

**LEAP Action Learning Report 2012**

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| Topic area  (The What) | How and in what ways do school leaders act as instructional coaches in professional learning communities to enhance the instructional expertise of teachers? |
| Context  (The Where and When) | Warren Central School is currently involved in gaining accreditation as a “Thinking School” through the University of Exeter in England. As part of the accreditation process I am responsible for facilitating high level professional learning for teachers in cognitive and instructional intelligences to improve the learning outcomes and engagement of all students. I was interested in seeing how this is achieved in Canadian schools. |
| Research methods  (The How) | I interviewed three high school principals (Patti Thompson – Saunders, Don McPherson – Beal and Connie Bray – North Middlesex District). I also interviewed members of the Thames Valley District School Board (Karen Wilkinson and Marion Moynihan – Superintendents, Catherine Zeisner – Learning Supervisor, Mike Sereda – Executive Superintendent). I also attended a professional learning day held at the University of Western Ontario. |
| Initial findings | The Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) recognises that by setting high expectations using learning classrooms they are building teacher leaders in every school based on collaborative inquiry. The TVDSB provides every principal with the resources to promote their professional learning based on the current research (Michael Fullan, Lucy West and Richard Elsmore) to enable them to facilitate professional learning for their teachers. To ensure that student learning is at the centre of everything in the TVDSB, Learning Coordinators (expert teachers) and Learning Supervisors (expert principals) facilitate and lead the site based professional learning using a “co-learning model”. This assists teachers, principals and superintendents to share best practice and assist in the delivery of learning cycles.  Instructional coaching was evident through the use of “Learning Classrooms” where critical friends observe and then debrief on teaching practice. In the case of new teachers this is shared with other new teachers from the Board. Most importantly, I witnessed a transformation of professional learning communities within schools into professional learning networks based on “problems of practice” at a Board level. |
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