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| **QUOTE** | **THOUGHTS/REACTIONS** |
| 1-Teacher competence *does* affect student learning. Outsiders *can* bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to tired systems. And principals *do* have a role in reform efforts. At the same time, our findings strongly suggest that in trying to improve public schools we are overselling the role of human capital and innovation from the top, while greatly undervaluing the benefits of social capital and stability at the bottom. |  |
| 2-The results of our research challenge the prevailing centrality of the individual teacher and principal leadership in models of effective public education. Instead, the results provide much support for the centrality of social capital—the relationships among teachers—for improving public schools. |  |
| 3-A social capital perspective would answer the same question by looking not just at what a teacher knows, but also where she gets that knowledge. If she has a problem with a particular student, where does the teacher go for information and advice? Who does she use to sound out her own ideas or assumptions about teaching? Who does she confide in about the gaps in her understanding of her subject knowledge? |  |
| 4-Most striking, students showed higher gains in math achievement when their teachers reported frequent conversations with their peers that centered on math, and when there was a feeling of trust or closeness among teachers. In other words, teacher social capital was a significant predictor of student achievement gains above and beyond teacher experience or ability in the classroom. And the effects of teacher social capital on student performance were powerful. If a teacher’s social capital was just one standard deviation higher than the average, her students’ math scores increased by 5.7 percent. |  |
| 5-Although our research does not tackle the complex social and political aspects of the tenure debate, our results in New York City clearly come down on the side of teacher experience, showing that greater tenure in the classroom leads to higher student achievement gains. There is one caveat to this finding, however, and it concerns where that experience is gained. Students show stronger growth in  math achievement when their teacher has spent more time teaching *at the same grade level.* The value of experience—and the growth in teacher knowledge that accompanies it—is found in what psychologists call contextualized learning or, in the case of elementary school teachers, learning how to teach children at a particular point in their chronological development. |  |
| 6-When principals spent more time building external social capital, the quality of instruction in the school was higher and students’ scores on standardized tests in both reading and math were higher. Conversely, principals spending more of their time mentoring and monitoring teachers had no effect on teacher social capital or student achievement. The more effective principals were those who defined  their roles as *facilitators* of teacher success rather than instructional leaders. They provided teachers with the resources they needed to build social capital—time, space, and staffing—to make the informal and formal connections possible. |  |
| 7-Principals spending their time on instructional activities  and teacher interaction had no effect on teacher social capital or student achievement. But principals who spent more of their time on collaborating with people and organizations outside the school delivered gains to teachers and students alike. Building social capital in schools is not easy or inexpensive. It requires time and typically the infusion of additional teaching staff into the school. It requires a reorientation away from a Teacher of the Year model and toward a system towards mentoring and collaboration among teachers. It also asks school principals and district administrators to become more external in their focus—spending less time looking over teachers’ shoulders and more time on collaboration with potential outside supporters of teachers’ efforts. |  |
| **How to Reform Public Schools**  **THE PREDOMINANT IDEOLOGY**  **Power of the Individual**: Reform efforts are focused on improving the capabilities of the individual teacher.  **Wisdom of the Outsider**: Bring in outside experts—or even novices—to solve problems.  **Principal as Instructional Leader**: The principal is the leader of school instructional reform.  **THE REALITY**  **The Power of the Collective**: The teaching staff is engaged in school reform collectively.  **Reform from Within**: Trust and meaningful communication among teachers are the bases of true reform efforts.  **Principal as Protector**: The principal supports teacher reform efforts through building external relations. |  |