Reciprocity in practice: Using deliberative democratic theory to reframe and improve teacher professional development

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Abstract

Researchers and practitioners have long viewed professional development (PD) as a tool to improve teacher practice and student learning. However, despite its promise, PD is perceived by these same stakeholders as unevenly effective. This chapter considers one reason for this gap: the macro sociopolitical context in which professional development is designed and facilitated. For decades, the dominant sociopolitical framework governing education broadly (and PD in particular) is one that prioritizes *efficiency*. Drawing on a broad survey of empirical and theoretical literature, I apply the lens of political theory to propose an alternative *deliberative* framework that is more compatible with principles of effective learning and thus more likely to improve learning across contexts. I further examine exemplars of deliberative-style PD at both the school- and system-level. I conclude that reframing the puzzle of professional development as relational (rather than procedural) offers new opportunities for improvement.

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1. Introduction

While professional development (PD) is frequently held up for its promise in improving teacher practice and student learning, it has also been viewed by many stakeholders as uneven. One widely cited synthesis of PD literature stated flatly that "[p]rofessional development, as we know it… has almost no defenders who argue that it substantially improves student learning."[1] More recently, the U.S.-based teacher development organization TNTP concluded that schools and districts "bombard teachers with help, but most of it is not helpful."[2]

The persistent questions about PD's uneven effectiveness are not for lack of consensus about its purpose. On the contrary, many stakeholders agree that good PD ought to lead to improved student learning.[3] Rather, I argue in this chapter that PD's uneven effectiveness lies less with discrete design elements and more with the tacit assumptions that underlie its design. Too often, the design of professional development over-relies on hierarchical relationships and is intended to facilitate an efficient transfer of expertise. I am hardly the first person to identify the limitations of top-down authority when it comes to improving schools. Forty-five years ago, the late Dan Lortie called this contrast one of bureaucratic versus professional control.[4] Talbert further predicted that pursuing bureaucratic or professional strategies for improving school culture through professional learning would result in markedly different outcomes.[5] I build on this work by examining the macro-sociopolitical context in which these strategies are developed and implemented.

I begin by exploring the overarching importance of understanding the socio-political context in which policies and interventions are designed. I then contrast two socio-political frameworks. Sociopolitical frameworks make visible the assumptions about interpersonal relationships and their relationships to authority that govern policies and

practices. The first framework, which I call the efficiency framework, assumes a hierarchical structure and best describes the current context of many education policies and practices in the United States during the last century. The second, which I call the deliberative framework, assumes a more egalitarian structure and is better suited to effective learning. Finally, I describe two models of deliberative-inspired professional development and explore the implications of these models for PD more generally.

In making this case, I draw on historical and theoretical perspectives, notably deliberative democratic theory. However, the intent of this chapter is more practical than theoretical. By making *explicit* the efficiency-oriented belief systems about teacher learning that have been, for decades, woven *implicitly* into the fabric of schools, I hope to point the way toward transforming them for the benefit of teachers and students alike.

2. The influence of sociopolitical frameworks

Educational policies and practices—like all other social activities—are embedded in a broader set of implicit and explicit beliefs about how society should be organized and how political decisions get made. Taken together, these beliefs form what I call a "sociopolitical framework." For example, among the core beliefs underlying a traditional conception of liberal democracy is an elevation of the rights of individuals over the systems that would control them. To be successful, such a system requires balance: placing faith in elected representatives to enact the will of the people while restricting the ability of leaders to act without consequences. To achieve this balance, liberal democracies are organized into complex hierarchies, with each citizen often represented by dozens of elected officials, some of whom inevitably have conflicting interests. But equally important is the conviction that these officials must be held accountable through regular elections. In part because they are subject to such scrutiny, elected officials similarly desire accountability from civil servants and citizens charged with carrying out policies. As a result, there is a driving

imperative to ensure policies are implemented in a way that maximizes their effectiveness.

This desire for accountability is evident in the sociopolitical framework of *efficiency*, dominant in the education sector for the last 100 years and as strong today as it was decades ago. The efficiency framework sees teaching and learning as linear, predictable processes of transferring expert knowledge to novices and likewise values hierarchical human relationships with duly appointed experts at the top. Within this framework, attempts to improve PD have tended to focus on tweaking its design without altering its basic model of where expertise lies and how that expertise is distributed.

By contrast, I argue that improving PD requires researchers, policymakers, and PD designers to adopt beliefs more consistent with a *deliberative* sociopolitical framework. Unlike the efficiency framework, the deliberative framework sees teaching and learning as dynamic, fluid, and relatively unpredictable processes where increased learning demands a capacity for collaborative problem solving. The deliberative framework similarly values human relationships characterized by relative egalitarianism, mutual engagement, and interpersonal trust. Viewed through this framework, PD facilitators and teachers would each have valuable expertise and would be jointly responsible for each other's learning. Rather than focus on the "best practice" design elements, deliberation-oriented facilitators and researchers would emphasize interpersonal dynamics and process.

I recognize that replacing the efficiency framework with the deliberative framework is not a matter of mere substitution. Globally, the efficiency framework is deeply entrenched in education systems. To make changes, it may be necessary to advocate first for a hybrid approach, incorporating deliberative practices and structures into an efficiency-oriented system until new institutional norms and individual capacities can be established. Thus, I present the deliberative framework as an *ideal* to which education professionals and policymakers may aspire. I further offer examples of how deliberative elements have been introduced into efficiency-driven systems.

3. Analytical approach

In this chapter, I examine an empirical claim—that PD has been persistently problematic despite broad consensus on its value—from multiple theoretical perspectives, building on a tradition of educational thinkers who have articulated theoretical arguments in response to empirical claims. In so doing, I integrate empirical and theoretical literature from three research domains: literature describing the current landscape of professional development; research on how people learn; and historical and theoretical literature on the sociopolitical contexts and purposes of education. Each of these literatures is rich. The first two have been used to assess PD's effectiveness and propose improvements.[6] I extend the literature on PD and learning by analyzing them both with a historical look at efficiency models in education and then again from a deliberative democratic frame.[7]

This chapter argues that core assumptions underlying the sociopolitical context in education have considerable influence on the design, implementation, and outcomes of professional learning. I take as my unit of analysis this macro sociopolitical context, describing it as it now exists and arguing its current efficiency frame is a stubborn obstacle to improved practice. By taking this approach, I do not mean to suggest that professional learning is monolithic, and I concede that the subjective experiences of professional learning vary at the level of individual teachers.[8] However, in order to improve practice at scale, I contend that policymakers and system leaders—as well as the researchers working in concert with them—must interrogate their beliefs about teaching and learning and human relationships, which often represent the dominant efficiency framework. By offering the deliberative framework as an alternative, I advance the case that deliberative learning environments are more compatible with principles of effective learning—and therefore more likely to improve learning at all levels and at scale—than those designed in line with an efficiency frame.

4. Introducing the Sociopolitical Efficiency Framework

As noted above, an essential characteristic of effective professional development must be its capacity to improve student learning. Among researchers and policymakers who disagree about many things, this point is one where consensus is relatively clear. One corollary of this is that in order for PD to contribute meaningfully to improved student learning, it must be an effective learning environment for teachers. An obvious question, then, is what make an effective learning environment?

Surveying decades of research on learning, the National Research Council—in work by Bransford, Brown, and Cocking[9]—proposed four features of effective learning environments: learner-centered, knowledge-centered, assessment-centered, and community-centered. Together, these features represent standards against which to assess whether PD may be expected to result in teacher learning. The efficiency framework is notably at odds with the learner-centered and community-centered principles. Prioritizing learners' ideas and seeing learners as jointly responsible for each other's learning assumes that expertise is distributed broadly, a notion that muddies the efficient transfer of knowledge from experts to novices.

By contrast, the efficiency framework rests on four very different assumptions about teaching and learning, and hence about teachers' professional development. First, the efficiency framework assumes that *it is possible to precisely define the elements of "good teaching."* The proliferation and pervasiveness of detailed, scripted curricula suggest a belief that teaching complex concepts like reading can be reduced to a series of carefully designed procedures developed by duly appointed experts.[10] Regarding PD, scripted curricula are often accompanied by training components that instruct teachers in how to correctly apply the methods in their classroom. Second, *the effects of "good teaching" can be measured in student learning.* Indeed, for at least a century, tests have been used to assess student learning and hold teachers accountable for the results.[11] Third, despite scientific advances that have

supposedly uncovered proven teaching practices, the efficiency framework assumes that *ineffective teaching practices are rampant.* As Lortie observed, many teachers develop their values and skills initially through an "apprenticeship of observation."[12] Viewed from an efficiency framework, the apprenticeship of observation is seen as having led to a cycle of ineffective teaching rolling uninterrupted from one generation to the next. Finally, linking the first three assumptions, the efficiency framework assumes that *by targeting ineffective practices and replacing them with proven practices through interventions like professional development, district- or school-leaders can achieve large increases in student learning.* Given these assumptions, I contend that the purpose of PD when viewed from an efficiency framework is to spread proven teaching practices at scale as a way to improve the efficiency of the system.

This purpose—and the beliefs about teaching that underlie it—made sense given the context in which they were created. Inspired in part by the scientific management movement, the efficiency framework had its origins in the industrial revolution. Frederick W. Taylor originally promoted his ideas among engineers in the late 19th century, but once they became popularized in the early 20th century they became widespread across numerous sectors of American life, including education.[13] Taylor asserted that businesses had an imperative to produce persistently high-quality output at a faster pace and a lower cost. Always on the lookout for innovations that could quicken the process without sacrificing quality, managers had a responsibility to analyze, plan, and control the entire manufacturing process in detail.

Taylor's system and the efficiency framework it inspired have an alluring elegance: if you uncover the component parts to any process, you can make it better. This allure is apparent in the ongoing relevance and application of scientific management techniques in education. One common link between education reformers in Taylor's time and today is an unyielding focus on results: a conviction that the efficiency of a system can and must be judged by its output. Having identified the desired outcome, leaders then agree on metrics

against which success can be measured and then set about using these metrics to drive improvement.

4.1   Efficiency's incompatibility with effective learning environments

However alluring it may be in the abstract, though, the efficiency framework fails to achieve results in practice because it is misaligned with effective learning environments. As evidence, we need only look at some of the most rigorously evaluated programs designed to scale up "best practice" teaching methods. Applying their own empirically-derived features of effective PD, several researchers oversaw two experimental design studies looking at the effect of PD on teacher knowledge, teacher practice, and student achievement, neither study yielded significant effects on student achievement.[14] Looking closely at the interventions, they appeared not to be designed in line with key principles of effective learning. In a post-hoc report analyzing the null results, Quint acknowledged that the researchers failed to account for teachers' prior experience and their expertise relative to the PD itself (*learner-centered*), writing, "the professional development that was delivered in these studies might have made more of a difference if teachers had been aware that they needed it" (p. 23).[15] In addition, facilitators were constrained from adjusting their instruction since they needed to preserve fidelity of implementation (*assessment-centered*), and they prioritized knowledge and skill acquisition over risk-taking (*community-centered*).

One way of making sense of these results is to say the designers should endeavor to make the intervention more learner-, assessment-, and community-centered and try again. But this approach to PD improvement misses the forest for the trees. The more fundamental problem is that the efficiency-minded beliefs underlying the design of these interventions is not compatible with the principles of deep and enduring learning. For example, attentiveness to context and to learners' preconceptions is not easily reconciled with breaking teaching down into discrete component parts and then treating teachers as

conduits for knowledge transfer. In this respect, the efficiency framework is emblematic of a hierarchical conception of human relationships found in traditional models of liberal democracy. In a framework predicated on a clearly defined class of experts and driven by pressure for them to discern and scale up best practices, reciprocal learning as embodied by the NRC community-centered principle is difficult, if not impossible, to sustain. Intuitively, when teachers are excluded from the design and delivery of PD, it is not surprising they resist the expertise of researchers and policymakers.

For professional development to succeed in improving both teacher and student learning, it must not only align with principles of effective learning environments; it must also recast assumptions about teaching in a way that engages stakeholders across levels of a school system. I believe that a new framework is required to do the heavier lifting of eliciting consensus on the purpose and structure of PD, thus improving PD at scale.

5. Introducing the Sociopolitical Deliberative Framework

The efficiency framework traps people into seeing the conditions for powerful learning as *action steps* to be implemented by experts for the enlightenment of novices. Stepping outside the efficiency framework, we see that multi-centric principles of learning, as articulated by the NRC, require close attention to social relationships and interactions. Moreover, relationships that support learning are characterized by reciprocity, not hierarchy; disequilibrium, not predictability; procedural divergence, not convergence; process, not products. I suggest these features are best found not in efficiency but in deliberation.

In applying the concepts of deliberation to the design of professional learning environments, I draw on the theoretical work of deliberative democratic theorists Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, who explain that "[t]he principles of deliberative democracy… express, in various forms, the idea of *reciprocity*."[16] Rawls argued that the norm

of reciprocity is both morally necessary and empirically effective at enabling collective self-governance.[17] A deliberative democracy differs from the traditional conception of an aggregative liberal democracy in that it prioritizes ideas over individuals and values the *process* of decision making over the *outcome*.[18] In aggregative democracy, the primary responsibility of citizens is to vote, a process by which they hold their elected representatives accountable. In a deliberative democracy, the primary responsibility of citizens is to engage in ongoing and consensus-oriented decision-making processes. And a decision-making process that considers multiple perspectives and forms of expertise is, at least in theory, a concrete enactment of reciprocity. (Many theorists point to social stratification and power imbalances as a hindrance toward achieving this ideal.[19] I take up these objections in more detail below and contend that the ideal is nevertheless useful toward illustrating the contrast between these two frameworks for learning.)

The political theory of deliberative democracy is compelling as an analogue to effective learning environments because it is based on the ideal that when people are treated as equals it is possible to improve society through open deliberation. Gutmann and Thompson describe the characteristics of this process and the relationships between members in more detail.[20] In a deliberative environment, members of a group must demonstrate respect by *justifying* their positions to one another, whether directly or through their representatives. Political theorist Danielle Allen adds that the rhetoric used to make an argument, especially when it draws on emotional narrative, can build and deepen trust among members.[21] The arguments in any deliberation must be *accessible* and delivered in a way that is easily understood. In addition, any decisions made in a deliberative environment are *binding*. Debates are not abstract: decisions lead to action. And even though decisions may be made, deliberation continues. This is because deliberative environments are assumed to be *dynamic*, where sociopolitical circumstances are fluid and citizens have the capacity to manage ever-changing and often uncertain circumstances.

There is good evidence that deliberative environments promote desirable outcomes. Broadly speaking, Gutmann and Thompson lay out several benefits for individuals and the groups to which they belong.[22] First, deliberation promotes the *legitimacy of collective decisions*. That is, even those who may not get what they want will be more likely to accept the outcome if they have deliberated about it. In the parlance of policymaking, deliberation increases "buy-in." Second, deliberation encourages *broader perspective taking*. Compared to individuals advocating only for themselves, a deliberative process is more likely to generate public-spirited or altruistic perspectives where all people—district-leaders, administrators, and teachers—see the "big picture." Finally, deliberation promotes *mutually respectful decision-making* in which people on opposing sides of a debate are nevertheless able to appreciate the conviction of someone they disagree with.

The benefits of deliberation are evident across sectors. Gutmann and Thompson presented examples in politics and health care, but deliberative environments can also be found in the education sector, at both the school and system level.[23]

5.1   Deliberative learning environments at the school level

Examples of deliberative PD at the school level show promising results. School-based structures, like professional learning communities (PLCs), that promote a sense of community have had positive effects on teacher practice and student learning.[24] Of course, the effectiveness or non-effectiveness of a PLC—as with any PD intervention—reflects the set of implicit and explicit beliefs underlying its design. Deliberative PLCs are more likely to be ones that Hargreaves called "living and learning" communities, in which learning is understood as a "way of life" and members "deliberate intelligently about what kinds of learning count as achievement, and courageously question, challenge, and subvert imposed prescriptions that diminish learning."[25]

First piloted in 1995 through the Coalition for Essential Schools and continuing today in small pockets, Critical Friends Groups (CFGs)—or "intentional learning communities" founded on the principles of critical friendship[26]—are well-established examples of these "living and learning" PLCs. CFG members commit to a regular facilitated meeting, during which they use protocols to set norms, jointly develop a practice-oriented goal for improving student learning, reflect on teaching practices that would help them achieve their goal, examine student work for evidence of improvement, and discuss school culture issues that might be related to student achievement.[27]

These teacher learning communities mirror deliberative democratic principles in at least three ways. First, in developing a joint practice goal, members must come to consensus, an ambitious task that is also a hallmark of deliberative democratic processes. Similarly, deliberations in a PLC must lead to action and the deliberative process must build sufficient trust so that subsequent monitoring does not jeopardize the community. Indeed, the theory of change undergirding CFGs and intentional learning communities assumes that the development of community and trust among its members is critical to then drive instructional improvement and schoolwide reform.[28] Finally, like deliberative democratic practices, CFGs have been used successfully across diverse contexts, including across subject disciplines, in primary and secondary schools, and in rural, suburban, and urban settings.

Researchers who have observed CFGs in practice report positive effects on teachers' practice and anecdotal evidence of improved student learning.[29] This anecdotal evidence is complemented by large-scale empirical research on the positive effect of trust and on teachers' willingness to engage in collective reflection and on student learning.[30] CFGs—and "living and learning" PLCs, more generally—are promising examples of deliberative learning environments rooted in and responsive to particular school contexts. However, in order to transform efficiency-driven systems and create the conditions for

deliberative learning environments at scale, it is important to address the system as a whole. I now consider whether such system-wide transformation is feasible.

5.2   Deliberative learning environments at the system level

Singapore—consistently one of the highest performing school systems in the world, according to international assessments of higher-order thinking skills like PISA[31]— has been attempting a gradual but purposeful shift from an "efficiency-driven" education system in the 1980s and early 1990s to an "ability-driven" system.[32] Among the important levers in this shift have been structures related to teachers' professional learning, including the creation of new teacher leader positions and the establishment PLCs *across the system*.[33]

Given Singapore's reputation as a hierarchical political system, it is reasonable to question whether the introduction of deliberative structures could succeed at transforming the Singaporean equivalent of the efficiency framework or whether they would merely be absorbed into it. In response, I argue that its emerging infrastructure for teacher learning is evidence of a *hybrid* system bridging the efficiency and deliberative frameworks, deploying some efficiency-oriented approaches toward deliberative ends. In hybrid systems where efficient and deliberative approaches coexist, the new "espoused theory" might be deliberative while the "theory-in-use" remains efficiency-oriented. However, provided that efforts are made within the system to identify and learn from these incongruities, there is reason to believe that over time transformation is possible.

The vision of the Singapore Ministry of Education—"Thinking Schools, Learning Nation" (TSLN)—originated with a speech in 1997 given by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, who asserted that "[e]very school must be a model learning organization."[34] To realize this vision, system-level decision-makers needed to relinquish some control over curriculum and instruction in order to enable diverse sources of expertise and forms of expertise that are closely connected to the context in which teaching and learning happen,

each of which are innovations consistent with deliberative democratic theory.[35] This redistribution of expertise was partly accomplished through the creation of the Teachers' Network, funded by the Ministry of Education but positioned as an independent organization staffed by teachers. Re-launched as the Academy of Singapore Teachers (AST) in 2010, the organization's goal was to surface and employ the often-tacit knowledge of teachers in the service of school improvement. Hairon called the founding of the AST "not only a mark of innovation, but also a revolutionary approach in professional development of teachers," distinguished by its "bottom-up approach towards change."[36]

Tripp described several programs in the original Teachers Network that have continued as part of the AST, including teacher-led workshops, a national teachers' conference, and action research cycles.[37] The PLC model promoted by the Ministry blended two conceptions – what Lee and Lee refer to as the Dufour and Fullan models, named after leading thinkers whose ideas formed their foundations.[38] The Dufour model was distinguished by its "prescriptive, product-oriented slant," while the Fullan model was seen as a more complex and relational approach in which diverse sources of expertise were surfaced, uncertainty was welcomed, and conflict was essential for learning.[39] Given its focus on procedure and the attainment of results, the Dufour model was more aligned with the efficiency framework, while the Fullan model's focus on divergent perspectives and reciprocal relationships was more aligned with the deliberative framework.

In practice, the deliberative aspirations of PLCs in Singapore were to varying extents compromised by the efficiency-oriented context. A review of 71 teacher-led action research projects found that the vast majority of them (69 of 71) adopted an efficiency approach, focusing on the effectiveness of precise pedagogies adopted to elicit relatively narrow student learning outcomes.[40] In addition, after three years documenting PLC implementation through interviews with AST staff and school leaders and surveys of teachers, Lee and Lee found that "the proposed Dufour-Fullan model, despite policy

statements and aspirations, remain[ed] largely a Dufour-predominant approach in practice."[41]

Despite these apparent shortcomings, the strategies and climate for professional learning engendered by the AST were aligned with deliberative democratic principles in three ways. First, just as deliberative democratic processes are meant to be responsive to diverse perspectives, action research cycles like are collaborative responses to the needs and resources of individual school communities. Second, the AST positioned teacher learning as an *ongoing* process, mirroring the continuous the decision-making processes that form the foundation of a deliberative democratic political system.[42] Finally, even among critics of the efficiency-oriented elements in the TSLN movement, there is considerable engagement with the best intentions and "big picture" behind the policies. Many of the above critiques were authored by researchers and practitioners aligned with Singapore's National Institute of Education, the sole teacher preparation institution in the country. This dual impulse to value and to improve a system is characteristic of stakeholders being fully involved in the design and decision making process.

6. Limitations of the deliberative framework

Promising though these deliberative strategies are, the deliberative framework has some limitations. In this section, I briefly describe three: hierarchy, capacity, and inequality. First, the idealized form deliberation for which many theorists advocate depends on the assent of those in power. After all, the powerful have the capacity to decide whether or not to "listen to" the less powerful in a way that is impossible in the reverse.[43] Given the structural inequality endemic to political systems and therefore also to the institutions of these political systems, including schools, deliberation is never a power-neutral exercise.[44] True deliberative legitimacy depends in part on the capacity of less powerful parties not merely to participate in deliberation already underway but also to *initiate* deliberation on

issues that matter to them.[45] Notably, decision-makers willing to take the risks associated with launching a deliberative process—and willing to commit the time to see deliberative processes through—have tended to be rewarded by the outcomes. In Singapore, the TSLN movement has been underway for more than 20 years. After the first 10, despite concerns about entrenched cultural norms that reinforce hierarchy and reward efficiency, Hairon found cause for optimism.[46] Where ministers once talked enthusiastically about how elites should lead the nation, contemporary government officials—especially those in the Ministry of Education—talked about "bottom up initiative, top down support."[47]

Second, a reliance on broadly distributed expertise could make deliberative learning environments susceptible to the widely variable capacities of their members. For example, at the district level, Thessin and Starr sought to scale up PLCs across a medium-sized school district and found that one of their biggest impediments was the uneven capacity for deliberation among teachers. This is not surprising. In an efficiency-driven sociopolitical context, deliberation is not necessarily the way teachers work and so they need models and practice to change the way they work. In response, Thessin and Starr's program trained teachers how to facilitate and participate in deliberative learning and reported that teachers who were selected and supported as facilitators felt empowered and viewed the opportunity positively. [48]

Finally, one must interrogate the deliberative framework's presumption of relative egalitarianism. Even if all members have equal representation and opportunity to contribute, members' identities play a significant role in how they understand or fail to understand each other. As Levinson noted, "minority groups may have such different experiences from the majority group that they come to understand how the world (or the nation) works in a way that is significantly different from, and even incomprehensible to, members of the advantaged majority."[49] For this reason, the work of deliberative learning—at the school and system level—should be seen not merely as an abstract

exercise but as a critical one. Deliberative PD, then, might begin by teachers examining and improving existing practices together, but its inquiry would move steadily toward a critique and transformation of the system itself.

7. Conclusion: Efficiency vs. Deliberation

The deliberative framework makes three assumptions about teaching and learning that serve as an essential contrast to the efficiency framework. First, *teaching is dynamic and fluid.* Although one-size-fits-all curricula may be useful tools, they cannot be relied upon to increase learning for teachers or students since the circumstances surrounding teaching and learning are continually in flux. Second, because teaching is so dynamic, *teaching well requires a capacity for professional discretion to manage inevitable uncertainty.* And third, *the best way to cultivate professional discretion is through collective inquiry.* Collective inquiry is preferable to individual reflection because reciprocal engagement with the perspective of others is more likely to generate creative solutions to complex problems. Given these core beliefs, I believe that the purpose of deliberative PD is to surface different dimensions of expertise and then manage uncertainty and solve problems through deliberation. This is very different from the efficiency framework's goal of scaling up proven practices.

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In short, the deliberative framework provides a new way of conceptualizing the "problem" of professional development, seeing it not so much as a failure to find the right *procedures* to achieve predefined learning outcomes as a failure to position stakeholders in *reciprocal relationships* that characterize effective learning environments. By redefining the problem, the deliberative framework also presents new ways of pursuing solutions that are compatible with learning principles and therefore more likely to lead to improved student learning.

In this chapter, I have argued that often-unacknowledged beliefs about teaching and learning have constrained policymakers' ability to design and deliver effective professional development. More pointedly, I have argued that these constraints are grounded in basic assumptions about social change and human relationships. Learning is a relational exercise, and when effective can result in transformed ways of looking at the world. The deliberative framework—representing transformed ways of looking at teaching and learning—can help those responsible for the design of PD to re-conceptualize change as something engineered not by technical experts but by people working in reciprocal relationships. This way of thinking is more compatible with effective learning environments, and I believe it can lead to improved PD and over time to improved student learning.

Although I am convinced that change is possible, I also believe transforming the sociopolitical frameworks that govern school improvement in general and PD in particular will require time and risk-taking. First, schools or districts that set out to realign their professional learning environments with the deliberative framework must be persistent and patient. Consider that, across diverse socio-political contexts, the efficiency framework has had more than a 100-year head start. Second, the failure of education stakeholders thus far to transform professional learning is not because they do not care about it, but rather I would suggest it reflects a lack of imagination and an over-cautiousness. To improve PD, we must be willing to take the risks that true learning demands, pushing against the dominant paradigm and re-imagining and redesigning professional learning environments as deliberative spaces.

Table 1. Comparison of the purposes of PD and assumptions about teaching associated with the sociopolitical efficiency and sociopolitical deliberative frameworks

	Sociopolitical Efficiency Framework	Sociopolitical Deliberative Framework
Purpose of PD	To spread proven teaching practices at scale as a way to improve the efficiency of the system	To encourage open-ended thinking as a way to surface different dimensions of expertise and then to manage uncertainty and solve problems through deliberation
Assumptions About Teaching	• It is possible to define the elements of "good teaching" • The effects of "good teaching" can be measured in student learning • Outdated or unsubstantiated teaching practices are rampant • By targeting ineffective teaching practices and replacing them with proven practices, district- or school leaders can achieve large increases in student learning	• Teaching is dynamic and fluid • Teaching well requires a capacity to manage uncertainty • The best way to cultivate necessary professional discretion is through collective reflection

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