

Deep learning engages senses, moves heart, NSDC Academy finds

“What are you learning about learning?” This theme echoed throughout NSDC Academy 2010’s learning teams as they met for the third time at the 2009 Summer Conference in Boston this year. The NSDC Academy is an extended 2½-year, problem-based, inquiry-driven learning experience designed to immerse school and district leaders in authentic collaborative learning so they not only develop as leaders of professional learning, but also understand and appreciate the deep structure of this form of professional learning.

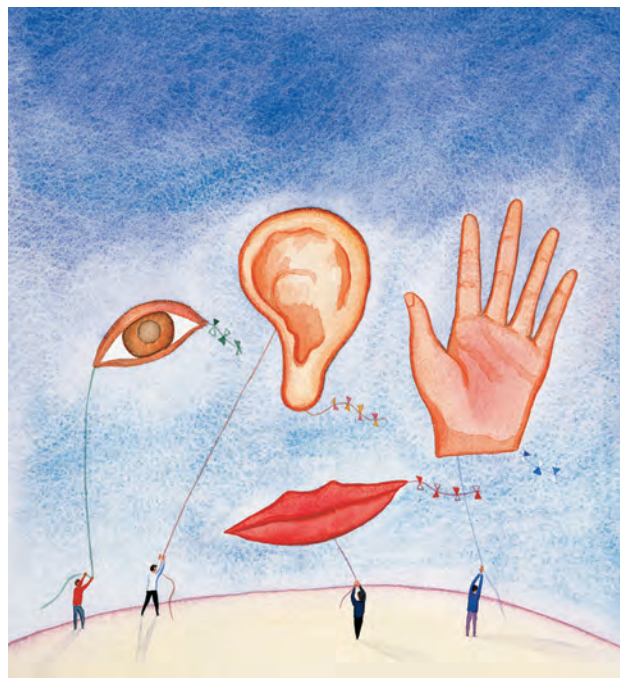
CONSIDER JOINING THE CLASS OF 2012

Applications for the next NSDC Academy cohort are due Feb. 1, 2010. Find more information at www.nsd.org/opportunities/academy.cfm.

Conversations centered on the realization that transferring knowledge and developing skills are only two elementary levels of learning. Learning that lasts and impacts students occurs when educators transform how they think about and act on what they know. This form of

learning is rarely embedded in more traditional professional development. Deep or transformative learning changes perspectives, creates new assumptions, engages all the senses, and moves a learner in the head, heart, and hand.

As members of the class of 2010 entered their third session, they continued to adapt to a new way of thinking about professional learning. They engaged more readily in unguarded dialogue that allowed them to suspend judgment. They shared teachable points of view with one



another for insight, input, and inquiry. They learned to investigate ideas and information, refine their leadership skills, interact with colleagues, and invent strategies and tactics to use within the context of their own work.

NSDC Academy’s class of 2011 is just beginning to develop its potential as leaders in professional learning. With each class, leaders of professional learning are emerging who will shape policy and practice in schools and districts throughout the world.



FROM www.nsd.org/learningBlog/

“No one will take professional learning seriously until the educators responsible for it assert themselves to demonstrate its **value**, its **power**, and its **results**, and insist their peers do so as well.”

— Hayes Mizell



Change is focus of book club selection

NSDC members who have added the NSDC Book Club to their membership package will receive *Motion Leadership: The Skinny on Becoming Change Savvy* by Michael Fullan. The noted leading thinker in change theory offers insights on motion leadership, or how to move individuals, institutions, and entire systems forward.

The book includes examples from Fullan's experience to help readers mobilize peers to collaborate, promote learning as the work of individuals and organizations, make progress and results transparent, earn trust, and enable others to become motion leaders.

Through a partnership with Corwin Press, NSDC members can add the Book Club to their membership at any time and receive four books a year for only \$49 annually.

To receive *Motion Leadership*, you must add the NSDC Book Club to your membership before Dec. 15. The book will be mailed to NSDC Book Club members in February. For more information about this or any membership package, call NSDC at 800-727-7288 or e-mail NSDCoffice@nsdc.org.

HAS EXCELLENCE BECOME A LOCAL OPTION?

When No Child Left Behind was enacted, its supporters argued that it would address “the soft bigotry of low expectations.” Is it possible that NCLB has actually solidified the inequity that results from wide variations in how excellence is defined? And, if that is the case, what role can effective professional learning play in ensuring that schools have high expectations for all students?

Consider three schools.

- **School A** has a large percentage of students who are not succeeding on the state's accountability exams. Facing severe penalties, school leaders narrow their focus to getting enough students over the line on relatively low-level literacy and math standards in order to avoid sanctions. As a result, teachers are pressured to narrow their focus as well, with the resulting message being that high expectations for their students are simply not valued or measured.

- **School B** has a number of students who are not succeeding on the state's accountability exams, but there is reason to believe that the school can address that fairly easily. Nevertheless, the school accepts the premise that once it has “made AYP,” the school will be successful, so it also narrows its focus to those students and those tests.

- **School C** also has a number of students who are not succeeding on the state's accountability exams, and the school is committed to doing what's necessary for them to succeed. But the school and the community do not accept the premise that avoiding state sanctions constitutes excellence. Instead, they work together to set high standards in all subject areas, not just literacy and math. The school and community focus on the knowledge, skills, and attributes that their students will need to be successful in the world. Professional learning in this school stimulates collaboration on standards, instructional best practices, and meaningful assessments. Instruction is effective, challenging, and engaging. Students experience success in a variety of ways and develop a love for learning and the ability to learn independently of teacher direction.

Suppose now all three schools are successful in reaching AYP and avoiding sanctions. Have the students in these three schools been provided an equitable education? Of course not. So I ask: In your state and in your school system, has excellence become a local option that is available in some schools and not others? Has the quality of professional learning available in these schools helped determine which schools have high expectations and which do not?

NSDC is committed to its purpose of creating schools “where every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves.” How are your school and school system defining student achievement? Right now, the school and system levels are where these critical decisions are being made. I hope that discussion is under way in your world. If not, I encourage you to start it. And while you're at it, take advantage of this opportunity to lead others to an understanding that there is no road to school improvement that does not require effective professional learning. If we are truly determined to fight the soft bigotry of low expectations, we must create schools where professionals collaborate to set and reach high expectations for all students. ■



Charles Mason is president of the National Staff Development Council.

IFN CONTRIBUTION HONORS LYNNE CHIDLEY'S SPIRIT

"Steve, are you and Pat going to run this morning?" Lynne asked. It was summer 1982, and we were in St. Louis developing a session for NSDC's Annual Conference in December.

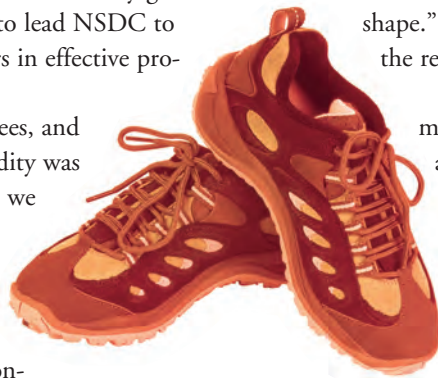
Patricia Zigarmi, Susan Loucks-Horsley, Lynne Chidley, and I were just beginning to formulate ideas for our session. Lynne was there against the advice of her doctors. She was determined to not give in to her cancer. Recently elected as a trustee on the NSDC board, she wanted to continue her life normally. After her first two years on the board, she was elected president in 1984 and led the Council for a brief time until shortly before her death. She unselfishly gave of herself in order to lead NSDC to engage all educators in effective professional learning.

It was 75 degrees, and the morning humidity was stifling by the time we were ready to run. St. Louis has hills!

"Steve, is Lynne still a little behind us?" Pat wondered.

"I don't know, Pat. Maybe we should double back and check on her," I answered.

We found her about a mile back, hunched over, breathing laboriously, with a big smile on her face. When we asked what was so funny, she said, "Me. I'm funny. You'd think I thought I was 18 years old. Boy, am I out of



shape." Not a word about the real cause.

January 2009 marked the 25th anniversary of Lynne's death. She began her professional life as an elementary teacher, became an elementary principal in a suburb outside Chicago, and served as a staff development expert with the Illinois Center for Educational Improvement. Her curiosity and energy were insatiable, and her passion for learning energized others.

After many conversations about how to best memorialize Lynne's spirit, NSDC's Board of Trustees decided

Impacting the Future Now supports NSDC's purpose as its guiding mission through four major scholarships and grants. The foundation has awarded more than \$38,000 in monetary and in-kind donations to fund scholarships and grants to schools and school districts.

In this year's annual campaign, the foundation board honors NSDC as it celebrates its 40th birthday by setting a goal of \$40,000. Make a contribution today in honor of this milestone.

Find a donation form and birthday card on NSDC's web site at www.nsdc.org/getinvolved/foundation.cfm. Pay tribute to NSDC's early leaders such as Lynne Chidley and Susan Loucks-Horsley and honor today's visionaries, including Stephanie Hirsh, Joellen Killion, and Dennis Sparks.



to create a foundation. The professionals who benefit from the Impacting the Future Now grants will never know Lynne. Her legacy of unselfishness will live through contributions to the foundation. In turn, recipients of foundation grants will contribute to NSDC's future through their individual efforts and successes, all because of Lynne.

My motivation to contribute to the foundation is to give back to an organization that significantly impacts who I am today as a professional and a person. When I contribute to the foundation, I continue to honor Lynne and her love for NSDC, and I know I make a difference in the professional lives of others.

— Steve Wlodarczyk

NSDC CALENDAR

Nov. 15: Deadline for submitting manuscripts for June 2010 *JSD*. Theme: *The new central office*.

www.nsdc.org/news/jsd/themes.cfm

Dec. 5-9: NSDC's 41st Annual Conference, St. Louis, Mo.

Jan. 15: Deadline for submitting manuscripts for August 2010 *JSD*. Theme: *Social justice*.

www.nsdc.org/news/jsd/themes.cfm

Feb. 1: Deadline for submitting proposals to present at NSDC's 42nd Annual Conference in Atlanta, Ga., in December 2010.