

Analyzing teachers' professional interactions in a school as social capital: A social network approach

Penuel, W. R., Riel, M., Krause, A., & Frank, K. A. (2009). Analyzing teachers' professional interactions in a school as social capital: A social network approach. *Teachers College Record*, *111*(1), 124-163.

Purpose: Analyze the role of formal and informal teacher interactions in helping teachers enact changes to instruction.

Methods: Explanatory case study methodology was applied to study two elementary schools in California. Researchers explored six alternative hypotheses relating to how the distribution of resources and expertise may have contributed to these schools' different levels of success in implementing their school improvements.

Findings: Social capital theory suggests that valued resources and expertise can be embedded within social networks and that it is through social ties that one gains access to and can make use of resources to effect change. Researchers found how different levels and types of social capital in a school can support or thwart the implementation of reforms. The study provided indirect evidence that teachers' social capital was important in facilitating teacher change.

Implications: The study also points to some potential lessons for effective collaboration that could be explored in future studies and in interventions designed to enhance or build teacher community.