LEADING IMPACT TEAMS

BUILDING A CULTURE OF EFFICACY

PAUL BLOOMBERG • BARB PITCHFORD

Foreword by John Hattie

"**Leading Impact Teams** *offers a great blend of rationale, research, and doable application. What's unique and noteworthy in this book is its powerful set of collaborative protocols focused on evidence, analysis, and action that puts students at the center of the teaching and learning process.*"

Larry Ainsworth, Author of *Common Formative Assessments 2.0: How Teacher Teams Intentionally Align Standards, Instruction, and Assessment*

"**Leading Impact Teams** *offers one of the most thoughtful, powerful, and purposeful books in a long time that holds the potential to both catalyze and transform educational systems. Through an immensely enjoyable read, Bloomberg and Pitchford provide an easy-to-follow road map to the complex journey of building efficacy and teams. This book is a must-read for educators and policy makers who are committed to bringing out the best in systems, students, and communities.*"

Alan J. Daly, Chair and Professor
Department of Education Studies, University of California, San Diego

LEARN HOW TO PROMOTE TEACHER, STUDENT, AND COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

Teachers are a school's greatest resource. Excellent teachers make excellent schools. **Leading Impact Teams** taps into the team planning time every school already has scheduled, and repurposes it in a model that provides the processes needed to build teacher expertise and increase student learning. The model combines two existing practices—formative assessment and collaborative inquiry—and promotes a school culture in which teachers and students are partners in learning. Readers will learn how to

- Build a culture of efficacy
- Take collective action
- Embed student-centered assessment in the classroom culture
- Clarify learning goals and criteria for success
- Leverage progressions of learning for "just right" instruction
- Utilize evidence-based feedback
- Maximize peer and self-assessment in classroom practice

Presented in an easy-to-read, practical format, this book will help teachers build upon their strengths to create conditions where innovation and creativity thrive and where students can develop the belief in their capacity to learn.

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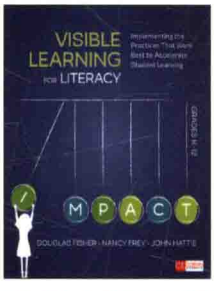

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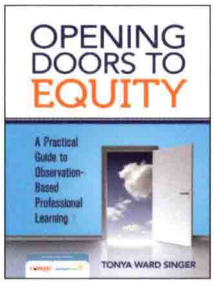

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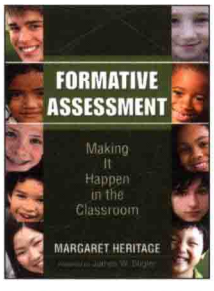

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Paul Bloomberg

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Leading Impact Teams

Foreword

The latest hot topic among educators is teacher collective efficacy—that is, teachers working together to build the confidence that they can get all students to advance in learning. The effect size from the recent work by Rachel Eells (2011) places it among the most powerful influences on student learning (at d = 1.57). Teachers' collective efficacy is quite specific—it is teachers working together, building mindsets that all students can make appreciable progress, and then reinforcing these efficacy beliefs with evidence that students do indeed learn by these teachers "causing learning."

Leading Impact Teams: Building a Culture of Efficacy combines some of the best innovations from the last decade to ensure a focus on changing the learning lives of students. Like all good cake recipes, it is not just the ingredients but also the way they are combined that matters the most—and the tender, loving care illustrated throughout these chapters as to the combination is the key to this book's success: building a culture of efficacy in leaders, teachers, and students based on developing impact teams.

To enable teachers to understand, to build confidence in growth, and then to feed this growth with evidence of actual student growth typically involves a determined, focused, and knowledgeable leader. It needs an instructional leader who finds the space, resources, and time for this to occur, to ensure its implementation, and to evaluate its impact. These are the themes outlined in this book—how to LEAD teams that have IMPACT by building TEAMS to have a CULTURE OF EFFICACY. At last we move past collecting data and then forming teams (or professional learning communities) to the more important working together to interpret the impact of our teaching on each and every student's learning. This interpreting is the core notion of clinical practice in most professions. This is contrary to the usual life of teachers—working alone (but often sitting together working alone), the classroom door closed, the discussion about their impact reserved for their anecdotes and selective memory of what worked, and designing pre-specific activities to engage students and keep

them on target until the bell goes. Instead, the focus is more on the consequences of the activities, the magnitude of the growth, the working together to maximize impact, and the sharing of these debates among colleagues (including with the students).

Such a method requires high levels of trust, a notion often referenced in the book. In some of my team's work this building of trust can take months before we can move to collaborate teams to develop high levels of efficacy. Teachers and schools have been so bashed in the past decades that they are appropriately nervous about sharing data and evidence—it has been so often used against them. Instead, this book is premised on the notion that there is considerable success all around us in schools, and it asks how we can reliably identify this expertise, use it in impact teams, and share and develop the expertise. Such scaling up of success is the ever-charging battery in this process.

This book asks us all to move away from setting up another team, yet again having another look at data, and arranging another professional learning community. Instead it has a laser focus on the purposes of these communities—to maximize impact on student learning *together*. This means that we need to ask about the evidence to make these impact decisions—and here is the place of formative evaluation of student work, both helping the students to know where to go next and helping the teachers best guide them in the next phase of the progression toward meeting the success criteria.

Of course, I am delighted they use my synthesis of meta-analyses to help inform their claims in this book. The reason it took me 15 years to write the first Visible Learning book related to creating the story underlying the data is that gathering the data was the easier part, and interpreting it and checking that others understood my interpretation was the hard part. Similarly, throughout this book Bloomberg and Pitchford emphasize the interpretation, show how teams help shape these interpretations, and discuss how teams provide an opportunity for checking the veracity and impact of these interpretations. It is the building of the story about the data that is more critical than the data (not that the data should be other than reliable and valid)—but it is the skill of interpreting the evidence that makes this book successful, in the same way that the skill of interpreting the evidence about student learning makes the teachers successful.

My theme is about maximizing impact, and this means a robust discussion in any education setting about what we collectively understand by this term. Progression in learning should not be left to the particular beliefs of any one teacher, but a sense of progress should come from all that students encounter in a school. To me, it is more than scores on tests, it involves inviting students to want to participate in learning, it involves

a joy of learning and taking on challenges, it is knowing when one is successful in learning, and it is knowing sufficient strategies to be able to choose among them to trial pathways to solutions. It does involve attaining precious knowledge, and I am continually reminded of Michael Young's claims that such attainment includes providing students with knowledge they would not get if they did not come to school.

Maximizing this impact involves teachers learning from students about their impact—and this is the heart of formative evaluation, which in turn is the substance of collaborative inquiry among teacher teams. This demands that instructional leaders hone the purpose, build the trust, and ensure the communication. This demands high levels of social sensitivity to others, respect for evidence, and beliefs that all can cause learning. All these are the core of Bloomberg and Pitchford's Impact Team Model.

They outline the what, why, and how aspects of building these teams, continually feeding the team back with evidence of its impact and reflections on whether this impact is sufficient for the time and energies imparted, which ensures that there is evidence put into action. Finally, a core purpose for impact teams—and it is a virtuous circle—that the evidence and analysis lead to action feeds back in the team, and the students are the beneficiaries. Oh, so are the teachers, as one of the major reasons we are in this business of education is to have an impact on all students!

—John Hattie

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Acknowledgments

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From Barb Pitchford

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And to the many teachers who have worked with me over the years – you have been my teachers!

From Paul Bloomberg

I am very grateful for my amazing writing partner and confidante, Barb Pitchford. We have been on quite a journey over the past 5 years and tried to ensure that students remained at the center while writing this book and developing the Impact Team Model. There is no greater gift than when students take ownership of their learning, mistakes and all.

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Paul Bloomberg is a national consultant and the founder and Chief Learning Officer for the Core Collaborative, a professional learning network that specializes in student-centered approaches to learning. Paul is also an Author Consultant for Corwin and a North American consultant for Visible Learning Plus.

Prior to founding The Core Collaborative, he was the former director of TIDES (Transformative Inquiry Design for Effective Schools and Systems), a nonprofit in San Diego focusing on inquiry-based learning. Dr. Bloomberg, a former principal and instructional leader, has directly supported multiple, successful school turn-around and school innovation efforts nationally. He was also a Distinguished Professional Development Associate for the Leadership and Learning Center, founded by Douglas Reeves. He is deeply committed to enhancing student success and believes that we all share in the responsibility for equity and diversity.

Paul's passion is partnering with professional learning teams and systems in an effort to empower ALL students to take ownership of their learning. Paul lives in California with his husband, Tony, and two sons, Alex and Taylor.

Barb Pitchford is a national consultant focusing on leadership for school improvement. During her 30 plus years in public education, Barb has worked at all school levels—high, middle, and elementary—as a teacher, counselor, and administrator. For the past 10 years, Barb has worked as a professional learning consultant specializing in powerful and practical leadership for improved learning for both students *and* teachers. Currently, Barb works with Corwin as a consultant teaching, coaching, and consulting on John Hattie's Visible Learning work, Leading Impact Teams, and is the Executive Director of Professional

Learning and cofounder of The Core Collaborative. Barb's passion is supporting schools to use their greatest resource—their teachers—to build knowledge, skills, and confidence to ensure success for both students and teachers. Based on research around collaboration and formative assessment, Barb specializes in developing Impact Teams to improve teacher expertise and increase student achievement.

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