



Center for Leadership & Educational Equity

Defining a Learning Community by the Nature of its Work

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Collaborative and reflective practices are powerful vehicles for job-embedded professional development. A learning community consists of a group of teachers and/or administrators who meet on a regular basis to share instructional practices, student work, and observations of classrooms within a supportive environment in order to improve teaching practice and student learning.

Learning Communities rooted in SRI collaborative and reflective practices typically:

1. Place improving student learning and success as the center of the work;
2. Meet regularly for a sustained and focused period of time to work and learn together;
3. Observe each other's practice and give feedback to each other on a regular basis;
4. Build trust by engaging in significant work while providing a safe environment for taking risks;
5. Make their work public—collaboratively examine and give usable feedback on work done by their students and on their own work (e.g. teaching practices, curriculum, school culture issues);
6. Value diversity of thought, experience and perspective;
7. Draw on their own expertise, as well as on the expertise of “outside” resources;
8. Engage in reciprocal learning (everyone learning from everyone);
9. Share leadership within the group;
10. Hold themselves accountable for continuous improvement toward helping everyone learn;
11. Are facilitated by a facilitator who has received high quality training and on-going support;
12. Continuously challenge one another to adapt practice toward fostering educational and social equity; and
13. Employ an action research cycle of inquiry as a framework for its activities and learning.