# Don't wait to find time — create it



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

The recent NSDC study by Linda Darling-Hammond and the Stanford University team, *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the U.S. and Abroad,* found that countries whose students outperform the United States provide teachers significantly more time to work together, as much as half their work week in some places. Teachers have time to collaborate on curriculum and honing lessons. In the U.S., as much as 80% of a teacher's work week is spent instructing students.

NSDC had suggested a meager-by-comparison 25% of work time be dedicated to learning and collaborating with colleagues. Yet still many educators are unable to meet even this goal. System and school leaders are searching for ways to reschedule time for professional learning and structures to provide teachers the time they need.

The learning principal **allocates resources to support job-embedded professional development in the school** (Roy & Hord, 2003, p. 70)**.** Job-embedded professional development includes **both informal and formal interactions** among teachers who develop lessons, share instructional strategies, examine student work, analyze achievement data, and observe each other and give feedback. Job-embedded work focuses on the core of instruction — the classroom — with the intention of improving educators' knowledge and skills so that students benefit. In her work concerning job-embedded designs for professional learning, Lois Easton (2008) has said that powerful professional development strategies:

- Connect to and return benefits to the real world of teaching and learning;

> **NSDC STANDARD**
>
> **Resources**: Staff development that improves the learning of all students requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration.

- Focus on what is happening with both student and adult learners;
- Are collaborative;
- Establish a culture of quality among staff; and
- Allow time for inquiry and reflection that promotes learning and application.

More and more job-embedded strategies are being developed, studied, and shared every day. In her book, *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning, 2nd ed.*, Easton identified 23 job-embedded professional development strategies, including action research, case studies, journaling, portfolios, shadowing, study groups, and protocols.

These strategies structure teacher interactions and create opportunities for substantial conversations about the classroom and instruction.

Crafting a schedule that allows time for colleagues to learn from and with each other is not easy. But, many schools and systems have found ways to create space in their day for teacher learning. The Spring 2007 *JSD* is devoted to this topic, and NSDC has published *Finding Time for Professional Learning* (2008), a compilation of articles that can provide information on what other districts and schools have done to create time for job-embedded professional development.

Time is one of the precious resources that schools have; the way we use time demonstrates the importance of various aspects of education. School leaders need to focus that resource on improving teaching and learning.

> **Learn more about NSDC's standards:**
> **www.nsdc.org/standards/index.cfm**

**REFERENCES**

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