



ICSEI

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## ICSEI MONOGRAPH SERIES: Issue 6

How Do We Create and Exchange Knowledge for Systemic Change?

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London Centre for Leadership in Learning, UCL Institute of Education

## ICSEI Monograph Series

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## From the Four-Part Series Editor

ICSEI offers a platform for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to engage in salient school effectiveness and school improvement (SESI) discourse. It is in this spirit that the four-part monograph series was developed; to both highlight cutting edge scholarship in SESI and to illuminate discussions from the annual ICSEI conference. Each of the four monographs in this series addresses a global SESI area, coupling empirical evidence with issues raised during the ICSEI 2015 symposium, "Networks for Change: Global Perspectives, Local Practices." The monographs conclude with implications for policy, research, and practice.

The four-part series features:

### **Local Innovation and Autonomy in Contexts of Standardization and Accountability**

*Stephen Anderson, Professor, University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education*

This monograph draws upon data from a comparative investigation of school effectiveness characteristics in 22 Ontario elementary schools selected for variation in performance on provincial tests (high and low) relative to other schools in comparable demographic contexts (mid/high and low SES). Anderson responds to the inquiry, "If everybody is doing the same things, why do we continue to see gaps in student performance between schools?" He calls to question whether meaningful opportunities for innovation and its



diffusion can co-exist with the pervasive press for standardization in education goals, outcomes and best practices.

### **How do We Create and Exchange Knowledge for Systemic Change?**

*Louise Stoll, Professor of Professional Learning, London Centre for Leadership in Learning, UCL Institute of Education*

A national R&D project, involving the UCL Institute of Education and Challenge Partners, a national network of over 300 schools, explores how middle leaders (department chairs and teacher leaders) contribute to effective practices by sharing knowledge, engaging in joint practice development, and leading and tracking colleagues' change across schools. Stoll explores the question, "Who are the key players in the middle tier between government and schools, and what role should researchers play?" Her study focuses on familiar ICSEI territory of creating collaborative cultures within and between schools – professional learning communities.

### **Student Voice: A Catalyst for Educational Change**

*Dennis Shirley, Professor, Lynch School of Education, Boston College*

This paper presents a study of cross-national networks for school improvement and educational change. Shirley reports on findings from an educational network organized by the Alberta Teachers' Association in Canada, the Center for International Mobility Organization, and the National Board of Education in Finland, a learning exchange change network that brought



principals, teachers, and high school students from two jurisdictions together to learn about similarities and differences between the two systems and to engender their own strategies for change. He responds to a question, “How can we improve learning, and do so in a way that students have opportunities to express and develop their opinions on matters both large and small?”

## **Exceptional Effectiveness: Taking a Comparative Perspective on Educational Performance**

*Alma Harris, Institute of Education, University College London  
& Andy Hargreaves, Boston College*

This monograph argues that more contemporary empirically-based comparative studies in the SESI field are needed to counter the pervasive influence of popular interpretations of large-scale assessments, such as PISA. At the 2015 ICSEI Congress, a symposium that focused on the opportunities and challenges facing the SESI field explored the relationship between comparative effectiveness, performance, and measurement. The catalyst for a group discussion within this symposium was a comparative study of high performance in three sectors - education, business, and sport - and a recent analysis of the leadership associated with high performance in these three sectors. This monograph proposes that such comparative analyses across sectors and systems offer much deeper insights into the process of educational reform in diverse educational settings. The monograph also addresses the question, “Is co-opetition (a synergistic relation between competition and collaboration) a dynamic opportunity or a grudging necessity in exercising uplifting



leadership that enhances improvement in schools and school systems?"

The authors and I hope the series will encourage ICSEI members to utilize the annual conference as a place to not only share cutting edge research and SESI practices but to also engage in collaboration that generates new contributions to the field.

Helen Janc Malone (editor)

Institute for Educational Leadership (U.S.)



# How Do We Create and Exchange Knowledge for Systemic Change?

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## Abstract

Since 2010, the policy mantra in England has been of a 'self-improving school system.' For this to succeed, schools have to have the capacity to support each other's development. A national R&D project, involving the UCL Institute of Education and Challenge Partners, a national network of over 300 schools, explored how middle leaders (department chairs and teacher leaders) contribute to effective practices by sharing knowledge, engaging in joint practice development, and leading and tracking colleagues' change across schools. Researchers engaged with academic evidence and combined it with their own experience through stimulating conversation that challenged their thinking, promoted new understanding, and helped generate new knowledge to enhance their practice. The study also focused on familiar ICSEI territory of creating collaborative cultures within and between schools –



professional learning communities. Many participants have developed confidence in their abilities to lead networked interventions with middle leaders and teachers in other schools in their regional hubs. This monograph highlights the middle leaders' study, while also drawing on an ICSEI 2015 symposium discussion, "Networks for Change: Global Perspectives, Local Practices."



## The Middle Tier of Education

The middle tier of education is shifting in a number of countries. In England, since 2010 a national policy commitment has been to significantly increase the number of schools directly funded by government and outside of local authority (LA – district) control. The associated mantra is of a self-improving, evidence-based school system. The notion of self-improvement is underpinned by a political, ideological stance that promotes school autonomy while diminishing the role and power of districts. Schools are thereby, intended to be freed up from associated bureaucracy. Meanwhile, sponsors are incentivized to set up schools run at public expense, and to establish chains of schools with some potential for financial gain. The national strategy places the power for leading self-improvement in the hands of the most highly performing schools and their headteachers (principals), assuming that these schools, sponsors, and collaboration between schools will drive up standards across the educational system.

While some evidence of the benefits of expert headteachers in a system leadership role exists (e.g., Baars, 2014), achieving the goal of a self-improv-



ing school system is likely to partially depend on schools' ability to support each other's development, rather than just leaving it to the most successful schools. Networking between schools has been recognized as an improvement strategy for some years (Muijs, 2010), and there are examples of school-to-school collaboration in England that have been found to have an impact on student outcomes (e.g., Ainscow, 2015; Chapman, 2015). Despite the English system's orientation toward individual school accountability, many formal and informal partnership arrangements have been established, and a growing number of practitioners around the country are engaged in networking. In addition to providing mutual support, with the national emphasis on outstanding schools supporting others,<sup>1</sup> a range of other 'partners' are usually involved. These include LAs, multi-academy trusts,<sup>2</sup> which oversee independent state schools (around 60% of secondary schools and 15% of primary/elementary schools are now academies or free schools), consultants, and universities and other researchers.

Voluntary networks of schools also exist. For example, Challenge Partners<sup>3</sup> is a national network of over 300 schools. It is committed to designing evidence-informed programs and supporting improvement in line with ICSEI's



mission. One of its major programs, Challenge the Gap, is a school-to-school approach to narrow the gap between its most and least disadvantaged students. The project involves 'Learning Threes': 15 outstanding Challenge Partners schools with expertise at narrowing the gap. Each work with two other schools, seeking to improve the attainment of their disadvantaged students. A team of staff from each of the schools collaborate through a program, focusing on three important narrowing the gap elements: leadership, teaching quality, and pupil interventions. The program was initially delivered by external expert facilitators and practitioners, but is also developing capacity in supporting outstanding staff in participating schools to learn how to lead further schools through the program.<sup>4</sup>

There are many individuals and organizations already occupying the middle tier space in England. Other countries have similar experiences; to take just two examples, consultancy organizations supporting free schools in Sweden, and Children First Networks in New York City (Wohlstetter, Smith, & Gallagher, 2013). Given ICSEI's mission to connect research, policy, and practice, who are the key players in the middle tier between government and schools, and what role should researchers play?



# The Potential of Middle Leadership

Where it is practiced effectively, distributed leadership can have a positive impact on organizational development and change (Leithwood, Mascall, & Strauss, 2009) and influence student learning outcomes (Silins & Mulford, 2002). In England, middle leaders (teacher leaders) are potentially well placed to spread best practice not only within, but also across schools. In recent years, there have been a growing number of national and local research and development projects where middle leaders and senior leaders, including headteachers (principals), carry out collaborative inquiry. A recent study, *Middle Leaders as Catalysts for Improving Teacher Practice: Developing a Knowledge Exchange and Impact Network for Challenge Partner Schools*,<sup>5</sup> partnered a team of researchers and 'knowledge professionals' (staff developers) at the UCL Institute of Education (IOE) with school leaders from Challenge Partners (Stoll & Brown, 2015).

The project team worked with 15 middle leader 'catalysts' (change agents) from a range of regional partnership hubs. The project goals were that this catalyst network would be able to: a) share effectively research and prac



tice-based knowledge about excellent middle leadership practice and professional development across schools; b) develop evidence-based tools and processes to track ways in which middle leaders change and enhance their practice as a result of knowledge sharing; c) have mechanisms to track the impact of middle leaders' knowledge sharing and changed professional practice on changed teacher practice; and d) be able to share the outcomes of their applied project work more widely to benefit a broader range of educators. Through a research and development project, the expanded team – IOE team, CP, and middle leaders – explored answers to four research questions:

1. What do we know about effective middle leadership within and across schools that changes teachers' practice?
2. What are powerful ways to share knowledge about excellent middle leadership practice within and across schools?
3. What evidence-based tools can be designed collaboratively between Challenge Partners middle leaders and academic partners to track changes in teachers' practice as a result of middle leaders' interventions? What principles underpin evidence-based tools designed collaboratively between Challenge Partners middle leaders and academic



3. partners to track changes in teachers' practice as a result of middle leaders' interventions? What principles underpin evidence-based tools designed collaboratively between Challenge Partners middle leaders and academic partners to track changes in teachers' practice as a result of middle leaders' interventions?
4. What leadership conditions in schools help to develop and embed cultures of shared outstanding practice?

The project findings<sup>6</sup> had a number of pointers about middle leadership:

- *Catalysts learned how to lead educational change in a theory-rich way.* Introducing a range of research perspectives on the nature of change itself proved highly significant. This immediately resonated with middle leaders and appeared to have been quickly internalized by many of them. They consistently drew on it throughout the project, weaving it into workshop conversations and tasks between sessions. They also reported on resulting successes, and were keen to share what they had learned about change leadership with other middle leaders in their regional hubs and elsewhere. In essence, they had an increasingly so-



- sophisticated understanding of their own role as catalysts for change in relation to the project's theory of action about knowledge exchange.
- *Catalysts learned robust approaches to tracking impact, and enabled others to do the same.* Supported by the researchers, they designed research-informed impact tools that were focused on improvements in students' learning and that were beneficial in helping stimulate and track changes in colleagues' practice. Impact measures were contextualized to specific situations and issues, but the enquiry processes always included a baseline against which impact could be judged. They also crafted questions to help open up meaningful learning conversations between them and their colleagues. This seemed to shift the emphasis from the accountability of colleagues to their professional development. Catalysts described changes in colleagues' practice and greater openness to change because the process helped build ownership. A considerable number had made plans to use the tools again in different situations, and some had influenced senior leaders to embed them within school development plans.



- *Certain catalysts developed the skills and confidence to engage colleagues in powerful ways as they exchanged their new knowledge within their schools and across regional hubs and/or other networks.* They used what they learned about networking, change, effective middle leadership, impact evaluation, and Challenge Partners' models to design collegial learning processes and strategies, or used or adapted research models. Headteachers of these catalysts were very pleased with the changes they had instigated, and further network activities were planned and are ongoing. In less successful instances, either their own immediate context or their own middle leadership capabilities or experience limited the reach and depth of their impact.

## **Knowledge Exchange: The Role of Research and Enquiry**

A key feature of the project was exploring the best methods for exchanging knowledge, both between middle leaders and between researchers and middle leaders. Promoting research use in schools has become of increasing interest in England. For example, following its co-development of a toolkit of



successful teaching and learning interventions,<sup>7</sup> the Educational Endowment Foundation (EEF) is funding a number of projects exploring the process and, in some cases, effects of research use.<sup>8</sup>

An important feature of an evidence-informed system is that researchers have powerful ways to engage school leaders and teachers with their research findings. This social process of engagement, which I call 'knowledge animation' (Stoll, 2010), helps people make learning connections in order to use ideas generated elsewhere. It focuses on finding ways of making knowledge accessible so that it stimulates conversation that challenges people's thinking, promotes new understanding, and helps them generate their own evidence-informed and contextually-relevant knowledge and action that will enhance their practice (Stoll & Brown, 2015).

A key outcome of this research and development project has been that the research team and Challenge Partners have co-developed a professional learning resource, a set of cards based on the findings of the research questions, which are currently being piloted. The cards have been designed to:



- stimulate evidence-informed learning conversations (Earl & Timperley, 2008; Stoll, 2012). The research-informed stimuli are intended to deepen understanding and intentionally interrupt (Katz & Dack, 2013) and challenge thinking, which are important features of effective professional learning so that changes to practice aren't just superficial (Muijs, Kyriakides, van der Werf, Creemers, Timperley, & Earl, 2014; Stoll, Harris, & Handscomb, 2012). Each process offers participants an opportunity to speak, listen, ask questions, reflect, and offer critical friendship. The processes are also designed to build trust as colleagues become more comfortable with stepping out of 'the land of nice' (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2010), which prevents educators from challenging each other;
- provide opportunities for problem-based collaborative learning;
- enrich decision-making as people come up with new ways of dealing with challenges;
- stimulate impetus for action focused on leading for improved practice; and,
- support and enhance school and partnership development.



Feedback from those who have already piloted the cards (piloting is still underway at the time of writing) suggests that practitioners find the existing way of conveying the research findings and the associated learning processes valuable. Feedback includes: 'very accessible' (head of continuing professional development, secondary/high school), that 'they really help you to engage with the research, to get deeper learning' (head of research and development, teaching school), and 'they provide an important starting point, a facilitator for conversations' (deputy Head/ Assistant principal, primary school). A deputy head of a teaching school with a responsibility for professional and leadership development across an alliance of schools, and whose school is also member of a number of national networks, talked about her plans for trialing the cards:

You could use them to fit wherever your school is on its journey. Five years ago, I would have used them to generate understanding: "Pick one and use it as a focus for what you are doing." Now I can use them with Heads of Faculty who are shifting next year.

A couple are experienced in middle leader training. I will be getting them to self-evaluate what they are strong on. Our senior leadership team will also look at what more we can do in this area.



Being evidence informed, and ideally evidence enriched, is not just about mobilizing and using external research. As Hattie (2009) argues on the basis of over 800 meta-analyses of interventions associated with student achievement, the more teachers become learners of their students' learning and their own teaching practice, the more successful the outcomes. As Timperley and colleagues (2008) conclude, if professional learning is going to have a substantive impact on student outcomes, it has start from an analysis of these outcomes. ICSEI's data use network focuses on these issues. A number of ICSEI colleagues have written about their findings (e.g., Schildkamp, Lai, & Earl, 2013). In British Columbia, Canadian networks engage in cycles of collaborative inquiry that start with deeper investigation of student self-concept issues, and their experience of learning, based on research findings. In these inquiries, teachers investigate their practice and exchange knowledge about effective strategies and interventions (Halbert & Kaser, 2013). These 'spirals of inquiry' are also being introduced elsewhere, including some early trials in England by Whole Education,<sup>9</sup> where collaborative inquiry was applied to narrow achievement gaps between more and less advantaged students.



## Discussion at the Symposium “Networks for Change”

The ICSEI2015 conference symposium, “Networks for Change: Global Perspectives, Local Practices,” surfaced a deeper exploration of a salient question that emerged from the middle tier study: What are the best ways for researchers to exchange knowledge with practitioners? Explored by scholars and practitioners from 10 countries—Australia, Chile, England, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and the United States—three interconnected themes emerged: defining the middle tier of teaching and schooling; teachers versus researchers; and the role context plays in exchanging knowledge.

*Defining the Middle Tier.* The middle tier is the space where most practitioners work and, potentially, implement research initiatives and findings. It varies from system to system, teachers’ and principals’ role, as well as at districts and central offices, depending on local and regional methods. Teachers may be more empowered and have more autonomy in some schools, whereas principals may play a much larger role in others. However, despite the contextual nature of the middle tier space, it remains a key to school success.



For example, in Chile, despite its high percentage of private schools, there is still a need for coordination, collaboration, and critical friendship. As a representative from the United States education regional lab shared, “[We are] excited to be part of the network [of teachers, researchers, and schools], but [we] need principals to be part of it, need [them] to engage their peers.” The middle tier is where research can be applied, where important teaching happens, and where leaders are formed. However, it may be hard to get traction to see these changes realized.

The English middle leadership project highlighted the importance of head-teacher (principal) commitment to and support for research-informed leadership development of middle leaders (Stoll & Brown, 2015). Another recently completed national R&D project involved 98 of England’s teaching school alliances in external research-informed collaborative enquiry projects investigating quality pedagogy, professional development, and leadership within and across networks.<sup>10</sup> It also finds that project leaders, teacher leaders, middle leaders, senior leaders, headteachers, and leaders of school alliances (networks) can all play roles in designing and implementing evidence-informed interventions that have an impact on students, teachers, schools, and



the alliance. One of the EEF-funded projects, Research Learning Communities,<sup>11</sup> also highlights the role of senior leaders, as well as teachers who are opinion leaders, based on the social networking research findings of another member of ICSEI (Daly, 2010), among others. While there is no suggestion that school leaders should become the entire middle tier, the evidence suggests that there is potential for them to play a greater role in developing their own knowledge and practice and supporting their peers' development. However, it still raises the question whether this can be done without researchers' input and help if it is to be evidence-enriched.

*Teachers versus researchers – either/or, both/and.* Schools benefit when they use data and ask the 'right' questions, when researchers establish a trusting relationship with teachers, and when interests are negotiated between the researcher and the school community. A Dutch colleague put forward the case that teachers are not used to exchanging knowledge. An Australian colleague concurred that teachers have access to data but are not always asking the right questions. A participant from England thought that there needed to be a better balance in teaching, with teachers engaging in research- and data-informed inquiry as part of their teaching. Participants



noted a growing awareness that researchers may need to play a wider role in supporting teachers and school leaders in developing evidence-enriched practice.

All of the English projects described in this monograph involve researchers supporting practitioners in carrying out collaborative inquiry, including issues around collecting baseline, developing success criteria, analyzing data, evaluating impact, accessing external research and judging its quality, and finding ways to share project findings with other colleagues. In the middle leadership project the research team was engaging in genuine knowledge exchange with the middle leaders. Near the start of the project a few groups of middle leader 'catalysts' saw such knowledge exchange as "an active and collaborative process" and even a "symbiotic relationship," but more thought that researchers just needed to "deliver" research "in practical ways that allows for instant engagement." By the end of the project, most catalysts had developed a more collaborative understanding of the nature of the partnership and genuine knowledge exchange. One explained in a final interview, "I felt you weren't 'telling us' what the research said but that we were exploring it and making meaning together and that was more valuable than being directed" (Stoll & Brown, 2015, p. 70).



*The role of context in exchanging knowledge.* Context influences educational effectiveness (Reynolds, Sammons, De Fraine, Van Damme, Townsend, Teddlie, & Stringfield, 2014) and improvement (Hopkins, Stringfield, Harris, Stoll, & Mackay, 2014). Unsurprisingly, the Symposium discussion concluded that the success and nature of the researcher-school relationship is likely to be highly context dependent, and that networks can play a role in helping to exchange knowledge. The role and expectations of researchers differ from one country to another. Experience at ICSEI conferences and from a range of cross-national research and development projects undertaken by ICSEI school improvement and leadership researchers collaborating with practitioners suggests that involved school leaders welcome a more collaborative relationship with researchers.

## Conclusion

While there are considerable caveats to many of the untested policy interventions in England, its focus on evidence-based teaching, increasingly mirrored in other countries, is certainly concentrating minds more on what researchers have to offer the system. So, what would be needed, interna-



internationally, to get these kinds of deep conversations, research conversations, moving around a system's network?

## Implications for practice

- As important agents in self-improving systems, and indeed any other system, middle leaders and teacher leaders need to know how to work alongside others over time to investigate their practice, articulate and share their knowledge about what makes great pedagogy in systematic ways. This involves research literacy. Both within and across schools, middle and teacher leaders need to be able to: access, critique, and share the external knowledge base; ask the right questions about evidence; trial new strategies and evaluate their impact; bring colleagues into investigations and build teams; evaluate the impact of changed practice on student learning and achievement; and, share findings in accessible and sustainable ways. To make this sustainable, they also have to be able to understand and facilitate professional learning, practice coaching skills, and develop trust with colleagues in other schools



- as well as their own.
- Schools and middle tier agencies should develop non-mandatory whole-school and cross-school professional learning communities, in which enquiry becomes a habit of mind, including, investing in accessible research resources – summaries, books, professional articles, video clips, intranet links etc, and find ways to make conversations about these a way of life. Social media and other technology can support this.

## Implications for research

- External researchers can support leaders of enquiry in and across schools to reflect on their developing skills in shaping emergent networks and partnerships. These skills need systematic and structured development in supportive practitioner learning communities with opportunities to apply and reflect on learning between sessions. Researchers could work collaboratively with other middle tier agents to develop structured development programs for ‘research champions’ in schools, both at senior and middle leader level (Stoll, Brown, Spence-Thomas, & Taylor, forthcoming).



- Universities should be encouraged to consider what sustainable and genuine middle tier/practitioner and university partnership look like. Educational effectiveness and improvement is field of study intended for application. Universities and research funding bodies would do well to support academics in engaging in high quality, evaluated research and developing activity to support schools and networks in their improvement attempts.
- Universities and researchers need to utilize what they know about knowledge exchange and professional learning to ensure that schools, networks, and other middle tier agents find powerful ways to engage with their findings. They can also form partnerships with middle tier knowledge brokers to develop additional ideas for ways to help bring research findings to life.
- Further research is needed on the middle tier and its impact. Given contextual differences, there could be a valuable opportunity for an international study, to be carried out jointly by ICSEI researchers and other members of ICSEI's 3P (policy makers, politicians, and practitioners) network.



## Implications for policy

- If schools are going to play a strong role in supporting each other's improvement, national and state/provincial leadership standards, preparation and professional learning experiences need to include a focus on developing collaborative cultures across schools. Incentives and support need to be provided to middle tier agencies and researchers to help them develop new projects that will create capacity, mobilise knowledge in ways that will promote deep learning and extend impact, and ensure sustainability.
- Accountability frameworks should be oriented to ensure that they create a culture that genuinely values collaborative, evidence-based improvement while maintaining quality and equity.

Finally, in line with the publication of *The Routledge International Handbook of Educational Effectiveness and Improvement*, edited by members of ICSEI (Chapman, Muijs, Reynolds, Sammons, & Teddlie, forthcoming), it is notable that the focus of this monograph and associated Symposium conversation is the role of the middle tier – those supporting and challenging schools. While



districts, networks, and other middle tier agents have been associated with ICSEI for many years, and have been the subject of research studies, research and development projects, and sessions at ICSEI conferences, the field continues to be called school effectiveness and improvement. The International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement also has the word 'school' in its name. With an increased emphasis on systemic change – it takes a whole village to raise a child – is it time for a name change?



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## Notes

1. <https://www.gov.uk/teaching-schools-a-guide-for-potential-applicants>
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-in-multi-academy-trusts>
3. <http://challengepartners.org>
4. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is sponsoring an evaluation of this programme, the results of which will be publicly available in 2016.
5. ESRC Knowledge Exchange Opportunities Scheme R&D project – Grant: ES/l002043/1 <http://www.lcll.org.uk/middle-leaders-change-catalysts.html>
6. Further details about methodology and analysis can be found in Stoll et al. 2015 forthcoming
7. <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/toolkit-a-z/>
8. <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects/projects-a-z/research-use-in-schools/>
9. [http://www.wholeeducation.org/pages/overview/get\\_involved/691,0/narrowing\\_the\\_gap\\_through\\_collaborative\\_enquiry.html](http://www.wholeeducation.org/pages/overview/get_involved/691,0/narrowing_the_gap_through_collaborative_enquiry.html)



10. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/research-and-development-network-school-based-research-on-pedagogy>
11. <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects/research-learning-communities/>

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## About the author

Dr. Louise Stoll is a former President of ICSEI whose research and development activity focuses on how schools, local, and national systems create capacity for learning in a changing world, with particular emphasis on professional learning communities and learning networks, creative leadership, and leadership development. She is also committed to finding ways to help make better connections between research and practice. She recently directed a national knowledge exchange project in England, working with middle (teacher) leaders, and is evaluating progress towards an evidence-based teaching system for England's Department for Education. Other projects include synthesizing the findings of teaching school alliances' R&D national theme projects for the National College for Teaching and Leadership. She has been an expert to the OECD for its Innovative Learning Environments, Improving School Leadership, and Evaluation and Assessment initiatives.



Currently Professor of Professional Learning at the London Centre for Lead-



ership in Learning at University College London's Institute of Education, a freelance researcher, and international consultant, Stoll started her career as a primary teacher. She is author and editor of many publications, including: *Professional Learning Communities* with Karen Seashore Louis, *It's About Learning* with Dean Fink and Lorna Earl, and *Changing Our Schools* with Dean Fink, which have been translated into several languages. She has developed research-based materials on professional learning communities, a simulation on school-to-school networking, and *The Toolkit: Improving School Leadership*, for the OECD. Stoll is an international keynote presenter and workshop facilitator, and a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences.

