom, however, differentiated instruction takes the form of peer groups. During dialogues, other teachers of mathematics also spoke of students working in groups, but their instructional descriptions fell shy of correlating these groups to any type of differentiated instruction.

Capacity for teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations is also contingent upon the availability and coordination of resources. When comparing the distribution of Reading First resources and college student volunteers/student teacher placements according to grade levels within Hillside, a critical question arises. This question problematizes the public's conceptualization of a "child." Though Ms. Abbey and federal policy may advocate for leaving no "child" behind, the public support (financial and human capital) needed to do so is primarily allocated/offered to grades K-2. Such lack of capacity (or willingness to provide substantial support beyond certain grade levels) begs the question, "At what elementary grade level does a student cease to be considered a child?" Regarding the missing human capital needed for a particular teacher to engage in differentiated instruction as a teaching and learning innovation, this question directly challenges the theoretical, practical and conceptual interpretations of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act. This question, particularly for low-income, inner city urban students most likely to benefit from the original ideals of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act,<sup>42</sup> challenges whether or not the federal government, states and school districts are willing and/or able to provide the full capacity needed for schools and teachers to address the diverse learning needs of students. Simultaneously, this question, within the context of Hillside, forces to the surface concern for whether or not future educators are being prepared for or are willing to work with "all" children or whether they deliberately seek to work with select age groups that represent particular grade level and needs populations. Following this logic, the above question also raises doubt as to

---

<sup>42</sup> In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was established as part of President Lyndon Johnson's campaign equalized educational opportunities and to eliminate poverty. See also Chapter One.

whether or not “all” African American elementary level students are considered to be "children." What appears to be more accurate is that younger (particularly kindergarten) learners are regarded as children while older learners are more likely to be viewed as an already lost, an undesirable cast--as the young effigies of the Black men and women they are destined to become. These older students no longer appear as children and, therefore, are more likely to be left behind in the NCLB pool for capacity building resources (financial and human) that support the teaching and learning process.

## Chapter Eight

### **ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL CAPACITY AND TEACHING AND LEARNING INNOVATIONS**

Chapters Four through Seven explored and uncovered the connections between teachers' individual and collective perceptions of pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations--connections that were contextually shaped by incessant reform implementation. Teachers collectively define teaching and learning innovations as the calibration/differentiation of their instructional/classroom practices in accordance with the diverse learning needs (academic and social/emotional) of their students.

A macro analysis of these chapters reveals that teachers' practical and day-to-day definition of innovative teaching shatters the notion of innovation as a "cutting-edge" phenomenon. These teachers are not quick to name technology or any other instructional methodology as a definitive teaching and learning innovation. For the teachers of Hillside, teaching and learning innovations are the myriad, ever changing, and deliberate acts that address the diverse learning needs of their students. Findings from this study reveal that teaching and learning are intricately intertwined. Not only do teachers identify their calibrated instructional and classroom practices (teaching and learning innovations) as having an effect on students' learning, they simultaneously identify the diverse learning needs of students as the central factors mediating their calibrated practices.

Yet, regarding the relationships between teachers' contextualized, individual, and collective perceptions, a prominent concept emerges: pedagogical capacity is immense

and is produced through the myriad interrelated elements of schooling. These elements exist throughout the multiple levels and relations that shape the formal process of schooling (e.g., the classroom, building, community, district, state, and national levels). Corcoran and Goertz (1995) explain that, "Discussions of capacity [regarding schools change] are often framed [differently] by advocates of particular reforms and their [varied] beliefs about what is essential to implementing their ideas" (p. 27). This exclamation is supported by findings from this study suggesting that the further away key players are from the educational core (Resnick & Hall, 1998) of schooling (teaching and learning at the classroom level), the less likely they are to interpret the diverse learning needs of students similar to teachers. These divergent degrees of concern for the learning needs of students makes problematic teachers' engagement in learning innovations as the multiple levels and relationships of schooling impact the pedagogical capacity for said engagement. What follows is a discussion of the non-exhaustive complexities of contextualized pedagogical capacity revealed through this study. This discussion concurrently proposes theoretical and practical implications for school reform, as supported by the perceptions and lived experiences of the teachers of Hillside Elementary School.

### **Classroom Level Pedagogical Capacity**

Chapter Four revealed that teachers' intrinsic commitment to and their nurturant relationships with students reciprocally provide a particular level of pedagogical capacity for their engagement in teaching and learning innovations. Teachers' intrinsic

commitment to students fuels their will to modify/calibrate their instructional and classroom practices according to the diverse learning needs of students. Supportively, nurturant relationships between teachers and students serve as a mechanism for unveiling the particular needs of students. As teachers learn more about their students through nurturant relationships, their commitment to meet the diverse learning needs of students deepens.

Deliberate classroom movements that form nurturant relationships highlight teachers' ethical decisions toward commitment while simultaneously corroborating findings from Chapter Six's discussion regarding the variant realms of concern between teachers and administrators. While administrators are responsible for coordinating the multiple functions that support teaching and learning at the classroom level (e.g., budget, curriculum, supervision and evaluation, district accountability demands, and policy), teachers' work may primarily focus on the diverse needs of students and instructional/classroom based concerns. Teachers' classroom based realm of concern directly speaks to the notion of location/place as pedagogical capacity (Haymes, 2003).

The classroom provides teachers with an immediate zone of power in which they are able to control their decision-making processes toward instructional and classroom practices. From this level of pedagogical capacity resonates a particular power/knowledge position (Foucault, 1979; 1980). This power/knowledge position recognizes teachers as intellectual meaning makers of their classroom context and as individuals empowered to make decisions based on these contextualized meanings. Ms. Day (D/P/18Febr04) reminds the reader that as a result of the initial double planning sessions,



instructional decisions were made based on teacher driven and teacher-tested data regarding "what worked with our children."

Findings from this study demonstrate that teachers utilize their power/knowledge position as a means to interpret broader factors of school reform, as top-down demands reach the classroom level. Their interpretations of such demands shine a spotlight on the divergent realms of concern derived from the multiple locations throughout the formal process of schooling. For example, the current measure of Title I school success is meeting Adequate Yearly Progress. As a means to meet such progress, the district has (through the acceptance of the federal Reading First Grant) begun to require teachers to employ a specific standardized instructional practice of differentiated instruction. Chapter Seven explored tensions between the rationale guiding this top-down demand and the classroom realities perceived by teachers. The district's mandate represents a decontextualized, technical-rational approach toward instructional reform that promises to yield increased student achievement by introducing "treatments that are teacher proof, that are reproducible, and are scientifically based--thereby taking what has long been considered 'the guesswork' out of teaching" (Easley, 2003, *The Context of Culture* section, ¶ 5).

The data from this study demonstrate that implementation purity of a district's standardization of reading instruction—differentiated instruction that purports to address *all* learning needs for students--may fail to fully account for *all* learning needs such as students' readiness level for prolonged, independent, and self-directed intellectual struggle as well as the need for additional human capital. This contradiction establishes

that the district's realm of concern lies in the notion of controlled and reproducible instructional treatments that can be implemented and monitored throughout its many schools. The teachers at Hillside, however, have had to reinterpret such mandate in accordance with their classroom based realm of concerns as a source of pedagogical capacity for meeting the diverse learning needs of students.

### **Local Community as Pedagogical Capacity**

Lipman (1998), in her text *Race, Class and Power in School Restructuring*, problematized each of the titled issues through a longitudinal, cross-case study of several Chicago high schools, of which her text discusses. She contends that, "School restructuring has specific meanings in relation to local settings--particular teachers and students, schools, and community" (p. 7). This study reveals that many of the learning needs of students span beyond purely academic issues. Chapter Five explored the impact of Hillside's local community as a source of pedagogical capacity. While some teachers identified parents' inability to assist students with their mathematics' homework, teachers collectively perceived a direct relationship between instructional assistance at home and the academic achievement of students. Moreover, several teachers specifically identified the local community as having an affect on students' social/emotional well being as well as their value of education. For example, Ms. Day (D/P/17Nov03) and Ms. Appleyard (P/25Nov03) believe that many students come to school from an environment of stress and from difficult family situations. Because of their care and commitment (See also Chapter Four) for students, these teachers collectively make ethical decisions to address

the social/ emotional needs of their student--needs that are shaped by their perceptions of the community in which Hillside is located. While their responses are limited to classroom practices, teachers choose to engage in teaching and learning innovations as a result of the impact the home/community environment has on students' learning needs. In this way, the community presents teachers with a certain level of pedagogical capacity, or, more specifically, an ethical need to modify their classroom practices.

While literature on instructional capacity addresses teacher variables such as teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Copland, 2003), such research often disregards teacher commitment. These teachers' commitment to students troubles familiar race-based findings in other studies of urban (high) schools--finding that present a particular perspective of teachers' beliefs about the conditions of low-income, African American students (e.g., Lipman, 1998; Metz, 1993). Lipman's (1998) findings reveal that teachers of class groups different from the low-income, African American students in their classrooms, particularly white teachers, are often disconnected from the daily out-of-school lives of their pupils. A pedagogy of place (Haymes, 2003), which defines the category "urban" as a particular type of place with racial meanings, offers (e.g., through media representations and stories by other teachers and students) to culturally and geographically disconnected teachers a certain understanding of African American students and their home environments. As a result, these teachers tend to develop a particular deficiency ideology used to describe students as "at risk" for academic failure. Lipman (1998) interprets data from her study to claim that white teachers of non-core academic subject areas were more likely to express a belief that the social conditions of

students' home environments created insurmountable obstacles beyond the school's control and beyond their instructional abilities at the classroom level.

The racial composition of Hillside teachers equals that of the key-participants in this study--63 percent white and 37 percent African American--and reflects a significant contrast to the 99.9 percent African American student body. Data from Hillside trouble the above racial relationships between white teachers and African American students. More specifically, teachers' dialogues about and descriptions of their interactions with students were racially indistinguishable. For example, all key participants exhibited expressed commitment toward the particular Hillside student population, indistinguishable by race (See also Chapter Four). Furthermore, several of these teachers noted the authoritative stance they have taken in which they "pushed" and encouraged students to complete assignments (See also Chapter Five). Many of the linguistic expressions and activities used by both African American and white teachers have been borrowed from cultural references familiar to students in an effort to motivate their participation in lessons. For example, Ms. Smith modified the popular song "Who Let the Dogs Out" in order to garner students' attention and enthusiasm. These acts demonstrate teachers' commitment and ability to access the cultural nuances of their students' out-of-school, lived environments in order to enhance their learning experiences--an example of pedagogical capacity for/and engagement in teaching and learning innovations.

These findings make clear that teaching is more than an act of instructional delivery. Undergirding effective teaching are teachers' ethical decisions about the multiple learning needs of students as well as their commitment to uncover and address

such needs. These include not only academic needs, but also social and emotional needs. For the teachers of Hillside, this has also meant coming to understand their positions as teachers in relation to what they may perceive as the positive and/or negative factors of students' out-of-school, lived environments. They have had to make ethical and professional decisions about their responses to these perceptions as forces that influence their instructional practices as well as the relationships they build with students.

However, such ethical positions are traits difficult to teach in schools of education. They must be owned by teachers and are most likely developed over time through critical reflections about one's practices and the purpose of education and teaching. In Chapter Four, Ms. Appleyard explained that part of her job is to help students navigate through hardships in life and "to help these kids realize that any situation can be turned into a positive situation" (D/P/25Nov03). Her ethical decision to address the non-academic needs of students is not accounted for in top-down policies that narrowly focus on increasing student achievement, as measured by quantifiable, standardized test scores. Yet, data from this study make plain that such non-academic student needs and teachers' ethical responses to these needs directly influence the capacity to increase student achievement.

### **Building Level Capacity**

Findings from this study demonstrate that top-down reforms blur the division between the uniquely building level capacities and those capacities derived from the district's relationship with the school. For example, Chapter Five revealed that while

teachers at Hillside had a direct hand in selecting the Harcourt reading program (a decision informed by teachers' understanding of students' collective deficiencies in decoding and phonetic skills), the district-wide adoption of this series represented a standardization of practice (See also Chapters Six and Seven) in which certain instructional demands became standardized by district mandate. Moreover, the state's acceptance of federal Reading First monies wedded both the district and the school to certain federally regulated practices regarding the teaching of reading, another standardization of practice monitored by the district.

The double planning sessions of Hillside represent a unique example of building level capacity. This example of capacity also highlights the manner in which capacity is context sensitive and may be altered as changes within the context occur. The double planning sessions, in both instances of significant school reform implementation, were simultaneously affected by specific leadership initiatives.

In 1997 Hillside entered into the CSR implementation process of reconstitution. As a result of the local Board of Education's decision to limit its control of the school's internal organization, Mr. Thachery, the former principal, was provided the liberty to lead in a grass roots manner (See also Chapter Six). Thus, he initiated the double planning sessions for teachers in hopes that they might develop a collective sense of responsibility for the academic achievement of students. This plan also required teachers to collaborate about their instructional practices and the academic development of students within their grade level, as informed by student achievement data. The implementation of NCLB, in many ways, usurped the grassroots ideals of reconstitution by ushering in a

standardization of practice that restricted the current principal's control for independent instructional leadership. The district driven standardization of practice that currently governs the instructional programming for reading inadvertently altered the leadership structure for mathematics teachers' engagement in double planning sessions. In the absence of a formal accountability system to ensure/monitor their participation in double planning sessions, certain mathematics teachers were provided the capacity to nurture their own leadership skills that govern(ed) their participation in the double planning sessions, thereby forming what Wegner (1998) and Wegner et al. (2002) call a community of practice. Hence, building level capacity (i.e., leadership) for governing the double planning sessions has been sensitive to the incessant changes in Hillside's context.

Hess (1999) contends that the notion of reform has become status quo. He borrowed a quote from Chester Finn, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education, to question the value of reform as vogue: "Because of this faddishness, American education often appears to be in the throes of ceaseless change. Yet few of these innovations endure. Fewer yield improved results. And nearly all of them are made within the boundaries of the old design" (p. 7). This study reveals that while the wheels of reform continue to turn in the form of serial reform implementation, there is little guarantee that reforms will generate adequate building level capacity for teachers to engage in teaching and learning innovations. For example, Chapter seven showed that, even when district-driven standardization of practice resulted in a particular, institutionalized definition of teaching and learning innovation (i.e., differentiated instruction), the full capacity needed for teachers to actualize the required instructional practice failed to materialize. More

specifically, Ms. Johnson cited the dispositions of students as unaccounted for in policy mandates while Ms. Jefferson noted the lack of additional human capital. Because reform and building level capacity are inextricable from the "old design" of systemic hierarchy and bureaucracy, schools are often held hostage by top-down policy--policy that is ill-informed of the contextually specific variables that influence a schools' potential to fully provide capacity for teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations.

This study also challenges the traditional notion of top-down reform as occurring outside of a school and as something that is done to a school. Using the double planning sessions as an example, top-down reform may also find its genesis within the school. Mr. Thacery introduced the double planning sessions as a top-down policy reform existing within the school. Hillside teachers initially had no input into this policy design. The double planning sessions were introduced as a top-down mandate from the expressed authority of the principal, while the district abstained from micro managing the daily activities of the school. Hence, a comparison of Hillside's reconstitution to the implementation of NCLB demonstrates that the old hierarchy design of schooling positions top-down reform within a relationship between the simultaneous existence of active and dormant policy mandates occurring harmoniously or discordantly throughout the multiple levels of an educational system (each in a top-down fashion). The congruous alignment of these policies is necessary to ensure their full implementation at the target level(s). Yet, serial reform implementation for Hillside has demonstrated that "the more things change, the more they remain the same." Schooling remains a hierarchical



practice. Schools and teachers remain at the bottom rung. Reform tends to remain something that is done to those at the bottom rather than with them collaboratively.

### **Public Ideology and Policy as Capacity**

Beyond the classroom, beyond the school, beyond local communities, and beyond the school district, a broader, public ideology has been constructed to mediate commonsense beliefs about student achievement. In Chapter One the claim was made that standardized test scores have been used as the primary source for measuring the achievement of students. Such assessments have also been used to identify schools as failing, particularly inner city, urban schools. Apple (1986) explains the ideology promoted by state sponsored competency tests:

The tests represent and reinforce a redefinition of the content of education as specific skills learning, where skills are defined narrowly. Thus, the language of competency, performance, and effectiveness [as measured by standardized tests] replaces broader language systems centered around knowledge, understanding, and personal development. (p. 147)

Several teachers and the current principal of Hillside recognize academic success as an opportunity to make a break in one's social status (See also Chapters Three and Five). Within their dialogues, there appeared no language to speak about students' academic success beyond the confines of a technical-rational ideology that attributes academic success to a quantifiable, standardized test score. Broader ideological understandings and representations of student achievement shape their small language in this area.

The principle behind President Lyndon Johnson's 1965 Elementary and Secondary Educational Act (ESEA) was to provide financial assistance to local education agencies (LEAs) serving large populations of low-income families. The goal of such assistance was to raise the academic achievement of low-income children as to compare favorably with children from other schools. The success of this plan was and continues to be measured by students' standardized test scores, namely the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). Simply stated, the goal of ESEA, historically and contemporarily, has been/is to close the achievement gap between low-income students and students from homes of economic privilege--the great Black-White academic gap. As a result of ESEA and texts like *Closing the Educational Achievement Gap: Is Title I Working?* (Kosters & Mast, 2003), not only is educational policy at the national, state and local levels shaped by students' academic achievement scores, but the American public (including the teachers of Hillside) has also come to understand student achievement in terms of standardized test scores. Thus, "Good learning is only the accumulation of atomistic skills and facts and answering the questions on standardized achievement tests for students" (Apple, 1986, p. 147).

This finding regarding teachers' limited perspective of students' academic success must be taken with caution as this study at no time deliberately prompted teachers to share their thoughts about broader concepts of student achievement. Yet, teachers' attempts to raise student achievement scores on the state test have directly influenced (provided the pedagogical capacity for) their engagement in teaching and learning innovations. Chapter Six showed that a small cadre of intermediate level mathematics

teachers sought to engage in a teaching and learning innovation that aligned their instructional practices across grade levels in order to ensure students' future readiness to do well on the state test. Even still, the teachers in this study collectively recognized the need to support students' academic success by addressing other issues within the teaching and learning process as well. Teachers recognized student's social/emotional, motivational, and readiness needs (See also Chapters Four, Five, and Seven) as factors to be addressed in order to support students' potential for academic achievement. Such recognition symbolizes teachers' commitment to the children they serve as well as their understanding that the pedagogical capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations is simultaneously and always affected by variables far beyond the classroom, beyond the school, beyond the design of policy, and beyond the public's perceptions of student achievement.

### **The Complex Relationships between Pedagogical Capacity and Teaching and Learning Innovations**

These examples demonstrate the complexity of pedagogical capacity for teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations, as revealed through this study.

Demonstrated here, pedagogical capacity is complex, not simply because it emanates from multiple stations and elements (e.g., classroom level, school level, and community level) within the process of schooling, but because these are relational, interrelated and exist as systems within larger social/educational systems (Sarason, 1990). Furthermore, such complexity troubles the notion of capacity as the "potential of material, a product,

person, or group to fulfill a function if it is used in a particular [intended and deliberate] way" (Newmann, King & Youngs, 2001, p. 261).

For example, Chapter Seven captured the duality of capacity by examining an institutionalized teaching and learning innovation (i.e., differentiated instruction). Hillside's concept of differentiated instruction resulted from a district defined instructional practice/policy, as influenced by NCLB's Reading First regulations. As a result of this a district defined, institutionalized teaching and learning innovation, teachers were instructed to follow the principles of: flexible grouping, ongoing assessment and analysis, focused intensity, greater duration, and the alignment of these principles according to students' performance levels (O/Staff Development Meeting/4Nov03). Conversations with teachers who explicitly named differentiated instruction as a part/consideration of their instructional repertoire revealed their unique classroom-based interpretations/applications of this institutionalized teaching and learning innovation. These teachers collectively defined differentiated instruction as a practice of placing student into groups; yet, they also identified certain "zones of wishful thinking" (Hill & Celio, 1998)<sup>43</sup> embedded within the district's design for this instructional methodology.

While district expectations may have provided the capacity for teachers to place students into groups according to teachers' discretion and regarding students' ability levels, teachers also identified the learning/social dispositions of students and human capital as impeding their capacity. These zones of wishful thinking result in the duality of

---

<sup>43</sup> A zone of wishful thinking assumes that reform efforts will fall into place as desired without the ability or planning to account for all conditions needed to make such efforts successful.

pedagogical capacity that may be produced by a single policy mandate. In other words, as top-down policies designed from a particular realm of concern are acted upon other levels of the educational system (that represent a variant realm of concern), their capacity for full implementation is likely to be dwarfed by unpredictable variables that shape the divergent realms of concerns throughout the system. Top-down policies are as likely to fail (at least in part) as they are to succeed, thereby reinforcing the notion that the more things change, the more they remain the same--the incessant rise and stall of reform.

Berends, Bodilly, and Kirby (2002) drew from their study of CSR to conclude:

"Throughout the history of education reform, a prominent theme has emerged: the process of planned educational change is much more complex than initially anticipated" (p. 170). Because of divergent realms of concern that exist at the various levels of schooling, those policy makers furthest away from the classroom are least likely to plan for the contextualized variables that teachers individually and collectively face on a daily basis within the teaching and learning process. This phenomenon is only one factor that adds to the complexity of pedagogical capacity for the implementation of top-down reform policies to produce desired results.

Though the pedagogical capacity for teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations results from the amalgamated relations between multiple levels of decision-making and actions, the classroom remains the primary location of the core technology (Prestine & McGreal, 1997) of schooling--teaching and learning. This study demonstrates that teachers perceived that their engagement in teaching and learning innovations--the calibration/differentiation of instructional/classroom practices--serves to

meet the learning needs of students. Yet, they also perceived the need for pedagogical capacity in order to maximize the potential of their engagement. This finding places pedagogical capacity at the nexus of teaching and learning. And while factors/conditions like collaboration, a principal's clearly articulated school mission/vision, and parents' instructional support may provide pedagogical capacity, this study reveals that classroom level capacity most directly influences teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations. Within the current hierarchical educational system, classroom level pedagogical capacity tends to remain the nexus between teaching and learning (even though serial reform implementation), for it is at this level that the core of education takes place.

Teachers identified numerous factors/conditions as classroom level pedagogical capacity. Three prominent examples are teachers' nurturant relationships with students, their commitment to the students they serve, and the use of informal/classroom assessment practices. Each is under girded by teachers' ethical/intellectual decision-making. These decisions refer to teachers' intrinsic ethical/moral desire to make a difference in the lives of the students they teach as well as their interpretations of policy demands, resource allotments, and other contextualized variables within their workplace. Moreover, their interpretations represent teachers' (classroom level) realm of concern as well as their value for immediate capacity--pedagogical capacity needed to address the vicissitudes of students' varied learning needs.

While pedagogical capacity is complex (existing with a multi-layered educational/social system and producing both favorable and negative results), classroom level

capacity is equally multifarious and may be understood as the least common denominator for teachers' ability to address the diverse learning needs, that is, their engagement in teaching and learning innovations. Figure D. highlights the gross analysis of such complexities as revealed through this study. Teachers' perceptions of pedagogical capacity and engagement in teaching and learning innovations are centrally focused at the classroom level and are coupled by the diverse learning needs of students. Teachers' intrinsic, ethical decisions and their interpretations of broader contextualized variables are influenced by students' needs as well as both their pedagogical capacity for and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations.<sup>44</sup> All variables affecting these relationships are not specifically named; yet, they are recognized in the broader concepts of district policy, state policy, national policy and community.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> While the arrows in Figure D. are one directional, they are not static and are representative of this study's gross analysis of the relationships between teachers' individual and collective perceptions of pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations.

<sup>45</sup> Examples of these variables include reconstitution, NCLB, a district driven standardization of practice and institutionalized teaching and learning innovation, statewide (standardized) assessment, and parents' instructional support for homework.

# District Policy and District Culture

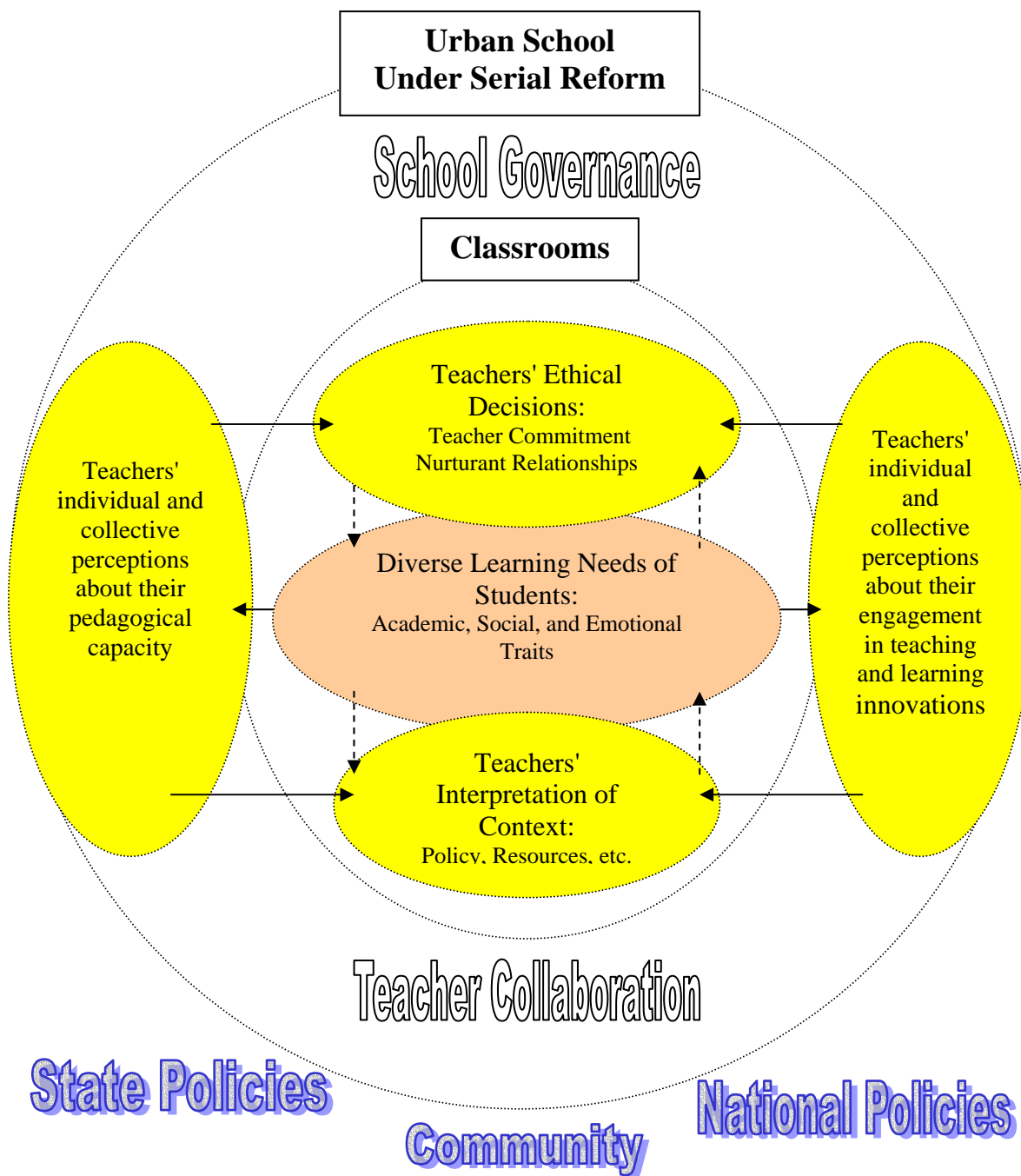


Figure D. The Relationships Connections Between Pedagogical Capacity and Teachers' Engagement in Teaching and Learning Innovations.



### **Implications and Recommendations**

A gross analysis of Chapters Four through Seven confirms that the complexity of school reform is real and that such complexity has a real effect on the pedagogical capacity for teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations at the classroom level. In simple, the complexities of school reform intensify teachers' work. As an illustration of such intensified work space, introduced here is a teacher's commentary not previously mentioned in this study. Ms. Adele explained:

The school-based rules are fine . . . , but it's the outside influences. The outside agencies [NCLB and the district] keep saying, 'You have to do this. You have to do that.' Sometimes you feel like, if they come in that door with one more piece of paper, you are just going to leave. Like I said, it's not the children, it's not the curriculum. It is none of that. It's the constant changing [of] things, instead of letting things that work work. I mean . . . [education is] influenced too much by people who are not educators? (D/P/19Nov03)

Her comment captures a teacher's perspective of classroom intensification as brought on by top-down policy mandates and other external initiated demands. Ms. Adele is not alone, however; other teachers, as previously discussed, also share this sentiment of intensification as brought on by factors beyond the classroom and beyond teachers' control.

This point is made here in order to underscore several important implications gleaned from this study regarding the bureaucratic design of schooling and serial reform implementation in relation to the relationships between teachers' perceived pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations. While several of these issues were briefly introduced earlier, they, along with others, are further developed

here: (1) a pedagogy of blame; (2) the language of achievement; (3) the need for dialogue; (4) a call for interdisciplinary research; and (5) a call for mixed methods research design. Each represents implications for a reconceptualization of certain practices and ideologies that currently inform school reform, urban schooling, and the pedagogical capacity for teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations.

### **A Pedagogy of Blame**

A review of literature for this study revealed that education is an inherently political system (Jones & Malen, 2002; Easley, 2003). As such, various perspectives of blame can be found to explain the alleged failures in education. Districts blame schools, America blames its teachers, and teachers blame parents. Such action can be understood as a pedagogy of blame, which mimics a game of dodge ball (i.e., dodging the blame) while simultaneously legitimating a system of unidirectional accountability. For example, reconstituted schools are often promised additional resources not provided prior to district decree for reconstitution (Malen et al., 2002; Goldstein et al., 1998). As such, the incumbent teachers and administrators were left to work in conditions of limited resources. Acting through a theory of reconstitution as remedy (Goldstein et al., 1998), districts essentially blame schools' former employees for failure while excusing themselves of fault for not having provided much need resources. This theory of remedy simultaneously provides districts with a way to promises the public change and future building level success.

In the case of Hillside, the implementation of NCLB has not resulted in the expected resources. Many critics of the policy, like the National Education Association (NEA, 2003), have made the claim that the implementation of this policy has forced upon states new under funded mandates that violate a provision of NCLB. Ms. Abbey's response reminds the reader of the ways in which this policy has financially impacted building level capacity:

It hasn't turned out to be additional resources for us [as related to the NCLBA resource allotment for Hillside Elementary School]. The faculty has taken on the mission to leave no child behind. It's just that when I'm saying we need all children proficient, teachers are looking at me saying, 'Ok, we have the curriculum; we are here every day, but we need some assistance in terms of having smaller class size, in terms of having after school programs that are of quality and that really connect with our work and other programs.' We're just getting small measures of that.  
(D/5Nov/03)

Cases of inadequate or ephemeral financial allocations from the top down are not uncommon in school reform. A comparative literature review of the federally recognized comprehensive school reform models Success for All, The Edison Project, and Reconstitution revealed that schools entering into these models are initially promised additional financial, human and/or technological support. Yet, support is often decreased as improvement occurs. The belief here is that once positive change has been produced, schools will be able sustain such change through their own devices (Goldstein et al., 1998). In reality, as new teachers join schools and change begets new challenges to reckon with, support should not be decreased but increased. From an administrative perspective as the superintendent of Trenton, N.J.'s Public Schools, Lytle (2002) contends:

consultant support [from external reform designers and district officials] should be increased, not decreased, as schools move into the third and fourth years of implementation. As the [reform] models evolve and school staffing changes, the need for related professional development continues. School budgets need to reflect these costs. (p. 166)

In fact, the 1990's RAND research on New American Schools' reform models showed that the lack of funding was the single most important reason why most schools decided to drop a previously adopted reform designs (Berends et al., 2002).

In the absence of reciprocal accountability (Goldstein et al., 1998), policy architects and top-level policy administrators are able to privately and discreetly renege on their promises to provide schools with additional resources (Malen et al., 2002). Within the current hierarchical and systematic educational design, those at the top retain the legitimate power to publicly blame schools for their inability to sustain improvements, even when the money is gone. In the absence of reciprocal accountability, a pedagogy of blame often works most effectively (though not definitively speaking) from a position of power and in a top-down direction. Hillside has begun to experience a standardization of practice (See also Chapters Six and Seven) as a result of NCLB and district mandates. These mandates implicate the school and teachers for students' low achievement while simultaneously suggesting that those at the top know what is best for schools, teachers, and students in the political game of dodging the blame. What is needed, however, is a reciprocal accountability relationship in which all stakeholders are responsible for the intellectual growth of students and the success of schooling as an institution. Within such a relationship, those furthest away from the classroom and

furthest away from the lowest rung of the current educational system are equally implicated in the failure of schools to leave no child behind.

### **The Language of Achievement**

This chapter introduced the concept of teachers' narrow definition of student achievement. Historically and contemporarily, academic achievement in/for American schools has been defined through an epistemology of comparison that requires quantifiable measures such as standardized test scores. The current language of achievement, over time, has come to be publicly accepted as commonsense and rationale and has been mediated through/by media representations (Freedman & Easley, 2004), policy, and research on academic achievement (Kosters & Mast, 2003). This study reveals that such commonsense thinking also governs teachers' talk and work around student achievement.

Though the teachers at Hillside recognize(d) and deliberately calibrate(d) their instructional/classroom practices in relation to the non-academic learning needs of students (i.e., social and emotional traits as well as motivational needs that may be shaped by students' day-to-day, out-of-school lived experiences), their language of achievement is limited by a commonly accepted and hegemonic understanding that standardized testing is "the measure" of students' success. Furthermore, their efforts to address these non-academic learning needs did not appear to be valued by district leaders and instructional facilitators (See also Chapter Seven). In reality, high stakes accountability reforms often focus on an immediate increase in student achievement, as

measured by test scores. As such, those players furthest away from the classroom tend to be least concerned with the specific and diverse learning needs of students, as recognized by classroom teachers. Their top-down decisions tend not to reflect an interest for the day-to-day, contextualized calibrations/differentiations that teachers engage in at the classroom level, as informed by the non-academic learning (i.e., social, emotional and motivational) needs of students. However, their expectations for classroom and building level outcomes on standardized achievement tests shape the conditions that lead teachers to purposefully prioritize their engagement in teaching and learning innovations according to those practices that are rewarded (Robertson, 1996). These expectations simultaneously shape teachers' language around student achievement.

Yet, a high standard for student achievement and a standardization of achievement are not necessarily equivalent. Whereas a high standard for student achievement may easily accommodate the varied learning needs of students by recognizing the academic growth of students individually, a standardization of achievement may not. For example, NCLB requires that students collectively and quantifiably produce a certain level of achievement each year. This rate of achievement is based on a formula that uses 2001-2002 student achievement data as the baseline. Districts and states are required to show consistent AYP for 95 percent of students tested (including students with disabilities taking alternative assessments as well as disaggregated groups regarding students' ethnic/racial and socio-economic backgrounds). Consistent AYP requires that those tested achieve consistent increments toward proficiency through the academic year 2013-2014 (See Appendix I). In the case of

Hillside, such data are taken from the fifth grade state achievement results. The test scores from each year's fifth grade cohort are compared, quantifiably, in order to determine AYP. Such is the standardization of achievement--a comparison of one cohort of students to another in order to measure AYP--that down plays the individual achievement of students, no matter how small. Ms. Jefferson reminds the reader:

[through informal assessments,] I can see that the children have progressed, even if it is by one or two percent, which may seem small to the state and others who collect the data, but that is huge for many of our kids. So, [because of the significance these small gains for some children] that means more to me than the 10 percent the state would ask for.  
(D/I/8Jan03)

Conversely, a high standard for student achievement acts in response to what Ms. Jefferson and the other teachers at Hillside have identified as the diverse learning needs of students that should be honored by recognizing the achievement of all students, regardless of how small or large. As such, the measure of achievement rests in a comparison of growth for the individual learner. This would mean that students' academic achievement would be measured individually by growth--a comparison of beginning of the year to end of the year assessment data.

### **A Pedagogy of Diversion.**

The limited scope of achievement presented here acts as a "pedagogy of diversion" (Giroux, 1998) that is concomitantly played out at multiple levels. Noguera (Personal Communication, April 14, 2004) contends that top-down policy/decision makers often ignore the condition in which urban teachers have to work. This means they

not only ignore the physical conditions and limited resources of many buildings, as described by Anyon (1997) and Kozol (1991)--conditions that deter teachers' willingness to remain in the profession--but also the community based conditions that affect the learning needs of students (See also Chapter Five). In such cases, top-down mandates assume that a "one-size fits all" instructional and curricular treatment will serve the learning needs of *all* students, particularly for low-performing students in inner city, urban schools thought to be in need of fixing. This assumption ignores the diverse learning needs of students as well as the varied levels of capacity needed for teachers to individually and collectively address the needs of students in their classrooms. At the classroom level, a standardization of practice may result in a pedagogical diversion that teaches students the basic skills needed to pass the test--one of the codes of academic success--while simultaneously leaving them inept of the cultural/social/intellectual capital needed to broach the broader socio-political and economic systems that exist beyond their immediate neighborhoods (Giroux, 1998).

To understand these pedagogical diversions is to question the extent to which the current educational system provides a "good" education to certain student populations. Deeply steeped in the current educational system, these pedagogical diversions also do little to advance the ideal "that a good education is an essential foundation for success in terms of the material, social and civic aspects of American life" (Hirschland & Steinmo, 2003, p. 334). They fail to support students' development of the intellectual and emotional capacities needed to mediate their personal lives and the conditions in which



they live. To understand these pedagogical diversions is to question the historical and contemporary language of achievement for all students.

However, reform decisions that result from dialogues with schools (regarding pedagogical capacity for engagement in teaching and learning innovations) and families serve as a more accurate method for meeting and addressing the diverse learning needs of students. While such a tactic may seem unusual and radical within the commonsense logic of a top-down educational system, particularly for reforms enacted at the national level, such acts are needed in order to sponsor the full development and academic success of students. Such acts are useful for uncovering and nurturing the intellectual and emotional capacities students need to mediate their personal lives, which in turn influence their academic growth. Such acts require that policies are made in counsel with schools and parents and that programs are designed collaboratively with the input of schools and parents. This also means that agendas for healthy school-family relationships are set collaboratively between schools and families and not by schools for families, in the absence of understanding families' needs, values, motivations and capacities to support students' academic development outside of the school.

## **Suggestions for Further Research**

### **A Call for Interdisciplinary Research**

As exemplified through this study, school reform and its effects on the everyday realities of teachers is complex. As such, those who research school reform and school change often adopt (a) particular interest(s) in this area. Researchers tend to take a specialized approach toward understanding the process of schooling and what measures are need to improve this process. Their specialization is encouraged by the institutionalized norms found in their workplace. Colleges of education are often divided into specialized departments and program areas (e.g., curriculum and instruction, educational administration, and school psychology) in which their curriculums are rarely integrated. Likewise, their research interests remain disconnected as well. English and Steffy (2001) contend: "To believe that faculty in colleges of education could work on a multidisciplinary basis across departments poses an unbelievable obstacle." (p. 6). They explain that the tenure and promotion process across departments tend to work against colleagues with diverse views.

However, the complexity of serial reform implementation and pedagogical capacity, as demonstrated in this study, beg the attention of an interdisciplinary study of school reform and school change. For example, this study revealed pedagogical capacity as emanating from multiple areas and relationships. These multiple areas and relationships are often addressed in very specialized ways within colleges of education.

School leadership, curriculum design, instructional design and delivery, staff development, the social/emotional needs of students, and policy are all addressed in this study, and each of these issues is typically studied within varied programs/disciplines at the university level. At this juncture, the research advocates a re-evaluation of such isolated research perspectives toward school reform and school change. Integrated research is needed in order to better inform the public, policy makers, parents, educational leaders, educational researchers, and others about the interrelated complexities of school reform and school change. Needed are integrated research agendas that move beyond a rhetorical recognition that schools exist within larger and broader social, political, and educational systems (Sarason, 1990)--systems that produce the pedagogical capacity for teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations in ways that are interrelated and dynamic.

### **A Call for Mix Methods Research**

Quantitative data have been used support the claim that Title I is not working, and that the effort to provide additional federal monies to low-income schools does little to close the achievement gap (Kosters & Mast, 2003). Such data are the result of quantitative research methods whose findings are typically considered generalizable beyond their sample population(s). A study of standardized test score results (NAEP, state assessments, etc.) has been the measure used to determine any and all movement within the achievement gap at a national level. The results of these tests have also been used to support the claim that American schools are failing as well as the call for school

overhauls like reconstitution. English and Steffy (2001) identified four myths that legitimate the widespread use of tests: (1) Tests are neutral and objective (like quantitative research methods); (2) Tests are meritocratic tools; (3) Tests take the politics out of education; and (4) One can test (inspect) quality into education. Furthermore, the current research agenda of the NCLBA is to fund quantitative research over qualitative research for the reasons mentioned above along with the beliefs that such research is rigorous, scientific, and objective.

This study reveals that the particular context of an urban, inner-city school (i.e., the interpretations and impact of serial reform implementation, as experienced by teachers) directly affects the pedagogical capacity for teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations. The variables that define the complexities of pedagogical capacity at Hillside were explored through qualitative methods--methods that not only revealed the "what" of the school's context but also the "why" behind the "what." There is little doubt that both the "whats" and "whys" of the relationships between teachers' pedagogical capacity and their engagement in teaching and learning innovations would have been revealed through quantitative measures alone. Yet, the results of this study are not generalizable beyond the context of Hillside. These results, however, may be important for designing further reach in urban elementary schools that have contemporarily undergone multiple reform efforts. I propose this study as a jumping off point for future mixed methods research that systematically explores both the what and why of pedagogical capacity and teachers' engagement in teaching and learning innovations as a means for arriving at generalizable data and implications.

## REFERENCES

- Adelman, C. (1989). The practical ethic takes priority over methodology. In W. Carr (Ed.), *Quality in teaching: Arguments for a reflective profession*. New York: Falmer Press.
- Anyon, J. (1997). *Ghetto schooling: A political economy of urban educational reform*. New York: Teacher College Press.
- Apple, M. W. (1982). *Education and Power*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Apple, M. W. (1986). *Teachers and Texts: A political economy of class and gender relations in education*. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Apple, M. W. & Weis, L. (1983). Ideology and practice in schooling: A political and conceptual introduction. In M. W. Apple & L. Weis (Eds.), *Ideology and practice in schooling*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Argyris, C. & Schön, D. A. (1974). *Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ascher, C. (1988). *Improving the school-home connection for low-income urban parents*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 293 973).
- Ayers, W. (1995). *To become a teacher: Making a difference children's lives*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Bailey, L.B. (2002). Training teachers to design constructivist reading homework. *Dissertation Abstract International*, 63(078) 2507.
- Berends, M., Bodilly, S. & Kirby, S. N. (2002). Looking back over a decade of whole-

- school reform: The experience of New American Schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 84(2), 168 - 175.
- Borman, G.D., Rachuba, L., Datnow, A., Alberg, M., Iver, M. M., Stringfield, S., & Ross, S. (2000). *Successes and challenges in reforming low-performing, high poverty title I schools* (Tech. Rep. No. 48). Johns Hopkins University & University of Memphis, Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk.
- Brown, J.S., & Duguid, P. (2000). *The social life of information*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Bryan, J., & Burstein, K. & Bryan, T. (2001). Students with learning disabilities: Homework problems and promising practices. *Educational Psychologist*, 36(3), 167–180.
- Bushnell, M. (2003). Teachers in the schoolhouse panopticon: Complicity and resistance. *Education and Urban Society*, 35(3), 251-272.
- Chase, B. (1998). Trial by Fire. National Education Association. Retrieved June 15, 1990 from <http://nea.org/publiced/chased/bc981115.html>.
- Clark, C. & Peterson, P. L. (1986). Teachers' thought processes. In M. C. Wittrock (ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (3rd. ed., pp 255- 296). New York: Macmillan.
- Cohen, D. K., Raudenbush, S. W., & Ball, D. L. (2003). Resources, instruction, and research. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 25(2), 119-142.
- Comer, J. P. & Haynes, N. M. (1991). Parental involvement in schools: An ecological

- approach. *Elementary School Journal*, 91(3), 271-177.
- Conant, J. B. (1961). *Slums & suburbs: A commentary on schools in metropolitan areas*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Cooper, R. & Jordan, W. J. (2003). Cultural issues in comprehensive school reform. *Urban Education*, 38(4), 380-397.
- Copland, M.A. (2003). Leadership of inquiry: Building and sustaining capacity for school improvement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 25(4), 375-395.
- Corcoran, T. & Goertz, M. (1995). Instructional capacity and high performance schools. *Educational Researcher*, 24 (9), 27-31.
- Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dahl, K. L., Scharer, P. L., Lawson, L. L., & Crogan, P. R. (1999). Phonics instruction and student achievement in whole language first grade classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 34(3), 312-341.
- Danielewicz, J. (2001). *Teaching selves: Identity, pedagogy and teacher education*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Darling-Hammond, D. (1994). Developing professional development schools: Early lessons, challenge, and promise. In L. Darling-Hammond, (Ed.). *Professional development schools: Schools for developing a profession*. NY: Teachers College Press.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*. Retrieved

- July 28, 2003 from <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n1/>
- Deal, T. E. & Peterson, K. D. (1999). *Shaping school culture: The heart of leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: The New Press.
- Desimone, L. M., Porter, A. C., Garet, M. S., Yoon, K. S., Birman, B. F. (2002). Effects of professional development on teachers' instruction: Results from a three-year longitudinal study. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(2), 81-112.
- Easley, J. (2003). *The Political Tension of Education as a Public Good: The Voice of a Martin Luther King Jr. Scholar*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Easley, J., Henning, M.B., & Bradley, B. (2003). Finding graduate student voices through the deconstruction of democratic relationships in a PDS. *The Professional Educator*, 25(2), 55-65.
- Education Week/Pew Charitable Trust (1988). *Quality counts '98: The urban challenge-public education in the 50 states* (Vol. XVII, No. 17). Washington, DC: Author.
- Elmore, R. F. (1997). Backward mapping: Implementation research and policy decisions. *Political Science Quarterly*, 94(4), 601-616.
- English, F. W. & Steffy, B. E. (2001). *Deep curriculum alignment: Creating a level playing field for all children on high-stakes tests of educational accountability*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Finn, C. E., Jr. (1992). Introduction. In C. E. Finn, Jr. & T. Rebarber, (Eds.), *Education Reform in the '90s*. New York: MacMillan.



- Firestone, W. A. & Pennell, J. R. (1993). Teacher commitment, working conditions, and differential incentive policies. *Review of Educational Research*, 63(4), 498-525.
- Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge*. Brighton: Harvester.
- Freedman, D. & Easley, J. (2004). It's my way or the highway: Academic success and social mobility in Dangerous Minds and Boston Public. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 7(1), 73-83.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2001b). *The new meaning of educational change*. (3rd. Ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gillian, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Giroux, H. A. (1981). *Ideology, culture, and the process of schooling*. Philadelphia: Temple Press.
- Giroux, H. A. (1988). *Teachers as intellectuals: Toward a critical pedagogy of learning*. New York: Bergin & Garvey.
- Giroux, H. A. (1983). *Theory & resistance in education: A pedagogy for the opposition*. New York: Bergin & Garvey.
- Giroux, H. A., & Simon, R. I. (1989). Schooling, popular culture, and a pedagogy of possibility. In H. Giroux & R. Simon (Eds.), *Popular culture, schooling and everyday life*. Wesport: Bergin and Garvey Press.
- Glickman, C. D. (1993). *Renewing America's schools: A guide for school-based action*.

- San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Goldstein, J., Kelemen, M., & Koski, W. (1998). *Reconstitution in theory and practice: The experience of San Francisco*. Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA. April 13 -17, 1998.
- Goodlad, J. I. (1984). *A place called school: Prospects for the future*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Griffin, G. A (1987). The school in society and social organization of the school: Implications for staff development. In M. F. Wideen & I. Andrews (Eds.), *Staff development for school improvement: A focus on the teacher*. New York: The Falmer Press.
- Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times: Teachers' work and culture in the postmodern age*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hart, T. (1997, June 13). Edison Project: The corporate way of life enters the classroom. *Wichita Business Journal*. Retrieved December 27, 2002, from <http://withita.bizjournals.com/wichita/stories/1997/06/16/story4.html>
- Haymes, S. N. (2003). Toward a pedagogy of place for Black urban struggle. In A. Darder, M. Baltadano, & R. D. Torres (Eds.), *The critical pedagogy reader* (pp. 211-237). New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Hess, F. M. (1999). *Spinning Wheels: The Politics of Urban School Reform*. Washington, DC: Brookings Press.
- Hess, G. A., Jr. (2003). Reconstitution--three years later: Monitoring the effect of sanctions on Chicago high schools. *Education and Urban Society*, 35(3), 300-237.

- Hill, P. T. & Celio, M. B. (1998). *Fixing urban schools*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Hirschland, M. J., & Steinmo, S. (2003). Correcting the record: Understanding the history of federal intervention and failure in securing U. S. educational reform. *Educational Policy*, 17(3), 343-364.
- Huberman, M. (1993). The model of the independent artisan in teachers' professional relations. In J. W. Little & M. W. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Teachers' work: Individuals, colleagues and contexts*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Jones, D. R. & Malen, B. (2002). Sources of victory, seeds of defeat: Linking enactment politics and implementation developments. In W. Hoy & C. Miskel (Eds.), *Theory and research in educational administration*, Volume 1. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.
- Jorgensen, D. L. (1989). *Participant observation: A methodology for human studies*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Kosters, M. H. & Mast, B. D. (2003). *Closing the education achievement gap: Is Title I working?* Washington, DC: The AEI Press.
- Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Lawson, M. A. (2003). School-family relationships in context: Parent and teacher perceptions of parent involvement. *Urban Educator*, 38(1), 77-133.
- Lieberman, A. (1996). Practices that support teacher development: Transforming conceptions of professional learning. In M.W. McLaughlin & I. Oberman (Eds.),

- Teacher learning: New policies, new practices.* New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lipman, P. (1998). *Race, class, and power in school restructuring.* New York: SUNY Press.
- Little, J. W. (2001). Professional development in pursuit of school reform. In A. Lieberman & L. Miller (Eds.), *Teachers caught in the action: Professional development that matters.* New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lodge, C. & Reed, J. (2003). Transforming school improvement now and for the future. *Journal of Educational Change*, 4(1), 45-62.
- Lytle, J. H. (2002). Whole-school reform from the inside. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 84(2), 164-167).
- Malen, B. & Rice, J. K. (2003, March). *Strengthening incentives, diluting capacity: An analysis of the initial effects of high stakes accountability initiatives on local school.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Finance Association, Orlando, FL.
- Malen, B., Croninger, R., Muncey, D., & Redmond-Jones, D. (2002). Reconstituting schools: "Testing" the "theory of action." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(2), 113-132.
- Malen, B., Croninger, R., Redmond, D., & Muncey, D. (1999, October). *Uncovering the potential contradictions in reconstitution reforms.* Paper presented at the annual conference on the University Council for Educational Administration, Minneapolis, MN.

- Manning, M. & Kamii, C. (2000). Whole language vs. isolated phonics instruction: A longitudinal study in kindergarten with reading and writing tasks. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 15(1), 53-65.
- Mathews, D. (1996). *Is there a public for public schools?* Dayton, Ohio: Kettering Foundation Press.
- McLaughlin, M. W. (1993). What matters most in teachers' work context? In J. W. Little & M. W. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Teachers work: Individuals, colleagues, and contexts*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Meier, D. (2002). *In schools we trust: Creating communities of learning in an era of testing and standardization*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education: Revised and expanded from case study research*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Metz, M. H. (1993). Teachers' ultimate dependence on their students. In J. W. Little & M. W. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Teachers' work: Individuals, colleagues, and contexts*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Miles, M. B. (1964). Educational innovation the nature of the problem. In M. B. Matthew (Ed.), *Innovation in education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mitchell, A. (2000). Historical trends in federal education that target students placed at risk. In M.G. Sanders (Ed.), *Schooling students placed at risk: Research, policy*

- and practice in the education of poor and minority adolescents.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- National Center for Education Statistics(1996). *Urban schools: The challenge of location and poverty.* Washington, DC: Author.
- NEA (July 7, 2003). *National Education Association to challenge provisions of No Child Left Behind Act: Litigation to focus on the impact of unfunded mandates.*  
Retrieved July 8, 2003 from  
<http://www.nea.org/newsreleases/2003/nr030702.html>
- NEA (November, 1998). Reconstituting low-performing schools, and the role of the union. In *Trends: Issues in Urban Education.* Retrieved January 15, 2003, from <http://www.nea.org/bt/3-school/trnd1198.pdf>.
- Newmann, F. M., King, M. B., & Youngs, P. (2001). Professional development that addresses school capacity: Lessons from urban elementary schools. *American Journal of Education*, 108(4), 259-299.
- Nieto, S. (1997). School reform and student achievement: A multicultural perspective. In J. A. Banks, and C. A. M. Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education.* New York: Teachers College Press.

- Noguera, P. A. (2003). *City schools and the American dream: Reclaiming the promise of public schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Noguera, P. A. (2003b). The trouble with Black boys: The role and influence of environment and cultural factors on the academic performance of African American males. *Urban Education*, 38(4), 431-459.
- Orfield, G., & Eaton, S. (1996). *Dismantling desegregation*. New York: The New Press.
- Paris, D. C. (1995). *Ideology and educational reform*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation evaluation methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Prestine, N. A. & McGreal, T. L. (1997). Fragile changes, sturdy lives: Implementing authentic assessment in schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 33 (3), 371-400.
- Ramirez, M. III. (1991). *Psychotherapy and counseling with minorities*. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Rait, E. (1995). Against the current: Organizational learning in schools. In S. B. Bacharach & B. Mundell (Eds.), *Images of schools: structures and roles in organizational behavior*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Resnick, L. B. & Hall, M. W. (1998). Learning organizations for sustainable education reform. *Daedalus*, 127(4), 89-118.
- Rice, J. K., & Croninger, R. G. (2001). *Resource generation, reallocation or depletion: A multidisciplinary analysis of the impact of school reconstitution on local capacity*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Finance Association,

- Cincinnati, OH.
- Rice, J. K., & Malen, B. (2002, March). *The human costs of educational reform: The case of school reconstitution*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference on the American Education Finance Association, Albuquerque, NM.
- Robertson, S. L. (1996). Teachers' work, restructuring and Postfordism: Constructing the new 'professionalism.' In I. F. Goodson & A. Hargreaves (Eds.), *Teachers' professional lives*. London: Falmer Press.
- Rosenholtz, S. J. (1991). *Teachers' workplace: The social organization of schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Rowan, B. (1995). The organizational design of schools. In S. B. Bacharach & B. Mundell (Eds.), *Images of schools: structures and roles in organizational behavior*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- San Francisco Unified School District (2002). *Mission, Goals, and Philosophical Tenets*. Retrieved December 17, 2002, from <http://storm.sfusd.edu/apps/Intro/mission.cfm> 17, December 2002
- Sarason, S. (1990). *The predictable failure of educational reform: Can we change course before it's too late?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Currency Doubleday.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1997). How can we move toward a community theory of supervision? Wrong theory/wrong practice. In J. Glanz & R. F. Newville (Eds.), *Educational*



- Supervision: Perspectives Issues, and Controversies*. Massachusetts: Christopher-Gordon Publishers
- Smith-Maddox, R. (1998). Defining culture as a dimension of academic achievement: Implications for culturally responsive curriculum, instruction, and assessment. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 67(3), 302-317.
- Smyth, J. (1991). *Teachers as collaborative learners: Challenging dominate forms of supervision*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Thompson, G. L. (2003). Predicting African American parents' and guardians' satisfaction with teachers and public schools. *The Journal of educational Research*, 96(1), 277-285.
- Tyack, D., & Tobin, W. (1994). The "grammar" of schooling: Why has it been so hard to change? *American Educational Research Journal*, 31(3), pp. 481-518.
- U. S. Department of Education. (2001). *Family involvement in children's education: An idea book* (abridged version). Jessup, MD: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.
- U. S. Department of Education. (2002, August). *Guidance on Comprehensive School Reform Program*. Retrieved November 20, 2002, from <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/guidance2002.html>
- U. S. Department of Education. (1998, April 20). *Goals 2000: Reforming Education to Improve Student Achievement*. Retrieved December 2, 2002, from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/G2kReforming/g2exuc.html>.

- U. S. Department of Education. (2002b). *Meeting the high quality teachers challenge: The Secretary's annual report on teacher quality*. Washington D.C.: Author.
- U. S. Department of Education. (1998, April ). *Tools for schools: Introduction*. Retrieved November 20, 2002, from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ToolsforSchools/intro.html>.
- U. S. Department of Education. (2002c). *What to know & where to go: Parent's guide to No Child Left Behind*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Wegner, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. United Kingdom: Cambridge Press.
- Wegner, E., McDormott, R., & Snyder, W. M. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Wideen, M. F., Mayer-Smith, J. A., & Moon, B. J. (1996). Knowledge, teacher development and change. In I. F. Goodson & A. Hargreaves (Eds.), *Teachers' professional lives*. London: Falmer Press.
- Wilson, B. L. & Corbett, H. K. (2001). *Listening to urban kids: School reform and the teachers they want*. New York: SUNY.
- Wilson, K. R. & Allen, W. R. (1987). Explaining the educational attainment of young Black adults: Critical familial and extra-familial influences. *Journal of Negro Education*, 56(1), 64-76.

## Appendices

## Appendix A

**INITIAL TEACHER INTERVIEW (DIALOGUE) PROTOCOL**

1. Could you tell me, please, how long have you been a teacher? How many of these years have been here at Hillside Elementary (Pseudonym)?
2. What would you say were the major factors that influenced your decision to teach at this school?
3. How would you describe yourself as a teacher? (For example, what would be your teaching philosophy?)
4. To what degree would you describe your teaching as innovative?
5. What factors would you say most affect your current teaching practices? (Perhaps these factors exist within the school, the district, or from prior experiences).
6. Assuming that someone wanted to observe your classroom teaching, could you describe for me what he/she would see? To what degree would you say this description highlights your best teaching?
7. Could you describe for me an example of what you would classify as your best teaching?
8. Did you teach at another school prior to this one?
  - a. If so, to what degree would you say your teaching is the same/different from your former school context(s)? What factors would you say account for these similarities/differences?
  - b. If no, in what ways would you say working here at Hillside elementary has specifically affected your teaching?

## Appendix B

**ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW (DIALOGUE) PROTOCOL**

1. Could you tell me, please, how long have you been/ were at this school as the principal?
2. What are/were the goals of this school and how have/did those change(d) during your tenure as principal of Hillside Elementary (pseudonym)?
3. How would you describe the curriculum focus of Hillside under your tenure? (For the current principal only)
4. In what ways has the No Child Left Behind Act affected the culture of this school? (For the former principal only)
5. In what ways did external policy decisions affect the culture of this school?
6. Can you talk a little about the demographics in both the student and teacher populations of Hillside during your tenure?
7. Have there been/were there any changes in this populations, and what factors would you say influenced these changes?
8. What conditions do you believe provide(d) teachers with the capacity to be innovative teachers?

## Appendix C

**SAMPLING OF PARTICIPANTS**

Principals' Categories	Potential Participants	Non-key Participants	Key Participants
I & I	1	-	1
I & II	7	1*	4
II & II	1	-	-
II & III	2	-	1
III & III	-	-	-
III & I	2	1	1
I (One list only)	2	2	-
II (One list only)	4	-	1
III (One list only)	2	-	-
Totals	21	4	8

Category I: Highly innovative teachers

Category II: Teachers with the potential to demonstrate teaching innovations in the future

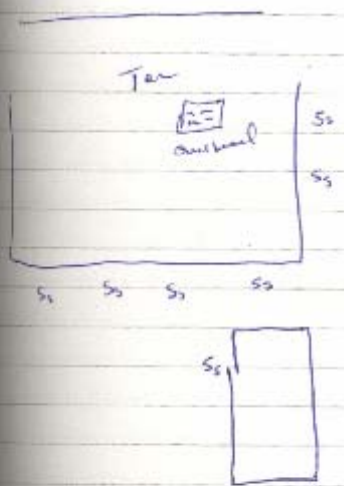
Category III: Teachers least likely to demonstrate teaching innovations

\* Observations only

Appendix D

SAMPLE FIELD NOTES

7/24/03 Ms Lenora O/C/I  
Math 1855



Tia tells S5 they will first review  
homework. They are asked to take  
out their homework & their supplies  
etc.

Tia calls on S5 for their answer  
-Tia asks - "I want to know how  
you got that answer"

Tia "Remember sometimes when you are  
doing multiple choice to cross  
out the choices that don't apply"

Tia - Did anyone solve this problem in  
a different way?

Problem #10  
Which of the following is 3rd order  
in a function

3(a) - what is this? S5 answers

Tia is that correct?  
S5 answers no

Tia Then look it over  
S5 explains how  
he should go

choice  
choices  $3\frac{1}{3}$ ,  $3\frac{2}{3}$ ,  $3\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $3\frac{3}{4}$

Tia asks "How did you know to  
check it down?"

Post Dialogue

Still commenting on their  
practice of probing for  
understanding. Tia  
insists that S5 is a  
good for her & her son  
engaging challenge. She  
continues talking to the  
classroom.

## Reflection

6/Nov/03

~~10/Nov/03~~ ~~Ms. Brown~~

Design of Reading Prog. - ? what does this look like?  
 Assessment used? How have we been found of informal assessment  
 carried out? what do they mean?  
 what practices through the program ~~could~~ would provide Cop. for Tigg-Tim?

17-Nov-03

Ms. Day commented on the request of the  
 Reading committee if the success placed on her - no  
 room for so to saying teaching because of the  
 technical nature and high level demands of the curriculum.  
 - Expects that the same conditions because  
 her son is also in the Progress programme.

14-Nov-03

Time P teacher share common time together  
 during lunch (as well as during scheduled play time).  
 Informal dialogue during lunch revealed their  
 concern about the high demands of the curriculum of  
 high school setting. These teachers discuss how many of  
 their children are not developmentally ready to  
 master certain skills required by the curriculum. The  
 concern that their teaching strategies  
 become one in that they try to get  
 lower performing ES tracks that they can feel successful because

they often notice  
 that when ES  
 become frustrated  
 and not being able  
 to meet all  
 academic demands  
 placed on them  
 but while sometimes  
 struggling to  
 keep ahead of  
 the curriculum



## Appendix E

**CHARACTERISTICS OF KEY PARTICIPANTS**

<b>Key Participant</b>	<b>Total Years Teaching</b>	<b>Years at Hillside</b>	<b>Current Assignment</b>
<b>Ms. Adele</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Ms. Jefferson</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Ms. Johnson</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Ms. Lenora</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Ms. Day</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Ms. Campbell</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Ms. Smith</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Ms. Brown*</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>-</b>

P - Primary grades (K-2)

I - Intermediate grades (3-5)

S - Specialty area (e.g. Music, Art, Instructional Liaison, Librarian)

\*Taught at Hills during the first year of reconstitution, left for one year to return until present date. This key participant was finishing her first year as the school's assigned Literacy Coach

## Appendix F

**OBSERVATIONS AND DIALOGUES WITH KEY PARTICIPANTS**

<b>Key Participant</b>	<b>Formal Classroom Observations (45 Minutes)</b>	<b>Formal Dialogues (45 Minutes)</b>	<b>Informal Dialogues*</b>	<b>Current Assignment</b>
<b>Ms. Adele</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Ms. Jefferson</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Ms. Johnson</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Ms. Lenora</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Ms. Day</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Ms. Campbell</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Ms. Smith</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Ms. Brown</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>20.25</b>	<b>14.25</b>	<b>15.30</b>	<b>-</b>

\* Informal dialogues occurred following observations, in the hallways during the change of classes, during lunch, after school, during member checking, etc. The numbers here represent frequency of contact. In approximation, these dialogues ranged from as short as three minutes to as long as thirty minutes. The total hours for this category are based on an average of 15 minutes per contact.

## Appendix G

**TEACHER FORM**INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

The Pennsylvania State University - Teachers

Title of Project: Contextualizing Pedagogical Capacity: The Nexus  
Between Teaching and Learning.

Principal Investigator: Jacob Easley II, 144 Chambers Building  
University Park, PA 16802  
(412) 371-5236, [JeasleyII@psu.edu](mailto:JeasleyII@psu.edu)

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775.

1. Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to explore the relationships between teachers' perceptions about their capacity for innovative teaching and their engagement in teaching and learning practices.
2. Procedures to be followed: You will be asked to participate in at least one and no more than five interviews regarding your perceptions about capacity for innovative teaching in relation to your teaching and learning practices. Also, you will be asked to permit the principal investigator to observe your classroom teaching in order to better understand the context of your work. Understandings derived from interviews and observations will be used for the dissertation purposes of the principal investigator, whose developing understandings will be presented to you throughout the study in order to assure clarity and accuracy in representation.
3. Discomforts and Risks: Participating in this research offers no risk beyond those experienced in your everyday work life. Interviews will be conducted during non-instructional time, for example, before and after school. All information gained during interviews and observations will remain confidential and will be reported using a coding system to insure your confidentiality (see below).
4. Benefits: As a participant, you will be provided the opportunity to reflectively discuss your professional beliefs and practices. You may also learn more about conditions that affect these beliefs and practices.
5. Duration: This research project will last from December 2003 through May 2004. An initial interview will last approximately 45 minutes. Subsequent interviews (no more than four) will last for no more than 45 minutes. Observations (no more than four classroom observations) will occur during your regular work routine (e.g., during classroom instruction, instructional meetings, faculty meetings and in-service activities). Each classroom observation will occur

for no longer than one class period in length. All observations will focus only on actions and comments as related to the capacity for innovative teaching.

6. **Statement of Confidentiality:** I will assure your confidentiality by creating a coding system for our contacts. This coding system will include the use of pseudonyms. The titles Mr. and Ms. will be used to indicate gender. Teachers' grade levels will be assigned a coding system of "P" for primary (grades K-2) and "I" for intermediate (grades 3-5). Other identifiers include a date to indicate the date of the contact, a letter to describe the type of contact ("O" – observation, "D"--interview) and a word to describe the location. Specialty area teachers will be coded with the letter "S." For example: Participant, grade level, the date, type of contact, and location: (Mr. Thachery, P, 12/20/92, O, Classroom).

Pseudonyms will be used when describing the school and its classrooms, and when identifying direct quotes within the researcher's notes, memos, or formally prepared documents (dissertation, publications or conference papers).

7. All tape recorded interviews and field notes (from observations) will be kept in a locked cabinet at the home of Jacob Easley II, the only person with access to these files. These materials will be erased/destroyed by the researcher after five years.
8. **Right to Ask Questions:** You can ask and I will answer your questions at any time during this study. You may contact me at 412-371-5236, [jeasleyII@psu.edu](mailto:jeasleyII@psu.edu) or schedule a time to meet with me while I am visiting the school.
9. **Compensation:** Participants will receive no monetary compensation.
10. **Voluntary Participation:** You do not have to participate in this research. You can end your participation at any time by telling me. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.
11. The advisor of this study is Dr. Dan Marshall. His contact information is: [jdm13@psu.edu](mailto:jdm13@psu.edu), 814-865-2239 O, 814-863-7602 Fax, 204 E Rackley Bldg., Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you consent to participate in this research study and to the terms above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this signed consent form to keep for your records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

The informed consent procedure has been followed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

ORP USE ONLY:

**The Pennsylvania State University Office for Research Protections**  
Approval Date: 12/12/03 – J. Mathieu, Expiration Date: 12/11/04 – J. Mathieu  
Social Science Institutional Review Board

## Appendix H

**PRINCIPAL FORM**INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

The Pennsylvania State University - Principals

Title of Project: Contextualizing Pedagogical Capacity: The Nexus  
Between Teaching and Learning.

Principal Investigator: Jacob Easley II, 144 Chambers Building  
University Park, PA 16802  
(412) 371-5236, [JeasleyII@psu.edu](mailto:JeasleyII@psu.edu)

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775.

1. Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to explore the relationships between teachers' perceptions about their capacity for innovative teaching and their teaching and learning practices.
2. Procedures to be followed: You will be asked to participate in at least one (and no more than two) confidential interview(s). The interview is designed to identify potential teacher participants and to understand the historical and contemporary contexts of your school (from an administrator's perspective). Understandings derived from interviews will be used for the dissertation purposes of the principal investigator, whose developing understandings will be presented to you during the study in order to assure clarity and accuracy in representation.
3. Discomforts and Risks: There is no risk in participating in this research beyond those experienced in your everyday work life. Interviews will be conducted during non-instructional time, for example, before and after school. All information gained during interviews and observations will remain confidential and will be reported using a coding system to insure your confidentiality (see below).
4. Benefits: As a participant you might learn more about yourself as an administrator and/or conditions that affect(ed) your (teachers') classroom practices.
5. Duration: This research project will last from December 2003 through May 2004. Interviews will last approximately 45 minutes.
6. Statement of Confidentiality: I will assure your confidentiality by creating a coding system for our contacts. This coding system will include the use of pseudonyms. The titles Mr. and Ms. will be used to indicate gender. Teachers' grade levels will be assigned a coding system of "P" for primary (grades K-2) and "I" for intermediate (grades 3-5). Other identifiers include a date to indicate the date of the contact, a letter to describe the type of contact ("O" –

observation, “D”--interview) and a word to describe the location. Specialty area teachers will be coded with the letter “S.” For example: Participant, grade level, the date, type of contact, and location: (Mr. Thachery, P, 12/20/92,O, Classroom).

Pseudonyms will be used when describing the school and its classrooms, and when identifying direct quotes within the researcher’s notes, memos, or formally prepared documents (dissertation, publications or conference papers).

7. All tape-recorded interviews will be kept in a locked cabinet at the home of Jacob Easley II, the only person with access to these files. These materials will be erased/destroyed by the researcher after five years.
8. Right to Ask Questions: You can ask and I will answer your questions at anytime during this study. You may contact me at 412-371-5236, [jeasleyII@psu.edu](mailto:jeasleyII@psu.edu) or schedule a time to meet with me while I am visiting the school.
9. Compensation: Participants will receive no monetary compensation.
10. Voluntary Participation: You do not have to participate in this research. You can end your participation at any time by telling me. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.
11. The advisor of this study is Dr. Dan Marshall. His contact information is: [jdm13@psu.edu](mailto:jdm13@psu.edu), 814-865-2239 O, 814-863-7602 Fax, 204 E Rackley Bldg., Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you consent to participate in this research study and to the terms above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this signed consent form to keep for your records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

The informed consent procedure has been followed:

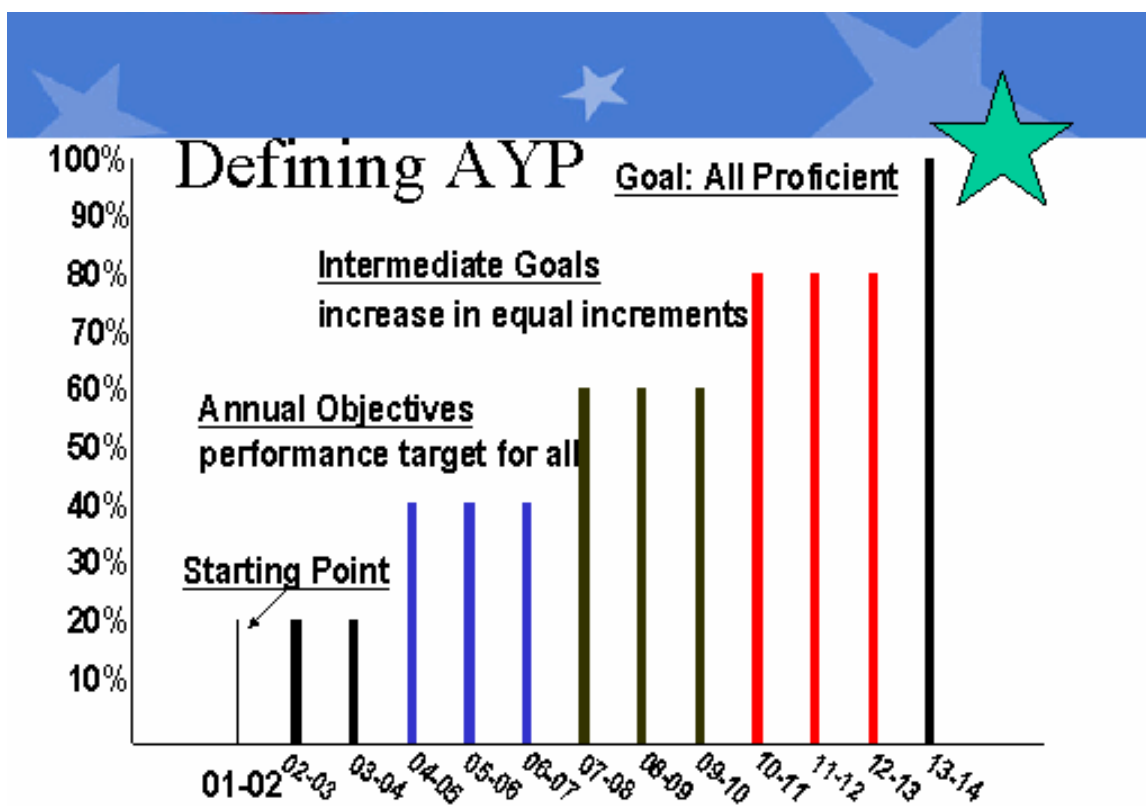
\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

<p>ORP USE ONLY:  <b>The Pennsylvania State University Office for Research Protections</b>  <b>Approval Date: 12/12/03 – J. Mathieu, Expiration Date: 12/11/04 – J. Mathieu</b>  <b>Social Science Institutional Review Board</b></p>
---

## Appendix I

## Defining AYP



Source: U.S. Department of Education  
October 2002 Student Achievement and School Accountability Conference

# Vita

## Jacob Easley II

---

### Education

The Pennsylvania State University  
**Doctor of Philosophy--2004**  
Educational Leadership/Curriculum and Instruction

Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
**Masters of Arts--1996**  
English/ Applied Linguistics (ESL)

Morehouse College  
**Bachelor of Arts--1992**  
Spanish

### Research

#### Research Interests

- Contextualized Leadership/Teacher Development.
- Schools as Organizations and Organizational Change.
- Understanding ways in which the socio-political, economic, cultural and ideological factors in and around (urban) schools shape and define the formal processes of schooling.

### Teaching and Instructional Supervision

**Professional Development Associate--Intern Supervisor (Fall, 2002 - Spring, 2003)**  
CI 495 B (Fall 2002) Clinical Application of Instruction Elementary Education PDS Section

CI 495 D (Spring 2003) Practicum in Student Teaching - Elementary and Kindergarten Education  
Supervise year-long interns in a triad supervisory model consisting of interns, mentor teachers and university PDAs. This Professional Development School model seeks to promote continuous professional growth and renewal among all PDS members through an inquiry stance towards teacher education and learning.

### Publications

Freedman, D. & Easley, J. (2004). It's my way or the highway: Academic success and social mobility in Dangerous Minds and Boston Public. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 7(1), 73-83.

Easley, J., Henning, M.B., & Bradley, B. (2003). Finding graduate student voices through the deconstruction of democratic relationships in a PDS. *The Professional Educator*, 25(2), 55-65.