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## Phases OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHING

By **Ellen Moir**

**F**irst-year teaching is a difficult challenge. Equally challenging is figuring out ways to support and assist beginning teachers as they enter the profession. Since 1988, the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project has been working to support the efforts of new teachers. After supporting nearly 1,500 new teachers, a number of developmental phases have been noted. While not every new teacher goes through this exact sequence, these phases are very useful in helping everyone involved — administrators, other support personnel, and teacher education faculty — in the process of supporting new teachers. These teachers move through several phases from anticipation, to survival, to disillusionment, to rejuvenation, to reflection; then back to anticipation. Here's a look at the stages through which new teachers move during that crucial

first year. New teacher quotations are taken from journal entries and end-of-the-year program evaluations.

### ANTICIPATION PHASE



more excited and anxious they become about their first teaching position. They tend to romanticize the role of the teacher and the position. New teachers enter with a tremendous commitment to making a difference and a somewhat idealistic view of how to accomplish their goals. "I was elated to get the job but terrified about going from the simulated experience of student teaching to being the person completely in charge." This feeling of excitement carries new teachers through the first few weeks of school.

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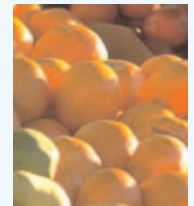
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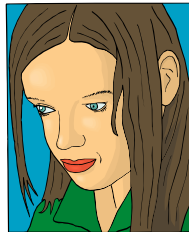
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**As you read this, consider how you can best support new teachers at each phase of their first year of teaching.**



### **SURVIVAL PHASE**

The first month of school is very overwhelming for new teachers. They are learning a lot and at a very rapid pace. Beginning teachers are instantly bombarded with a variety of problems and situations they had not anticipated. Despite teacher preparation programs, new teachers are caught off guard by the realities of teaching. “I thought I’d be busy, something like student teaching, but this is crazy. I’m feeling like I’m constantly running. It’s hard to focus on other aspects of my life.”



During the survival phase, most new teachers struggle to keep their heads above water. They become very focused and consumed with the day-to-day routine of teaching. There is little time to stop and reflect on their experiences. It is not uncommon for new teachers to spend up to 70 hours a week on schoolwork.

Particularly overwhelming is the constant need to develop curriculum. Veteran teachers routinely reuse excellent lessons and units from the past. New teachers, still uncertain of what will really work, must develop their lessons for the first time. Even depending on unfamiliar prepared curriculum, such as textbooks, is enormously time consuming.

“I thought there would be more time to get everything done. It’s like working three jobs: 7:30-2:30, 2:30-6:00, with more time spent in the evening and on weekends.” Although tired and surprised by the amount of work, first-year teachers usually maintain a tremendous amount of energy and commitment during the survival phase, harboring hope that soon the turmoil will subside.



### **DISILLUSIONMENT PHASE**

After six to eight weeks of nonstop work and stress, new teachers enter the disillusionment phase. The intensity and length of the phase varies among new teachers. The extensive time commit-

ment, the realization that things are probably not going as smoothly as they want, and low morale contribute to this period of disenchantment. New teachers begin questioning both their commitment and their competence. Many new teachers get sick during this phase.

Compounding an already difficult situation is the fact that new teachers are confronted with several new events during this time frame. They are faced with back-to-school night, parent conferences, and their first formal evaluation by the site administrator. Each of these important milestones places an already vulnerable individual in a very stressful situation.

Back-to-school night means giving a speech to parents about plans for the year that are most likely still unclear in the new teacher’s mind. Some parents are uneasy when they realize the teacher is just beginning and many times pose questions or make demands that intimidate a new teacher.

Parent conferences require new teachers to be highly organized, articulate, tactful, and prepared to confer with parents about each student’s progress. This type of communication with parents can be awkward and difficult for a beginning teacher. New teachers generally begin with the idea that parents are partners in the learning process and are not prepared for parents’ concerns or criticisms. These criticisms hit new teachers at a time of waning self-esteem.

This is also the first time that new teachers are formally evaluated by their principal. They are, for the most part, uncertain about the process itself and anxious about their own competence and ability to perform. Developing and presenting a “showpiece” lesson is time-consuming and stressful.

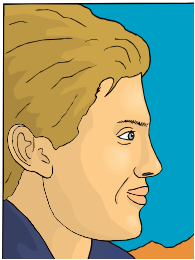
During the disillusionment phase classroom management is a major source of distress. “I thought I’d be focusing more on curriculum and less on classroom management and discipline. I’m stressed because I have some very problematic students who are low academically, and I think about them every second my eyes are open.”

At this point, the accumulated stress of the first-year teacher, coupled with months of exces-

During the survival phase, most new teachers struggle to keep their heads above water. They become very focused and consumed with the day-to-day routine of teaching.

During the disillusionment phase classroom management is a major source of distress.

sive time allotted to teaching, often brings complaints from family members and friends. This is a very difficult and challenging phase for new entries into the profession. They express self-doubt, have lower self-esteem and question their professional commitment. In fact, getting through this phase may be the toughest challenge they face as a new teacher.



### REJUVENATION

The rejuvenation phase is characterized by a slow rise in the new teacher's attitude toward teaching. It generally begins in January. Having a winter break makes a tremendous difference for new teachers. It

allows them to resume a more normal lifestyle, with plenty of rest, food, exercise, and time for family and friends. This vacation is the first opportunity that new teachers have for organizing materials and planning curriculum. It is a time for them to sort through materials that have accumulated and prepare new ones. This breath of fresh air gives novice teachers a broader perspective with renewed hope.

They seem ready to put past problems behind them. A better understanding of the system, an acceptance of the realities of teaching, and a sense of accomplishment help to rejuvenate new teachers. Through their experiences in the first half of the year, beginning teachers gain new coping strategies and skills to prevent, reduce, or manage many problems they are likely to encounter in the second half of the year. Many feel a great sense of relief that they have made it through the first half of the year. During this phase, new teachers focus on curriculum development, long-term planning, and teaching strategies.

"I'm really excited about my story writing center, although the organization of it has at times been haphazard. Story writing has definitely revived my journals." The rejuvenation phase tends to last into spring with many ups and downs along the way. Toward the end of this phase, new teachers begin to raise concerns about whether they can get everything done prior to the

end of school. They also wonder how their students will do on the tests, questioning once again their own effectiveness as teachers. "I'm fearful of these big tests. Can you be fired if your kids do poorly? I don't know enough about them to know what I haven't taught, and I'm sure it's a lot."

### REFLECTION

The reflection phase beginning in May is a particularly invigorating time for first-year teachers. Reflecting back over the year, they highlight events that were successful and those that were not. They think about the various changes that they plan to make the following year in management, curriculum, and teaching strategies. The end is in sight, and they have almost made it; but more importantly, a vision emerges as to what their second year will look like, which brings them to a new phase of anticipation. "I think that for next year I'd like to start the letter puppets earlier in the year to introduce the kids to more letters."

It is critical that we assist new teachers and ease the transition from student teacher to full-time professional. Recognizing the phases new teachers go through gives us a framework within which we can begin to design support programs to make the first year of teaching a more positive experience for our new colleagues. ◆



This article was originally written for publication in the newsletter for the California New Teacher Project, published by the California Department of Education, 1990.

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Bill Ferriter is a 6th-grade social studies and language arts teacher at Salem Middle School, Apex, N.C.

# Holding colleagues accountable

I was hanging around the digital “workroom” at the Teacher Leaders Network ([www.teacherleaders.org](http://www.teacherleaders.org)) when Renee Moore — a virtual friend from Mississippi — raised a topic that we all tend to avoid in education: Holding colleagues accountable for responsible professional behaviors.

She wrote, “The scary part is that we as educators usually have no way of calling attention to questionable classroom practices — our own professional code of ethics, for example. It should be standard practice among us to address such integral issues at the collegial level. Isn’t that what professionals do?”

Renee’s thoughts have been rumbling around in my head ever since. Education’s (poorly kept) secret is that the quality of instruction across classrooms in the same building varies greatly. Class placement can often have as much to do with academic success as personal ability or parental support. While some students are engaged in activities that promote higher order thinking and are exposed to the entire scope of the intended curriculum, others spend their days finishing endless piles of worksheets.

Having spent 14 years as a teacher, I have wrestled with this reality more than once. Confronted with colleagues who were ineffective at best and incompetent at worst, I turned a blind eye on what I knew were bad situations. Something about approaching another teacher about poor instructional practices just plain seemed wrong. Besides, educators are notoriously territorial and I knew I’d hear a lot about “different styles” of teaching being a good thing and that



“what works for you won’t work for me.”

This common perception that “there’s no one right way to teach” is a result of our lack of agreed upon “pictures” of what good teaching looks like. Unlike other professions that work to build a common body of knowledge about effective practice on which all members draw when making decisions — and that all practitioners add to with experience — we have few clear definitions of what works best. We hesitate to approach ineffective colleagues without concrete evidence to use as levers for change.

We also struggle against a culture of isolation that continues to plague schools. Our interactions with peers are limited to passing comments about difficult students or upcoming activities. Colleagues are seen as competitors and professional transparency is rare. Opportunities for collaborative work are left to chance — and to the personal initiative of teachers determined to learn from one another. As a result, we seldom possess the full complement of dialogue skills or confidence necessary to work through difficult conversations — and questioning teaching practices definitely leads to difficult conversations!

By failing to delineate and defend standards of teaching excellence, we have been pushed aside as the instructional leaders of our schools. To reestablish ourselves as professionals, we bear a responsibility for identifying effective instruction and then holding colleagues accountable for their work. When we willingly ignore those who struggle, we cheapen our expertise — and overlook our responsibility to protect every child in our schools. ♦

**Join the conversation with Bill by visiting [www.nsd.org/blog/](http://www.nsd.org/blog/) and offering your opinion. Bill posts his provocative ideas frequently — be sure to return often.**



David Gonzales is an assistant principal and coach at Prairie Middle School in Aurora, Colo. He is responsible for the professional learning for 100 teachers and 50 support staff. You can contact him at [dgonzales5@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:dgonzales5@cherrycreekschools.org).

# Each class visit needs one focus

**Q** What has experience taught you as a beginning coach?

There needs to be a point of focus every time you walk in the room. In the beginning, I was looking for things I think are important for a well-functioning classroom. That didn't work so well because I'd be on one page and the teacher might be on a totally different page. I could miss something that the teacher thought was really good because I was stuck on another component.

Now I let teachers know I'm going to be coming in and looking at this only and oftentimes let the teacher dictate what that is: "What do you want to get better on?" That's something I now do all the time.

Another thing is listening. Teachers often respond to how I listen to them first before I speak. When I do speak, I talk about lessons that I've learned and things that I've tried in the classroom that worked really well and those that did not. I talk about my thinking and the reflection, and I ask the teachers what they would do differently. It is always about bringing it back to lessons learned and telling them, "I don't have all the answers. I have six years of teaching experience, and here's what I've figured out and here's what I'm still trying to figure out." I felt like I had answers — really just tip of the iceberg. There are pieces I can bring in as a coach that can help the work we're doing here. I give them the big picture and then help them translate that into their classrooms. ♦

by Joellen Killion and Cindy Harrison

# Taking the Lead

New roles for teachers and school-based coaches



JOELLEN KILLION



CINDY HARRISON

**T**his book explores the complex, multi-faceted roles played by teacher leaders and school-based coaches as well as examining district and school expectations, hiring practices, and deployment of these educators. NSDC, 2006



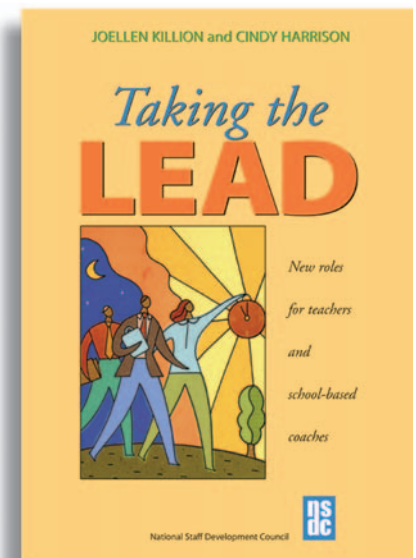
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Joellen Killion is deputy executive director of National Staff Development Council.

# Keep an eye on the finish line

Professional learning has as its major focus improving teaching and student learning. To ensure that learning for adults translates into learning for students, learning facilitators think about how the learning processes teachers experience mirror the learning processes these same teachers want for students. Researchers have noted that teachers tend to teach as they were taught, and recognizing this, those responsible for professional learning think not only about what they want teachers to know, but also about what they want teachers to do with what they learn. Simply put, modeling strong learning processes in professional development increases the likelihood that teachers will use what they learn in their own classrooms.

Employing the best design strategy for professional development means that learning facilitators think about the outcomes of the learning experience and match the strategy to the outcome. The outcomes of learning fall into five categories (KASAB). See box at right.

Each type of outcome requires a different way of learning. Learning about something doesn't automatically translate into knowing how to use the knowledge. It is possible to know about something, believe in its value, know how to use it, and not have the desire to use it, and consequently choose not to use it. Depending on the type of outcome, the learning facilitator selects the best strategy for achieving that outcome. Unfortunately, many learning experiences for adults are designed for knowledge and skill when the intended outcome is really behavior.

This mismatch often means that learners will not use what they learned, and professional development will be unsuccessful.

The last two decades of federally funded math and science initiatives have modeled the design standard. To deepen teacher content knowledge in math and science and expand their pedagogical skills, universities and school systems have partnered, supported by federal grants, to provide professional development for teachers. In these learning experiences, teachers first are students of mathematics or science, experiencing carefully planned and executed professional learning experiences that not only help teachers learn

what they don't know about math and science, but also modeling the same kind of instructional strategies that the professional development providers hope teachers will use once they return to their classrooms. These learning experiences are built on the premise that once they experience it, teachers are more likely to understand the learning process, feel comfortable with it, and be ready to implement it in their own classrooms.

The design standard, too, serves as the foundation for this prac-



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

Learning outcomes	Description
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	Factual information, principles, concepts
<b>ATTITUDE</b>	Belief in the value of something
<b>SKILL</b>	Ability to do something; know how to do it
<b>ASPIRATION</b>	Desire or willingness; motivation
<b>BEHAVIOR</b>	Using the learning regularly in practice

**Killion, J. (2002).** *Assessing Impact: Evaluating Staff Development.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

### SCENARIO A

Teachers arrive at a designated location where all teachers from one grade level are scheduled to meet for the day. They have been promised continental breakfast and box lunches and six hours of professional development credit for the day. The outcome of the day is to familiarize teachers with the curriculum, help them know how to use it, and to teach the new inquiry-based instructional methodology the curriculum is based on. The science coordinators spend most of the six hours lecturing about how the curriculum was developed and explaining that it is based on both state and national science standards, show scope and sequence charts of the key strands in the curriculum, explain the pacing guides, and share common benchmark assessments that teachers will use to assess students in science. They learn how the benchmark assessment will be given on a set schedule, how the score will be turned into the principal at each school, and how those scores will be sent to the district office for analysis of how well each school is implementing the curriculum. The coordinators talk about the difference between inquiry and direct instruction and cite the benefits and challenges of both approaches. They show a videotape of an inquiry-based science lesson based on the curriculum and ask teachers if they have questions. Teachers make several comments about the added work and the challenge of each approach. At the end of the day, teachers receive their curriculum guides and are told to call the science coordinators assigned to their school if they have additional questions.

tice. Essentially it says that how professional learning occurs impacts both the perceived value and implementation of the learning. Two examples (see boxes on this page) will help clarify this point. In each scenario, the district is implementing a new science curriculum. In the fall orientation period before school starts, all teachers attend

### SCENARIO B

Teachers meet regionally in classrooms. As they arrive, they receive their curriculum guides, learn where and what typical science classroom equipment is in their learning room, and are grouped into grade-level teams of four. Each team is instructed to learn how the curriculum guide is organized using a set of questions appropriate to each team. After 20 minutes of exploration, the science coordinator highlights a few key points about the guide and answers questions. In their grade-level teams of four, teachers' next task is to prepare a 25-minute lesson using the curriculum guide. They are asked to make sure their lesson incorporates a few key principles — high student engagement, hands-on, and discovery vs. telling. Teams are encouraged to spend a few minutes clarifying what these terms mean to them and are pointed to several resources in the curriculum guide that might be helpful. They learn that they will present their lesson to another team. The teams have 75 minutes for preparation. After a short break, each team is paired with another team to observe each other's lesson. As one team becomes the students, and a member of the other team teaches the lesson, the three remaining members take notes on how students respond in the lesson. The process is repeated when the other team steps into the teacher and observer role. Teams share feedback with each other using the rubric for an age-appropriate inquiry lesson included in the curriculum guide. Next, teachers in their teams map out the first month of science lessons, what resources and questions they have, how to use the curriculum guide, and what equipment, materials, or other resources they are likely to need. They wrap up the day talking about how this approach to teaching science is both the same and different than what they did before, what they anticipate the benefits will be for students, and what they want students to gain from their learning.

**For more information about NSDC's Standards for Staff Development, see [www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm](http://www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm)**



a one-day workshop provided by the district's science curriculum team. The outcome of the day is to familiarize teachers with the curriculum, help them know how to use it, and to foster teachers' use of the new inquiry-based instructional methodology on which the curriculum is based.

The approaches to professional learning differ. How the learning is structured and what learning strategies for adults are integrated into their learning experiences is likely to impact both teachers' depth of understanding of the new science curriculum, how to use it, and their willingness to use it. However, the learning does not stop after this day. Savvy learning facilitators meet frequently with teachers in teams to talk about challenges, problems, successes, and to look at student work resulting from the lessons. Facilitators may offer to co-teach or conduct demonstration lessons for teachers. They may help teachers find the equipment they need for a

particular inquiry lesson. They are likely to help teachers analyze the results of common assessments to determine how to address those students who missed key concepts or skills.

Lois Easton, editor of *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning* (NSDC, 2004) recognizes that aligning the appropriate learning strategy for adults with the intended outcomes is essential to maximize the potential of professional learning. She provides a rich resource for learning facilitators in *Powerful Designs*. In it, she describes how to choose learning designs and gathers together chapters from experts in the field who share detailed information on how to use 21 different learning designs. This is an essential resource for those who facilitate learning for adults in schools or districts. When learning facilitators know clearly their intended goals and use learning strategies that align with those goals, both adults and students benefit. ♦

See pp. 11-17 to learn more about the designs featured in *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*.

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# Concepts can cement content

STUDY INDICATES THAT CONCEPT-BASED TEACHING IN HISTORY  
MAY HELP MIDDLE-SCHOOL STUDENTS LEARN

By **Carla Thomas McClure**

**C**oncept-based instruction can help middle school history students master content and develop historical thinking skills, according to research findings published in *The Journal of Experimental Education*.

## What is historical thinking?

Historical thinking comprises a set of critical thinking skills that govern the process of historical inquiry. Examples of these skills include the ability to evaluate and interpret historical data and the ability to determine the relative significance of historical events.

## What is concept-based instruction?

In concept-based instruction, concepts serve as anchors for learning. History teachers who take this approach minimize irrelevant details and provide students with discipline-specific vocabulary within a conceptual framework. They explicitly teach students to recognize the relationships among various forms of knowledge, such as facts, concepts, and principles.

## What prompted the researchers to study its use in history classes?

Researchers Todd Twyman, Jennifer McCleery, and Gerald Tindal assert that traditional history instruction has been “largely unsuccessful.” They point to NAEP data, which show that “more than half of all students do not meet basic proficiency standards by Grade 10.” What’s missing, say the researchers, is a bridge between

## Fact, concept, or principle?

**Fact:** The American Civil War (1861-65) was a war between the Union and 11 Confederate slave states in the South that tried to break away from the United States.

**Concept:** Regional conflicts led to the Civil War and resulted in significant changes to American social, economic, and political structures.

**Principle:** War is a result of conflict between political, social, and economic factors



what’s included in textbooks and what’s expected in state and national standards which call for an increase in both conceptual knowledge and problem-solving ability. A review of the research literature convinced the researchers that concept-based instruction might serve as this bridge. They designed a study to explore how this strategy might influence student learning, especially the development of general case historical thinking.

## How was the study done?

Two groups of 8th-grade social studies students in a suburban middle school were taught the same unit in U.S. colonial history over a five-week period.

The school was described as “average” in size and socioeconomic status. Students in both groups were nearly equivalent on demographic measures and were comparable on several achievement measures, including oral reading fluency, written expression, and class grades. Both classes met for 46 minutes daily during the

## EDVANTIA™

Carla Thomas McClure is a staff writer at Edvantia ([www.edvantia.org](http://www.edvantia.org)), a nonprofit research and development organization that works with federal, state, and local education agencies to improve student achievement.

school's 6th period.

Each teacher covered the same content each day but used different instructional strategies; researchers assisted with instruction in both classes to ensure fidelity of treatment.

The experimental group, a class of 26 students, received concept-based instruction. Each day began with a review of the previous lesson. The teacher then scaffolded the instruction of new lessons incrementally and gave opportunities for guided and independent practice (with corrections and feedback). Weekly reviews were conducted. The control group, a class of 28 students, received traditional textbook-based instruction that emphasized reading, lectures, and discussion. Each day, the teacher introduced the lesson and the day's task, directed group and individual reading of selected text passages, allowed time for silent reading, and asked text comprehension questions. Students were asked to "think about" the unit concepts, which were embedded within the lesson. All students in both groups took a pretest and several posttests. These included factual knowledge tests, vocabulary tests, and problem-solving essays.

**What were the results?**

The increase in factual knowledge was about the same for both groups. On the vocabulary tasks, the students who received concept-based instruction outperformed those in the control

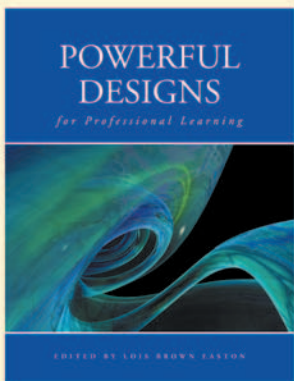
group, but students in both groups did well, with no student getting less than 70% of the items correct. The essay results, however, showed a large difference between the two groups. The essay question asked students to explain which American colonial region (middle or southern) they thought would most improve their lives had they been early settlers. Among student responses in the concept-based instruction group, 83% offered conceptually focused supporting details, whereas only 13% in the control group provided such details.

**How can concept-based instruction address content standards in history?**

Textbooks, say the researchers, make large cognitive demands on learners. Textbooks may assume that students know more than they do, often do not emphasize the most important content, and are rarely designed to help students think about the information being presented. Traditional history instruction, which can rely heavily on textbooks, does not usually include the teaching of reading comprehension strategies. Yet content standards require that students not only acquire factual knowledge but also demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Concept-based instruction can bridge the gap between textbooks and standards by providing a framework for acquiring information and strategies for using it. ♦

**Reference**

**Twyman, T., McCleery, J., & Tindal, G. (2006).** Using concepts to frame history content. *The Journal of Experimental Education, 74*(4), 331-349.



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*for Professional Learning*

*Edited by Lois Brown Easton*

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*Lois Brown Easton*



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# RIPE FOR THE PICKING

Collection of 21 strategies satisfies a taste for context and content

By Lois Brown Easton

Imagine a school that has an environment of staff growth and learning. The climate that makes learning possible for adults in this school can always improve, but the school can legitimately call itself a professional learning community. This school has the context for adult learning.

Imagine that this school has collected and analyzed data from a variety of sources. Staff members know what they need to learn to do better so students can learn better. Teachers know the content they must study.

What they need to know is how: How will they learn what they need? What strategies will help them learn and help them make changes that affect student achievement? What processes will they initiate?

As a school-based staff developer, you are required to make frequent decisions about the right process (or strategy or design) to use for professional learning that will make a difference. Process is so important that the National Staff Development Council made it one of three aspects designers of professional development must consider, along with context and content (NSDC, 2001).

Imagine that our imaginary school has determined that students need to improve their reading skills in the content areas. The staff wants to learn

how to help students understand materials they read in social studies and science, for example. You consult a resource that describes powerful strategies for professional development — such as NSDC’s book, *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning* (NSDC, 2004) — and select a variety of processes that could be used. Some of these designs work individually. In some, staff work individually and then get together in groups. Six months into their focus on reading in the content areas, teachers come together, bringing a variety of viewpoints after experiencing a variety of professional development activities — though all focused on reading. Their professional development continues with other processes as they implement the changes they have identified.

Let’s be more specific. In the first six months, one teacher decides to **access student voices** by having students talk about reading in focus groups. Other teachers begin **action research** projects, mostly working alone but get-



ting together every other week to share their results. A few individuals keep **journals** about reading in their own classrooms. Some of these individuals create **portfolios** to share with others. Another group conducts **case discussions** on reading, and another looks at curriculum as **curriculum designers**. The principal and associate principals do **classroom walk-throughs** that focus on reading. Another group **analyzes the data** that initiated this professional learning cycle; this group wants to know the details behind the scores that alarmed the staff about reading in the content areas. The last group examines classroom and district **assessments** for levels of questioning about text.

At the end of the first six months, these individuals and groups learn from each through **visual dialogue**, and the staff as a whole creates a plan for action. The action research individuals and groups continue their work, as do the journal writers and portfolio makers. The curriculum designers and the assessment group expand their work, and other groups begin to form. Some staff members begin to meet in **critical friends groups** and do **tuning protocols** around student understanding of text. A small group decides to **shadow students** in another school, known for its focus on critical reading skills.

Later, as implementation continues (and gets tougher), a group forms to do lesson study related to reading in science classes. Another group looks at assignments through the standards in practice process. Finally, the staff decides to have a school coach help them focus on literacy across the curriculum.

This article and the tools on pp. 14-17 will guide you in choosing the designs that will work for your school.

**Who?**

All of the 21 professional development designs included in *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning* (listed at right) work well with classroom teachers as well as administrators at the building and district levels. The p. 14 tool identifies designs that will benefit by including college or university staff or community members, parents, and policy makers as partners.

Regardless of who is involved in profession-

al development, always ask, “Who else needs to be here?”

1. Who should be involved?
2. Will people work as individuals or in groups?

**What and why?**

Each of the 21 designs has roots in what happens in classrooms, focuses on learners and learning, and is collaborative in some way. All designs honor professionals. All lead to application. All promote inquiry and reflection.

Beyond these standards for powerful professional development, however, are other more specific purposes that can be promoted through certain designs. These more specific purposes take the form of questions listed below. Designs that are especially oriented to these specialized purposes are listed in the tool on pp. 15-16.

1. Which designs are most useful for gathering and using information from within the school or district about learning?
2. Which designs are most likely to require outside resources to inform the work?
3. Which designs are especially useful in creating a learning community?
4. Which designs focus most on standards, curriculum, and assessment?
5. Which designs focus most on practice or pedagogy?
6. Which designs are most useful for looking at classrooms?
7. Which designs focus on the whole school and/or beyond?
8. Which designs are particularly reflective?
9. Which designs look at student work or involve students in some way?
10. Which designs are best for bringing others (other than teachers or administrators) into the school improvement effort?
11. Which designs can be used to address specific problems and seek solutions?
12. Which designs result in a concrete product? Which designs are the most experiential?
13. Which designs may involve modeling?

**When?**

To be effective, schools should plan to commit to a design for at least a year. No design

**21 strategies**

The strategies included in *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*:

- Accessing student voices
- Action research
- Assessment as professional development
- Case discussions
- Classroom walkthroughs
- Critical friends groups
- Curriculum design
- Data analysis
- Immersing teachers in practice
- Journaling
- Lesson study
- Mentoring
- Peer coaching
- Portfolios for educators
- School coaching
- Shadowing students
- Standards in practice
- Study groups
- Training the trainer
- Tuning protocols
- Visual dialogue

should be implemented only once a year. They are meant to be continuous over a period of time.

See the tool on p. 14 for guidance in designs that will work well in three to six sessions a year, those that require at least monthly meetings, those that should occur at least weekly, and those that should happen daily.

In addition, the duration of any professional development activity or session can vary enormously. Some strategies that may require less frequent meetings may need three hours or more for each session. Some strategies may require educators to meet together more often but for shorter amounts of time. Individual work that results in later group sharing might require an hour or less.

**How?**

All 21 designs identified in this article can

be used with other designs to explore the same content. In fact, using a variety of adult learning strategies oriented towards the same need can enrich the results considerably.

The tool on p. 17 will help you identify strategies by answering the following questions:

1. Which designs require a facilitator?
2. Which designs require administrators to be involved?
3. Which designs work best when school is in session? Which designs work best when school is not in session?
4. Which designs cost the most?

Students will succeed when educators choose the best possible context for professional development, deliberately focus content on student improvement needs, and choose processes that help teachers learn to best address those needs. ♦

**Each of the 21 designs:**

- Has roots in what happens in classrooms.
- Focuses on learners and learning.
- Is collaborative.
- Honors professionals.
- Leads to application.
- Promotes inquiry and reflection.



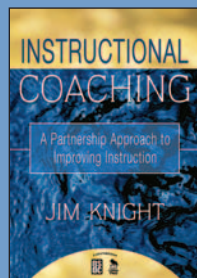
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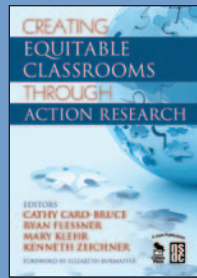
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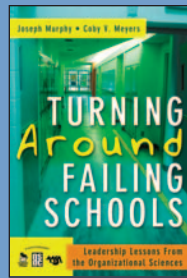
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**POWERFUL DESIGNS WHO AND WHEN**

POWERFUL DESIGN	Who? In addition to classroom teachers and administrators, who should be involved?					When? (Assumes no less than 1-year commitment)							
	University or college staff	Community, parents, policy makers	Individuals at first, then groups	Pairs	Large groups/ Concurrent small groups	Frequency				Duration			
						3 to 6 times year	At least monthly	At least weekly	Daily	Each session is 3 hours or more	Each session is 1 to 2 hours	Each session is an hour or less	
Accessing Student Voices			X			X					X		
Action Research	X		X				X*	X**				X*	X**
Assessment as Professional Development					X	X					X		
Case Discussions					X		X					X	
Classroom Walk-Throughs			X						X				X
Critical Friends Groups	X				X		X					X	
Curriculum Designers	X				X	X					X		
Data Analysis	X	X			X	X					X		
Immersing Teachers in Practice					X		X					X	
Journaling			X						X				X
Lesson Study					X	X					X		
Mentoring	X			X				X				X	
Peer Coaching	X			X				X				X	
Portfolios for Educators			X					X					X
School Coaching	X	X			X		X					X	
Shadowing Students		X	X			X					X		
Standards in Practice					X		X					X	
Study Groups	X	X			X	X					X		
Training the Trainer	X						X					X	
Tuning Protocols	X				X		X					X	
Visual Dialogue					X	X					X		

\* = group sharing    \*\* = individual work

**SOURCE:** *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*, by Lois Brown Easton, Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council, 2004. All rights reserved. Order through NSDC's Online Bookstore, [store.nsd.org](http://store.nsd.org).

**POWERFUL DESIGNS WHAT AND WHY**

<b>POWERFUL DESIGN</b>	Useful for gathering data in a school	Involves gathering information from external sources	Particularly helpful in creating a learning community	Looks at standards, curriculum, assessment	Focuses on pedagogy and teaching	Involves looking at classrooms	Involves looking at whole school/behind
Accessing Student Voices	x						x
Action Research	x	x		x	x	x	x
Assessment as Professional Development		x		x			
Case Discussions		x		x	x		
Classroom Walk-Throughs	x					x	
Critical Friends Groups			x		x		
Curriculum Designers		x		x			x
Data Analysis	x						
Immersing Teachers in Practice				x	x		x
Journaling					x		
Lesson Study		x		x	x	x	x
Mentoring		x	x		x	x	
Peer Coaching		x	x		x	x	
Portfolios for Educators	x				x	x	
School Coaching		x					x
Shadowing Students	x	x			x	x	
Standards in Practice				x			
Study Groups		x		x			x
Training the Trainer							x
Tuning Protocols			x		x	x	
Visual Dialogue	x	x	x	x			x

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**POWERFUL DESIGNS WHAT AND WHY (continued)**

<b>POWERFUL DESIGN</b>	<b>Is particularly reflective</b>	<b>Involves looking at student work or students</b>	<b>Good for involving others</b>	<b>Good for problem solving</b>	<b>Results in a concrete product</b>	<b>Is experiential</b>	<b>Involves modeling</b>
Accessing Student Voices		x	x	x			
Action Research		x		x			
Assessment as Professional Development					x		
Case Discussions							
Classroom Walk-Throughs				x		x	
Critical Friends Groups		x		x			
Curriculum Designers					x		
Data Analysis				x			
Immersing Teachers in Practice						x	x
Journaling	x					x	
Lesson Study				x	x	x	x
Mentoring	x	x	x	x		x	x
Peer Coaching	x	x		x		x	x
Portfolios for Educators	x	x		x	x		
School Coaching			x	x			
Shadowing Students		x	x			x	
Standards in Practice		x		x	x	x	x
Study Groups				x			
Training the Trainer	x		x		x	x	
Tuning Protocols		x					
Visual Dialogue			x	x		x	

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**POWERFUL DESIGNS HOW**

POWERFUL DESIGN	FACILITATOR NEEDED			ADMINISTRATOR INVOLVEMENT			SCHOOL IN/OUT		COST
	No	At first	Yes	Support	Participation essential	Participation helpful	In	Out	
Accessing Student Voices			x	x		x	x		\$
Action Research	x			x		x	x		\$\$
Assessment as Professional Development			x	x	x		x	x	\$\$\$
Case Discussions			x	x		x		x	\$\$
Classroom Walk-Throughs	x			x	x		x		\$
Critical Friends Groups		x		x		x	x		\$\$
Curriculum Designers			x	x	x			x	\$\$\$
Data Analysis			x	x	x			x	\$\$\$
Immersing Teachers in Practice			x	x		x	x	x	\$\$\$
Journaling	x			x	x		x		\$
Lesson Study			x	x		x	x	x	\$\$
Mentoring	x			x	x		x		\$\$
Peer Coaching	x			x	x		x		\$\$
Portfolios for Educators	x			x	x		x		\$
School Coaching			x	x	x		x		\$\$\$
Shadowing Students			x	x	x		x		\$\$
Standards in Practice			x	x		x	x		\$\$
Study Groups		x		x	x		x		\$\$
Training the Trainer			x	x		x	x	x	\$\$\$
Tuning Protocols		x	x	x		x	x		\$\$
Visual Dialogue			x	x	x		x		\$\$\$

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