

# FOUNDATIONS AND COMPONENTS OF PRACTICE-BASED INQUIRY®

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the PBI collection

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Bringing Professional Practice into Focus



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### **The PBI™ Collection**

*Answers to the Basic Questions about Practice-Based Inquiry®* is a brief introduction and overview to Practice-Based Inquiry.

*Foundations and Components of Practice-Based Inquiry®* is published by Catalpa Ltd. as part of a series that explains both the conceptual and practical dimensions of Practice-Based Inquiry. It presents a comprehensive description of PBI definitions, assumptions and underlying concepts. It considers the place of PBI in the historical tradition of professional practice. Its central focus is how PBI works as a legitimate methodology that generates accurate and legitimate findings about the quality of professional practice. Its thorough and authoritative discussion of Practice-Based Inquiry provides the details necessary for understanding its value and its use as a research tool.

### **Handbooks for Catalpa Services**

Catalpa is proud to provide services to help clients claim and use Practice-Based Inquiry. The following handbooks describe the stipulations and procedures for Catalpa services: protocol accreditation, chair certification and visit report endorsement, as well as the outlines for how a Center can be licensed to use PBI®.

*Assuring the Legitimacy of Practice-Based Inquiry® Visits: The Preparation, Review and Certification of a PBI™ Visit Protocol.*

*Assuring the Legitimacy of Practice-Based Inquiry® Visits: Certification of PBI™ Visit Team Chairs and Visit Team Members.*

*Assuring the Legitimacy of Practice-Based Inquiry®: Endorsing PBI™ Visit Team Reports.*

*Assuring the Legitimacy of Practice-Based Inquiry®: Accrediting and Licensing PBI™ Centers.*

### **Guides to Ensuring the Legitimacy of PBI™ Visits**

Catalpa offers a growing series of guides on how to design, conduct and follow-up on a PBI™ visit.

#### **Catalpa's website ([www.Catalpa.org](http://www.Catalpa.org))**

Catalpa's website provides a comprehensive set of resources for those interested in Practice-Based Inquiry. The website provides further examples, details, links to documents and other relevant websites, as well as references to other studies and descriptive documents. These include access to visit reports prepared by PBI visit teams, studies and discussions of the benefits of PBI, and *Handbooks* and *Guides* about how to ensure the value and rigor of Practice-Based Inquiry. Finally, the site offers the opportunity to join Catalpa's member list for updates about Catalpa and school visits.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This the most authoritative and theoretical description of Practice-based Inquiry® offered by Catalpa Ltd. is based on 16 years of research, and 13 years of field testing. The thought and work of over 2,000 interested people have contributed to the writing of *Foundations and Fundamentals*.

This includes the large number of friends, colleagues, funders and critics who contributed to the initial research work. The early contributions of James Learmonth, Thomas James, Joe McDonald, Larry Cuban, Fred Erickson, Theodore Sizer, Arnold Shore, Robert Schwartz, Lallie Llyod and David Green are still essential. The acknowledgement sections of the major research documents (*Reaching for a Better Standard* (1996), *Visiting Accreditation* (1999) and *The Value of Rhode Island's SALT School Visit for Team Members*, 2005) provide a complete listing of contributors.

The lengthy and thorough field-testing drew out contributions from many school practitioners. The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) implementation of the School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) ranks as the most extensive field test. Starting as a pilot project in 1997 with one school visit, moving to a full state-wide implementation for all of the public schools in the state in 1999 and widening its implementation with follow up activities to visits and experimenting with different visit protocols for different purposes in 2005. RIDE has now conducted over 300 school visits. From this 12 years of work, the leadership of RIDE has made a major contribution to the thinking behind *Practice-Based Inquiry*®. This includes SALT Project Director, Rick Richards, Commissioner Peter McWalters, Deputy Commissioner David Abbott, Director Mary Canole, and Ken Fish (now retired).

The work and thought of the Regent Fellows who have chaired SALT visits shaped a good deal of what was learned from the field. The Rhode Island teachers who have served as visit chairs are Andre Audette, Michael Barnes, Carol Belair, Margaret Della Bitta, Joann LaBranche, Ruth Haynsworth, Catherine Hutz, Tom Kenworthy, Sandy Olson, Donna Reinalda, Pat Ribeiro, Cynthia Scheller and Elaine Zagrodny.

In addition, several Chicago colleagues from the Chicago Schools Alliance three year old initiative to implement a rigorous school visit and from the Chicago Public Education Fund's pilot of using Practice-Based Inquiry® for program evaluation have also made important contributions to this document. These contributors

include Kim Zalent, Mary Ann Pitcher, Sarah Howard, Mary Cumane, Michael Alexander, Manford Holmes and Paul Goren.

Over 2,100 teachers and educators in Rhode Island and Chicago have participated in PBI® school visits and the writing of reports about how well schools are performing. In addition to their work on school reports, many have also contributed to this discussion of the methodology by completing reflection sheets, surveys and discussions.

People on both sides of the Atlantic who have critiqued a version of this text at least once include Michael Alexander, John Bartholomew, Pamela Gray-Bennett, Simon Clements, Larry Cuban, William Derrig, Fred Erickson, Paul Goren, David Green, Katie Hill, James Learmonth, Rick Richards, Caroline St. John-Brooks, Arnold Shore and Kim Zalent. Their contributions to the substance of this document reflect their understanding of the role of theory, the historical use of visit methods and the recent lessons from American field-tests. Their knowledge and sense of good writing have strengthened its style.

This diverse and numerous group of contributors did not work together to come to a “deliberated consensus.” The conversations were often about different judgments about ideas and what would make the writing most clear. So the final responsibility for what is here rests on my shoulders.

And it was my wife, chief editor and beloved friend, Leslie Oh, who not only contributed to the substance, but also made that load lighter.

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