

## PROFESSIONAL CAPITAL

In the book *Professional Capital* (2012), Hargreaves and Fullan employ a business analogy to emphasize the importance of investment in our educators. In the world of business, if you want a return, you must make an investment. Likewise, in the world of education, if you want quality teaching and learning, you must make an investment in educators. The authors refer to this as professional capital that consists of the confluence of three other kinds of capital: human, social, and decisional. It can be expressed as a formula:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{PC} &= \text{Professional Capital} \\ \text{HC} &= \text{Human Capital} \\ \text{SC} &= \text{Social Capital} \\ \text{DC} &= \text{Decisional Capital} \\ \\ \text{PC} &= f(\text{HC}, \text{SC}, \text{DC}) \end{aligned}$$

### Human Capital

*Human capital* is about having and developing valuable knowledge and skills for teaching and learning. It is about knowing the critical components of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the learning environment; understanding how children learn; empathizing with the diverse cultural and family circumstances of your students; possessing the passion and the moral commitment to serve all children; and wanting to keep getting better in what you know and do. Human capital is about individual talent.

### Social Capital

*Social Capital* exists in the relationships among educators. It is about the quantity and quality of interactions and social relationships among people that affects their access to knowledge and information; the senses of expectation, obligation, and trust; and the adoption of a common language of practice. Social capital is about giving you access to other people's human capital, thus increasing your knowledge and developing a kind of "collective capacity."

## Decisional Capital

Decisional capital is about making discretionary judgments. It is about the human capital that professionals acquire and accumulate through structured and unstructured experience, practice, and reflection, which enables them to make wise judgments in circumstances where there is no fixed rule or evidence to guide them. Social capital is an integral part of decisional capital, which draws on the insights and experiences of colleagues in forming judgments over many occasions. Decisional capital is about practice which is mediated through interaction with colleagues.

Professional capital, then, is the confluence of human, social, and decisional capital. It is important for educational leaders to have an understanding of the significance of these components as they plan for the implementation of a shared vision for teaching and learning. One of the key responsibilities of a leader is to maximize the use of collaborative structures around professional learning to build the collective capacity of staff to support a culture of change. **Building human capital through social capital over time yields decisional capital.**

## Reference

Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.