

Leading Student Achievement (LSA): Networks for Learning Research Project – Our Journey

2005

2018

LSA -> encourages and supports principals and system leaders to use processes of collaborative inquiry and knowledge building in principal learning teams and leadership networks -> improve OLF leadership practices and personal leadership resources -> greater influence on key conditions along pathways in LSA theory of action-> professional learning communities and growth of teacher practice -> improve school and classroom experiences -> impact student learning and well-being

2005	2006 - 2009	2010 - 2012	2013 - 15	2016 - 18
<p>Leading Student Achievement (LSA): Our Principal Purpose - to support growth of instructional leadership in principals</p> <p>Focus on improving student achievement in literacy</p>	<p>Focus on Key Conditions that impact student learning and the leadership practices that influence these conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Emphasis Disciplinary Climate Efficacy Trust Instructional Time Focused Instruction <p>Focus on data driven decision making, differentiated instruction</p> <p>LSA and international research influences development of the Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS) and the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF)</p>	<p>LSA: Networks for Learning</p> <p>Introduction of Theory of Action – OLF Leadership Practices to influence conditions along Four Paths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rational Emotions Organizational Family <p>Focus on student achievement, learning and well-being</p> <p>Evolution of the OLF to include 21 Key Leadership Practices and Introduction of the Personal Leadership Resources (PLRs)</p>	<p>Expanded Theory of Action to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rational Path: Collaborative Inquiry, Knowledge Building Organizational Path: Principal Learning Teams, Professional Learning Communities, Interactive technologies Family Path: Family Educational Culture <p>Framework of Characteristics of Effective Principal Learning Teams (Leadership Networks): Health, Structure, Connectivity, Outcomes, Unintended challenges</p> <p>Focus on pedagogies for deeper learning and coherence</p> <p>Strong Districts and Their Leadership – identifies 9 characteristics of “strong” districts and the related system leader practices</p>	<p>Evolving Theory of Action to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotions Path: Teacher Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior Family Path: Parent Expectations, Parents’ Social Capital, Parent-child communications in the home <p>Focus on characteristics of effective leadership networks, collective efficacy, the Renewed Math Strategy, Collaborative Professionalism</p>
<p>An evolution of Processes for Learning</p>				
	Collaborative inquiry – Teaching Learning Critical Pathway (TLCP)	The Professional Learning Cycle (2011) - Four stages in collaborative inquiry cycle – Plan, Act, Observe, Reflect	Knowledge Building / Knowledge Creation / Knowledge Forum	
<p>An evolution of Structures for Learning</p>				
Multi level – province, district, school Professional learning communities Principal Learning Teams Provincial Symposia	Regional sessions Virtual sessions Carousels / Learning Fair	Leadership Networks Real Stories: LSA participants share Speakers Series		Networked Improvement Communities (NICs) Innovation Networks
<p>Inspiration For Action</p>				
<p><i>Every student in Ontario will develop reading, writing, mathematics and comprehension skills at a higher level by the age of 12. Progress will be measured by ensuring that 75% of students reach the provincial standard.</i> (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005)</p> <p><i>I would stress the urgency that exists around bringing about improvement and the fact that we are convinced that we will indeed achieve our goals. I think we can do even better than 75% as we learn more and more about how to unlock their potential. The children cannot wait.</i> (Avis Glaze, LSA 2005)</p>	<p>Leadership is absolutely crucial to an expert system. The role of leadership is to provide the focus and expert support system to personalize each classroom with greater instructional precision. The glue is moral purpose – without it, it is very hard to stay the course...I passionately believe that all teachers can teach students to high standards given the right conditions and assistance. I passionately believe in having high expectations...We’ve got to think seriously about the in-context daily professional learning that individually and collectively we and our teachers are involved in. The key place to start is to have teachers talking about ongoing relevant data – assessment for learning data. (Carmel Crevola, LSA 2006)</p> <p><i>Our commitment is to every student... This means both “raising the bar”, and “closing the gap” ...no matter their personal circumstances...School principals have a special responsibility to focus on what it takes to implement the core priorities. We will support principals’ development with a more comprehensive leadership strategy.</i> (Reach Every Student, Energizing Ontario Education, 2008)</p> <p>Learning is the process through which experience causes permanent change in knowledge and behavior. In other worlds, the way one thinks, does and knows is different forever. It is essential that we create conditions for this kind of learning to occur...To go a mile deep in learning, we can only go an inch wide. Therefore, the first essential step is to choose the right inch to explore. (Stephen Katz, LSA Symposium 2009)</p>	<p>Being in Ontario is like being in a parallel universe. The level of professionalism, commitment, the alignment of the political agenda with the professional agenda, the quality of discourse ... among teachers and among school leaders and between teachers and school leaders is just markedly different from virtually every setting I’m in in the States and internationally. (Richard Elmore, Ontario Leadership Congress, 2010)</p> <p><i>The LSA project has developed an impressive infrastructure of schools and leaders, along with a skilled team of facilitators. As a large-scale effort to build the capacity of school leaders for improving student learning, it has few equals anywhere. Encouraging evidence is now emerging about the impact of project priorities on both school organizations and student learning.</i> (Kenneth Leithwood, LSA Project Evaluation, 2011)</p> <p><i>If we see an increase in the best practices and our case studies show that the practices work and student achievement is increasing over the long haul, time and again, then we can be confident about the difference that leadership practice is making. Leadership has made the difference in Ontario – it’s undeniable – we can trace it, feel it, see it.</i> (Michael Fullan, Ontario Leadership Congress, April 2012)</p> <p><i>Your problems of practice as leaders are much, much more about how to influence other people, how to create conditions...Collaboration can be incredibly powerful if you intentionally create the conditions to engage in it in a particular way – what I am calling intentional interruption. You need diversity of opinion because it is the raw material through which you will build new understanding.</i> (Steven Katz, LSA Symposium 2012)</p>	<p><i>Our work requires three qualities:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Urgency – There is urgency; our students cannot wait. Passion – We must bring passion to the game; we must talk about it and nurture it. Perseverance – We must persist in our efforts towards staff improvement, to the point where every teacher is involved.” (Mary Jean Gallagher, LSA Symposium 2013) <p>Networking is the glue that holds the system together, especially critical in a system as large as Ontario’s. (Michael Fullan, LSA Symposium 2013)</p> <p>Success is achieved when all succeed. This encompasses the belief that everyone should be helped and that everyone should be part of the movement forward. (Carl Bereiter, LSA Symposium 2014)</p> <p><i>We are in the midst of a revolution in which systemic change is imperative, change which requires a ‘warp engine’ to bring it about. The core of this ‘warp engine’ is Knowledge Building.</i> (Marlene Scardamalia, LSA Symposium 2014)</p> <p>Leadership networks are significant sources of professional capacity development for individual network members ... principal networks (“my principal learning team”) are the second highest rated source edged out of first place by individual professional reading. (Kenneth Leithwood, 2015)</p>	<p>Leadership for learning is about broadening and deepening learning for all. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016)</p> <p><i>We are at a pivotal point in time, which requires us to rethink the manner in which we do things. The status quo is familiar and comfortable, but it is imperative that we are open to new ideas and new possibilities. The openness, in combination with passion, belief, vision, and perseverance, provides the context in which innovation develops.</i> (Joanne Quinn, LSA Symposium 2016)</p> <p><i>We are not blinking.. This is not a left hand turn.. This is going deeper...These kids are our collective responsibility and we are not done until they are all there. Collective efficacy must be a driving notion to help us reach those we haven’t yet reached...</i></p> <p>Leaders must monitor progress, assess impact, and engage others in continuous improvement dialogue. Encourage and invite all staff to be active collaborative participants in advancing a professional culture in their workplace...</p> <p>More precision, more personalization, and deeper professional development, are still really important to reaching the rest. (Cathy Montreuil, LSA Symposium 2017)</p>

Since the beginning of the project, Leading Student Achievement has evolved through a number of significant stages that include the development of an LSA Theory of Action (Leithwood, 2010 and 2017) and, more recently, a Model of Effective Networks (Leithwood, 2016). Participation in an effective leadership network should be of considerable support when using LSA's Theory of Action for school improvement purposes.

LSA THEORY OF ACTION

FOUR PATHS OF LEADERSHIP INFLUENCE ON STUDENT LEARNING



Key Conditions That Impact Student Learning

Rational Path

Academic Emphasis: This is the degree to which there is a school-wide focus on student achievement. In schools with academic emphasis, staff set high but achievable academic goals and standards, and believe their students are able to achieve those standards. Students value these goals, respond positively, and work hard to meet the challenge.

Disciplinary Climate: There is a collective belief on the part of the staff and students about the importance of minimizing indiscipline, violence or other disruptive behaviour. A sense of collective responsibility exists across the school for preventing distractions to the academic priorities of the school.

Classroom Instruction: The implementation of cognitively challenging student experiences designed to accomplish explicit learning objectives and including close monitoring of student progress, provision of timely informative feedback, differentiated in response to student needs and building on the power of peer to peer collaboration.

This encompasses Focused Instruction and Knowledge Building (see definitions below).

Knowledge Building (KB) is a theoretically rich and highly developed approach to instruction aimed at developing deep understanding of big ideas and complex problems. This approach is most effectively supported by the online technology, Knowledge Forum, which makes thinking visible and provides a space for ideas to live and grow, by creating a learning community committed to collective responsibility for idea improvement. A key defining feature of KB is its commitment to *community* - as well as *individual* - knowledge building.

Collaborative Inquiry Processes: Such processes may take several different forms (Teaching-Learning Critical Pathways and Professional Learning Cycles are examples) but all include an effort by groups of staff to improve the design of lessons, analyze student work and create meaningful ways of diagnosing and monitoring student learning. These processes are often the content of the work that takes place in PLCs.

Emotions Path

Collective Efficacy: Teachers across the school perceive that their efforts, as a whole, will have positive effects on student achievement. Teachers organize and implement whatever educational initiatives are required for students to achieve high standards of achievement.

Trust in Others: A belief or expectation on the part of teachers that their colleagues, students and parents support the school's goals for student learning and will work toward achieving those goals.

Teacher Commitment: This type of commitment is about an individual teacher's strong belief in the school organization, identification and involvement in the organization, and a strong desire to remain a part of the organization

Organizational Citizenship Behavior: OCB's are discretionary behaviors not formally part of a person's formal job description or contract that contributes to the effective functioning of the organization.

Organizational Path

Principal Learning Teams: A group of school leaders in a district, usually including at least one system leader, as well, with same purposes as professional learning communities but with a focus on improving their own leadership. PLTs often also help guide district as well as school-level decisions.

Professional Learning Communities: A group of teachers and school leaders, often in the same school, who meet together regularly to learn from one another, share their challenges and successes, and to work on improving their instruction.

Instructional Time: School schedules, timetables, structures, administrative behaviours, and instructional practices are all designed to ensure that students are engaged in meaningful learning as much of their time as possible. Distractions from meaningful learning are minimized.

Interactive Technologies: The LSA project provides several types of interactive technologies to support the work of principals and their colleagues. LSA has a website and provides a number of web-based resources for project participants and regularly hosts virtual learning sessions.

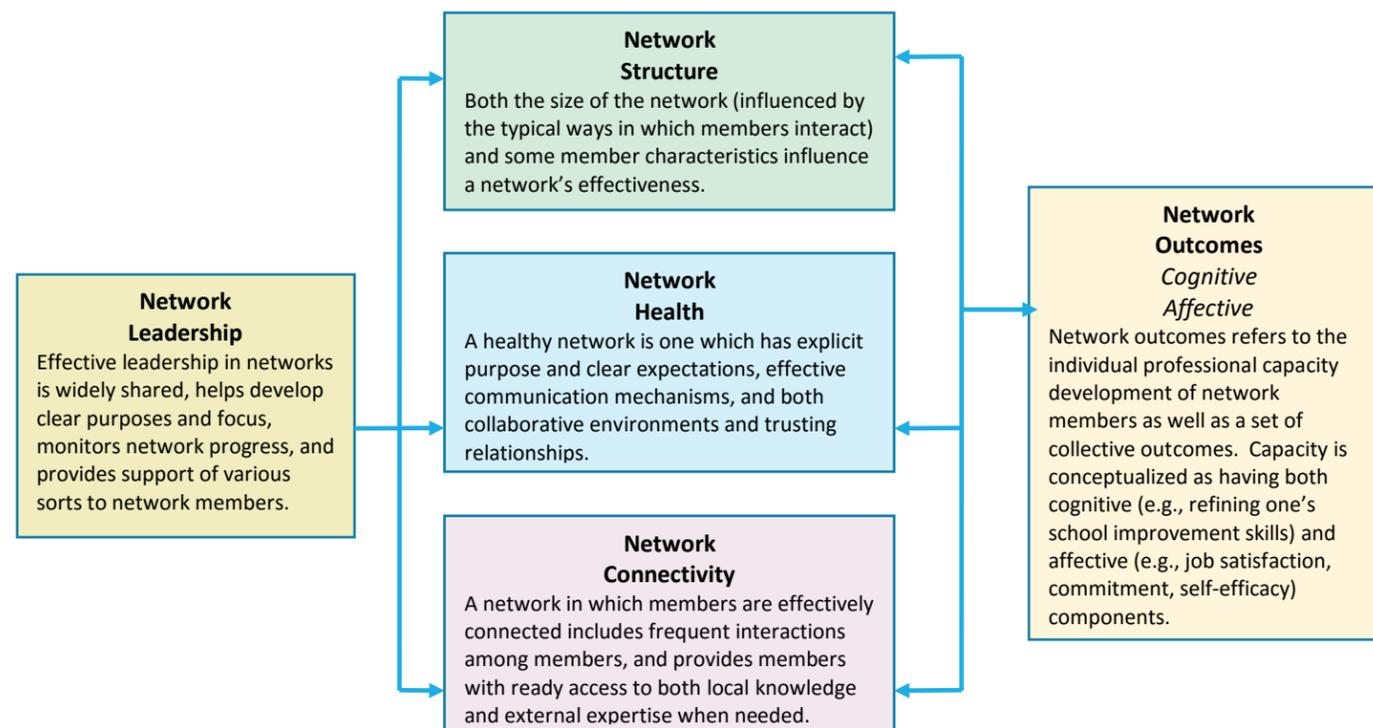
Family Path

Parent Expectations: These are the parents' expectations about their children's success at school.

Parents' Social Capital: This consists of the connections with others that provide information about schools that increase parents' ability to advocate on behalf of their children.

Parent-child Communications in the Home: This is associated with role parents adopt with their children, the most effective allowing for considerable discretion for children's decisions within firmly established and well understood boundaries.

Framework of Characteristics of Effective Principal Learning Teams / Leadership Networks



Unless systematic initiatives are undertaken to further develop the capacities for effective network leadership, the significant time and money spent on leadership networks in districts is likely to have disappointing results. (Leithwood, 2016)

Evidence from LSA's research and experience suggests, that well-functioning leadership networks provide considerable autonomy to members in deciding what is considered worth learning, prompt members to consider new ideas from their influential peers, offer members concrete examples of effective leadership practices and provide the types of social persuasion, modelling and mastery experiences associated with improvement in leaders' individual and collective efficacy. (Leithwood, 2017 in press)