



Pat Roy is co-author of *Moving NSDC's Staff Development Standards Into Practice: Innovation Configurations* (NSDC, 2003).

#### REFERENCES

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## The secrets of success

*To follow, without halt, one's aim  
There's the secret of success*

— Anna Pavlova

I remember reading years ago that one of the differences between Japanese and American educators was that the Japanese believed in **effort** rather than **ability**. They believe that a child's effort, persistence, and determination results in high achievement rather than some raw, innate *ability*. The American system, in contrast, seems to focus on "early detection of differences in innate ability" (Fallows, 1991, p.57). Starting with the use of an IQ test through tracking systems, we subtly send the message that each student has a pre-set level of ability that will determine his or her success in school and life. This belief leads us to say things like we teach everyone to the level of their ability which is not quite the same as setting high expectations for **all** students. Just listen to educators' conversations in the next staff meeting, how many times do you hear the word "ability" and the implication of the limitations of ability on attaining those NCLB goals?

Effort has been identified as one of the research-based instructional strategies that can make a difference to learning (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). This meta-analysis suggested that teachers need to teach about effort and its connection to achievement. The research found that students could be taught the importance of effort, and when they understood the connection, it enhanced their achievement.

This research has application to the principal's role in relation to the Equity standard; that

is that the principal should **work with staff to understand the impact of attitudes on instruction and to modify classroom practices** (Roy & Hord, 2003, p. 101). This suggests that the principal should help staff members examine their own beliefs about effort and ability and the impact of those beliefs on achievement. To achieve this, the principal would structure conversations to explore, discuss, and reflect on how educators' **own attitudes, background, culture, and social class impact the teaching**

#### Equity:

Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students; create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments; and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.

**and learning process.** A belief in the importance of effort is an underpinning of high expectations: many teachers don't press for high expectations from all students because they don't truly believe that students have the "ability" to succeed.

The principal, further, supports the **development of new skills and attitudes related to holding high expectations for all students** by structuring time for teachers to plan for classroom strategies that communicate high expectations and the importance of effort. This can be done by exploring stories of people who have overcome tremendous barriers through persistence and effort. To support these new strategies, the principal also **arranges for observation of classroom practices regarding how expectations are communicated to students**. Finally, the principal, working with staff, **creates a schedule for classroom coaching and follow-up discussion to ensure behaviors that communicate high expectations become part of daily practice**. High expectations means more than setting high standards and rigorous goals; it also means exploring personal beliefs about what it takes to succeed and instilling in students that hard work and effort pays off.