

**Cracking the Mold:
How Second-Stage Teachers
Experience their Differentiated Roles**

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Introduction

The growing exodus of new teachers from public schools today is a matter of great concern. Recent research reveals that thirty percent of new teachers leave teaching within three years of entry and fifty percent leave within five years (Smith & Ingersoll, 2003). This attrition comes with significant financial and educational costs. Hiring, induction, and mentoring expenses associated with new teachers are substantial, and they are incurred not only when teachers leave the profession, but also when they change districts and schools (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Chicago Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, 2003; Texas Center for Educational Research, 2000). As many districts experience a revolving door of teachers (Ingersoll, 2001), school officials find themselves repeating this costly process year after year.

Students pay the highest price for teacher turnover when they are repeatedly taught by beginning teachers, who are, on average, less effective than more experienced teachers (Hanushek et al., 2004; Murnane & Phillips, 1981; Rockoff, 2003). Thus, for many reasons, teacher attrition is a problem that merits considerable attention.

There has been much speculation and some research about why so many teachers are leaving the profession early in their careers. Research from the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers (NGT) found that generational differences between this entering cohort of teachers and their counterparts who began to teach thirty years ago explain some of the discontent today's new teachers express (Johnson and The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004). Although low salaries, scant occupational prestige, and a lack of resources have long been factors that contribute to teachers' dissatisfaction,

new teachers today have new concerns. They expect to work in collaboration with colleagues and are dismayed to find little evidence of teamwork in their schools. They hope to develop as professionals over time, but see little prospect of growth in a career in which work on the last day of one's career has traditionally looked very much like work on the first day. They hope to have expanded influence in education over time, and wonder how that might be possible from their current positions within the classroom (Johnson and The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004). Given what these new teachers discover about this career, many decide that it offers no future for them.

Traditionally, roles for teachers that offered differentiated work or expanded influence required them to leave teaching for a position as a school administrator or to assume additional responsibilities on top of their teaching assignments, such as coaching a sports team, advising after-school clubs, or participating in union leadership (Silva, Gimbert, & Nolan, 2000; York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Smylie & Hart, 1999). In 1986, the Carnegie Forum proposed that new professional roles be established that capitalize on teachers' expertise in ways that would contribute to the work of schools. Their report, *A Nation Prepared*, argued that such lead teacher positions would increase teachers' commitment to remaining in the profession (Carnegie Forum, 1986). This report generated many local experiments with career ladders and merit pay, but the concept of teacher leadership was not well developed. In many cases, new responsibilities were simply layered on top of teachers' existing responsibilities in schools, rather than being used to transform teacher roles and career expectations (Little, 1987; Silva, Gimbert, & Nolan, 2000; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Since the recent introduction of standards-based reforms and the need for increased instructional capacity within schools, however, districts have created new roles for teachers that reach beyond the scope of classroom teaching. These new roles – differentiated from that of full-time classroom teacher – have the potential to serve both school reform efforts and teachers’ interests in expanded career opportunities.

Today many schools and districts have introduced differentiated roles for teachers, assigning them responsibilities that are meant to improve others’ instructional practices and the school-wide organization. These differentiated roles provide these teachers opportunities to rotate in and out of their classrooms, full- or part-time, to engage in differentiated work in their schools and districts, and thus challenge what has traditionally been a “flat” career (Lortie, 1975). As yet, there is little research about this introduction of differentiated roles and its effect on teachers and teaching (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Do these roles affect the satisfaction of those who hold them? Do the roles serve the instructional needs of schools? Are these roles likely to help retain teachers in the field who might otherwise feel inclined to leave?

We speculate that many of the teachers in these differentiated roles today are recent entrants to teaching, often with no more than four or five years of teaching experience. Having achieved tenure and a sense of confidence about their classroom teaching, these teachers are in the second stage of their careers (the decade after tenure), a time when attrition rates, although lower than those for new teachers, remain high (Leukens, Lyter, Fox, & Chandler, 2004). During this period, teachers who become frustrated by their attempts to experiment and grow tend to leave. Huberman (1993) has termed part of this period a “danger zone.”

In this study, we investigated the experiences of second-stage teachers in differentiated roles. In doing this work, we sought to understand why the teachers accepted these roles, how they experienced them, and whether they found them satisfying. We hypothesized that these roles could only support the retention of second-stage teachers if they experienced satisfaction with them. We found that, in taking on and performing these roles, the second-stage teachers in our sample, wanted, above all, to make a difference beyond their classrooms. The roles that were designed to influence other teachers' instructional practices presented the greatest challenge to those holding them. Only when teachers in these roles were supported by their principals in particular ways did they experience success and, thus, gain satisfaction in their roles. These principals gave more than resources and verbal encouragement. They had clear visions for school improvement coupled with an understanding of how the roles contributed to that vision. Such principals also took the initiative to create a professional culture that mediated acceptance of the role. They also organized school structures (such as scheduling and teaching assignments) to ensure that the second-stage teachers who took on these differentiated roles could succeed in them.

New Roles in a Context of Standards-Based Reform

There is some evidence that two changes in today's education context may be working together to make the climate more amenable to the notion of teachers in differentiated roles within schools and districts. The cohort of today's new teachers, which is rapidly growing to represent the majority of the teaching force, is pushing for such roles and appears willing to challenge the egalitarian culture of teaching (Johnson

and The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004). At the same time, new school improvement demands fueled by standards-based reforms are forcing school leaders to think differently about how work is distributed in schools and to create new roles that engage teachers in supporting their colleagues to improve their instructional practice.

In an effort to move beyond traditional models of teacher learning and development, district leaders are beginning to rethink leadership and learning in school contexts. By relying on local teacher leaders to enable learning and change within schools, principals and superintendents have begun to tap the resources that exist within school staffs to catalyze instructional improvement (Spillane, 2000). Additionally, through viewing school improvement as a discipline (Elmore, 2002) that calls for teachers and school leaders alike to engage in developing and implementing new teaching practices, both the possibility and imperative to revise the work of teachers emerges. Such a revision opens up opportunities to create differentiated roles for teachers focused on addressing the demands of standards-based reform.

Meeting teachers' needs for experimentation and growth during the second stage of their teaching careers, therefore, stands to not only support them to remain in teaching beyond the "danger zone" but also to serve schools' improvement needs. However, not much is known about why some second-stage teachers take on differentiated roles in their schools and districts and what might contribute to their satisfaction in those roles.

Therefore, our research is guided by the following question:

What factors influence second stage teachers' satisfaction in their differentiated roles?

Methodology

Sample Selection

This study is based on interviews with a purposive sample of twenty teachers in the second stage of their teaching career (years three through eleven, all with tenure). Each held a differentiated role in his or her school or district, which included responsibilities that reached beyond a single classroom. We identified potential candidates for our sample using the professional networks of the members of our research team, seeking teachers who were working in several metropolitan areas and in a range of school settings: urban and suburban; traditional and charter; elementary, middle, and high school. In constructing this sample, we sought variation with respect to gender, race, age, and prior career experience in education and other fields.

We also sought variation in the types of roles these teachers held, but we limited the range of roles to those that were compensated with time or money and that had the potential to be ongoing. We did this because we think that such roles may be likely to influence teachers' careers and school improvement. In addition, such roles, we believe, are more amenable to policy influence than the many temporary and informal roles teachers hold. The twenty participants and their roles are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Names, Roles, and Years of Experience for 20 Teachers in Sample.

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Years teaching</i>
Amanda	lead teacher/ literacy resource teacher	6
Anna	math consultant	5
Bill	eighth grade house leader	7
Clark	instructional facilitator	10
Dave	math instructional teacher	7
Eleanor	resident science educator at a museum	5
Eric	sixth grade team leader	7
Jack	math department facilitator	9
Jean	instructional coach	11
Jonathan	union vice president	11
Julie	special education coordinator	7
Kelly	elementary literacy coach; K-8	6
Lauren	literacy coordinator	8
Lindsey	cooperating teacher	7
Mai	elementary math coach	5
Martin	diversity coordinator	6
Patrick	mentor coordinator	9
Robin	school support team leader	3
Sarah	science curriculum coordinator	8
Stephen	technology coordinator	10

Roles within the Sample

Each role held by a second-stage teacher in our sample was different from the rest, and often the job title did not adequately describe the work of the role. Many teachers – such as Lauren, Anna, and Sarah – worked directly in others’ classrooms, hoping to improve instruction by demonstrating lessons, giving feedback, and providing resources. Most roles of this type focused on a specific subject such as literacy, math, or science.

Our sample also included roles that provided support only indirectly linked to instruction, although teachers holding these roles often explained how they thought their work in the role enabled teachers to do their job more effectively. For example, Jonathan, who served as the vice president of the teachers union, and Eric, a sixth grade team leader, both worked to ensure that policies and procedures were in place to support teachers as they worked with students in their classrooms.

Other teachers served their colleagues by coordinating services and special events in the school. Sometimes role titles and descriptions were clear and pre-determined and the teachers did the work as it was specified by others. Sometimes, however, the teacher’s job description was generated organically as the participant perceived needs in the school that were not being addressed. For example, Julie, who was a special education coordinator, took it upon herself to organize a new reading program for the entire school. Some roles provided flexibility for teachers to adapt or re-write their job descriptions as they saw fit.

Many of the teachers in our sample provided professional development sessions for teachers in addition to their other efforts. Anna, for example, provided district-wide sessions for colleagues on teaching math. Importantly, many of the roles required not only teaching skills of content and pedagogy, but also skills for working with individual teachers, training groups, and facilitating discussions among adults.

Data Collection

Each teacher participated in one 60-minute interview conducted by a member of our research team between March, 2004, and January, 2005. Research team members followed a semi-structured interview protocol comprised of questions that addressed, for example, these participants' reasons for taking the role, benefits and challenges of the role, and their perceptions of support for the role by colleagues and administrators (see Appendix A). Three of the twenty interviews were conducted by phone. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for the purpose of data analysis.

Data Analysis

All interviewers created thematic summaries soon after conducting the interviews. This collection of thematic summaries was used for the first level of analysis in which we created analytic memos focused on themes that emerged from the data. Upon receipt of the full transcripts, we worked collaboratively to create descriptors for our emergent themes and to define those descriptors in codes that were then applied to the data. ATLAS qualitative analysis software was a useful tool that enabled us to confirm the reliability of our coding. Following the coding of our data, we more deeply investigated

the patterns and themes that emerged from the data through the use of matrices and memos. Throughout the process, multiple members of the research team worked together to confirm the validity of our analyses and findings.

In the following section, we begin with a discussion of why these participants took on their roles. Next we examine the extent to which they felt satisfied in their roles. We then focus on those whose roles required them to work closely with colleagues on improving their teaching practice, because we found that the principal was key to their satisfaction. We consider how the principal mediated their satisfaction by providing a *vision* or “big game plan” for the work to be done, building and reinforcing a professional *culture* that was aligned with the vision and the role, and ensuring that the essential *structural supports* for the role were in place. We provide two profiles to illustrate the vital nature of the principal’s support and its role in the participant’s satisfaction. Finally, we suggest how this study can inform policy, practice, and future research.

Making a Difference

Teachers in our sample listed many reasons for taking on their roles, ranging from a search for more training or the desire to teach or coach adults, to the need for greater pay or job flexibility. Notably, however, each participant spoke of a desire to make a difference in education through their work in the role. This desire superseded all other goals in importance. “Making a difference” took many forms for these participants. While some teachers hoped to make a difference in school or district structures or

through leading a program that affected students, others hoped to directly influence the practice of their colleagues.

Jean, one teacher in our sample, supported teachers at her school as they implemented new practices aimed at closing the achievement gap. She described her desire to make a difference through her role as wanting to “work...with the teachers more directly in supporting changes.” Jean saw her role as providing an opportunity to promote change in her colleagues’ instructional practices.

Martin, by contrast, hoped to make a difference through a role that focused directly on students. He coordinated his school’s diversity program, taking students to a week-long camp focused on issues of diversity, working with them in a follow-up leadership component, and supporting the entire staff in raising awareness about issues of diversity. He said that he took on his role because he saw “kids touched so deeply by a program like Camp Unity.” He said, “[T]his is what education should be about.” Martin saw his role providing him with the opportunity to make a difference by helping students and their teachers see that issues of diversity are central to their lives.

Finally, Jonathan hoped to make a difference in his school at the policy level. As union vice president, he wanted to work towards changing policies that affected teachers’ work through the contract negotiation process. He said, “I want to play an active role in a part that I can shape. I can define working conditions. I can define how many students I teach in a classroom...through the contract.” Jonathan hoped, through shaping the content of the contract in his district, that he would be able to affect practices and policies at his school. In taking on his role, he hoped to make a difference in working conditions and, through that, to improve instruction and student learning.

No matter whether their roles were focused on changing teachers' practice, directly influencing students' learning or beliefs, or shaping policies in their schools and districts, teachers in the sample all took on their roles with an eye toward a common goal – making a difference.

Making a Difference and Feeling Satisfied

There was a relationship for all of these participants between their ability to make a difference and their feelings of satisfaction in their roles. While all participants felt some degree of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction in their roles, we can generally categorize each participant's overall experiences as leaning towards satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The following examples illustrate how those who thought they were making a difference felt more satisfied, while those who were not, or who felt that they had less influence than they expected, felt less satisfied.

Feeling Satisfied

Anna trained and supported teachers as they tried to implement the district's mathematics curriculum. She said that she gained a great satisfaction from her job and thought that her trainings helped the participants teach better. She noted,

[W]hen I have the same teachers coming, I have teachers who have been to every training I've ever taught in three years. I know them now; they're like friends, you know. And when I see them coming back, it's so rewarding. And I feel like, wow, I really am making an impact outside of my own little, my own two-and-a-half walls.

Anna gained a sense of satisfaction from the fact that workshop participants returned time and again to her trainings. She saw these "return customers" and their feedback as

evidence that her work as a mathematics trainer and coach was having a broad-based influence within her district.

Robin was the chair of the teacher assistance team (TAT) at her school, convening meetings in which teachers collaboratively developed new approaches for working with struggling students. She was pleased to lead conversations during which, collectively, teachers arrived at new strategies for teaching. She noted that she felt successful when teachers “[saw] TAT as a resource to...help you think of alternatives to what you’ve been doing.” She felt that her work enabled teachers to see the team as a new source of ideas for their teaching.

Sarah worked with teachers in her district to model and co-teach science lessons and curriculum. She noted that, in the context of *No Child Left Behind*, science often takes a back-seat role in classrooms. When teachers responded to Sarah’s support, particularly in light of her district’s lack of emphasis on teaching science, she felt particularly pleased:

I feel good when I leave a classroom. And, I mean, I’ve had teachers say, “I’m so excited about light now.” And then they’ll catch me in the hall a couple weeks later and say, “Come to my room. You should see what I did.” So I do feel good that I am making a difference. Maybe, you know, to teachers, and then through teachers to students.

These three participants felt satisfied in their roles because they were able to make a difference. Anna derived her sense of satisfaction from the feedback that she got from workshop participants. Robin, on the other hand, was satisfied because she perceived that TAT had come to be seen as a resource by teachers. Finally, Sarah realized that her work had an impact when she saw teachers build off of her coaching and modeling or get excited about teaching science. These participants’ accounts represented just three of the

ways that second-stage teachers in this study felt that they were making a difference – a feeling that led to satisfaction.

Feeling Dissatisfied

Some participants, however, expressed more frustration and dissatisfaction in their roles. For example, Lauren coached teachers at her school to support them in implementing the literacy curriculum. She found her work especially difficult when teachers resisted her offers of support: “I’ve kind of given up the fight with the teachers that constantly cancel on me or don’t want me in their room anyway.”

Martin, too, experienced frustration as he worked with colleagues and students to change their beliefs about issues of diversity. He found it slow work to address deep-seated attitudes that played out in the classroom. He remarked, “It’s like pushing a stone up the hill and it keeps rolling back down again.” Martin’s work was often discouraging and left him feeling unsuccessful. Overall, he felt dissatisfied with his work and the role.

Julie also experienced frustration and dissatisfaction in her role. When she began working in the role as special education coordinator, Julie had worked to educate the staff about special education law and to support them to use teaching practices that benefit students with special needs. Under a new principal, however, Julie encountered new obstacles and felt thwarted in her efforts to provide such support. She noted, for example, “[I]t’s gotten very difficult to work within his structure to serve the kids really, really well in terms of like me being able to communicate with the faculty as a group.”

Lauren, Martin, and Julie are three participants who felt frustrated by the challenges of trying to make a difference in their roles and thus were largely dissatisfied.

Lauren's dissatisfaction arose when she was unable to have access to teachers or to influence their teaching through her coaching and support. Martin's dissatisfaction and frustration arose when he struggled with the monumental task of helping his colleagues see how their beliefs about diversity influence their work. Julie was dissatisfied when her principal would not set aside time in meetings or staff development sessions for her to train teachers. The challenges of gaining access to and cooperation from colleagues in order to support their teaching, finding the necessary time and resources for the work of the role, or meeting with conflicting notions about the purpose of one's role, were some of the frustrations that led to dissatisfaction.

Principal Support

For each participant, the principal's attitudes and actions were essential to the work of the role. For some people, the principal provided resources in the form of time, training, space to work, or feedback about their performance. However, some roles – those that focused on directly influencing or changing other teachers' practice – required even higher levels of support from the principal. Second-stage teachers in such roles needed their principals to act as brokers, facilitating their relationship with the colleagues whose teaching they were expected to affect. The principal had to pave the way for these teachers' work so that they could actually make a difference with their colleagues.

A Minimal Need for Principal Support

For some participants, the principal was not central in their work, and they could achieve success and satisfaction on their own. We found that this was true for participants

who did not have roles focused on changing instructional practice. For example, Bill felt satisfied with the results of his work and did not need the principal to play a central role as supporter or broker. As a house leader in his school, Bill held a traditional leadership role in which he was not required to directly influence his colleagues' teaching practice. Instead, as he explained, he was "in charge of the academic progress of the students in [his eighth grade] house." He felt satisfied with the results he achieved in this capacity, particularly with the supports he provided for parents and students. Although Bill felt comfortable going to his principal or assistant principal for input or advice, he said that he went "to one or the other based on whether it [was] a planning item, or a reaction to a situation." However, their intervention and support were not essential for him to achieve a sense of success.

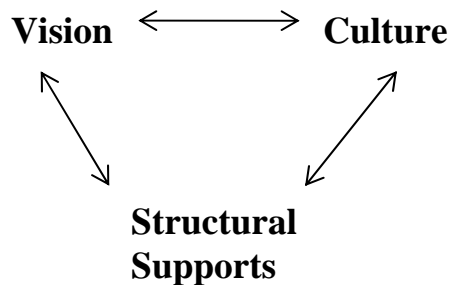
Principal as Broker

When participants held roles that were instructionally-focused, the role of the principal in brokering the relationship between the second-stage teacher and colleagues was vital. Participants in such roles worked to advise peers about their practice, to critique their teaching, to present new models for instruction, and to coach teachers on their implementation of particular pedagogical strategies. When principals actively mediated the relationship between participants in these roles and the teachers whom they supported, participants reported being able to work more productively with their colleagues.

Principals in our study who brokered these relationships effectively did so by providing support in three ways. They had a clear vision for the improvement work of

their school; they nurtured a professional culture in which ongoing learning and collaboration were systemic; and they provided structural supports for the work of teachers in roles (e.g., common planning time, regularly-scheduled professional development sessions, or substitute coverage for training sessions). When these three types of supports were present, participants were more likely to be able to influence the instructional practice of their colleagues and thus feel a sense of satisfaction. However, when these participants did not have their principal's support in these three domains, they encountered frequent obstacles to carrying out their work with colleagues.

Figure 1. The three domains of principal support: vision, culture, and structural supports.



Our analysis revealed an interaction among these three aspects of the principal's work. A clear vision for instructional improvement on the part of the principal helped to build and enhance a professional culture where it became the norm for teachers to focus on learning, change teaching practice, and support students' needs. Such a vision and culture were equally reinforced when principals provided the structural supports needed to enable this work. These supports allowed teachers to actively work towards the principal's vision for the school, while simultaneously shaping or creating a culture with

norms based on ongoing instructional improvement and collaboration. These participants' accounts suggest that, only when all three of these elements were firmly established did teachers in instructionally-focused roles have what they needed to improve instructional practices and to feel the satisfaction of making a difference. The following stories of Jean and Clark illuminate how principal support plays out in their efforts to carry out their roles.

Principals' Support through Vision, Culture, and Structures

Jean: Partnering with a principal who paves the way

Jean is a middle-aged, white woman who entered teaching as her second career. Recruited to her current school by her principal, she held the position as an instructional coach, which, in Jean's words, meant that she provided professional development to teachers at her school. She helped her peers improve instruction to better meet the needs of students, particularly through helping them move from whole-group instruction to integrating small-group and other more child-centered approaches into their practice. Jean described being recruited to the Massey School in order to serve as model of instructional practice for teachers. At first, her work at the Massey involved simultaneously teaching her own class and serving as a model that others in the school could observe. The role was funded through Title I money and designed at the district level to meet NCLB mandates. There were 37 other instructional coaches in Jean's district, and she described fruitful and supportive interactions with that group in bi-monthly meetings, as well as through ongoing informal contacts.

Jean's principal presented a clear example of how having a clear vision for the school, aligned with a culture supporting change, and supported by essential structures, can pave the way for the second-stage teacher's work in her differentiated role. In describing how she worked with her principal to design her work, Jean noted: "[I]t comes from a big game plan. Everything is well thought out and planned out." Jean said that her principal's "big game plan" not only guided the work of the school, but was at the heart of Jean's planning process with her principal. Her principal's vision catalyzed Jean's work assuring that, when she worked with teachers, she could help them to meet the goals that the principal had for instructional improvement. Reciprocally, Jean's work helped teachers to realize the principal's vision for the Massey.

Jean's principal advanced her big game plan by providing structural supports for Jean's work with her colleagues, thus offering concrete evidence of her vision for the school and of the culture of growth and development that she worked to create. Jean described one such structural support:

So, when I was in there for the week [modeling small group instruction], the principal would free up other teachers in other classrooms and send them in to watch for a couple hours so that they would get a sense of how it works, because you can read all you want and I can explain all I want to you, but the best way really is truly to model.

By providing release time for other teachers to watch the practices that Jean was modeling, Jean's principal sent a message throughout the school that she valued the work of instructional reform and Jean's role in it. By her actions, she made it clear that she would provide the necessary resources for the staff to be fully involved in this work. At the Massey, these supports were a natural outgrowth and component of a culture where it was the norm for teachers to embrace change and work with other to improve their

instruction.

Jean also appreciated the support of having time to plan with teachers. She said, “We have a block of common planning where once a week teachers meet at grade level, and that would be the teachers and any instructional assistants that may be at that grade level and the special [education] teacher at that grade level.” Jean was able to use common planning time with cohorts of teachers to reflect on lessons that she had modeled or to support their teaching in other ways. By arranging the school’s schedule in this way, Jean’s principal signaled that she saw such collaboration as vital to the work of reform.

Teachers in differentiated roles are better able to negotiate their new relationships with colleagues when they work with a principal who has a clear vision for the school, creates and sustains a corresponding culture with norms that embrace change, and provides the structures that make the enactment of the role more doable. Together, this sends a strong message that the principal affirms the work that the teacher in the role is there to provide. Jean could accomplish with her colleagues exactly what was intended from her role. She said, “I mean that is my role to support them and the fact that they do come to me for it reaffirms that they’re safe with coming to me to do that and that our relationship is working in that role.” This, perhaps, was the clearest evidence to Jean of the difference she was making, and her principal was essential to this success.

Clark: Frustrated by the lack of strong vision, culture, and school-level supports

Clark, a white man who served as an instructional facilitator at his school, had been a teacher for ten years. He spent seven of these at Hillview, the last two sharing the

role of instructional facilitator and fifth grade teacher with another teacher in his building. Clark's role was designed to support other teachers as they implemented a school-wide reform model, Paideia, which focuses on critical thinking and communication. Through modeling lessons, coaching, and leading seminars, Clark hoped to make a difference in his school as they implemented this approach. Using funding from the state, his former principal had created this role; however, that principal left before Clark began his work. The support that Clark felt from his first principal was not there with his principal's successor.

Clark struggled to feel effective in his role, but felt that his work did not make a difference for his colleagues – a fact that can be traced back to a lack of both vision and structural supports on the part of his current principal. While the principal who invited Clark to take on the role had a vision for the school's improvement and Clark's role in it, the new principal did not. Instead of seeing Clark's work as advancing the Paideia model at Hillview, his new principal often called on Clark and his role colleague to pick up administrative duties in her absence:

We were asked to do administrative things sometimes. And sometimes they would be just small things like run the assembly....But there were things that kind of felt almost assistant principal-ish. You know? Take care of this discipline problem or that.

In asking Clark to take on work that he termed "assistant principal-ish," his new principal illustrated a lack of understanding of his work and a potential lack of belief in the value of his role. If she had a vision for the school, Clark's role had no place in it. Instead, he was seen as someone with extra time who could step into administrative duties.

Clark struggled in his role, not only because of his principal's unwillingness to uphold the prior vision, but also because this lack of understanding of how his role might

support school improvement led to a lack of structural supports. Clark explained the problem:

I didn't feel that I had administrative support because the position is such that, on one hand, you know, they want you to work alongside your colleagues and help give feedback and help improve instruction. But if there is no impetus, if there is no real mandate for people to go out and seek your help, a lot of times they just won't, because they are busy.

Without the principal's encouragement, colleagues did not turn to teachers such as him for coaching, particularly because such collaboration was not a norm or expectation of the culture at the Hillview. Clark said that there was "no mandate" from his principal and no impetus for change. However, a mandate might have left teachers working with him only because they were told to. Had the principal led with a clear sense of purpose and plan, a culture might have emerged in which continual growth was the norm.

Had Clark's principal provided structures such as release time for teachers, common planning time for grade levels, or compensated professional development time, during which teachers could work with Clark, they might have felt a greater interest in his coaching and support. Additionally, had the principal set clear expectations for each teacher's professional growth, teachers might not have hesitated to seek his advice.

Without structural supports and a culture that embraced growth and change, however, these teachers understandably felt that there was no time to work with Clark to change their practice.

Reflecting on whether he would continue in his role, Clark said that he might do so, "if I had the administrative support where people really looked at the administrator as an instructional leader.... that they would put out suggestions on people bettering their instruction, and that one of the ways to better instruction would be to use and utilize the

instructional facilitator.” Clearly, Clark saw the need for a leader with vision, a leader who created a school culture in which instructional improvement was valued, and thus his role, in providing supports for such improvement, would be valued. Without the presence of these supports, he was left feeling frustrated and dissatisfied, unable to make a difference with his colleagues, to help the Hillview move towards a full-fledged implementation of the Paideia model.

The impact of clear vision, strong culture, and structural supports

Principals with vision not only have a clear idea of where their school is headed, but also understand the capacity of their teachers and the needs of their students. They incorporate this knowledge into a plan that will chart the course of change for their school. The big game plan of Jean's principal, aligned with the collaborative school culture that she fostered and the structural supports she provided, paved the way for Jean to support teachers in instructional improvement. In fact, Jean felt that she was able to make a difference in other teachers' practice and was satisfied in her role as an instructional coach. Clark's principal, on the other hand, lacked vision, did not foster a collaborative school culture, and failed to provide structural supports to facilitate Clark's work as an Instructional Facilitator. Thus, Clark felt ineffectual in his role.

These two stories illuminate not only the power of principal support in the domains of vision, culture, and structural supports, but also the ways in which each support reinforces the other. Without a clear vision, principals cannot create or continue to nurture a collaborative school culture. And without structural supports, this culture cannot continue to grow, nor can the vision be realized. Because these three types of

supports are mutually reinforcing, the principal must ensure their presence and alignment as the key to the success of second-stage teachers who are navigating roles focused on providing instructional support and improvement.

Conclusions and Implications

Recent state and federal legislation has led to a proliferation of unique, home-grown roles created for teachers to guide the work of school improvement. At the same time, research has shown that many schools and districts are failing to attract and retain a strong and skilled teaching staff. Many promising, recently-tenured teachers leave education before contributing to their peers what they know about successful teaching. Our findings in this exploratory study reveal an opportunity emerging from the interplay between these new roles and the interests of second-stage teachers today in assuming roles that would allow them to better their schools.

We found that the second-stage teachers in our sample were drawn to differentiated roles in order to make a difference beyond their classrooms. From their accounts, it was clear that “making a difference” could take many forms, from influencing how teachers interact with one another and teach their classes, to changing how students experience school, to shaping policies that, in turn, affect the structure of schools. Our findings suggest that teachers in differentiated roles were satisfied to the extent that they felt their efforts had positive effects. Additionally, for teachers with roles focused directly on changing instructional practice, we found that the principal was essential in brokering their relationships and work with colleagues.

Many of these roles seemed to hold promise for improving practices at schools and for sustaining teachers in their work. Although we can report on ways in which participants perceived that their differentiated roles affected instruction, we cannot report with any certainty on the effect that these roles actually had on instruction or on teacher retention. Further longitudinal research is necessary to investigate these relationships. This study does establish, however, that simply creating differentiated roles does not, in itself, guarantee that the teachers holding those roles will be successful and satisfied. This is especially true of roles designed to influence instruction, which make extraordinary demands on the second-stage teachers who hold them. Our work confirms that the principal is crucial in supporting the work of these teachers, and the success and satisfaction that they achieve in them.

To sustain second-stage teachers with roles, principals must have a vision for how the work of these teachers is integrated into the academic vision for the school. This means that the principal, in creating and/or endorsing the role, must articulate what Jean called a “big game plan,” which clarifies what is needed to achieve the school’s goals and how the role moves that plan toward completion. As we saw with these participants, it is not enough for the principal to be a passive supporter. Julie acknowledged that her principal was a “green light guy” who consistently approved her proposals, but she remained dissatisfied because her principal lacked a vision that would frame and focus her work, both for herself and for others.

Similarly, a principal can promote a strong professional culture in the school that embraces ongoing learning, collaboration, and instructional improvement. In such cultures, second-stage teachers who hold differentiated roles find that they have easier

access to responsive colleagues, who can recognize their skills and accept their guidance. In schools where teachers are accustomed to talking about their practice, teachers in differentiated roles can step in to lead discussions, observe classrooms and provide feedback, teach model lessons, and procure resources for their colleagues.

Finally, structural supports that are in place school-wide allow teachers in roles to have easy access to their colleagues. Such supports include staff meetings that are well-structured and purposeful, sustained opportunities for professional development, and common planning time for discussions about teaching practice. By providing these supports, the principal can communicate to faculty the purpose and value of the teacher's work in a differentiated role. These are the structures that allow the shared vision for improvement to take root in the school by allowing teachers with differentiated roles to do their work.

Many of the roles held by teachers we interviewed were not well established in their schools and/or districts. In such cases, the principal's investment in making these new roles work appeared to be even more crucial. In addition, there was clear evidence that turnover in the principal's office can undermine the role if it is not managed well. As we saw with some participants, new principals often brought with them a new agenda for the school, which did not include the work being done by teachers in differentiated roles. When this occurred, the potential of the role was wasted and the teacher was frustrated. This highlights the importance of consistent leadership in schools, even when a new principal is assigned. Such consistency provides one of the best supports for school reform. Thus, when turnover does take place in the principal's office, mechanisms must be put in place to ensure the maintenance of a strong vision for the school, as well as

roles linked to that vision. Finally, these findings underscore the need for principals to recognize that their success is ultimately interdependent with that of their best teachers, who assume specialized roles in their schools.

Differentiated roles for teachers have cracked the traditional mold of a flat teaching career long reinforced by egalitarian norms in the profession. While this is hopeful, far more is needed than creating new roles for teachers. As an individual, a motivated and inspired teacher who seeks to make a difference beyond her classroom cannot rely solely on her own strategies, work ethic, and beliefs to succeed. On her own, she simply may not be able to bridge the expectations of her role and the expectations of her colleagues. However, the principal can shape the organizational context in which such roles are carried out, and thus increase the likelihood that the roles will strengthen the school and, ultimately, the teaching career.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

1. I am interested in the work you do in your role as a _____, but I know that you may have other roles. Can you mention any other roles you hold that feel important to you?

2. For this interview I would like to ask you about your work as a _____.
 - What do you do?
 - Is time for this scheduled during the school day or after school?
 - How long have you had this role?

3. I am wondering if your work in this role is compensated in any way. Do you receive extra pay or time off from your regular teaching duties to do this work?
 - Do you know how that is funded?

4. I am interested in understanding how you came to have this role. Were you recruited for this role or did you pursue it on your own?
 - Why did you accept/ pursue this role?
 - What were some of the pros and cons you weighed in deciding to take on this role?

5. I am interested in whether you have the support to do your job well.
 - Did you have any training or preparation?
 - Do you have the material resources you need?
 - Do you have sufficient administrative support?
 - Are there other _____s in your school or district? Do you have an opportunity to interact with them?

6. Do you get feedback on how you're doing in this role?

- From whom?
 - How?
7. Have your relationships with colleagues at your school changed since you began this role?
8. Has your relationship with your principal changed since you began this role?
9. Do you find your work in this role rewarding?
- Why/ why not?
 - Can you tell me about some of the benefits and drawbacks?
 - Do you think the work you do contributes to the school/ district?
10. Do you find it a challenge to maintain your classroom responsibilities with this role?
- Does this role place new demands on you that teaching did not?
11. Do you hope to continue working in this role?
- Why/ why not?
12. What are your plans for your career?
- Has having this role influenced your plans?

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