Design customizes the lesson for the group and the goal

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Teacher leaders contribute to the design of professional development in two ways. One is as facilitators of learning. In this role, teacher leaders design, coordinate, and/or facilitate professional learning. The second way is by serving as a member of a school improvement or professional development committee whose task is to design and/or monitor professional development at the school or district level.

In either role, teacher leaders use extensive knowledge about a variety of designs for individual, small group, or large group learning to ensure that the designs they select align with the intended learning outcomes. Frequently, when contributing to decisions about professional development, teacher leaders draw on their own experience and belief system as a reference for their decisions.

For example, when Charles Kitcher,* the instructional coach at Piedmont Elementary School, helps the principal design the first staff development day for the new school year, he relies on his experience with past staff development days on which a consultant came to work with the entire staff for the morning. Since this is what Kitcher and the staff experienced previously, his recommendation to the principal is that they find a dynamic, entertaining, and motivating speaker to work with the staff on the staff development day. Both Kitcher's own experience and his belief that a dynamic, motivating, and entertaining speaker is the key to successful learning for adults contribute to his recommendation.

But a speaker is only one way to design learning. Other designs are also available, however Kitcher is limited by what he knows and believes. As a teacher leader contributing to decisions about designs for professional development, he eventually understands that not all adults learn the same way. In addition, he will discover that giving information is insufficient to transform beliefs and behaviors, often the expected outcomes of professional development.

Before designing learning, Kitcher's first responsibility is to confer with the principal and the staff development committee to identify the expected outcome(s) for the staff development day. Typical outcomes include building awareness, increasing knowledge, developing skill, or changing practice. Once the outcome is clear, Kitcher and team consider a wide variety of learning designs available and select the one that best matches the intended outcome(s) and the participants' learning needs.

The focus of the first staff development day to help teachers understand how to use the school-wide writing criteria they adopted to raise the quality of students' written work. Given this outcome, it makes more sense for Kitcher to ask teachers to bring a few samples of student writing and organize teachers into scoring teams to use the new criteria on student writing. This design engages teachers in the actual work that they are expected to do and will more likely produce the intended outcome.

The range of designs for learning is extensive. Those designs that engage teachers in collaborative teams to do authentic work may be best to accomplish goals related to changing practice, while other designs might be more suited to other outcomes. ◆

* Fictitious name and school

> **DESIGN**
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> Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.