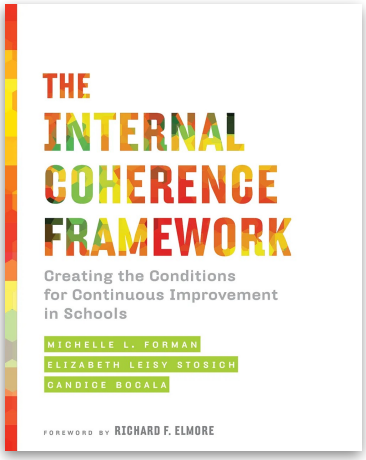
Internal Coherence Project

Traditionally, school improvement strategy focuses on providing underperforming schools with instructional interventions designed to increase student learning. What we fail to acknowledge with this approach is that struggling schools often lack the ability to summon the organizational response necessary for an intervention to affect student learning in all classrooms, over time. Without this organizational capacity, not even the most powerful intervention will result in improved outcomes at the school level. External pressure to improve or the threat of sanctions will similarly fail to drive improvements in schools unable to harness the collective resources of the organization in the service of achieving collective goals.

We ask schools to **improve** as organizations.

But do we help schools **function** as organizations?

Integrating current research, SERP offers schools pathways to improvement.



Related Publication

The Internal Coherence project is anchored in an assessment process that generates a profile of a given school's existing capacity to engage in deliberate improvements in instructional practice and student learning across classrooms. The ICAP is designed to provide school leadership, and potentially system-level supervisors, with a structured body of information about a school's capacity on each of the three dimensions of Internal Coherence: leadership focused on the support for instructional practice, individual and collective efficacy beliefs, and whole school and team-level organizational structures and processes. ICAP data profiles are designed to drive professional development supports tailored to the particular needs of an individual school, and guided by the provisional causal order which underlies the work.

The ICAP consists of a survey of teachers, a series of protocols for interviews and focus groups with teachers and principals, and a brief protocol for classroom observations. They are all designed to support the growth described below.

Leadership Practice → **Organizational Processes** → **Individual and Collective Efficacy Beliefs** → **Student Achievement**

- Articulate instructional focus and vision
- Model public learning
- Create environment supportive of risk-taking (psychological safety)
- Focus on structures, processes and content of team work
- Examine available instructional supports / PD

- Structures in place
- Instructional mandate (vertical accountability)
- Attention to processes
- Explicit focus on group commitments

- Broaden instructional repertoires
- Normative press increases expectation of success, perseverance
- Interplay growth individual and collective efficacy beliefs

- Individual efficacy linked to classroom behaviors
- Collective efficacy a strong predictor of whole-school achievement

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