

New series provides interactive learning with colleagues

This fall, NSDC's online learning offerings took a great leap forward with the first professional development program in the 2009-10 E-Learning Series. The program, facilitated by NSDC Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh, was the first of six that NSDC will offer during the current school year.

Each five-week program in NSDC's E-Learning Series offers participants an opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise with program facilitators and colleagues from across the country and around the world. Programs are conducted in the NSDC Learning Exchange, an innovative e-learning platform that includes live weekly presentations, a resource library, live chats and asynchronous discussion forums, and the opportunity to work collaboratively with colleagues on group activities.

NSDC's e-learning programs provide educators with a unique opportunity to not only learn from experts in the field of professional learning, but to collaborate with their colleagues in ways that increase the collective learning of all program participants.

"We want our e-learning programs to reflect the belief that school's most complex problems are solved by educators collaborating and working together," said Tom Manning, NSDC's associate director of member experience.

NSDC'S E-LEARNING LINEUP

- **Raising achievement through school improvement planning** (begins Jan. 11, 2010)
- **Data tools that support sustained improvement** (begins Feb. 22, 2010)
- **Assessing the impact of professional development** (begins April 5, 2010)
- **Professional learning that changes classroom practice** (begins May 17, 2010)



NSDC's e-learning programs are \$199 for NSDC members and \$249 for nonmembers. To discover more about the e-learning series, go to www.nsd.org/elearning/programs

"Our programs are not passive learning experiences. Everyone who participates contributes to the conversation. Whether you're relaying your own experiences during a live session, or participating in group activities, or posting your ideas in a community forum, each program participant is expanding the knowledge base of everyone in the program. Everyone is truly learning both with and from one another."

NEW TRUSTEES ELECTED

NSDC members selected Amanda Rivera and Kenneth Salim to join the Board of Trustees. Their terms begin at the end of the 2009 Annual Conference.

Rivera is a principal in Chicago Public Schools and has also worked in the district as director of professional development. She has been an NSDC member for seven years. She has presented at NSDC's Annual Conference, participated in NSDC's Big 35 network, and sponsored an Innovation

Configuration training for district partners. Rivera has served in national, state, and district committees on teacher evaluation, mentoring, professional learning



Rivera



Salim

communities, and National Board Certification.

Kenneth Salim, a four-year NSDC member, is director of teacher development for Boston Public Schools. He is a member of the NSDC Academy Class of 2009, a founding member of the New England NSDC affiliate, and has presented at NSDC's Annual Conference.

He is a doctoral candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where he researches the experiences of teacher leaders.



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 how to move individuals, institutions, and entire systems forward.

This book includes examples from Fullan's experience to help readers understand and work with change, mobilize peers to collaborate, and promote learning as the work of individuals and organizations.

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.

Read the Q&A with Michael Fullan on p. 12 to learn more about the ideas in this book.

FUNDAMENTALS CREATE A CONTEXT FOR LEARNING

As NSDC president, I am very pleased that this issue of *JSD* focuses on the fundamentals of professional learning. No individual or team realizes its full potential without a grounding in the fundamentals of its craft and a regular reinforcement of those fundamentals. In the rush to get our work done, it's very easy to skip over steps we know are important or to design work for others without testing the plan against those practices we know increase the likelihood of effective learning and improved practice.

For me, one of the fundamentals too often neglected is the importance of setting the context for professional learning. The outcome of a professional learning experience is affected before the learners ever engage in learning activities. Thoughtfully addressing some very basic questions up front can create a much more positive context.

Here are three questions related to context that I find important.

- **What is the rationale for a particular learning experience, and how will it be communicated in advance?**

Just telling people when and where to show up rarely creates an atmosphere that nurtures positive expectations. Assuming there is a clear and compelling rationale for the learning opportunity, learners should understand that rationale and be informed of it by the most effective messenger well in advance. Sometimes the learners themselves set the goals. In that case, this step is a matter of team members articulating clear objectives for themselves. When learning goals are set by the school or system, this step requires much more thought. The rationale must be supported by data and communicated by someone with the credibility and authority to make the case that the learning is important and worthwhile.

- **What else is going on in the learners' world that needs to be taken into consideration?**

Educators are very busy people. When we ignore the totality of their daily work, we can create barriers to learning that are hard to overcome. Part of setting the context for learning is finding a time that optimizes the attention and commitment of the learners. Being mindful of the time of the grading period, special events that may be going on at the school, and other learning experiences in which participants are engaged are all important pieces of context that the wise planner identifies and considers.

- **What can be done before the first group learning experience to create readiness and focus?**

Every good teacher knows that getting students' minds on the learning at hand is job one. It's no different for adults. We can do that in advance by asking learners to engage in thought that sets the stage for learning. We might ask them to think about three questions and be ready to share their responses or ask them to read an article and let them know there will be an opportunity to share their reactions. The keys are for the activity to relate to the content and to be used early in the learning experience.

In this issue of *JSD*, we have the opportunity to learn about or be reminded of other fundamentals in designing and providing effective professional learning. I encourage you to integrate these ideas about creating a positive learning context into your own command of the basics. ■



Charles Mason is president of the National Staff Development Council.

IMPACTING THE FUTURE NOW — WHY I GIVE

Shirley Hord, NSDC scholar laureate and member of the Impacting the Future Now Board, has shaped the thinking and practices of NSDC members and friends through her passion and her research. She joined the board of NSDC's foundation to further her commitment to continuous professional learning that results in high student achievement. Here she shares why she donates to the foundation:

I give to Impacting the Future Now because it is a pathway to what I believe is imperative — continuous professional learning of our educators. My rationale for giving goes something like this:

1. Most people agree that the basic reason that we have schools is for student learning.
2. In schools, the most significant factor that influences whether students learn well is quality teaching. There are big questions

around what to teach students, when to teach it, and how to teach it, but the major variable is quality teaching. I don't say quality teacher — there are many at the campus and in the district who contribute to the teaching that occurs.

3. When we ask how to expand quality teaching, the response is continuous professional learning. The major reason I contribute to Impacting the Future Now is to support teachers, principals, and school

teams in assessing adult learning needs, planning for providing that learning for the adults, and monitoring its progress.

The point is to provide continuous learning for educators so that their effectiveness is continuously enhanced and students consistently learn successfully. Impacting the Future Now contributes to this agenda through making grants that support the continuous professional learning of our professional educators.



JSD CALL FOR ARTICLES

- *August 2010*
Social justice
Manuscript deadline:
Jan. 15, 2010
- *October 2010*
Policies that support professional learning
Manuscript deadline:
Feb. 15, 2010
- *December 2010*
Content-specific professional development
Manuscript deadline:
April 15, 2010
- *February 2011*
Working with external partners
Manuscript deadline:
June 15, 2010

Read more about each of the themes at www.nsd.org/news/jsd/themes.cfm.

Send inquiries or manuscripts to Tracy Crow (tracy.crow@nsdc.org).

NSDC CALENDAR

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

Feb. 15: Deadline to apply to the NSDC Academy Class of 2012. www.nsd.org/opportunities/academy.cfm

Feb. 15: Deadline for applying for Impacting the Future Now scholarships and grants. www.nsd.org/getinvolved/foundation.cfm

April 1: Deadline for NSDC Awards nominations. www.nsd.org/getinvolved/awards.cfm

July 18-21: Attend NSDC's Summer Conference for Teacher Leaders and the Administrators Who Support Them, Seattle, Wash.

NSDC AWARDS 2009

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CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD

Thomas Guskey, Lexington, Ky.
Shirley Hord, Boerne, Texas



Make a nomination for NSDC Awards 2010.

Learn more at

www.nsdc.org/getinvolved/awards.cfm

BEST RESEARCH

"Improving Teachers' Assessment Practices Through Professional Development: The Case of National Board Certification"
American Educational Research Journal, Vol. 45, No. 3, 669-700 (2008)

Mistilina Sato (from left), University of Minnesota
Ruth Chung Wei, Stanford University
Linda Darling-Hammond, Stanford University



SUSAN LOUCKS-HORSLEY AWARD

Page Keeley,
Maine
Mathematics
and Science
Alliance,
Augusta,
Maine



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Marti
Richardson,
Knoxville,
Tenn.



SHIRLEY HAVENS SUPPORT & CLASSIFIED STAFF DEVELOPMENT AWARD

DeKalb
County
School
System,
Decatur,
Ga.



STAFF DEVELOPMENT BOOK OF THE YEAR

Change Wars
by Andy Hargreaves, left, and
Michael Fullan (Editors)
Solution Tree, 2008

