

# Democratizing Professional Development

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*The purpose of this article is to describe the evolving democratization of a professional/curriculum development project and its accompanying democratization of teacher involvement in research. We will describe how teachers moved from finding a voice, to being heard, and from being consulted about how the project grows, to taking responsibility for nurturing it. In this paper we will describe Project SMART, a ten-year professional development/curriculum development program; use particular case examples to describe the evolution toward democratization in both program planning and research focus; and illuminate several threats to this growth toward democratized professional development.*

## Introduction

"From the first time I walked into Project SMART I was ready to turn around and walk back out. I was completely overwhelmed." This statement was made by a teacher who has been working for several years with the Project SMART professional development program called Kids at Work. The following statement was made by a school superintendent in a countywide superintendents' meeting. "If anyone can make this program work, it's a Project SMART teacher." The distinction between these two statements signals change that occurs in elementary teachers who have been involved with this program; many teachers enter the program with anxiety but grow into actively involved change agents in schools.

The purpose of this article is to describe the evolving democratization of this professional/curriculum development project and its accompanying democratization of teacher research. When we speak of democratization of professional development, we are talking about a process in which teachers move from finding a voice, to being heard, and from being consulted about how the project grows, to taking responsibility for nurturing it.

We have found evidence to support Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1993) claim that when teachers conduct their own research, they become much more actively involved in the professional conversation of their work. We have also found the converse to be true: when teachers actively participate in the professional conversation of their work, they become much more interested in conducting their own research. However, the simplicity of these statements belies the complexity of such a process. In this paper we will: 1) describe Project SMART, a ten-year professional development/curriculum development program in the areas of mathematics, science, and technology; 2) use particular case examples to

describe the evolution toward democratization in both program planning and research focus; and 3) illuminate several threats to this growth toward democratized professional development.

## Related Literature

Since before the civil war, teachers have been attending institutes to learn about new developments (Biklen, 1995; Fuller, 1989, Hoffman, 1985), but more importantly to share information with each other about the application of new developments to their particular contexts. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when teachers were relegated to the least important position for making decisions about teaching, Margaret Haley, president of the National Education Association, called for teachers to participate in decision making at the policy level and to reflect our country's democratic political process in the profession and in the classroom (Fraser, 1989; Haley, 1981).

The connection of Project SMART to this legacy of teacher empowerment is especially significant given our location at SUNY Oswego, a college with roots in a well-known normal school founded by Edward Austin Sheldon. Teachers left the Oswego Normal School and moved around the country employing what was nationally known in the late 1890s as the Oswego method, or object-method, of teaching. We are part of a history of *action*, of teachers coming together and collaborating to share, learn from, and grow through their interactions. While policy makers, politicians, and university experts have rallied around the crises of education calling for more than a century and a half of reform after reform (Cuban, 1989), teachers have been quietly and collectively doing the daily, immediate work of teaching.

We are also directly tied to the recent history of the of

the theory-practice split that occurred in the 1950-60s, where the educational research of the time moved "away from the concept of teacher-researcher toward that of teacher-learner, in which teachers would learn to apply what researchers discovered" (Noffke, 1997, p. 318). This was especially true in the area of science and mathematics education, where post Sputnik curricula were developed to be process-oriented, but teacher-proof.

The most recent wave in the reform movement began in the mid-1980s, and again included a call for improvement in students' science and mathematics abilities, this time in the context of state and national curriculum standards. It was in this global, economic policy storm that Project SMART was born. While work in Project SMART has been influenced by historical issues, our individual and collective growth has also occurred in spite of these external developments. Project SMART is operating in a context where school reform occurs from the bottom up, from the inside out, and from small particular experiences to a collective experience.

The Project SMART model is consistent with Lieberman's (1995) and Stalling's (1995) call for a professional development approach that is based on a constructivist, collaborative view of professional learning. Lather's (1991) notion of catalytic validity which "represents the degree to which the research process re-orient, focuses, and energizes participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it..." (p. 18) has served as a useful way to conceptualize our process. Later in this paper we will describe examples of how teacher research within Project SMART has re-oriented, focused, and energized teachers. In developing this ongoing professional development project, we have avoided didactic, top-down, or quick-fix patterns recently challenged by scholars. Sparks (1995) criticized traditional staff development approaches as piecemeal efforts focusing on a "needed" change without concern for the context. Too often such staff development is based on a *telling*—a transmission view of knowledge where content and skills information is delivered to teachers who in turn deliver it to children. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) argued that conventional staff development has been top-down, and what we now need are top-down policies for bottom-up reform. They pointed out that new reforms call for teachers to teach in ways that they have not experienced, requiring them to unlearn old practice. They call for participant-driven inquiry-reflection/experimentation in a sustained, collaborative community that is connected to other aspects of school change. The "systematic ad hocism" they discuss, whereby structures continually change and evolve to respond to new needs, is reflected in the evolution of project SMART, where new structures have emerged to deal with various teacher-identified concerns.

Our work is strongly informed by the writing of Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) and Allen, Cary, and Delgado (1995). We see many of our goals, efforts, and understanding reflected in the professional development

work they describe. However, we view professional growth, as well as threats to a democratized process, in ways that none of these authors has done. To establish a context for our story, we begin with a description of Project SMART.

### The Curriculum/Professional Development Model: Project SMART

The original intention of Project SMART in 1988 was to have a group of interested teachers convene to develop and disseminate hands-on, inductively developed "Kids at Work" units with real world connections. This initial group of teachers would work with college professors for three weeks in the summer, and then offer awareness workshops in their schools. However, this is not what happened. Though teachers initially intended to participate for only one summer session, they decided that the work of the first year was not done. The curriculum units needed piloting in the classroom, revision, and implementation the following year. This was the beginning of a tradition that built a culture of sustained contact within the project. About 60% of the teachers return annually, with at least 15 teachers participating for more than five years. Participants in the summer institute say that they come together as professionals to collaborate, share, and find acceptance for their ideas.

Subsequent years brought many changes. Teachers began to feel comfortable working with college professors on an equal level as teams developed interdisciplinary units with connections to regional technologically rich businesses. Elaine Suskin, a teacher who was with the project for 10 years reminisces,

The first summer in the Project was an exciting and somewhat unsettling experience for me. I was nervous about working with high school teachers and college professors who really taught science. I didn't have the background in physics. I only knew what I had basically learned by myself. My experiences with past college professors were from the early 1960's and rather negative at that. Now I was faced with working with these learned people every day, trying not to look stupid. I was encouraged to be the student, to make suggestions and mistakes, and to discover to myself the principles that I would eventually be teaching to other teachers and to my students. No one made fun of my lack of knowledge in the area of science. I was treated with respect and allowed to take that crucial step from one who somewhat feared science to one who now looked forward to the learning (Russo et al., 1997, p. 3).

Teachers, like Elaine, who were unsure of what they knew were allowed to learn content with the help of the professors, but hierarchical student and teacher roles were avoided. Professors from a variety of disciplines were encouraged to learn elementary pedagogy with the help of the teachers.

Ann Keen, a teacher with the project nine years, described her growth this way:

I remember clearly thinking I would attend a summer institute and listen carefully to "those in the know." They would teach me how to conduct his hands-on instruction that I would go back to my school and do whatever I was told. Not so. I was instead encouraged to move in my thinking from listening passively to actively creating a unit with other teachers. My enthusiasm for such involvement was mirrored in the face of my peers. Our thoughtful discussions, creative expressions, and enthusiastic products shone on our faces. Our knowledge and experiences were acknowledged and honored. We co-partnered with university faculty and teacher peers to create challenging curricular connections for students (Russo et al., 1997, p. 4).

Ann's experiences reflected the changes in many project participants, including staff and teachers.

At first, project directors decided on the focus for each summer institute. As the years progressed, the project became more than curriculum development and dissemination. Teacher identified broad themes that needed to be addressed along with the development and dissemination of the project materials: parental involvement, technology, cooperative learning, anti-bias teaching, assessment, and action research. Project SMART was slowly changing into a teacher-directed process with expanding connections to professional growth.

Suskin describes the change in herself in terms of a combination of finding confidence in conjunction with learning about the power of collaboration.

Through self-reflection I became aware of specific changes that had occurred within me. My feelings of confidence were strong. I also felt less isolated in my role as a classroom teacher. I had become part of a network of teachers who worked together and shared ideas and teaching strategies. I no longer had to rely solely on myself to solve all of my academic problems. This network led to many opportunities to work collaboratively with teachers from the elementary to college level. I have also been able to develop my leadership qualities as a result of my association with the project. I moved from the role of teacher-follower to that of teacher-leader (Russo et al., 1997, p. 5).

Suskin's description points to a major area of growth for many teacher participants who emerged into a variety of leadership roles.

Many teachers have presented papers at local, regional, and national conferences, a big step toward self-definition as teacher-leader rather than teacher-follower. Project

SMART teachers speak of finding an opportunity to be "on the cutting edge" of educational innovation. Each summer's theme explores what is new in the profession, giving teachers a background that can be used for further exploration at other professional development events. Teachers feel comfortable voicing new understandings in school district meetings where they are called upon to suggest ideas for staff development days.

The evolving teacher-as-leader role has meant that Project SMART teachers often work as members of district staff development committees and educational policy decision-making teams. Some project teachers serve as adjunct instructors in the college's preservice teacher education program. Teachers also network, coordinate, and collaborate with other staff development initiatives such as England's IMPACT elementary mathematics program, and Goals 2000 regional grants. Others are participating in a special graduate program with coursework focusing on professional development and action research specifically created for a cohort of Project SMART teachers.

Teachers have found validation for their ideas, expanded their involvement in the project over the past ten years, and concurrently expanded their control over this involvement. Perhaps the Project SMART model causes this level of change in teachers; or perhaps it merely provides a site where teachers, who would be leader, find a nurturing space to develop. Nancy Labbe, a teacher with the project for eight years explains,

When I was introduced to the project, the project philosophy, and the community of pride that engulfs the participants, I knew I had found a safe haven that would allow me to grow, accept my differences, and nurture my strengths as a professional. My own style of learning was validated. My notions about the creation of successful learning environments and relevance to the real world began to unfold and became grounded in research. I shared concepts with my teaching team and then back to the broader community-based environment that my students inhabit. I have taken on more leadership roles: adjunct professor, facilitator of a Portfolio Assessment Group, participant in validation hearing for Project SMART, presenter at national conventions, Oswego County Assessment Liaison/staff developer through the State Education Department, GOALS 2000 grant recipient, [and more] (Russo et al., 1997, pp. 10-11).

As teachers, like Nancy, evolved from teacher-participants to teacher-leaders, the picture of professional development held by the classroom teachers and college faculty also shifted. The initial model, though collaborative in nature and built upon notions of teacher empowerment, focused on applying research findings about exemplary science teaching in the development and teaching curriculum units. Over time, teachers expanded their spheres of involvement

and decision-making, and professional development evolved as a process where teachers and professors negotiated shared understandings of good teaching.

**Shared Understandings.** While there have been changes in the ways teachers define their own roles in the project, participants and staff shared some initial common beliefs and commitments about curriculum development, professional development, and program evaluation. These shared perspectives held by this diverse group about these essential characteristics of the project formed a synergy that fueled an increasingly broadened focus for teachers' roles in their own professional development: (1) Collaboration – We are committed to involving partners from various walks of life including teachers, university members, business and industry representatives, school administrators, and parents; (2) Context – We work with teachers and children within and across real school contexts seeking to extend boundaries to home and the workplace; (3) Sustained Effort – We believe change takes time, and involves participants and contexts over multiple years; (4) Warranted Practice – Topics chosen for study, though selected by teachers, are grounded in the research on teaching and learning and reflect practices warranted by that research; and (5) Integrated/Inclusive Approach – We seek to integrate topics across disciplines, and include all types of learners and teachers from diverse contexts.

The interplay of these five commitments led to the broadened focus, changing roles, and shifts in understandings through the life of this project. In addition, the meaning of research and teachers' roles within project research evolved.

### The Changing Role of Research

Initially the project staff conducted research to study teachers; then the staff and teachers studied together; and now teachers design their own studies. The project has evolved away from a mostly quantitative research methodology toward qualitative inquiry (Bogdan & Biklin, 1992; Patton, 1990). This has helped us clearly describe results of the project, and has played a major role promoting understanding of our own growth. Most recently, an increasing reliance on qualitative inquiry provided a route for identifying dilemmas raised when the distinction between the roles of staff and participant blurred in this decade-long process. Using a qualitative inquiry lens to assess professional development allows for a holistic, naturalistic, inductive interpretation reflecting the perspectives of program participants. In the sections that follow we will describe the shifts from quantitative to qualitative evaluation, from an external to an internal focus, and from an expert-driven staff development process to a collaborative professional development approach. We will include examples of studies that demonstrate how we studied teachers, studied with teachers, and eventually saw teachers defining and conducting their own research.

**Studying Teachers.** The initial analysis of the project's

impact on teachers drew from several sources of data collected between 1990 and 1994. The data included pre-post attitudinal surveys administered to teachers, students, parents, and administrators; orientation workshop follow-up surveys; field notes collected by participant observers who observed in elementary classrooms, workshops, and summer institute sessions; and official Project SMART documents. Both quantitative and qualitative program evaluation findings indicated that: teachers' practice changed to include more inductive teaching, students' attitudes toward science usefulness improved, and parents had more knowledge of and support for school science programs (Beyerback, et al., 1995).

A transition incident drew teachers into the data analysis process. A survey of children's attitudinal factors – in which all results were significant in the *wrong* direction – provided data discrepant from that collected through participant observation. The survey data indicated that Project SMART "Kids at Work" units tended to make students less satisfied with science instruction and less aware of the usefulness of science. Yet classroom observations described children actively engaged in science lessons and generated many real world applications as a result of their visits to industrial sites and the career-focused activities. In searching to understand these discrepancies, evaluators drew teachers in the data interpretation process. Teachers pointed out that their students saw "Kids at Work" as a separate subject, and not as science. Teachers reported children asking, "Can we do 'Kids at Work' today *instead* of science?" Re-examination of the classroom data indicated that as children experienced these units, they became more dissatisfied with traditional science instruction. This incident helped staff and teachers revise how the units were presented to children, and strengthened a resolve to include the teachers' voices in data interpretation.

**Studying With Teachers.** A second transition toward strengthening teachers' voice in the research involved a role shift, as one teacher framed her master's thesis around the participant observation and interview data collected in her classroom and that of a neighboring sixth grade (Hawthorne, 1995). This marked the point at which a teacher took the lead in framing research questions, and soon drew others into the research process. Subsequently several teachers took sabbatical leaves from their elementary positions to work with the research team.

Recently, the most experienced teachers expressed an interest in conducting their own research to understand the impact of Project SMART. During the summer of 1996, professors and teachers presented a summer institute on action research for 44 participating teachers. Several teachers developed research studies to implement throughout the 1996-97 school year. An ongoing study group met bi-monthly to provide ongoing support.

One qualitative research study (Keen, 1996) that grew out of this process focused on the activities, reactions, and obstacles as teachers learned about action research. Data included teachers' journals, interview audiotapes, a collec-

tion of documents generated during the institute, videotapes of institute activities, and field notes. Ann Keen, an elementary teacher for 20 years and Project SMART participant for nine years, served as co-presenter and participant-observer in the institute. She reported that teachers' reactions to action research included: refusal to participate in some activities; hostile mistrust that we were merely trying to get them to do "professors' work;" simple rejection of the idea that they could possibly find time, support, and skill to do research during the school year; polite tolerance of the activities; interest in getting more information; satisfied recognition that they had been collecting data and using it for decision making for years, but had never thought of it as research; and eagerness to begin as process of systematic data collection and sharing results.

Elaine Suskin, one of the participants in Keen's study, designed a study that grew out of her own ten-year experience as a Project SMART teacher and the satisfaction that encourage her to return year after year (Suskin, 1997). Her study sought to understand the meaning that experienced Project SMART teachers make of this professional development project. The teachers who were the focus of this study were veteran elementary teachers who had been with the project at least five years. The purpose of Suskin's study was to understand their perceptions of the project. She used audiotapes from the 1996 summer institute in which novice Project SMART teachers interviewed experienced teachers about their reactions to the project. The information in these interviews was used to generate questions that Suskin used in conducting follow-up interviews with the 14 most experienced teachers. Suskin noted several ways in which these teachers commonly refer to Project SMART: the project is like a family; they find opportunities to collaborate with other teachers; they find support and release from isolation; they have experienced growth in their self-confidence and professional growth; the work is done in a democratic fashion and they feel empowered to make decisions in their own schools.

Suskin's own professional growth is a testimony to the effects of Project SMART. In addition to presenting papers at professional conferences, conducting orientation sessions about Project SMART, and teaching fourth grade, Suskin completed her master's thesis in 1997.

Suskin, Keen, and Hawthorne mentioned above, worked closely with the professors who serve as permanent staff to Project SMART. The topics and research designs of their studies were suggested by and then collaboratively planned with these professors. During the 1996 and 1997 summer institutes, other Project SMART teachers designed their own research studies and then sought support from professors.

**Teachers Studying.** The third transition occurred following the summer institute of 1996 when we focused on action research. Ten experienced Project SMART teachers initiated a specially designed graduate program in which they could conduct action research and extend their knowledge of professional development. These permanently cer-

tified teachers worked as a collaborative cohort in a masters degree program that builds on their interests and common experiences. For many of these teachers, who had taught for 15-20 years, and taken nearly as many graduate courses, the masters degree was an illusive option, partially because the idea of conducting research was overwhelming to them. Several supportive Project SMART institute sessions combined with specific information about conduct action research provided the catalyst to propel them into successfully completing a masters degree.

In addition, several Project SMART teachers returned to their teaching settings and conducted studies. Nancy Labbe, a fourth grade teacher, worked with other teachers in her school to develop a program aimed at increasing parent involvement. As a result of her work with Project SMART this program also included the systematic collection of several types of data, which were subsequently used to evaluate the program, and apply for continued funding and support from the Board of Education.

Claire Wandersee, a fifth grade teacher was convinced that allowing her students to use calculators for mathematics increased their abilities to learn mathematics. She began to design a study to prove that, but found an impressive collection of literature that had already proved her hypothesis. So she devised a plan to share her own discoveries with other classroom teachers in her building by forming a semester-long study group. Part of this plan included an evaluation of the effectiveness of this study group. Wandersee administered a pre-and post-survey to the teachers and also recorded field notes of their comments during study group meetings, where Wandersee shared the results she had found in the literature, and where all teachers discussed the promises and problems associated with using calculators. Wandersee found that teachers increased the time they allowed students to use calculators and expanded their repertoire for calculator use from merely checking work to actually solving problems. In addition, the teachers in Wandersee's building were so impressed with the study group format that they planned study groups for the following semester on other topics of importance to their teaching.

Donna Frani, a fifth grade teacher, developed an interdisciplinary unit where the children built marionettes and developed plays that focused on life during the civil war. Frani had conducted a marionette unit with her children before, but this time she kept copious notes about her own efforts at obtaining community support for materials and adults to help the children build the marionettes. She kept field notes based on her observations of her students as the unit progressed. As part of a conscious effort to collect data about the results of her efforts, she also collected samples of her students' writing about the unit. In addition to completing a masters' project, Frani has presented the results of her project in her own district and at regional meetings.

## Paradigm Shifts

Transformations in the model of professional development were related to changes in teachers' and our own thinking about research, knowledge construction, and collaboration. We moved from a view of research as a product to be applied in classrooms, to a view of research as a process in which teachers collaboratively engage to improve teaching and learning. Teachers have taken a lead role in framing research questions, collecting data, and interpreting results. This process is consistent with movement in professional development from replication to reflection and from learning separately to learning together (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Stallings, 1995). The view that teachers become empowered through their own research has guided the recent efforts of the staff in applying action research and understanding this professional development project.

Specifically, we noted the following changes across the ten-year existence of the project: 1) a change in the goal of professional development from *changing* teachers, to creating a context where teachers and university faculty collaboratively build a knowledge base; 2) a change in our approach to research away from an exclusively quantitative, deductive, multi-variate (particularistic) approach toward a collaborative and complementary mix of qualitative and quantitative action research; 3) a change in our view of scholarship from one in which knowledge is generated by university researchers who have implicit power over the process, to one in which scholarship is seen as the articulation of negotiated means among all participants on the project.

For example, in our current thinking we have sought to dispense with, or at least disperse the notion of expert. We now define our work as teachers, university faculty, business partners, parents, and community members forming mutually empowering and supportive relationships (learning communities) to transform teaching and learning for children in many contexts – home, school, community and the world of work. The site for decision making has shifted away from Project SMART staff toward classroom teachers.

During the Project SMART summer institute and follow up activities, teachers have the opportunity for organizing time, using talk, and interpreting the tasks of teaching and schooling, three elements that Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) identify in communities which support teacher research. Typical teacher comments include, "In the project there is always someone who will help you find answers." "It's like a family. We are interested in each other as people, people caring about each other. The teachers are such a plus. The support is there." "I would never have thought about getting my Masters if it hadn't been for the support of the project." Clearly these three elements of time, talk, and focus on the tasks of teaching, also support teacher professional development. The link between professional development and teacher research occurs within the fourth factor

that Cochran-Smith and Lytle describe, constructing and using texts. Involving teachers in inquiry about their teaching as well as their own professional development results in a disruption of relationships between teachers, knowledge, and research, and shifts teachers' role "from receivers to researchers, users to knowers, and subjects to participants..." (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p.2). Involving teachers in defining professional development and in conducting research exposes several threats to the goal of democratization in professional development.

## Threats to Democratizing Professional Development

We know that some teachers leave after one summer institute for a variety of reasons and never return. Others return to the institute in successive summers. They communicate that their participation in the institute has changed their teaching practice. However, neither of these results is direct evidence of a democratization of professional development. Democratization occurs at points where teachers assume a leadership role, by conducting orientation sessions and workshops for other teachers and acting as change agents in their buildings or in other professional groups (generating oral texts). We also see democratization occurring when teachers share their understanding of their own professional growth in written form through curriculum unit development or in conference papers, articles, and master's theses (generating written texts).

Having made these claims of growth and change, we continue to struggle with several threats to this process of democratization. One threat to democratization lies in our tendency to *value written texts over oral texts*. In education, knowledge about teaching that is written is valued over knowledge that is passed on orally. This hierarchy of knowledge privileges the work of professors and other "experts" in the field of education. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) have pointed out how experts have historically developed theories and models for teaching, and then criticized teachers for not applying research findings appropriately. Teachers who attend orientation session featuring Project SMART materials often determine the credibility of the speakers on the basis of whether or not they have actually used the materials. Valuing written texts over oral texts when teachers share experiences with, and interpretations of, curriculum units denies the possibility of teachers defining the standards for knowing. It denies an opportunity for teachers to democratically participate in this discourse.

A second threat occurs when *professors impose traditional standards for reporting research efforts*. This is a tricky issue to describe. It is easy to accept that people who are knowledgeable about traditional research processes should pass this knowledge on and work as facilitators to help others who are interested in learning about research. Yet, those of us experienced in conducting research in education are aware that the range of appropriateness for data collection, data analysis, and reporting of results can vary greatly depending on the researcher, the context of the re-

search, and the audience receiving the results. Instead of taking advantage of perspectives which classroom teachers can bring to research we have found ourselves, at times, rejecting particular efforts at sharing research, favoring the more traditional forms of developing written texts, and thus encouraging teachers to ignore their own ideas and assimilate into the culture of high education research. For example, we have overlooked or devalued the use of personal narrative. We tend to conceive of third person writing as more formal, and first person writing as more casual, and therefore less valuable. Once again, teachers' voices become quieted.

A third threat to democratization occurs when *teachers become merely the subjects of professors' research*, or agree to do the research that professors alone define. This is a process of exploitation where teachers, as natural resources or available labor, are used to allow professors to follow a research agenda and collect the benefits structured by the higher education system that rewards scholarship. While the professors who have worked with Project SMART during the past ten years would deny any conscious effort at issuing their roles in this way, we cannot deny that a number of conference presentations and publications have grown from our work with teachers. The reward to professors is clear. The reward to teachers for their efforts results in these papers is much less clear.

A fourth threat is the *lack of support, time, and money for teachers* who want to conduct action research and/or develop written texts. We have worked out systems for funding full days of release time when teachers conduct orientation sessions to support the work of sharing oral texts. But we have not yet figured out a way to find the resources to free teachers from their classrooms on a more regular basis, and provide ongoing support for their efforts to participate in this form of professional development.

The last threat to democratization of professional development lies in the *uncertainty of who speaks in teachers' names*. Often as teachers take on a leadership or change agent role, they move into administrative or quasi-administrative roles in their districts. Many of the participants in Project SMART have taken on administrative roles where part or all of their jobs include curriculum development and/or professional development duties. They are not at the moment working as classroom teachers. Others, like many of the authors in Cochran-Smith's and Lytle's book (1993) have entered doctoral programs. The perspectives of teachers in these roles change as a result of the process of socialization for administrators and doctoral candidates. Yet often, when written texts are created, only these peoples' voices are heard. This insider-outsider status can deviate from the thinking of actual classroom teachers.

While we celebrate the evolution of this professional development, and its move toward democratization, we continue to be mindful of the issues that threaten our efforts. At each stage of growth we find ourselves facing conflict or lack of understanding which stems from: valuing one form of knowing over another; expecting teachers to as-

similate into a research process that discounts the context of their teaching; exploiting teachers for gain in the academy; denying meaningful resources for teachers to conduct their own research; and allowing a particular few teachers to speak in the name of all teachers.

Having identified these threats to democratization in professional development, we intend to actively pursue solutions. However, like an impending storm, we cannot deny or expect to eliminate the threat. Instead we strive to act in ways which can diminish the potential harm, or in this case, silencing of teachers. We hope to live up to the expectations of Nancy Labbe, a long-term Project SMART teacher, who says,

The project continues to be a source of inspiration for me. Its learning community provides a place to learn, grow, and integrate our new knowledge into the setting of our classrooms where its effects ripple throughout the county and the state. I feel Project SMART teachers will continue to be on the cutting edge of the reform movement. The constructivist model exemplifies the standards being advocated by state and national reform. The project provides a safe haven for teachers to become involved in classroom research, reflectively collaborate, and implement strategies that inform practice and validate theories.

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