# 1

## *A New Model of Leadership for Adult Growth and Learning*

I was recently working with and learning from a group of about a hundred superintendents, principals, and teachers who had gathered to learn about some of the ideas I'm about to present in this book. Several of them, at different points during our time together, said, "Thank you for making me feel so special and for recognizing the challenges and complexity of my work." As one seasoned leader explained, "In my work, it is so rare that I ever feel special . . . appreciated." My response to each of them was, "You *are* special. The work you do is so important. Thank you for all you do." With all my heart, I meant every word.

Teachers, principals, and superintendents face increasingly complex educational challenges in working to serve students and support their achievement and well-being. All adults who serve in our schools and school systems are being called upon to lead and assist in building collaborative learning centers that nurture children and adults' growth and learning. How can we build schools as learning centers that can nurture the growth of adults with different needs, preferences, and developmental orientations? How can we build schools so that they are mentoring communities—true learning centers?

I have been studying teacher development, professional development, and leadership development—as well as how such adult development can make schools better learning centers—for more than two decades. I have worked on the ground as teacher, program director, coach, school counselor, staff developer, and consultant in several middle and high

schools, and this experience informs my research and the learning I hope to share in this book. I dedicate my teaching, research, and writing to supporting diverse constituencies (teachers, principals, assistant principals, superintendents, graduate students, and adult literacy teachers) who serve in a variety of educational contexts (K–12 schools, school districts, workplace learning centers, and universities). My work bridges theory and practice, and I seek to use each to inform, build, and strengthen the other. In other words, not only do I share with practitioners practices for supporting adult development that are informed by theory, but also I feed back what I learn from practitioners to build theory and enhance practice. This dynamic dialogue between theory and practice is a centerpiece of my work.

I have observed what growth-enhancing—even magical—places of learning schools and school systems can be for all who participate in them. I have also experienced the challenges and problems that can exist in schools and school systems. More specifically, as a teacher, I first noticed that children's well-being and academic achievement seemed to be positively influenced by teachers and principals who felt supported in their own development. I also observed the reverse. I set out—years ago—to understand why it was so difficult to support adult development in schools. How might school leaders do this better? What practices might support adult development?

My overarching goal for this book is to answer these questions, by offering a helpful map that shows *how* we can better support our own and each others' growth within schools and school systems. I hope this book offers a response to the urgent calls from the field for better supporting the personal and professional growth and learning of all adults who serve in schools and school systems. In today's complex and ever-changing world, we must all be learners who are invested in supporting each other's growth. In particular, school leaders across the system—principals, teachers, superintendents, and others—need to lead adult learning in the service of the complex adaptive challenges that schools face. I hope this book is of help as we journey forward—together.

## IN THIS CHAPTER

In this chapter, I introduce the need for a new learning-oriented model of school leadership and explore the connections among the fields of professional development, adult developmental theory, adult learning, organizational development, and leadership practices. I discuss the complex, adaptive challenges educators face and emphasize the need to find more effective ways to support adult development within schools and across school systems. I introduce an important distinction between informational and transformational learning—or growth. In so doing, I point to themes in the professional development literature that emphasize common and urgent calls for schools and school systems to support better the growth of teachers, principals, superintendents, and other school leaders. Supporting adult learning across the system will enable all to meet more effectively the implicit and explicit demands of leadership, teaching, learning, and life.

I also briefly introduce the developmental principles that inform my model and present a short overview of the four pillar practices of my learning-oriented model: teaming,

providing adults with leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring. As pillars support a roof, these mutually reinforcing, broad forms of adult collaboration are supportive of and challenging to adults at different developmental levels. An overview of all of the chapters in the book, a summary of this chapter, and reflective questions conclude the chapter.

## MEETING ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES

I recently facilitated a workshop for experienced principals on robust ways to support adult development within schools and across districts. In their leadership work with the National School Leaders Network, these participants were responsible for the learning and development of newer principals. In the beginning of this workshop, Jane, a seasoned principal in a high-performing, overcrowded New York City high school (4,200 students and 200 teachers), shared that the changes in the city's educational system (that is, new membership in the empowerment schools where principals have more autonomy) are "putting so much on us." The demands on her had become "so great" that she was not sure how much longer she could manage. I looked around the room and noticed other experienced principals, from around the country, nodding in agreement.

Toward the end of the workshop, one participant, John, who had served as a New York City principal for more than 20 years, said,

> I have a master's degree in educational administration and have taken many courses and workshops on different aspects of leadership and administration since earning my degree. None of my coursework has focused on understanding how adults learn. Without this workshop, I wouldn't have even realized how much I needed to learn—as a principal, I *need* more knowledge about how I can support adult learning and growth.

John's desire to learn how to support adult learning for his staff and for the newer principals he mentors is emblematic of the great desire many principals have to support adult learning and development more effectively.

At the start of my workshops, I ask participants to share their hopes for learning. Over the years, school leaders have consistently expressed similar ideas. Dan, an experienced teacher of 22 years in urban Philadelphia, captured the essence of what others have voiced. He explained,

> My hope is that this workshop provides a space where I am intellectually fed, nurtured in my own learning and development, and to have a space to engage in reflection. It's so rare that I ever have any time to reflect, to be in conversation with colleagues about my work, and to learn. I invest almost all of my time into caring for my students' learning and development. I almost feel guilty taking out this time for my own learning and reflection, even though I know it's important.

Another experienced teacher, May, followed Dan's comment by saying,

And the other thing I've been thinking about is that while we say that at our school we value adult learning and learning from our mistakes . . . what really happens when adults make mistakes? Are they really opportunities for us to learn?

It is important for us to consider how we can shape schools as mentoring communities—or learning centers—in which mistakes are valued for the learning that can be gleaned from them. *Learning centers,* as defined in this book, are schools and school systems that nurture and support the growth and learning of children, youth, *and adults.*

In my work with principals, teachers, and superintendents, domestically and internationally, I have found that they yearn for opportunities to learn. They need time and space for dialogue and learning in the company of colleagues, and they feel that such dialogue will support their growth, their ability to lead, and their personal development.

As noted in the Preface, educators today work in a context of increasing complexity and increasing accountability, and they do not always have the tools or support to thrive in this environment. As Richard Elmore (2004b) rightly notes, successful school reform must grow "from the inside out." In addition, he emphasizes that developing a deeper understanding of how to support adult growth and learning is an area in which further research and attention are essential. Only recently, however, have we started to examine these complex issues (Firestone & Shipps, 2005; Gardner, 2007; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

School systems around the country are changing in response to the call for increased accountability, greater diversity in the student population, and standards-based reform. Given these leadership demands and the extraordinary pressure to improve student achievement, school systems, researchers, policymakers, and reformers are searching for promising new approaches (Blankstein, Houston, & Cole, 2007; Wagner, 2007). We must develop fresh strategies because the challenges we face require more than the approach we have in hand—what leadership scholar Ronald Heifetz (1994) calls a "technical fix." Technical problems are those for which we have both the problem and solutions clearly defined. With regard to the challenges we encounter in education today, we have not been here before. Rather, we are facing profound *adaptive challenges.*

By *adaptive challenges,* Heifetz (1994) means situations and problems for which neither a problem nor a solution is known or has been identified. This kind of problem requires new approaches and is solved as we are "*in the act of working on it*" (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 10). Without the appropriate tools and supports needed to meet such challenges, many principals, superintendents, and teachers leave their professions for more supportive environments (Donaldson, 2008; Moller & Pankake, 2006; Murphy, 2006; Teitel, 2006). The use of effective support models for leadership development in schools helps us build our cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal capacities. Increasing these capacities can make the difference in adaptively addressing complex challenges. We will have to learn our way into understanding what these problems are and toward developing a more adequate response. And we will have to do it together.

While principals, teachers, and superintendents certainly need support to meet the traditional technical requirements of their work, the new demands of the 21st century are adaptive challenges, and these will require new approaches. Educators will have to address these challenges while *in the process* of working on them. Thus, ongoing support for adult growth and new ways of working, learning, growing, and leading together—not just specific training or discrete skill acquisition—is critical to fulfilling our visions for our school communities. While some supports can be provided externally, many must come from within the school through the practice of leadership and the work we do together as we support each other's growth. In light of the many adaptive challenges school leaders face, supporting adult growth in schools is important both for its own sake as well as for the contributions it can make toward improving student achievement (Guskey, 1999).

One way to facilitate the development of principals, teachers, and superintendents is to shape schools and school systems more effectively into what I call genuine *mentoring communities;* that is, contexts for collaborative learning where educators support and challenge each other to grow. Such communities will strengthen teaching and, in turn, student performance (Desforges, 2006; Donaldson, 2008; Elmore, 2004b; Fullan, 2003; Murphy, 2006; Parks, 2005; Wagner, 2007). The research on which this book is based offers a promising path toward building mentoring communities, helping educators work through adaptive challenges while simultaneously building developmental leadership capacity. It must be a given that if schools are to adapt to current conditions, they need to be places where adults as well as children can grow, and we must change *the ways in which we work, grow, and learn together.*

We know that a direct link exists between supporting adult learning and enhanced student achievement (DuFour, 2007; Guskey, 1999; Wagner, 2007), and opportunities for improving student learning depend on principal leadership and the quality of teaching (Firestone & Riehl, 2005; Levin, 2006; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). However, we need a deeper understanding of the practices that can support adult development and learning. As Hayes Mizell (2007) writes, "The more often educators are engaged with their peers in effective professional learning, the more they will learn and the more likely it is their practice will improve" (p. 2). Like others, Mizell emphasizes that to meet the complex challenges of 21st-century schooling and globalization, we need new ways of working together that will support adult development (see Childs-Bowen, 2007; Donaldson, 2008; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Wagner et al., 2006).

Improving school-based professional learning for all adults—teachers, principals, and superintendents—must stay at the forefront of our educational agenda. In fact, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) (2008) states that its purpose is to build schools in which "every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves." In stepping forward to meet the multiple, complex demands of 21st-century schooling with courage and hope, we must support our own and each other's growth. This special kind of developmental capacity building will enable educators to increase student achievement and improve schools so that they can be true learning centers where all—adults and children—can grow.

## Building Developmental Capacity

Traditionally in education, two kinds of capacity have been necessary for improving student achievement: *school or organizational capacity*—the school's collective ability as a functioning, working whole to increase achievement (Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000; Spillane & Louis, 2002)—and *instructional capacity*—teachers' ability to provide effective instruction (Cohen & Ball, 1999; Hoerr, 2008). But a third kind of capacity is also needed, and this book addresses it: *developmental capacity.* Educators must be supported in pursuing adult learning and development. Developmental capacity concerns the cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal capacities that enable us to manage better the demands of leadership, teaching, learning, and life. The new mental demands placed on educators often exceed our developmental capacities (Kegan & Lahey, 2009).

For example, principals need to help teachers prepare K–12 students to prosper in a global knowledge economy. Yet many principals are not trained in these tasks, and many are not supported to meet such new challenges (Elmore, 2004b; Kegan & Lahey, 2009). Moreover, some principals may not yet have the developmental capacities or educational training to do so.

Similarly, as mentioned, teachers are called upon to assume more responsibility and demonstrate even greater authority in schools. Recently, there has been a great deal of discussion about helping teachers to increase their capacities to build schools as learning centers where both children and adults grow (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2007; Moller & Pankake, 2006). For example, research shows that teachers who are change leaders engage in several productive behaviors: they navigate the complex structures of schools, cultivate relationships with each other, help each other manage change, and challenge conditions in schools by illuminating children's needs and voices (Barth, 2006; Silva, Gimbert, & Nolan, 2000).

The complexity of teaching and leading in the 21st-century places increasingly complex demands on all educators—teachers, principals, superintendents, and others—and school communities (Donaldson, 2008; Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001; Kegan, 2000, Kegan & Lahey, 2009). Such complex demands cannot be addressed in isolation. As noted above, what is needed are new ways of working together in support of each other's growth and development so that together we can meet the implicit and explicit demands of 21st-century schooling.

## Acknowledging Developmental Diversity

In addition to the various forms of diversity that school leaders typically consider when supporting the growth and learning of adults in their schools (e.g., race, ethnicity, years of experience, religion, and sexuality), they also need to attend to what I call *developmental diversity.* Caring for and attending to developmental diversity means being mindful of the qualitatively different ways in which we, as adults, make sense of our life experiences. In other words, because we take in and experience our realities in very different ways, we need different types of supports and challenges to grow. This book is about how we can do just that.

Since research suggests that in any school, team, or group, it is likely that adults will make sense of their experiences in developmentally different ways, we need to attend to this type of diversity. It is therefore necessary to incorporate learning-oriented leadership practices that will support and challenge adults in different ways. As one leader recently remarked,

> By acknowledging developmental diversity, I will be better able to understand people's attitudes, behaviors, and expectations and be better equipped to support teacher learning in the service of student learning. I hold very near to my heart the possibility of helping adults grow into this profession of servicing kids and providing students with opportunities to achieve and attain success. (Teacher-leader and aspiring principal, July 2007)

Although adult learning theories can be a powerful tool for understanding how to support adult development in K–12 schools, they are underutilized (Cranton, 1996; Drago-Severson, 2004a, 2004b; Hammerman, 1999; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Levine, 1989; Mezirow, 2000). Table 1.1 provides a brief example of how adults with different developmental orientations communicate with others, as well as how they orient toward working together.

The adults listed in Table 1.1 make sense of communicating and working collaboratively in qualitatively different ways, which means they need different supports and challenges in order to grow. The qualitatively different ways in which they are making sense—or making meaning—of their experiences represent their *ways of knowing.*

As I wrote in my first book, *Helping Teachers Learn: Principal Leadership for Adult Growth and Development* (2004b), a way of knowing is actually a person's meaning-making system through which all experience is filtered and understood; it is often referred to as a developmental level or *stage.* A person's way of knowing dictates how he or she will make sense of reality. It is the filter through which people interpret their experiences, largely determining their capacities for perspective taking on self, other, and the relationship between the two. As such, it determines how learning experiences (and all life experience) will be taken in, managed, understood, and used. A person's way of knowing is not connected to gender, age, or life phase, but there is a progression of increasing complexity from one way of knowing to the next. A person's way of knowing shapes how she understands her roles and responsibilities as a teacher, leader, and learner. It also informs how she thinks about what makes a good leader, what constitutes effective leadership practice, and the supports and challenges she needs to grow from various forms of adult collaboration.

Of the six primary ways of knowing (Kegan, 1982, 1994, 2000), the first two (stage 0 and stage 1) are prevalent in infancy and childhood. Three more ways of knowing—the *instrumental, socializing,* and *self-authoring* ways of knowing—are most common in adulthood. While less common, a sixth, which I call the *self-transforming* way of knowing, is becoming slightly more prevalent in today's society, given the complex challenges of living, learning, teaching, and leading. Awareness of these ways of knowing, which I discuss in depth in Chapter 2, helps us to understand adults' developmental diversity so that we can

support their growth accordingly, bringing us closer to the goal of establishing schools as true learning centers for all.

**Table 1.1**   Adults' Different Perceptions of Communication and Collaboration

| *Leader* | *Orientation Toward Communicating* | *Orientation Toward Collaborating* |
|---|---|---|
| **Mel** | • Emphasizes rules for communication; orients toward facts, right way to do things, and concrete goals. | • Everyone in the school or team needs to do their work the "right" way (there is one right way).<br>• Achieving concrete goals is most important. |
| **Fran** | • Emphasizes his or her own and other people's feelings.<br>• Communicates feelings and personal experiences (internal sense of self).<br>• Orients toward making sure all are in agreement. | • Needs the school, group, or team to agree on a shared goal that they work toward. |
| **Daye** | • Emphasizes ideology, philosophy, and feelings when presenting her perspective to others.<br>• Seeks to understand diversity across similarities and differences in perspectives. | • Understands and appreciates that adults will bring different perspectives, values, and experiences that enrich collaboration.<br>• Values coming together for a common purpose. |
| **Pat** | • Seeks to negotiate multiple boundaries of diverse stakeholders who bring different needs, gifts, and experiences to a school.<br>• Orients toward stretching his own capacity to support interpersonal and organizational processes. | • Values a collaborative spirit of accountability in the group so that each person can work to capacity and share responsibility for leading, teaching, and learning, while being flexible so each person can rely on the group.<br>• Values structure and process when they are based on collaboration and what each person brings to and needs from the group.<br>• Appreciates when space is created where each person's gifts and abilities can come forth. Considers it important for groups to be able to balance the personal circumstances of their members with achieving the tasks and/or goals for the group. |

## The Power of Transformational Learning: Its Promise Across the System

Whereas teachers struggle to improve student achievement and support each other's growth and learning, principals, in their role as instructional leaders, struggle to create

conditions that support teacher learning. Principals today are being asked to add leadership of instructional improvement to their managerial responsibilities. To do this, they must become primary adult developers and architects of collaborative learning communities. As they assume these diverse roles under challenging conditions, they must find ways to support themselves and teachers with differing needs, developmental orientations, and levels of experience.

Just as the demands placed on teachers and principals have become increasingly complex, so too have the demands placed on superintendents (Elmore, 2004a). Superintendents have the tremendous responsibility of shaping the culture in which all members of the school system operate. Recently, their work has changed: no longer only primarily responsible for *running* the school system, they are now responsible for *transforming* the school system in response to new demands. Yet in their training, many superintendents have not been prepared for this role (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). It is clear that the demands of leading and teaching in the 21st century require important changes across all levels of the school and the district (Donaldson, 2008; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Wagner et al., 2006).

In today's global society, both the implicit and explicit expectations of what leaders are supposed to accomplish, within and across education, have changed. Many acknowledge how complex the work of teaching and leadership in the school has become and how expectations are changing constantly. Educators are expected to lead in ways in which they were never taught to lead and they themselves have never experienced. How can we help each other to develop the capacities needed to lead through the complex demands of leading and teaching?

Here I need to make an important distinction between two kinds of learning: informational learning and transformational learning. *Informational learning*, often the goal of traditional forms of professional development, focuses on increasing the amount of knowledge and skills a person possesses. *Transformational learning*, on the other hand, relates to the development of the cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal capacities that enable a person to manage the complexities of work (e.g., leadership, teaching, learning, adaptive challenges) and life. With transformational learning, or growth (I use these terms interchangeably), a qualitative shift occurs in *how a person actively interprets, organizes, understands, and makes sense of his or her experience.* This kind of learning is associated with an increase in individual developmental capacities, which enables a person to have a broader perspective on him- or herself, on others, and on the relationships between self and others (Cranton, 1996; Kegan, 1982, 1994, 2000; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Mezirow, 1991, 2000). While both types of learning are important and necessary, we need opportunities to develop our internal capacities if we are to meet the implicit and explicit new and complex demands of the 21st century. And we need help in doing this. No one can do it alone. As human beings, we need different kinds of supports and challenges in order to grow.

In fact, Kegan and Lahey (2009) contend that many leaders—and adults in general— have not been prepared to meet adaptive challenges, which require both new knowledge and new ways of thinking, and do not yet have the developmental capacities to manage

these challenges effectively. In other words, the adaptive challenges we face today often outpace our capacities (Kegan, 1994, 2000; Kegan & Lahey, 2009). However, adults can develop these capacities by engaging in practices that support transformational learning, since this kind of learning changes the ways in which we understand and make sense of our reality and often causes changes in our fundamental beliefs and assumptions. As Kegan notes in an interview (Sparks, 2002):

> Major change requires alteration in some of our basic, underlying beliefs. That is transformational learning. . . . Technical challenges require harnessing already existing kinds of thinking and knowledge. Adaptive challenges, on the other hand, require creating new knowledge and new ways of thinking. Heifetz says that one of the biggest errors leaders make is addressing adaptive challenges through technical means. We're saying something similar—that the challenges school leaders face are adaptive and require transformational learning (p. 70).

## THE NEED FOR A NEW MODEL OF LEADERSHIP

The school leaders I've worked with and learned from for over two decades have taught me many important lessons, and in this book I share some of them. One thing I've learned is how palpable and widespread the need is for more opportunities to collaborate. During workshops, I ask educators, "What kinds of practices do you feel support your own and other people's learning?" Regardless of their position—teacher, principal, superintendent, staff developer, coach, or curriculum coordinator—they name practices that center on collaboration. Most often they also remark, as one district leader put it, "It is both difficult and important to privilege time for collaboration and reflection. I know we need more flexibility in the agenda to accommodate this." The new learning-oriented model I present in this book takes into account the need to build healthy, strong school systems where collaboration is part of the fabric of day-to-day life.

In my work with practicing school leaders and those who attend my university classes, I continue to be inspired by how much these adults teach each other (and me). Michael Nakkula and Sharon Ravitch (1997) developed the concept of *reciprocal transformation* from developmental research that focuses on mentorship between children and adults. I employ this concept to highlight the importance of reciprocity when adults are collaborating with each other.

Just as the boundaries between teacher and student in graduate classrooms differ from those in the classrooms of decades ago, so too do the boundaries between adults in different kinds of leadership capacities in schools differ from what they were. To build capacity and support adult development in schools, mutuality, reciprocal learning, and shared leadership are needed.

Building capacity and practicing shared leadership also require a good *holding environment*—a concept discussed in some detail in Chapter 2. Briefly, and for our purposes here, a good holding environment both supports a person where he or she is in

terms of making meaning of life experiences and challenges the person to grow beyond that, but without conveying any urgent need for change. In other words, it joins a person in his or her meaning making, or way of knowing. It also seeks to bring the individual's voice into the conversation, whether that person is a teacher, a student, a principal, or a superintendent. It is the kind of environment created by teachers in effective classrooms, by thoughtful leaders in effective schools, and by developmentally mindful superintendents in outstanding school systems. In these contexts, all leaders meet learners where they are, provide challenges for growth and learning, and stay around while the learner is demonstrating a new way of thinking and acting. This may sometimes mean that the leader needs to empower the quieter or less empowered learners. Children feel the difference when the adults in their school are thriving and well supported in their work.

Roland Barth (2006) underscores the importance of building trusting, generous, helpful, and generative relationships among the adults in a school and emphasizes that the quality of these relationships has "a greater influence on the character and quality of that school and on student accomplishment than anything else" (p. 8). He continues by pointing out the need for a collegial culture and how important it is to have conditions where colleagues can help each other learn. As he puts it,

> A precondition for doing *anything* to strengthen our practice and improve a school is the existence of a collegial culture in which professionals talk about practice, share their craft knowledge, and observe and root for the success of one another. Without these in place, no meaningful improvement—no staff or curriculum development, no teacher leadership, no student appraisal, no team teaching, no parent involvement, and no sustained change—is possible. (p. 13)

In essence, Barth is referring to trust and trusting relationships, and as you know, these are fundamental to supporting growth in *all* human beings. Trusting relationships lead to growth-enhancing cultures of learning and development for all, regardless of age. As Alan Blankstein et al. (2007) remind us, developing trust among teachers, administrators, parents, and all persons within schools and school systems is a vital foundation for adult learning and development. Research consistently shows that supporting adult learning is directly and positively linked to enhancing children's achievement (Donaldson, 2008; Guskey, 2000; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Roy & Hord, 2003; Wagner, 2007).

We need new ways of shaping schools to be true learning centers, places where adults and children are well supported in their learning and development. I hope that the pillar practices (described at the end of this chapter and in more detail throughout this book) that compose my learning-oriented model of school leadership will help educators to support adult growth and build capacity across the school system: principal to principal, principal to teachers, teacher to teacher, superintendent to principal, and superintendent to superintendent. The four pillar practices—establishing teams, providing adults with leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring—can support effective, differentiated approaches to adult development in schools. Informed by principles of adult learning and developmental theories, these pillar practices are developmentally robust,

meaning any one of them can support adults with different needs, preferences, and developmental orientations. And they can help us to attend to the different needs for growth that we bring to our learning and leadership.

According to adult learning and developmental theory, we must understand the underlying assumptions we hold about how the world works because we accept them as truths until we become aware of them. Our assumptions guide our thinking and our behaviors. Developing greater awareness of our assumptions can help us to grow. The pillar practices create structures, or holding environments (as described above), that allow us to engage in shared reflection and examine our assumptions about leadership, teaching, and learning and then to test these assumptions, revise them, and grow.

In other words, just as teachers must accommodate all types of learners to support their learning and development, so too must adults work to support other adults' development. The best teachers create lessons and structure class activities in ways that both support and challenge ("stretch," in a developmental sense) all learners. The new learning-oriented model, the pillar practices, and the examples of these practices that I present in this book can support the development of adults with different preferences, needs, and developmental orientations (or ways of knowing). They offer a new and promising pathway to establishing true learning communities through a developmental approach. In effect, they help us to understand that we need to differentiate our leadership in support of each other's learning and growth. And they provide a map that shows us how to do so.

## SUPPORTING LEARNING ACROSS THE SYSTEM

> *Improvement requires fundamental changes in the way public schools and school systems are designed and in the ways they are led. It will require change in the values and norms that shape how teachers and principals think about the purposes of their work, changes in how we think about who leaders are, where they are, and what they do, and changes in the knowledge and skill requirements of work in schools. In short, we must fundamentally redesign schools as places where both adults and young people learn.*

—Elmore, 2000, p. 35

As Richard Elmore (2000) emphasizes in the above quote, we need to find more effective ways to support the continual learning of adults across levels of the system and to make fundamental changes in the system itself. Similarly, as Michelle LaPointe and Stephen Davis (2006) point out, relatively "little is known about how to design programs that can develop and sustain effective leadership practices" (p. 16). In this section, I highlight a few common themes from the literature about professional development for central office district leaders and staff, principals, and teachers; I then focus on each group individually.

First, the primary way in which teachers, principals, and superintendents are supported in their personal and professional growth is through professional development programs,

often referred to now as professional learning programs. Second, the literature emphasizes a critical need for more time to be devoted to these programs (Blaydes, 2002; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001; Donaldson, 2008; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Peterson, 2002). Third, research shows that supporting learning and development for each group decreases the individual's sense of isolation, making it possible for all three groups to influence student achievement positively (Donaldson; Guskey, 2000; Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Peterson, 2002). Traditionally—and unfortunately—professionals in schools and school systems carry out their work and practices on their own, without the benefit of a supportive yet critically thoughtful observer. Thus, many times their good work is not replicated, built upon, examined, or celebrated. In addition, many issues with which adults need help are left undiscovered. Last, these three groups have a common need for meaningful professional development, which entails job-embedded, ongoing, safe opportunities (rather than single-shot or "drive-by" experiences) and engagement in meaningful dialogue about their work and its inherent challenges (Guskey, 1995; Hoffmann & Johnston, 2005; Johnson et al., 2004; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Teitel, 2006).

## Superintendents

Superintendents have the important leadership responsibility of sustaining school- and district-level improvement (Elmore, 2004a; Levine, 2005; Teitel, 2006). Central office professionals are also responsible for supporting and monitoring the effectiveness of school-based professional development (Blankstein et al., 2007; Roy & Hord, 2003). Yet how are central office staff supported in their efforts to accomplish this? For more than a decade, scholars have argued that it is essential for districts to offer support to principals, teachers, and professional development committees (Blankstein et al.; Johnson, 1996; Roy & Hord). In addition to their other responsibilities, say Pat Roy and Shirley Hord, districts need to

> prepare administrators and teachers to use a variety of data to determine the focus of professional learning, to build collaboration skills and structures, to use job-embedded professional development designs, and continue to focus on long-term support for the development of new classroom-based skills. (p. 3)

Their examination of district support for school-based improvement reveals that while building district capacity to support schools is possible, it requires "redefining everyone's role—not only the principal's role but also that of central office staff, superintendent and school board members" (Roy, 2007, p. 3). Roy further notes, "District staff also found that their current structural features did not easily support new approaches to collaboration and professional development" (p. 3).

How do we support the learning and growth of superintendents? Recently, a superintendent remarked before one of my workshops, "I have served as a senior superintendent of [a large urban district] for many years. I have felt overwhelmed and undersupported [in my own development and learning] most of the time." Fortunately,

more attention is being paid to developing effective initiatives and programs for supporting the learning and development of superintendents, given the complexity and importance of their work (Blankstein et al., 2007; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Teitel, 2006; Wagner, 2007; Wagner et al., 2006).

In his examination of effective professional development programs for school superintendents, Lee Teitel (2006) finds that superintendents valued the following about their executive learning experiences:

- Being able to talk about the real issues they face in a "safe space," where they can talk openly without compromising their authority
- Being with peers to whom they can relate and whom they respect
- Learning about their own leadership
- Sharing practical ideas that they can apply to their work at the district level

It is necessary to emphasize the importance of creating a "safe" context in which superintendents can share concerns and issues. Being able to share honestly about the complexity of their work and their own leadership challenges is central to learning and growth and a necessary feature in bringing about change (Garmston & Wellman, 2009; Rallis, Tedder, Lachman, & Elmore, 2006).

Teitel (2006) also finds that the effective programs he surveyed could be characterized as *professional learning communities* in which superintendents shared their practice with each other, engaged in problem solving together, and developed shared norms and values. As a result, they hungered for more opportunities to engage with these types of communities.

Teitel (2006) argues, "If the current 'boom' in programs for sitting superintendents is to have any lasting effect (sustainable beyond any future reductions of interest and funding), capacity must be built" (p. 9). He further questions where this capacity is being built: "Is it in the superintendents? In the districts? In the sponsoring organization? In the approaches programs are using?" (p. 9). I suggest that the learning-oriented model I present in this book offers one promising path for building capacity within superintendents individually and as a group. Furthermore, my research indicates that adopting my learning-oriented model can help superintendents better support the growth of the adults who serve in their schools.

## Principals

While outside stakeholders highly value accountability, scholars and practitioners maintain that principals are expected to fix schools and communities without having the necessary resources, a situation that has led to a critical shortage of principals (Donaldson, 2008; Fullan, 2005; Murphy, 2006). The global shortage of principals is attributed to a cascade of events in which they are blamed for the problems in their schools, lack the time and energy to sustain a balanced life, and suffer from the resulting stress (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Byrne-Jiménez & Orr, 2007; Coleman & Perkins, 2004; Donaldson, 2008; Houston,

1998). Principals are increasingly resigning due to this stress, which is also fed by inadequate training (Moller & Pankake, 2006), insufficient compensation, professional isolation, bureaucratic micromanagement, uncertainty related to role expectations, inadequate support (Arnold, 2005; Donaldson), and the burden of inculcating youth with a knowledge base on which leaders cannot agree (Langer & Boris-Schacter, 2003; Oplatka, 2003; Wagner, 2007). For instance, a 2002 survey conducted by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP, 2002) found that 66 percent of its membership would be retiring in the next six to ten years. Kent Peterson (2002) notes that districts expect to replace more than 60 percent of all principals over the next five years.

Principals, like superintendents and teachers, face new challenges of standards-based reform and increased accountability (Donaldson, 2008; Elmore, 2004a, 2004b; Sparks, 2004), challenges that are even more difficult when attempted in the context of a troubled school attended by many low-income and/or nonnative English speakers. Support for principal leadership is particularly important in the climate of high-stakes accountability systems.

The shift from being managers to instructional leaders has also placed new and increasingly complex demands on principals. More specifically, districts are asking them to adapt from a chiefly managerial role (scheduling, budgeting, and imposing discipline) to being a school's primary adult developer and architect of the collaborative learning community (Samuels, 2008).

The friction between complex work demands and an adult's developmental capacities also factors into principals' job stress and their ability to meet their leadership challenges (Drago-Severson, 2007). Principals must take on a diverse set of roles, supporting both themselves and teachers who have differing needs, developmental orientations, and preferences. Many principals are not equipped or given the support needed to meet these challenges (Donaldson, 2008; Elmore, 2004b; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Kelley & Peterson, 2002; Wagner et al., 2006). As a result, many teachers and principals leave the profession in search of more supportive places of employment. Principals need to be adult educators and advocates to retain teachers and to sustain themselves under adverse conditions.

Research shows that supporting new and experienced principals' learning by creating opportunities for reflection on practice is crucial to everyone in a school (Byrne-Jiménez & Orr, 2007; Donaldson, 2008; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1998; Wagner et al., 2006). While principals benefit from practices such as skill development and training provided by their district, they also need time and resources for reflective practice with fellow principals (Byrne-Jiménez & Orr; Coleman & Perkins, 2004; Kegan & Lahey, 2009). Peterson (2002) references the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) description of the kinds of structural and cultural qualities that professional development for school leaders needs to incorporate. The NSDC states that effective programs of professional development take place over the long term, are carefully planned, are embedded in the job, and focus on student achievement and how it can be reached. Such programs, the NSDC emphasizes, should include opportunities to develop positive norms, examine assumptions, and engage in reflective practice with peers about issues related to work. Karen Osterman and Robert Kottkamp (2004) define

*reflective practice* as a method for developing a greater self-awareness about the nature and influence of leadership.

Thus, one way to support principal development is to provide school leaders with ongoing opportunities to reflect on their own and others' leadership in a group setting, thereby focusing on how they make sense of their experiences. The research points to the importance of creating regular opportunities for principals to engage in dialogue with peers. The purpose of such opportunities is to step back from the immediacy of one's own experiences and gain new insight into practice (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Donaldson, 2008; Drago-Severson, 2004b; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Wagner et al., 2006). When we as educators re-examine our assumptions and belief systems, we can transform our practice, in turn improving our ability to facilitate change and support adult growth in schools and in ourselves. The pillar practices offer a promising path for achieving this.

Gordon Donaldson (2008) and Mónica Byrne-Jiménez and Margaret Terry Orr (2007) have developed effective professional development models that center on inviting principals to engage in reflective practice with colleagues over time around leadership dilemmas. Byrne-Jiménez and Orr's framework extends Victoria Marsick's (2002) model for supporting adult learning in for-profit organizations through *action learning conversations.* Byrne-Jiménez and Orr's model, like Marsick's, draws on adult learning theories (Knowles, 1978; Mezirow, 2000) and emphasizes the importance of dialogue and reflection to support learning and development (see Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). Their powerful and low-cost model, like Donaldson's (2008), coincides with what Silverberg and Kottkamp (2006) recommend in terms of the importance of examining assumptions and learning collaboratively.

My learning-oriented model is similar to those discussed above in that it, too, centers on dialogue and shared reflection. However, my model differs in that it is informed by adult developmental theory. It focuses on the person as an active meaning maker, the ways in which adults make meaning of their experiences, and the different kinds of supports and challenges adults need in order to grow. The pillar practices themselves are effective holding environments for supporting growth and are robust enough to support adults with diverse ways of knowing.

## Teachers

Principals are responsible for creating conditions that nurture teachers' growth in schools. Often, though, the demands of being the central designer and developer of adult learning communities outpace leaders' preparation and capacities (Johnson, 1990; Kegan & Lahey, 2001, 2009; Lugg & Shoho, 2006). To be effective leaders, principals need to understand what makes for effective professional learning that supports teacher development.

In a meta-analysis of 35 years of research on school leadership, Robert Marzano, Timothy Waters, and Brian McNulty (2005) find that a highly effective school leader can have a dramatic and positive influence on students' overall academic achievement. Furthermore, as Roland Barth (1990) maintains, "Probably nothing within a school has

more impact on students in terms of skills development, self-confidence, or classroom behavior than the personal and professional growth of teachers" (p. 49).

The primary way in which teachers are supported in their personal and professional growth is through professional development programs. In their 1990 study, Dennis Sparks and Susan Loucks-Horsley identify five distinct models of staff development. My developmentally oriented review of the literature furthers theirs by illuminating the assumptions that undergird the models, the developmental demands of these models, and the different supports and challenges that adults need in order to grow from engaging in professional development initiatives. I have identified six types of professional development models that are currently practiced (Drago-Severson, 1994, 1996, 2004b):

- Training
- Observation/Evaluation and Feedback assessment
- Involvement in an improvement process
- Inquiry/collaborative action research
- Individually guided or self-directed
- Mentoring (sometimes referred to as "developmental coaching")

The sequence of models presented in Table 1.2 reflects an increasingly internal or self-developmental focus. As shown in Table 1.2, there is a lack of clarity and consensus as to *what* constitutes teacher development, *how* to support it, and *how* models are translated into practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006; DuFour, 2007; Lieberman & Miller, 2001; Peterson & Deal, 1998).

Currently practiced models of teacher growth operate on different assumptions and expectations about how teacher growth can be supported (Drago-Severson, 1994, 1996, 2004b, 2007). Scholars have emphasized that new visions for professional development are sometimes implemented in different ways (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006; DuFour, 2007; Hord & Sommers, 2008). Similarly, other educational researchers and practitioners emphasize the need to reassess what constitutes professional development (Darling-Hammond, 2003; DuFour; Lieberman & Miller, 2001), and they acknowledge that the ideas and assumptions informing the models are sometimes misunderstood, interpreted differently, and implemented incorrectly (Cochran-Smith & Lytle; DuFour; Hord & Sommers).

Scholars maintain that principals must allocate resources to support school-based and job-embedded professional development for teachers (Blankstein, Houston, & Cole, 2007; Hord & Sommers, 2008; Roy & Hord, 2003). Roy (2007) also notes that job-embedded (on-site and school-based) professional development for teachers "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" (p. 3). She emphasizes that this kind of professional development centers on the classroom and focuses on increasing teachers' knowledge and skills so that students will profit.

**Table 1.2**  Characteristics of Professional Development Models

| Defining Characteristics | Training | Observation/ Evaluation & Feedback Assessment | Involvement in School Improvement Process | Inquiry/ Collaborative Action Research | Self-directed | Mentoring/Coaching |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Focus: Target of development** | Information, increasing knowledge, and skills development | New or improved teaching methods through skill development | Increased knowledge and skills needed to participate effectively in decision making | Improved decision-making skills, collegiality, collaboration, communities of practice | Increased self-direction, pursuit of self-defined interests | Psychological development of self through the context of the interpersonal relationship |
| **Methods: Types of initiatives** | Most inservice, some coursework, Hunter model | Peer coaching, clinical supervision, teacher evaluation | Curriculum development, research into better teaching, assessment of student data, improvement processes | Collaborative action research, collaborative research, study groups, roundtables | Self-directed learning, journal writing, evaluation with teacher setting goals | Supportive, longer-term interpersonal relationship |
| **Goals** | Improved student achievement, enhanced teacher knowledge and skills | Improved student achievement through improved teacher performance | Improved classroom instruction and curriculum | Improved teaching practices and greater student learning | Improved collegiality and opportunities for reflection | Psychological development of self |
| **Mode of delivery** | Are mostly single-shot or "drive-by" experiences. | Several conferences and/or meetings occur over a period of time. | Longer term—may span several years. | Variable—depends on context and current problems, issues, and dilemmas. | Variable—depends on context and current problems, issues, and dilemmas. | Usually longer term—may extend over several years. |
| **Underlying assumptions** | Techniques and skills are worthy of replication. | Colleagues' observations and feedback will enhance reflection and performance. | Adults learn most effectively when faced with a problem to solve; that is, issues of practice that are meaningful to them. | Process is self-managed and nonhierarchical; teachers have knowledge and expertise that can be brought to the inquiry process. | Adults are capable of judging their own learning needs; adults learn best when they are agents of their own development. | Development occurs in the context of a relationship, a constellation of relationships, or a team; mentoring skills can be taught to adults. |

SOURCE: Adapted from Drago-Severson, 2004b.

Recently, scholars have argued that effective professional development approaches have several common features. They (1) work to link improved instructional practice and student learning, (2) address the needs of student and adult learners, (3) are collaborative and ongoing experiences, (4) create a culture of excellence, and (5) allocate time for reflective practice that nurtures learning and application (Blankstein, Houston, & Cole, 2007; Easton as cited in Roy, 2007).

Research highlights the sensitivity of professional development to teachers' needs for active learning (Corcoran, 2007), as well as informal, diverse, and continuous development practices that are spontaneous rather than planned (Blankstein et al., 2007). Joellen Killion (2000) discusses informal learning as "teacher planning, grade-level or department meetings, conversations about students, reflection on students' or teachers' work, problem solving, assisting each other, classroom-based action, research, coaching and supporting one another, making school-based decisions, developing assessments, curriculum, and instructional resources" (p. 3). Creating these types of learning opportunities, Killion emphasizes, ignites and sustains teachers' excitement for learning, growing, and altering their instructional practices. Furthermore, she contends that these types of experiences could be created in schools regardless of financial resources, provided that nonfinancial resources, such as human resources and time, are available. She, like others, finds that teachers say the "alignment of school goals with student learning needs" (p. 3) is key to their development preferences (see Corcoran; Roy, 2007). Adequate resources in terms of time and funding, as well as a strong principal, are also paramount.

Peter Youngs and M. Bruce King (2002) conducted a multiyear, qualitative study to explore principal leadership of teachers' professional development in four urban elementary schools. They found that effective principals fostered trust, created structures for teacher learning, and directed faculty to outside expertise or helped teachers to learn on-site. These practices complement what others have emphasized as key to supporting teacher learning. A collaborative approach to leadership for teacher learning is essential because collaboration provides greater access to pertinent information and alternative perspectives, nurtures reflective practice, helps develop a culture that supports learning and growth, and facilitates change (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2007; Blase & Blase, 2001; Donaldson, 2008; Fullan, 2005; Hargreaves, 1994; Rallis & Goldring, 2000). According to Gayle Moller and Anita Pankake (2006), the principal's role is to be a facilitator or "matchmaker." As these authors explain, principals need to match their information about professional learning opportunities with their teachers' interests to foster professional growth.

## RE-ENVISIONING STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In pointing out the need for new ways of leading and providing better support for the individuals who care for our children, Andy Hargreaves (2007a, 2007b), like Richard Elmore (2000, 2004b), advocates new ways of supporting adult development within schools. In so doing, he challenges educators to consider how we can alter old ways of delivering staff development to serve learners better in the future. He uses the words *integrity*, *equity*,

*innovation*, and *interdependence* to describe staff development at its best. To create the interdependence Hargreaves advocates, we need more effective practices for supporting adult learning throughout the system. In fact, Hargreaves maintains that students will not be able to learn and develop unless teachers are learning and developing. And for teachers to be supported in their learning and development, we must help all educators in their learning and development: principals and superintendents, as well as teachers.

Similarly, Michael Fullan (2005, 2007) advocates dramatic shifts in how we conceptualize professional development, envisioning very different contexts for the work of both teachers and students. According to Fullan, we must ensure that we foster the highest standard of learning among the adults in our schools.

Likewise, Shirley Hord (2007) furthers the discussion for building schools with collective learning at their center. To accomplish this, schools and their staffs need to support the learning of communities of professionals. She argues that such support has two requirements: (1) creating a rich learning community for adults requires human and material resources, and (2) "relational conditions" are essential to establishing a community of learners. Future schools, she explains, must be places of learning for all students and adults. Creating true learning communities that attend to adults' differing learning and developmental needs is a promising path to achieving this new vision and emerging call from the field.

Today's teachers, not just principals and superintendents, must assist in building these collaborative learning communities. How can we build schools as learning centers that can support adults with different needs, preferences, and developmental orientations? How can we build schools so that they are mentoring communities—true learning centers?

As educators committed to supporting student learning and achievement, organizational change, and adult learning and development, we must understand that change begins with us. As Kegan (as cited in Sparks, 2002) puts it,

> The most powerful driver for behavioral change is a change in how one understands the world. If you want powerful ongoing changes in teaching or leadership, you have to get at the underlying beliefs and conceptions that give rise to behaviors. (p. 70)

The pillar practices, informed by adult developmental theory, are robust and can help us to examine our assumptions and underlying beliefs that give rise to our behaviors. Employing these practices can help us grow.

## THE RESEARCH INFORMING THIS BOOK

The research on which this book is based includes and extends my prior research, which I presented in *Helping Teachers Learn: Principal Leadership for Adult Growth and Development* (2004b). In that study, 25 principals from across the United States discussed how they worked to support teachers' learning and development *within their schools.* What I learned from these leaders, a few of whom are no longer practicing principals, extended

what I had learned from an earlier four-and-a-half-year ethnography (Drago-Severson, 1996) in which I examined how one principal, Dr. Sarah Levine, exercised leadership on behalf of teacher development in her school. This was one of the first studies that examined this type of leadership process in schools.

In this book, I reference the 1996 study, the later sample of 25 principals, and the research I have conducted since then with principals, teachers, superintendents, and other school leaders in the workshops, institutes, and classes in which I teach the pillar practices. It was from listening to the stories these school leaders told about how they support adult learning and development in their schools that I developed what I now refer to as the *learning-oriented model of school leadership.* In the research appendix, I describe the research methods on which my development of this model is based.

## A NEW LEARNING-ORIENTED MODEL OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

During a retreat for experienced teachers in the last year of an evaluation cycle, I introduced the pillar practices and the developmental theory that informs them. I invited the teachers to consider how these might inform their teaching and leadership work, their current and future goals, and the supports and challenges (logistical and developmental) they felt they needed in order to grow and achieve their goals.

One 15-year veteran, Kara, asked, "How are the administrators in our school supposed to support us if they do not understand the pillar practices for growth and the developmental theory informing them?" Another teacher, Dave, elaborated,

> We need administrators and supervisors to understand the ideas—the pillar practices and the theory behind them—if they are to support us in our development. They need to understand what we're talking about when we share with them our needs for support and challenge and why we want to use certain pillar practices.

After the workshop, the teachers voiced this concern to their administrators. The administrators wanted to learn more about the pillar practices and the theoretical principles informing them to support their teachers' learning and growth. This example illuminates how adult learning can be supported when the school is viewed as a learning center in which adults share a common language for development, understand how to support and challenge each other, and employ the pillar practices to enable growth.

This book is, in many ways, a response to the concerns of teachers like Kara and Dave. It is an opportunity to introduce—to educators and administrators—the kind of leadership that fosters adult growth, or transformational learning. It is also a response to the principals, superintendents, and other school leaders who expressed the need for better supports for their own and other adults' growth. The ideas informing my learning-oriented model are aligned with a growing realization in the field that we need more effective ways

to care for the growth and development of leaders across school systems. Furthermore, to build schools as learning centers, or mentoring communities for growth, we all need to be more active in supporting each other's development. As we know, learning-oriented school leadership needs to attend to more than practice and improvement; it also needs to support the development of our capacities to handle complexities. My model, informed by developmental theory, offers a range of practices that are supportive of and challenging to individuals at different developmental levels.

## Developmental Underpinnings of the Model

Robert Kegan's constructive-developmental theory informs my learning-oriented model. In particular, this theory helps us to understand how differences in our behaviors, feelings, and thinking are often related to differences in how we *construct,* or make meaning of, our experience. It also helps to explain why even as adults we have different developmental capacities and different needs for growth. Understanding the key principles of this theory provides us with a *language* we can use to discuss adult development. Importantly, it also helps us to understand that growth is possible in adulthood. In fact, adulthood can be a period of significant development if a person is provided with developmentally appropriate supports and challenges.

The pillar practices and the developmental theory informing them help us to understand that we need to differentiate the kinds of leadership we provide according to the different needs of the adults with whom we are working, just as we do for young learners. My work shows that professionals will experience the same curriculum or developmental initiative differently and that it is necessary to modify our approach accordingly. In this book, I draw on a variety of developmental theories to illuminate how the pillar practices can help adults develop their cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal capacities to support others and themselves. Providing this kind of differentiated support will enable us to build true professional learning communities through a developmental approach.

Adult learning and constructive-developmental theory help us to understand the developmental underpinnings of the pillar practices and ways in which adults learn and grow when engaging in them. In this book, I illuminate the interplay between a person's developmental capacity (or way of knowing) and his or her readiness to engage in these practices. Since Kegan's theory illuminates how people construct experience and considers how contexts can provide both supports and challenges, it offers a way to help adults grow.

The pillar practices can serve as robust holding environments for supporting adult growth. Any one of the pillar practices can be used to support adults with different needs, preferences, and developmental orientations.

## The Four Pillar Practices for Growth

In *Helping Teachers Learn* (2004b), I presented principals' perspectives on and experiences with supporting adult learning in their schools. From my original research with 25 principals, I developed a new model of learning-oriented leadership, which is

composed of four pillar practices. This book extends and enriches the content of my first book on this topic in several ways:

- I offer more in-depth, concrete examples of the pillar practices.
- I share insights gleaned from new research conducted with a variety of educators serving in different types of leadership positions.
- I discuss the self-transforming way of knowing and how to offer developmental supports and challenges to help these adults grow.
- I include application exercises to help you, the reader, translate your knowledge into the action of supporting adult growth in your school or school system.

While I wrote *Helping Teachers Learn* primarily for school principals, I have written this book to help all adults in school systems learn and grow. The example practices can be implemented across districts and by different kinds of district leaders.

Perhaps the most important thing to say in introducing the pillar practices is to emphasize that they are *distinct yet mutually reinforcing* initiatives that were designed and should be applied with the intent of supporting adult development in a collaborative environment. They can support transformational learning by creating contexts—dynamic spaces—in which adults can engage in different modes of reflection and shared dialogue within the school and school system. I introduce the pillar practices briefly below.

### Teaming

Engaging in teams provides adults with opportunities to question their own and other people's philosophies and assumptions about leadership, teaching, and learning. It provides a context in which adults can examine and question their assumptions and beliefs about the ways they implement a school's core values—in the curriculum and elsewhere, reflect on their teaching and leadership practices and challenges, examine their school's mission in light of new accountability demands, and make decisions collaboratively. Teaming creates an opportunity for adults to share their diverse perspectives and learn about one another's ideas, perspectives, and assumptions, as well as to challenge each other to consider alternative perspectives and to revise assumptions toward growth. Learning to appreciate others' perspectives can enable individuals to manage better situations with multiple perspectives and to develop broader perspectives.

### Providing Adults With Leadership Roles

In assuming leadership roles, adults are invited to share power and decision-making authority. As adults, we grow from being responsible for an idea's development or implementation, as well as from different opportunities to assume leadership. In these contexts, we learn about other people's perspectives and ourselves. A leadership role is an opportunity to raise not only one's own consciousness but also a group's consciousness with respect to the ideas, perspectives, and assumptions we bring to our practice. These roles are a way for the

members of a school community to benefit from other adults' expertise. I use the phrase "providing leadership roles" rather than the commonly used "distributive leadership" because of the intention behind these roles. In contrast with assigning tasks, providing leadership roles offers supports and challenges to the person taking on the role so that he or she can develop. Working with others in a leadership role helps people to uncover their assumptions and to test out new ways of thinking and acting. It's important to note that many adults assume informal leadership roles and that these experiences can also provide opportunities for growth.

### Engaging in Collegial Inquiry

Collegial inquiry is an example of a larger developmental concept known as reflective practice, which can occur individually or in groups. I define *collegial inquiry* as a shared dialogue that involves reflecting on one's assumptions, values, commitments, and convictions with others as part of the learning process. In other words, while we can engage in reflective practice alone, we need at least one partner to engage in collegial inquiry. Collegial inquiry also creates a context in which adults can reflect on proposals for change, new initiatives, and schoolwide issues (e.g., developing a school mission), as well as build individual and systemwide capacity. Setting up situations in which adults talk regularly about their practice in the context of supportive relationships encourages self-analysis and can improve the individual's and the school's practice.

### Mentoring

Mentoring creates an opportunity for adults to broaden perspectives, examine assumptions and beliefs, and share expertise toward supporting growth. Mentoring as a practice takes many forms, including pairing experienced teachers with new teachers or university interns, pairing teachers who have deep knowledge of the school mission with other teachers, pairing new and experienced principals, and group mentoring.

### Bringing the Practices to Work

In this book, I offer examples of how adults with different ways of knowing will experience the pillar practices and of the kinds of support and challenge they will need in order to grow from engaging in these practices. I also share specific examples of how the pillar practices can be used to facilitate adults' transformational learning.

At the end of a workshop for district leaders who served in different positions, the participants and I discussed how they might use some of the pillar practices to strengthen each other's development. Immediately, they expressed a desire for more time to collaborate. Betty voiced the following, which resonated with others:

> We've [always] known that our primary concern and agenda have been to support children's growth, learning, and development. It occurs to me, now, how rarely I've thought about the need to support adult learning. This is really important and needs to be part of our shared agenda in our district.

# ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

In the chapters that follow, I hope to serve as your guide as you explore the pillar practices and the developmental theory informing them. I hope that as you read, you will consider how these practices and ideas might help you to support other people and your own personal and professional growth. The two chapters in Part 1 provide a foundation for understanding the chapters in Part 2, which consist of an in-depth exploration of the pillar practices for growth.

Throughout, I have provided case studies and numerous examples of how the theories and practices here have been applied in different real-world educational settings. Also included throughout are application exercises and reflective questions that invite you to consider deeply how the ideas and practices presented might be helpful as you work to support your own and others' growth and development.

## Part 1: Foundations

The first two chapters are offered to provide a solid foundation for understanding the ideas and concepts that follow. My intention in Chapter 1 is to introduce the need for a learning-oriented model of school leadership, especially in light of the adaptive challenges leaders face across every level of our school systems.

Chapter 2 reviews the foundational ideas of Harvard psychologist Robert Kegan's constructive-developmental theory of adult growth: (1) theoretical principles, (2) the most common "ways of knowing" in adulthood (which account for adults' differing developmental orientations), and (3) the central aspects of a "holding environment"—an environment that encourages growth and learning in all of its diverse members.

## Part 2: Pillar Practices for Growth

Each of Chapters 3 through 6 is devoted to exploring one of the four pillar practices. In each chapter, I present main themes from both the professional learning literature and the adult developmental literature and then discuss the pillar practice from a developmental perspective to illuminate how it supports adult growth. In addition, I share case examples of how leaders employ the practice under consideration in a variety of school contexts. Chapter 7 provides case examples showing how school leaders have actually employed the pillar practices, and Chapter 8 shows how the four pillar practices can be adapted for different settings. More detailed reviews of Chapters 3 through 8 follow.

Chapter 3 focuses on how the practice of teaming can be used to promote personal and organizational learning through various forms of collaboration. I review the literature on teaming and discuss important features for structuring teams from a developmental perspective. I also relate the ways in which adults with different developmental orientations will experience the practice and the types of supports and challenges they will need in order to grow through teaming. This chapter includes a discussion of how variations of teaming can support adults with different developmental orientations and specific examples of ways

to structure teams and use developmental protocols to support adult development optimally. Through case examples, I show how leaders organize their schools for teamwork and describe how teaming opens communication, decreases isolation, supports growth, and builds interdependent relationships. Toward the end of the chapter, I present a case from a principal who serves in a large, urban high school, which illustrates how this leader implemented teaming from a developmental perspective.

Chapter 4 presents the practice of providing adults with leadership roles. I review the theoretical literature on leadership roles and then explore (1) why these roles are essential in today's complex educational world, (2) the principal's role in inviting other adults to assume leadership, (3) how providing these roles cultivates schools as learning centers, and (4) how inviting teachers to assume these roles in schools can create a pathway to individual and organizational growth. I also discuss how to support adults in these roles from a developmental perspective, how adults with different developmental orientations will experience the roles, and what types of supports and challenges they will need in order to grow from assuming these roles. Using real-life examples, I describe how leaders employ the practice of providing leadership roles and how it supports learning, builds capacity and positive school climates, decreases isolation, nurtures relationships, and supports adult development.

Chapter 5 explores the practice of collegial inquiry—investing time in meaningful dialogue about practice. After a review of the literature on adult and professional development, I discuss how to structure collegial inquiry from a developmental perspective, how adults with different developmental orientations will experience the practice, and what types of supports and challenges they will need to grow from it. After illuminating why school leaders believe collegial inquiry supports adult learning and what conditions are necessary to facilitate it, I provide examples of how it has functioned and the forms it has taken in different schools. I discuss how principals and assistant principals employ this practice with teachers and other adults in their schools, how principals engage in this practice with fellow principals, and how teachers use it with fellow teachers. In addition, I present a case example of how one school leader used collegial inquiry as an opportunity to reflect on her practices and assumptions and ultimately grow.

Chapter 6 describes the practice of mentoring as an initiative that school leaders can employ to promote personal, professional, and organizational growth through a more private relationship or series of relationships. I briefly introduce the origins of mentoring as a growth-enhancing practice that supports human development and review the mentoring literature. I then discuss how adults with different ways of knowing will experience this practice and what types of supports and challenges they will need to grow from it. Next, I explain why school leaders value mentoring and how they think it supports adult learning, and I clarify the adult learning and developmental principles behind it. I illuminate how mentoring program purposes vary from "spreading a mission" to exchanging information to providing both new and experienced educators with emotional support. Through these examples, I show how leaders employ this practice and describe what effective mentoring

*means to them;* why they value it; and how it opens communication, decreases isolation, builds interdependent relationships, helps adults to manage change, and supports adult growth.

Chapter 7 includes several in-depth cases written by leaders who employ the pillar practices in service to adult development. This chapter illustrates how teaming, providing leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring can together create a true center for adult learning and growth. The cases illustrate how the pillar practices help adults broaden their perspectives, build community, manage change, and grow. As you will see, while these leaders employ the pillar practices, they adjust them to meet the needs of the adults with whom they are working—that is, they adapt the pillar practices to the context of their work. In presenting developmentally oriented examples from these leaders' experiences with the pillar practices in diverse contexts, I hope to make the pillar practices more immediately practical and accessible.

Chapter 8 discusses ways in which school leaders can adapt and use the four pillar practices in different settings. I emphasize the importance of each school's particular characteristics in supporting the learning of all its members. In addition, I discuss some of the implications of the learning-oriented model of leadership. While no universal remedy can be applied to every school context and system, this model is especially promising for the very reason that it can be adapted to different school cultures and systems that nonetheless share the same purpose: supporting the growth and learning of the community.

In illuminating this learning-oriented model, the pillar practices, and practical examples, as well as by sharing the experiences of leaders like yourself, this book provides a new entry point for joining the conversation about building schools as learning centers. It also helps us to increase our capacities to meet the adaptive challenges of schooling and leadership today by implementing practices that will help adults grow *within* schools and school systems. My greatest hope is that this work will take us one step further toward realizing our collective desire to support adult learning in schools by building cultures responsive to adults' developmental needs.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

*"What is honored in a country is cultivated there."*

—Plato's *Republic*

In this chapter, I introduced the need for a learning-oriented model of school leadership, exploring connections among the fields of professional development, adult developmental theory, adult learning, organizational development, and leadership practices. I introduced how adult learning and adult developmental theories, and in particular how adults' different ways of knowing, inform my learning-oriented model of school leadership. Then I briefly described the four pillar practices supporting my model: teaming, providing adults with leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring.

To galvanize a movement that will build capacity in schools—especially in light of the adaptive challenges schools face—leaders at all district levels need to be aware of practices that support adult learning. To be true mentoring communities and learning centers, schools and school systems must be places where the adults as well as the children can grow.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Please take a moment to reflect on these questions. They are intended to help you consider the ideas in this chapter through internal reflection and group discussion.

1. What are two challenges you currently face in your practice? Do you consider them to be technical or adaptive? How so? What kinds of supports would help you better manage these?

2. What do you feel are the ingredients needed to help yourself and other adults grow?

3. Before reading Chapter 2, consider your current ideas about what growth in adulthood means. How do you think growth is supported?

4. What do you consider to be the most important features of a professional learning community? Why? If you have been working to build such a community, what challenges have you experienced? Why? If you have not yet done this work, what do you anticipate in terms of challenges? Why?

5. In what ways does this chapter help you think about the challenges you face as a school leader? What, if anything, resonates with your own experience?

6. What are two practices you engage in regularly by yourself or with colleagues to support your own growth? How are they working?

7. What are two practices you employ to support other people's growth? How well do you think these practices are working?