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JSD

The
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Journal

FEBRUARY 2013,
VOLUME 34,
NO. 1

A spirit of problem solving is leading the way to a future full of possibilities

The definition of innovation is quite simple — innovation means "something new." Educators have been encountering innovations for decades, and we even have a set of tools — Innovation Configuration maps — to take the steps to realizing change. Yet beyond its most basic meaning, innovation carries with it the hefty burden of expectation. Innovation evokes the future, the potential for solving difficult challenges, the possibility of reaching seemingly impossible goals.

In this issue of *JSD*, you'll read about some of today's exciting innovations with the potential to transform professional learning. The potential for results from these innovations is high. New technology products and services are effectively reducing isolation, increasing efficiencies and effectiveness, and ensuring equity.

•

Tracy Crow (tracy.crow@ learningforward.org) is director of communications for Learning Forward.

Many educators who have seen initiatives come and go are wondering why there is always another innovation on the horizon. The answer is that, in education, we still have a huge job left undone. Students are not leaving high school ready for careers or college, and professional learning is not adequately supporting enough educators to reach all students. This isn't acceptable.

While emerging technologies have a real wow factor, the innovations evolving in education weren't created for innovation's sake. There is a real spirit of problem solving that leads educators and researchers to find new ways of approaching intractable challenges. Those working to pioneer potential game-changing solutions see the possibility of systemwide transformations and collective impact — without which our huge job will remain undone.

That is why the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has made an enormous investment in what it calls iPD. Originally, iPD stood for innovative professional development, and now it means so much more — striving to move from individualized to personalized and beyond. Read Stephanie Hirsh's Q&A with Carina Wong on p. 20 for a deeper understanding of the issue.

Laying the groudwork for the kinds of innovation covered under the iPD umbrella is no different than establishing a systemwide mindset that results in effective professional learning in general. As always, systems must work in a culture that embraces the cycle of continuous improvement, considering data about student and educator learners, identifying critical needs and relevant strategies, and assessing progress along the way.

That inquiry mindset is identical to that of the most forward-thinking innovators. It's wonderful to experiment with the cutting edge, but if such innovations don't result in the desired outcome, they aren't worth continuing. Unless, of course, in continuing to develop the innovations, those at work tweak, adjust, and refine until the solution meets the need.

By the same token, educators must hold iPD to the same standards to which we hold any professional learning. As part of her article exploring the potential for technology in professional learning, Joellen Killion shares criteria to consider when examining the role a particular tool or service might play in a professional learning system (see p. 10). An innovation doesn't get extra credit on the standards scale for using cool technology. We must continue to demand results.

We offer our appreciation to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for its support of this issue of *JSD* and our 2012 Annual Conference. The foundation's support encourages Learning Forward members to explore the possibilities for and impact of innovation on professional learning. ■

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essentials

GREAT PRINCIPALS
Playmakers: How Great Principals Build and Lead Great Teams of Teachers
New Leaders, November 2012

This research study identifies the actions that great principals take to ensure and amplify great teaching: Develop teachers, manage talent, and create a great place to work. The report includes local, state, and federal policy recommendations to invest more time, attention, and resources into improving principal effectiveness. The findings are based on an in-depth analysis of the leadership practices in more than 200 district and charter schools that saw substantial gains in student achievement in seven urban areas.
www.newleaders.org/ newsreports/publications/ playmakers

BEATING THE ODDS
Failure Is Not an Option:
How Principals, Teachers, Students and Parents From Ohio's High-Achieving, High-Poverty Schools Explain Their Success
Public Agenda, 2012

Public Agenda's report suggests that effective school leadership is one of the major drivers of success at high-poverty schools. The report also illuminates concrete practices and qualities of effective leaders. *Failure Is Not an Option* tells the story of nine high-poverty, high-achieving schools in Ohio. Each has confronted tough issues and beat the odds. While each school has its own story, they all share a common set of attributes and best practices that could be emulated by other public schools. In addition to strong leadership from principals, these schools demonstrate a culture of collaboration and engagement, data-driven instruction, high expectations, and nontraditional incentives.
http://publicagenda.org/pages/failure-is-not-an-option

RETAINING TEACHERS
Promoting Quality Teaching:
New Approaches to Compensation and Career Pathways
Accomplished California Teachers, 2012

With one-third of all new teachers in the United States leaving the profession within five years, California can stem this loss and improve teacher quality by extending time to train new teachers and providing more opportunities for career growth, a report released by Accomplished California Teachers concludes. The ACT report also emphasizes the need to attract high-quality teachers to low-performing schools by not only offering higher pay, but also released time and additional stipends earmarked for ongoing professional development relevant to the needs of the students they teach.
http://edpolicy.stanford.edu/publications/pubs/679

ACTION FOR COMMON CORE
Implementing the Common Core State Standards
Achieve, 2012

Achieve, in partnership with College Summit, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the National Association of Elementary School Principals, has published a series of action briefs on the role of school counselors, secondary school leaders, and elementary school leaders in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The action briefs provide no-cost take-aways, talking points, and action steps that school leaders and counselors can begin to put into practice in their schools today.
www.achieve.org/publications

LINKING LEADERSHIP TO ACHIEVEMENT
The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning
The Wallace Foundation, 2013

This expanded edition of the Wallace *Perspective* summarizes a decade of foundation research and work in school leadership to identify what it is that effective school principals do. It concludes that they carry out five key actions particularly well: Shaping a vision of academic success for all students, creating a climate hospitable to education, cultivating leadership in others, improving instruction, and managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement. New to the report is a section on teachers and teacher leadership. An interview with Linda Darling-Hammond focuses on the principal-teacher connection, and a teacher reflects on how principal leadership impacts her work.
http://bit.ly/zcvOCB

TRANSFORMING TEACHING
Dennis Sparks on Leading and Learning
Dennis Sparks, 2013

In his blog, Dennis Sparks offers his views on transforming teaching, learning, and relationships in schools. Sparks, former executive director of National Staff Development Council (now Learning Forward), serves as a "thinking partner" to school system administrators, principals, teacher leaders, and leadership teams to assist them in developing their knowledge and skill to continuously improve teaching and learning in all classrooms. In a recent post titled "The ultimate test of leadership development," Sparks writes that teaching and learning that benefits students will occur through leadership development that is intellectually robust, acknowledges the power of leaders' beliefs and conceptual frames to influence their practice, develops skills, and is sustained over many months.
http://dennissparks.wordpress.com

DIGITAL LEARNING
Expanding Evidence Approaches for Learning in a Digital World
U.S. Department of Education, 2013

This report from the Office of Educational Technology explains why the transition to digital learning warrants rethinking educational evidence and describes in detail six new approaches to gathering evidence. It then presents how the new approaches can be applied to help address a number of familiar current education challenges. The report features a decision-making model that provides guidance on the amounts and types of evidence needed for different kinds of learning technology decisions. An evidence strategies framework illustrates how the new approaches to gathering evidence can be used to support the proposed decision-making model, followed by recommended actions for funders, policymakers, practitioners, developers, and researchers.
www.ed.gov/edblogs/technology/evidence-framework

OVERHEARD
at the
CONFERENCE

The iPD (innovative professional development) strand at the 2012 Annual Conference offered many opportunities to hear about the pioneering work educators are doing in professional learning. While technology propels much of the innovative work highlighted, the core questions focus on learning, as these overheard snippets illustrate.

BARRIERS TO TEACHING EXCELLENCE

"There is limited collaborative time to talk about what quality teaching looks like. Last year, I interviewed about 300 teachers around the U.S., and no one said they were satisfied with the amount of time they have to talk together about what quality teaching looks like. The fact that they determine that for themselves makes it really hard to know if they're getting it right. It's very important that we change that dynamic."

— From "Learning Together," a distinguished lecture by Pat Wasley, chief academic officer for Teaching Channel (www.teachingchannel.org).

IN THIS ISSUE OF *JSD*   **THE LEARNING STARTS HERE** ▼

What's next?

As you consider how innovative solutions will become a factor in the professional learning in your school or system, explore the questions at right with your colleagues or learning team.
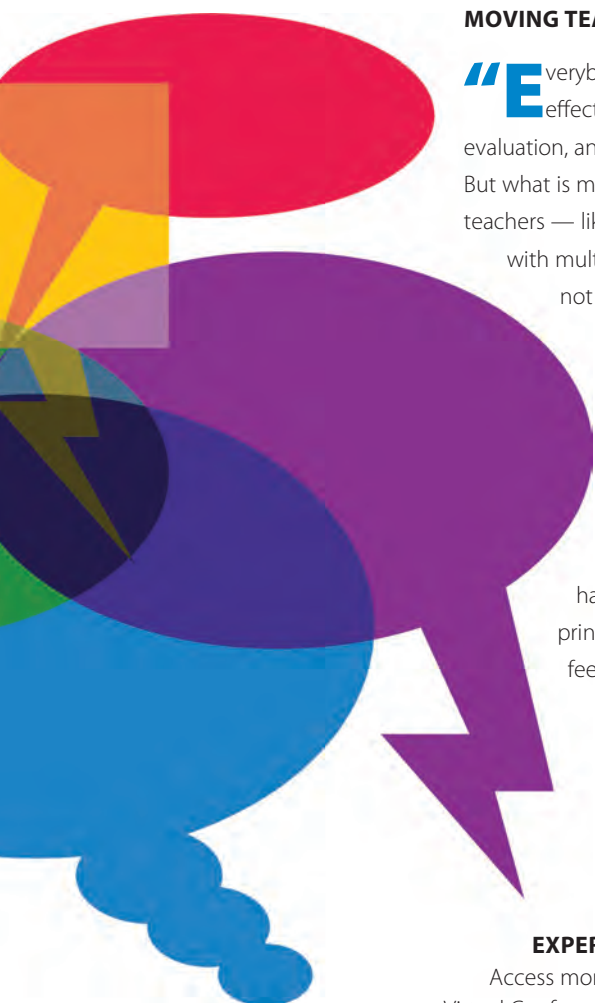
MOVING TEACHERS TO EXCELLENCE

"Everybody talks about teacher effectiveness in relationship to evaluation, and evaluation is important. But what is more important is providing teachers — like me, many years ago — with multiple forms of feedback and not just leaving it to chance that perhaps I teach across the hall from someone who's phenomenal. Having students actually be able to give me feedback, having peers be able to give me feedback, having thoughtful instructional principals able to give me feedback on how to [improve]."

— From keynote presentation by Irvin Scott, deputy director for effective teaching for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's United States education division.

KNOWING WHAT EXCELLENCE LOOKS LIKE

"Observation protocols in essence try to do the work of codifying professional practice. They provide a language and specification around the components of teaching and then provide a common technical language with which to talk about instruction. Observation protocols also break apart the work of teaching, so, for example, when we talk about organizational skills, that's a big area.

"Part of what observation protocols try to do is break that down into the different components of what it means to organize a classroom, organize instruction, and then also what it looks like at different levels of quality.

"So observation protocols are making both distinctions about the quality of performance as well as distinguishing the different practices. And it's those levels of quality that allow you then to compare the quality of instruction across classrooms."

— From "Investing in Teachers: Leveraging Observation Protocols for Instructional Improvements," a distinguished lecture by Pam Grossman, the Nomellini-Olivier Professor of Education at the Stanford University School of Education.

EXPERIENCE THE CONFERENCE ONLINE

Access more than 35 hours of conference video content through the 2012 Virtual Conference Archive. Members can purchase the archive for $99 through **www.learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/virtual-conference.**

How will innovation assist learning?

How can we create the appetite for innovation that demonstrates potential to revolutionize our practices?

What impact will innovation have on our capacity to demonstrate student results?

What will guide our technology investment decisions?

How do we see our goals evolving as we integrate more innovative solutions?

How will we rethink the concept of team as we expand our use of technology? What benefits will that bring?
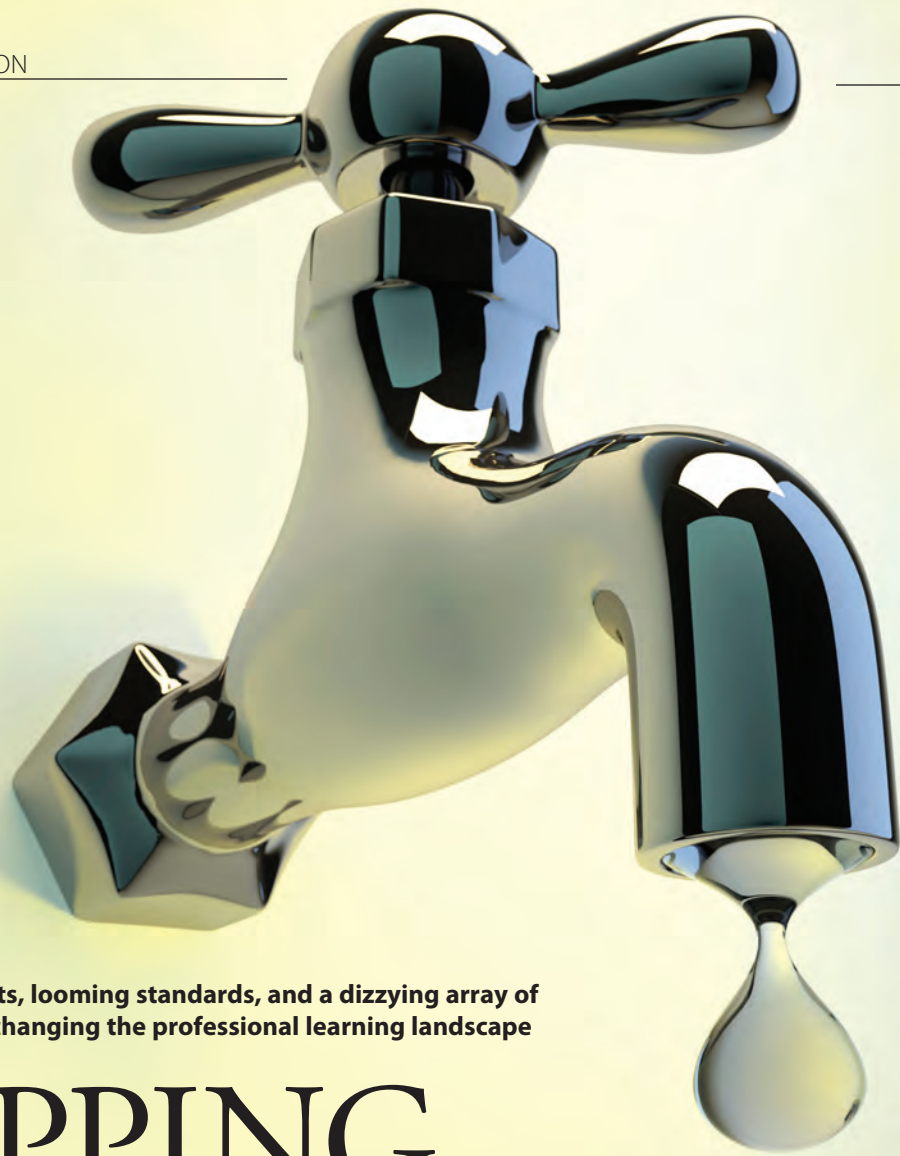
Shrinking budgets, looming standards, and a dizzying array of innovations are changing the professional learning landscape

TAPPING TECHNOLOGY'S POTENTIAL

By Joellen Killion

The breadth of the need for professional learning required to implement new content standards overwhelms most districts and states. Nearly all reports from teachers, district leaders, and state leaders include professional learning among the most frequently identified needs.

As the call for professional learning that incorporates on-going feedback and support increases and resources to address that need decline, more states, districts, schools, and individuals are turning to technology. Technology creates significant opportunities for more focused professional learning, especially when it is effectively integrated into a comprehensive system for professional learning; provides easy access to content that is relevant to individual, team, school, district, and state goals; and includes high-quality content, application of learning within the work setting, and constructive feedback and support over time to refine implementation of learning.

RESOURCES AND TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTING COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

This article is excerpted from *Meet the Promise of Content Standards: Tapping Technology to Enhance Professional Learning.* This brief is just one of several resources created as part of Learning Forward's initiative Transforming Professional Learning to Prepare College- and Career-Ready Students: Implementing the Common Core.

The multidimensional initiative focuses on developing a comprehensive system of professional learning that spans the statehouse to the classroom. The project will reform policy and practice and apply innovative technology solutions to support and enhance professional learning.

With an immediate focus on implementing Common Core State Standards and new assessments, the initiative provides resources and tools to assist states, districts, and schools in providing effective professional learning for current and future education reforms. This work is supported by Sandler Foundation, MetLife Foundation, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Learn more at **www.learningforward.org/advancing/ implementingthecommoncore.cfm.**

While technology can enhance professional learning, how educators use it will determine the degree to which it can influence educator practice and results for students. As individuals, schools, districts, and states strive to meet the demand for professional learning generated by Common Core standards and other emerging initiatives in education, effective use of technology requires careful consideration and planning.

HOW TECHNOLOGY ENHANCES PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Technology is a purposeful component of a comprehensive system that includes a vision, goals, definition, standards, policies, and practices for coherent and continuous learning throughout educators' careers to support achievement of individual, team, school, district, state, and national education improvement goals. Technology enhances professional learning through a range of critical attributes:

Personalization. Technology supports professional learning that is personalized to meet each educator's unique learning goals and preferences by allowing educators to select and adapt what they learn, how they learn, and when they learn. Technology allows rapid responses to performance data tied to a specific teacher and classroom. These data inform what immediate professional development needs can improve student learning. For many learners who are frustrated with one-size-fits-all professional learning that offers little differentiation, technology allows both professional learning providers and participants to design what works best for learners.

Collaboration. According to many learning theorists, learning occurs when learners connect with ideas and other learners. For decades, learning researchers have promoted the value of interaction as a part of the learning process. Early uses of technology to enhance professional learning relied on static content and information transfer. Technology promotes collaboration among individuals who have common interests and needs through multiple forms of dynamic interaction. Through this process, learners can co-construct knowledge, share experiences, reflect on practice, seek feedback, and contribute to the learning of others.

See the tool on pp. 15-18 for a list of criteria to consider when making decisions about the integration of technology-enhanced learning products and services for professional learning.

Access. Increasingly, people expect to be able to learn wherever and whenever they want, and technology makes this possible (Johnson, Adams, & Cummins, 2012). The degree to which educators can engage in high-quality professional learning influences its effects. Access to such learning is fundamentally an equity issue. When some have access to effective professional learning and others do not, growth and development opportunities are uneven, and that in turn may affect educators' effectiveness and efficacy as well as student achievement. Education budget challenges have reduced professional learning resources, including time and funding for participation in

face-to-face professional learning such as courses, conferences, or workshops that often require registration fees and travel. At the same time, online and hybrid forms of learning reduce costs while maintaining and even increasing access to professional learning. Technology has increased learning opportunities for educators in remote areas where travel is challenging because of distance and weather conditions, and even for educators for whom driving across town to the district office is too time-consuming.

Efficiency. Large-scale change, such as implementation of college- and career-ready standards, redesigned student assessments, and educator effectiveness systems, places tremendous pressure on educators to redesign their routines and processes. Technology can alleviate pressure some educators feel when facing significant changes and help to facilitate them. Technology can increase the efficiency of routine tasks, access to resources at the workplace, and serve as a vehicle for ongoing feedback.

Learning designs. The design of learning influences its outcomes, particularly when the design incorporates core elements of effective learning such as practice, feedback, and sustained support. Just as teachers are creating more challenge-based and active learning for students, educator professional learning should create deeper learning for educators inside and outside school, connecting educators with the global community, and promoting successful implementation of new initiatives designed to increase student success.

Technology-based learning, if designed well, supports added practice, feedback, and support to deepen learning. In addition to assisting educators to use technology to facilitate routine work, their professional learning must model and engage educators in similar learning experiences using technologies students are using, if appropriate. These technologies include mobile devices, tablet computing, game-based learning, personal learning environments, augmented reality, and natural user interfaces (Johnson, Adams, & Cummins, 2012). Where early versions of learning via technology relied heavily on knowledge transfer using online text, newer advances open the door to augmented reality and natural user interfaces that engage educators in simulated environments to practice and refine skills, such as problem solving and contextual decision making.

A HOLISTIC SYSTEM

History suggests that implementation of new initiatives requires major overhaul of education's approach to change. "All too often, implementation of major change efforts in education becomes a hodgepodge of standards over here, assessments over there, and teacher appraisal and incentives in still another box," suggest Tracy Benson et al. (2012). Districts, states, even whole countries, often have great front-end fanfare but, without systemic leadership capacities, a chronic inability to put the pieces together in implementation" (p. 5). A systems approach ensures coherence, coordination, and consistency for optimal results.

Professional learning is one component of a broad, holistic education system designed for student success. Included in this broad system are multiple, interdependent, comprehensive systems working coherently toward a common goal. Component systems such as curriculum and assessment, induction and mentoring, educator effectiveness, and professional learning work together to ensure that students have consistently high-quality teaching and learning each day. A technology-enhanced professional learning system, then, nestles inside a comprehensive professional learning system nestled inside a holistic education system. Technology contributes to the success of the broader system and its individual component systems.

Without thoughtful integration of technology, the opportunities it provides may be lost if the technology is misaligned to the goals for student and educator learning, if the selection process does not include probable users and has limited criteria, and if inadequate support for full use of the technology to implement the learning are unavailable.

STANDARDS-BASED LEARNING

To be effective, technology-enhanced professional learning, just like face-to-face professional learning, meets the Standards for Professional Learning.

The standards synthesize nearly three decades of research on professional learning and identify the attributes of professional learning that improves educator practice and student achievement. Using Standards for Professional Learning as a guide, the table on pp. 15-18 provides criteria for making decisions about the integration of technology-enhanced learning products and services for professional learning.

COMMON LIMITATIONS

With its many strengths and benefits, there are limitations to technology-enhanced professional learning. These limitations can be mitigated with careful planning, ongoing support, and constant monitoring, analysis, and evaluation.

Misuse of technology. Misuses of technology can occur in multiple ways, such as using technology to substitute for all forms of professional learning; adding technology as a resource for professional learning without embedding it into a comprehensive plan for professional learning driven by a vision, definition, standards for all professional learning, and ongoing evaluation; and providing technology with no support for applying learning into practice or constructive feedback to refine practice over time. To avoid these and other misuses, a comprehensive plan for professional learning is a necessary first step

> Professional learning is one component of a broad, holistic education system designed for student success. Included in this broad system are multiple, interdependent, comprehensive systems working coherently toward a common goal.

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—Anastacia McCarney, assistant superintendent,
Lemoore Union Elementary School District, California

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to guide the thoughtful selection, planning, implementation, and evaluation of technology-enhanced and all other forms of professional learning.

Disconnected from other support systems. Without a connection to other information and data systems, technology-enhanced professional learning has limited potential. When integrated with student and educator data systems, technology-enhanced professional learning connects educators with information they need to assess their professional learning needs and provides them the data to monitor and assess progress toward their goals.

Inadequate support for learners. Any new tool or resource typically requires an explanation of how it works and can benefit users. Technology-enhanced professional learning requires support for new users to build basic understanding and to promote further experimentation. For those more comfortable with technology, online help may be sufficient. For those less comfortable, online and onsite support may be needed. For any professional learning to add value, educators must receive sustained, ongoing support.

Limited implementation planning. Too frequently, a school or district will choose technology resources because they promise results. To get those results, however, the school or district must develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate technology-enhanced professional learning just as it would any other professional learning. Access alone will not ensure results for educators and students. To achieve full benefits of any professional learning, decision makers need to establish clear expectations for use, provide support, monitor use and effectiveness, identify and address barriers, and offer educators opportunities to learn how to use the resources to strengthen practice and student results.

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Those who lead, plan, and implement professional learning, along with those who participate in it, can increase its benefits by becoming savvy, critical consumers and engaging in thoughtful selection, planning, implementation, and evaluation of available technology products and services. The process begins with assessing student and educator learning needs based on the expectations of Common Core standards, establishing explicit student and educator learning goals, and selecting the most appropriate learning design to achieve the educator learn-

> As individuals, schools, districts, and states seek new ways to expand professional learning, they will turn more frequently to the many innovative, technology-enhanced professional learning products and services available from for-profit, nonprofit, associations, universities and colleges, regional education agencies, districts, and state education departments.

ing goals. Successful implementation also takes into account these considerations:

Integrate technology into a comprehensive professional learning system.

Implementing technology as a part of a comprehensive professional learning system requires thoughtful decision making and deliberate actions at all stages — selection, implementation, and evaluation.

Use a careful selection process.

Understanding the new product's intended purpose and developing clear criteria for selection that integrate probable users' perspectives are important first steps of the selection process.

Consider joint purchasing agreements.

Technology is a way to address increased demands with limited budgets; however, most initial investments in technology-enhanced professional learning products and services are significant. Tapping the potential of collaborative purchasing agreements across districts, regions, within the state, or even across states can add value to the investment both for the provider and the purchasers.

Provide ongoing support for use and application of learning.

As with all professional learning, technology-enhanced professional learning realizes its potential when it improves educator practice and increases results for students. Results require application of learning, and application of learning requires job-embedded assistance and constructive feedback to refine use.

As individuals, schools, districts, and states seek new ways to expand professional learning, they will turn more frequently to the many innovative, technology-enhanced professional learning products and services available from for-profit, nonprofit, associations, universities and colleges, regional education agencies, districts, and state education departments. Informed decision making and sufficient, sustained support are key to implementing and benefiting from these products and services.

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CRITERIA FOR SELECTING TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

To be effective, technology-enhanced professional learning, just like face-to-face professional learning, meets the Standards for Professional Learning. The standards synthesize nearly three decades of research on professional learning and identify the attributes of professional learning that improves educator practice and student achievement. Using Standards for Professional Learning as a guide, the following table provides criteria to consider when making decisions about the integration of technology-enhanced learning products and services for professional learning.

(Note: The type of product or service and its intended outcomes may require that some indicators have greater priority than others. Thoughtful examination of all indicators prior to review will assist reviewers to prioritize the indicators for their identified purposes and intended outcomes.)

STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	CORE ELEMENTS	TO WHAT DEGREE DOES THE TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED PRODUCT OR SERVICE:
LEARNING COMMUNITIES Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.	Engage in continuous improvement.	• Integrate a cycle of continuous improvement for sustained, ongoing professional learning. • Analyze educator, student, and school data to identify student-learning needs. • Define educator professional learning goals based on student learning needs. • Select and implement evidence-based designs for professional learning to achieve professional learning goals. • Provide job-embedded coaching and other forms of assistance to support transfer of learning. • Assess and evaluate the effectiveness of professional learning. • Inform ongoing improvement in teaching, leadership, and learning. • Tap external assistance when necessary. • Engage users.
	Develop collective responsibility.	• Facilitate collaboration, resource sharing, networking, and knowledge co-construction for shared learning among large and small teams of educators who share common goals for student success; job-related performance; school, district, and state improvement efforts, etc. • Promote a culture of collective responsibility for student and peer success. • Tap internal expertise of peers. • Promote collaborative problem solving, inquiry, decision making, and product development to support effective professional practice.
	Create alignment and accountability.	• Support achievement of individual, team, school, district, or state goals for educator effectiveness and college- and career-readiness for students. • Build in accountability for professional learning and application of learning to improve practice and student results.

STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	CORE ELEMENTS	TO WHAT DEGREE DOES THE TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED PRODUCT OR SERVICE:
LEADERSHIP Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.	Develop capacity for leading.	• Develop leadership capacity of educators, particularly those with formal and informal leadership responsibilities and those who aspire to become leaders. • Promote educator communication with peers and supervisors. • Provide tools for leaders to support effective use of technology for professional learning.
	Advocate for professional learning.	• Link professional learning to state, district, school, and individual improvement efforts. • Generate information to inform communication with policymakers, decision makers, educators, and public about the role of professional learning in supporting implementation of Common Core standards and college- and career-readiness for students.
	Create support systems and structures.	• Provide infrastructure that facilitates effective professional learning. • Incorporate data and information management for professional learning. • Provide planning, analysis, reflection, and evaluation tools for professional learning. • Align with established goals, plans, and overall professional learning system.
RESOURCES Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.	Prioritize human, fiscal, technology, material, and time resources.	• Promote thoughtful use of all resources for professional learning to achieve individual, team, school, district, and state improvement goals. • Reduce dependence on other resources (staff, time, materials, or funding) or increase the efficiency and effectiveness of other resources for professional learning without diminishing effectiveness of learning and results for educators and students. • Increase effectiveness and efficiency of learning process.
	Monitor resources.	• Collect data about effectiveness and efficiency of professional learning and results. • Generate analyses of resource use to inform revisions, planning, and evaluation of professional learning.
	Coordinate resources.	• Develop cross-program, school, district, and state integration of resources for professional learning to maximize benefits, increase efficiency and return on investment, and expand use. • Expand resources available for professional learning. • Provide single point of entry for all resources, information, and data for professional learning.

STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	CORE ELEMENTS	TO WHAT DEGREE DOES THE TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED PRODUCT OR SERVICE:
DATA Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.	Analyze student, educator, and system data.	• Collect data from multiple sources. • Provide analysis of data collected to inform decisions about learning needs, goals, content, and processes. • Create learner profile and goals for individual, team, school, district, and state professional learning.
	Assess progress.	• Incorporate identification of benchmarks and indicators for progress toward professional learning goals. • Use data to measure progress toward professional learning goals. • Provide recommendations for interim adjustments to achieve professional learning goals.
	Evaluate professional learning.	• Collect data to evaluate the effectiveness, results, and efficiency of professional learning. • Provide analyses to inform decisions about future planning for professional learning. • Support analysis of data for individual, team, school, district, and state evaluation of professional learning.
LEARNING DESIGNS Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.	Apply learning theories, research, and models.	• Use a research-based approach or theoretical framework for learning process. • Integrate principles of human learning. • Demonstrate respect for professional educators.
	Select learning designs.	• Integrate multiple learning designs to address learner preferences and needs. • Integrate learning processes that parallel expected outcomes for educators. • Provide models of exemplary practice. • Maximize the use of technology to increase effectiveness, efficiency, and results of professional learning. • Differentiate to accommodate learner preferences, backgrounds, experiences, environment, technology skills, and identified needs. • Support options for learner choice in content and process. • Build flexibility in learning pathways and processes. • Meet ADA or web-content accessibility standards. • Support ease of use and navigation. • Provide evidence of success in other schools, districts, states, and education agencies.
	Promote active engagement.	• Engage learners in constructing knowledge. • Require demonstration of learning through product development, application to practice, and evidence of results. • Integrate ongoing reflection, analysis, critique, evaluation, and synthesis of information, ideas, principles, concepts, practices, etc. • Create multiple opportunities to practice application of learning in different settings.

STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	CORE ELEMENTS	TO WHAT DEGREE DOES THE TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED PRODUCT OR SERVICE:
IMPLEMENTATION Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.	Apply change research.	• Use research on change to promote implementation of learning. • Support professional learning through all phases of the learning process, including acquisition, application, analysis of results, and continuous refinement to achieve mastery.
	Sustain implementation.	• Promote mastery and refined use of learning. • Define explicit expectation for learning and application of learning. • Provide exemplars of application of learning as models. • Provide access to personalized support for implementation. • Provide support over multiple years to achieve full and accurate implementation of new learning.
	Provide constructive feedback.	• Provide continuous formative feedback based on explicit criteria. • Provide feedback from peers, supervisors, and experts. • Incorporate a system to request feedback on specific processes, products, or other aspects of the learning process. • Integrate self-analysis and reflection as a part of the learning process. • Link feedback with next-step actions.
OUTCOMES Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.	Meet performance standards.	• Align educator learning goals and content with performance expectations and standards. • Align learning goals and content with identified learner needs. • Promote high level of educator performance. • Deepen educator content knowledge. • Expand instructional practices. • Integrate pedagogical content knowledge.
	Address learning outcomes.	• Align educator learning goals and content with student learning outcomes as defined in Common Core or college- and career-ready standards. • Align educator learning goals and content with identified student learning needs. • Promote high level of educator performance to achieve student learning goals and standards. • Expand educator expertise to meet the academic, cultural, language, family, and social needs of all students. • Develop strategies to guarantee equity in learning for all students.
	Build coherence.	• Build on previous experience and background of educators. • Link initiatives, resources, and talents across multiple initiatives, programs, and improvement efforts. • Promote synthesis of learning across multiple learning experiences.

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Q&A with
CARINA WONG

Carina Wong, deputy director of education at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, speaks with Learning Forward Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh about the foundation's investment in iPD.

CREATIVE SPARKS

INNOVATIONS FUEL A NEW VISION FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

By Stephanie Hirsh

Stephanie Hirsh: What is innovative professional development — or iPD — and how does it differ from traditional professional development?

Carina Wong: We think about iPD as creating more effective learning systems for teachers, schools, and districts. We know that many professional learning opportunities are not having an impact on teacher practice. Traditional professional learning seems to be one-size-fits-all, and it's often something done "to" teachers. We think teachers need to have ownership of their growth and to develop both individually and as part of a collective team. iPD uses data about where individual teachers are in their professional practice to identify where they need support, gives teachers access to multiple models of delivery to fit their learning styles, and provides them with continuous feedback.

Hirsh: How will iPD impact how the Gates Foundation scales its investments?

Wong: Over the last three years, we have made significant investments in supporting teachers as they try to implement Common Core State Standards. We've learned a lot about what it takes to have an impact on classroom practice and to get teachers to own the work and be part of a collaborative community. (See www.literacydesigncollaborative.org and www.mygroupgenius.org.)

We are using some of the same strategies that helped us successfully scale that work as part of our iPD scaling strategy. We put teachers at the center of the work, focus on a few key levers that have a ripple effect across the system, create a common language, and think about scale in nontraditional ways (i.e. through viral spread and teacher networks).

CARINA WONG

Carina Wong is deputy director of education at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. She leads the foundation's program work on teacher supports related to standards, assessment, curriculum, and instruction and on student supports related to games as learning and assessment, creating a college-going culture, and academic motivation and engagement.

Wong has worked in education policy at the national, state, and local levels for 15 years. She was director of the Bureau of Assessment and Accountability at the Pennsylvania Department of Education, where she implemented No Child Left Behind reforms for the state.

Previously, she worked in the Philadelphia School District as part of a $150 million Annenberg Challenge Grant and served as director of youth policy and education at the Washington, D.C.-based National Center on Education and the Economy.

Most recently, Wong was executive director of the Chez Panisse Foundation, where she led that organization in addressing a range of issues such as implementing a districtwide healthy meal program and developing tools to replicate a national hands-on kitchen and garden educational program.

Hirsh: It's interesting how the notion of iPD has moved from innovative to individualized to personalized.

Wong: One thing that I think folks misperceive when we say "I" and mean innovative or individualized is that this is just about individual development and not about the collective development of teachers. We have to do both — create personalized pathways for teachers and create collaborative communities where teachers are leading the professional learning.

Hirsh: I love the fact that you deliberately recognize that individualized could lead to fragmented teacher learning efforts. What contribution to the field of professional learning do you aspire to make from the iPD investment?

Wong: About a year ago, we launched the iPD portfolio and invested in new modes of delivery, ranging from games that help teachers improve their practice to remote coaching and video feedback systems. This year, we are launching the iPD challenge, an effort to create scalable iPD solutions in a set of districts. (See the list of districts below.)

We wanted to focus on the system and what it would take to redesign it with an eye toward creating effective learning systems. While we are working with a small set of districts to start, we plan to create a much larger community of practice around this work.

HOW DISTRICTS WILL BENEFIT

Hirsh: Tell us more about what will be expected from school systems selected for the challenge.

Wong: The iPD challenge is designed to help districts in several ways. It will create much more effective learning systems that include choices and higher-quality content, a balance of individual and collective learning, higher levels of teacher commitment and ownership, informed by more sophisticated data analyses. The challenge will increase district use of more effective models of delivery — including in-practice feedback, video, simulations, online and blended learning courses — and new forms of teacher collaboration such as professional learning experiences designed by teachers and led by teachers to accelerate implementation of the Common Core.

The challenge will help districts build systems and processes for optimizing existing resources, tracking the quality, cost, and efficacy of professional development, creating supportive policies and structures that remove barriers to innovations, and supporting committed leaders in implementation.

Another goal is to create more scalable solutions that travel across networks quickly and more broadly. All participating districts belong to at least one network and will commit to solutions that can be used across multiple networks rather than boutique solutions that can only be used in one place. With this, districts will demonstrate how professional learning systems connect specifically to improvement of instruction and learning by individuals and groups.

Hirsh: What do you expect at the end of your investment in such district efforts?

Wong: I recently read a book by Will Richardson called *Why School?* (TED Conferences, 2012). He asks students, "How do your teachers learn?" and mostly gets answers like: "They go to conferences. They take after-school workshops. They read books." Students see teachers' learning as an event, not an ongoing process. How sad and how true, I thought.

With the iPD challenge, we want to change that image of professional learning. We want to see a variety of roles for teachers in leading professional learning and greater ownership. We should see high-quality professional learning choices in the marketplace that have stronger alignment to Common Core and effective teaching practices. There should be assessment systems and feedback loops built into professional learning so we can have better data on their impact and quality. Ultimately, this is about doing whatever it takes to improve teaching and learning for our students.

Hirsh: What challenges do you expect your sites to address?

Wong: I think one of the biggest challenges that the districts will face is how to think very differently about engaging teachers in developing and leading an iPD system. If you really put teachers at the center of this work, it means redesigning systems so that they can lead and their work is more manageable.

Another challenge is going to be getting districts to really adopt scalable solutions that travel well. We're not looking for boutique solutions but are asking professional learning providers to partner with us on a variety of fronts to ensure that we

DISTRICTS PARTICIPATING IN iPD CHALLENGE

Location	Number of students	% free/reduced lunch	Number of teachers
Fresno, Calif.	75,000	83%	3,100
Long Beach, Calif. (former Broad Prize winner)	85,000	69%	3,400
Bridgeport, Conn.	21,000	98%	1,380
New Haven, Conn.	20,000	73%	1,570
Jefferson County, Colo.	86,000	33%	4,870

have good ways to identify which options are best suited for which teachers and which offerings have the most impact.

FINDING TIME

Hirsh: Let's talk about a specific challenge — finding time. How are you asking districts to think differently about this?

Wong: We want districts to think much more creatively about people, time, resources, and the vendors they use. Through a series of audits, districts will gain information about their use of resources (financial, time, personnel, technology) for professional development and for optimizing instructional conditions when teachers try to implement what they are learning.

As part of the audit process, they will be asked to analyze what they see, looking at impacts from a range of factors such as policies and regulations, budget constraints, and leadership capacity. They will then take the time to push the envelope and imagine: If you could use these people in different ways, what would you do? What policies and systems would have to change to make next-generation innovation possible?

Imagine if every student in the district had to complete online courses of study, and, along with that, every teacher had to teach one course online for kids. What would that look like?

How do we then reimagine individual and community teacher time, and what they do with that time? And how would we ultimately need to design schools, districts, policies, and budgets differently to make that idea a reality? I'm hoping that teachers will put all of these questions on the table and rethink how they use their resources very differently for very different instructional results.

Hirsh: Explain the foundation's interests in the concept of the teacher's professional development wallet.

Wong: One thing that intrigues us is the idea of teacher autonomy — where and under what conditions systems might create more opportunities for teacher autonomy. If we gave teachers a wallet for their professional learning, what would they use it on, what would the impact be, and how do we think about that? Under what conditions is it ideal to put learning decisions and resources in the hands of the teachers? We've also been thinking about teacher wallets with respect to purchasing curriculum materials and decentralizing those choices.

Hirsh: How do teachers and districts mesh targeted professional development with collaborative professional development? What I see frequently is that those two kinds

"This was my first Learning Forward conference, and I would definitely recommend this to all of my colleagues! Professional development not only helps us become better in our specific areas, but it can also be fun, like it was here at the Learning Forward conference!"

Erica Ramirez, Pace High School, Brownsville, Texas

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of learning operate on parallel paths. Teachers use one set of skills or standards to prepare for an evaluation session and another while they are working on Common Core implementation with their colleagues.

Wong: The iPD challenge is trying to bring this work together. All of the districts involved are committed to implementing the Common Core and linking it to their measurement and support systems. I'm looking forward to seeing what creative solutions the districts will come up with.

Hirsh: What are the responsibilities of system and school leaders to successfully implement these processes?

Wong: We identified a set of enabling conditions and building blocks that we think are important. Building blocks include data infrastructure, delivery infrastructure, and high-quality digital content and tools. Some of the enabling conditions are creating supportive policies, building leadership capacity, optimizing resources (time, money, and people), getting teacher input and ownership, and focusing on collective development.

RAISING TEACHERS' VOICES

Hirsh: iPD isn't the only teacher-centered work funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. How does iPD tie to your other investments?

Wong: We have a number of efforts to support teachers, including the Literacy and Math Design Collaboratives, a Teacher Advisory Council, and an annual conference called Elevating and Celebrating Effective Teachers and Teaching. We fund a number of advocacy and teacher leadership organizations. We want to elevate teachers' voices in all of our work. Melinda Gates recently released a video (above) about teachers that celebrates all their hard work.

Victor Hugo wrote, "Nothing is so powerful as an idea whose time has come." I feel like the time has come for this work. iPD is going to be a powerful lever to integrate what is happening right now in implementing Common Core, using technology, and teaching effectively. IPD is about raising teachers' voices in all of those places.

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Stephanie Hirsh (stephanie.hirsh@learningforward. org) is Learning Forward's executive director. ■

THE DIGITAL TOOLBOX

AN INTRODUCTORY GUIDE TO COLLABORATION TECHNOLOGY

By Anthony Armstrong

The growing acceptance of collaboration as a necessity in high-quality learning has fueled the rapid growth of online tools to better support educators. In *Meet the Promise of Content Standards: Tapping Technology to Enhance Professional Learning* (2013), Joellen Killion examines this "explosion of web-based tools (that) promote and support social interaction, constructivism, and connectivism as primary learning theories" and offers tips and resources for finding success in adopting collaborative technology.

In the report, Killion shares five purposes for collaboration among learners: Co-construct knowledge, share experiences, reflect on practice, seek feedback, and contribute to the learning of others. Fortunately, most of the collaborative tools available allow users to perform some of these functions at various levels. However, determining which tools or services best support a specific professional learning system can be complex and frustrating — especially since the number and type of features each service offers can vary a great deal.

Technological tools require an investment of time and energy to properly explore and evaluate. Unfortunately, the number of collaboration tools that have appeared in recent years makes it almost impossible to devote resources to reviewing all of them. To help navigate this dizzying collection of online services, it may help to group them into three manageable categories: services that offer a primary purpose tool, services that offer a suite (or collection) of tools, and those that offer a comprehensive system of support specifically for professional learning.

The guide on pp. 28-31 is meant as a cursory introduction to some of the collaborative products and features available and is not meant to be a comprehensive collection.

It is important to remember that the various types of collaboration technology are simply tools that facilitate a small part

of a complete professional learning system and cannot actually replace the learning on their own.

An axiom common in technology circles is, "Do not let the technology get in the way of the learning." Killion advises districts considering the adoption of collaborative tools to make sure that the selected tools integrate into a well-planned professional learning system.

"When dropped without full integration into a comprehensive plan, technology has the potential to fragment focus, distract learners, and waste resources," said Killion. "Implementing technology as a part of a comprehensive professional learning system requires thoughtful decision making and deliberate ac-

tions at all stages — selection, implementation, and evaluation" (Killion, 2013, p. 26).

REFERENCE

Killion, J. (2013). *Meet the promise of content standards: Tapping technology to enhance professional learning.* Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

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GUIDE TO
COLLABORATIVE
PRODUCTS

PRIMARY PURPOSE TOOLS FOR GENERAL USE

Services that offer a primary purpose tool, such as video sharing, may offer secondary features or services as a complement, but the main focus is on the original tool or intention. For example, YouTube is a video-sharing tool that also allows users to engage in discussions via comment threads. However, the primary purpose for YouTube is video sharing. The discussions are a secondary feature.

Eric Sheninger, in his keynote presentation at Learning Forward's 2012 Annual Conference in Boston last December, noted that using readily available social media tools can help educators create a professional learning network and overcome resource limitations. "Social media is a dynamic resource that allows us to get involved, discuss, and create," said Sheninger. "I harness and leverage social media tools to connect myself to smart people who give me ideas, knowledge, and strategies to do what I do better.

"When you harness the power of free social media," Sheninger said, "you are put in the center of your learning, and you form a professional learning network. … It's about sharing, getting resources, support, informal learning, self-directed learning, and acquiring knowledge. When you put it all together and find different tools that function in different ways, you create portfolios, resource libraries, and modes to communicate."

PRIMARY PURPOSE TOOLS FOR GENERAL USE		
Tool	**Description**	**Example**
Blogs, microblogs	Create and save discussion threads about one focused topic at a time. Microblogs share brief statements and links, and join conversations around one or more specific topics.	Blogger WordPress Tumblr Facebook Google+ Twitter
Document distribution	Share specific documents, whether the content is proprietary or from a third party. Use these tools to share content with a wide variety of audiences, including the public.	LiveBinders Scribd Google Drive Dropbox
File sharing	File sharing provides multiple people access to a central location of resources or files. This is different from document distribution in that file sharing allows sharing and editing of files within a central resource, whereas document distribution is focused on presenting one file at time, without editing capabilities. Some services allow for multiple people to modify a file simultaneously for real-time collaboration.	Windows Skydrive Google Drive
Social bookmarking tool	Social bookmarking allows Internet users to share content and websites they find on the Internet. Users can build collections of content-focused resources, such as a list of favorite Common Core resources.	Delicious Diigo Evernote Scoop.it
Video-sharing site	While these sites allow for commenting and discussion threads for uploaded videos, they can be cumbersome and limited and are usually best for one-way sharing.	Vimeo YouTube
Web conferencing, presentation sharing, screen sharing	Numerous services facilitate sharing presentations or sharing computer screens. Most offer voice sharing through the computer, telephone conferencing, and chat functions.	Adobe Connect SlideShare WebEx Join.me Google+

PRIMARY PURPOSE TOOLS FOR EDUCATORS

Not all primary purpose tools are for the general public. Many have been created specifically for educator professional learning. Jennifer Wolf, a 6th-grade math teacher at Stewart Middle School in the Hillsborough County School District in Tampa, Fla., uses MyLivePD for one-on-one consultations to help her with classroom practices. "I like MyLivePD because it offers personalized coaching on my time," said Wolf. "If I have a question about teaching, I can go online and get connected to a coach in two to three minutes."

Wolf sees clear benefits in being able to collaborate with a live expert on demand. "Before we started using MyLivePD, if I wanted to learn about something, I would have to search online, figure out what I needed to know, and then search for where to learn it or find someone who would be willing to spend an hour with me after work to teach it to me. Now I get information that addresses my personal needs from a live expert who can sit and work with me for an hour if I need it, at a time I choose."

PRIMARY PURPOSE TOOLS FOR EDUCATORS		
Tool	**Description**	**Example**
Educational blogs	Education-only blogs designed for student and teacher use.	Edublogs
Video	Videos of quality teaching and supporting materials to use for free.	Success at the Core
	Cameras and software to create videos with sophisticated commentary and sharing.	thereNow
	Watch video content created by Teacher Channel and engage in discussions through comment threads and a new Q-and-A feature.	Teaching Channel
Live consultations	Live one-to-one consultation for teachers about classroom practice.	MyLivePD
	Live one-to-one consultation for professional learning coaches.	Coaches Connect
Discussion threads	Discussion groups with file sharing and event calendars.	Literacy Information and Communication System
Social network	Education-only social network that includes pages for specific groups with file sharing, quizzes, and polls. Was originally designed for classroom use, but now offers a professional development focus.	Edmodo for PD

SUITE OF TOOLS

Software and services in this category offer multiple tools that work together. Sometimes these tools are intended for one specific purpose, such as course creation, and sometimes they are suites of tools that are adaptable to a broad range of applications, such as project management tools that can be used for a variety of project types.

SUITES OF TOOLS		
Tool	**Description**	**Example**
Project management	Manage any type of project online. Can include various types of communication tools, a calendar, file sharing, milestones, and time tracking. Many of these services offer phone apps to meet consumers' mobile needs.	Basecamp TeamworkPM OneDesk Clarizen AtTask
Office suite	Comprehensive sets of general tools that can include project management, collaboration (communication, file sharing, etc.), office productivity tools, financial tools, human resources management, etc.	Zoho Google Apps
Course creation and management systems	Create and deliver online courses with a variety of engagement and management tools.	Moodle Blackboard eFront Udutu Adobe Captivate
Wiki platforms	Build and manage knowledge repositories, including allowing others to contribute.	Wikispaces PBworks
Social networks	Use multiple tools for collaborating, including discussion threads, file sharing, and private groups.	Yammer Facebook Huddle LinkedIn Google+ Communities

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMS

Comprehensive systems are designed to meet all the needs of an educator professional development process. Supporting a range of learning stages, from initial induction to observations and follow-up paperwork, these systems are designed specifically for educator professional learning.

Marguerite Dimgba, director of the professional learning center for Greece Central School District in New York, uses MyLearningPlan as a comprehensive system for the district's professional learning.

Dimgba cites the system's ability to reduce paperwork, centralize resources, and link multiple activities. "From a management standpoint, we can upload documentation that comes with the course, so we no longer have paper files. Everything is stored in a team room, so it is a communication tool and an easy way to retrieve data on courses, proposal forms, or notes for date changes. For evaluations, we used to scribble notes to leave for the teacher, but now we can complete a course evaluation and collect data on impact and student performance. It makes it easier to link teacher impact with teacher effectiveness."

The reduced fragmentation is a huge benefit for Dimgba. "We have 1,100 teachers and 12,000 students, so (MyLearningPlan) was a way for us to make everything work together. It has benefits for communication, such as for committees or for people to pose questions. It allows dialogues outside of committee and coursework and puts a structure in place. I know there are other tools out there, but you don't want people to log into yet another system. This gives us a one-stop shop for our professional learning needs. Now our teacher conferences, in-house learning, and teacher evaluation system are all tied together. It used to be that some things were in an old database, on paper, or in different departments."

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMS

Tool	Description
My Learning Plan	My Learning Plan is described as an "observation and appraisal management system" that manages scheduling, record keeping, and evaluation reporting for staff at all levels.
Truenorthlogic	This system offers an educator effectiveness model that facilitates and manages professional learning from induction to ongoing career management and evaluation.
School Improvement Network	This system offers its own educator effectiveness model, Common Core implementation resources, and on-demand videos.
Teachscape	Self-described as human capital management, this service offers observation and evaluation management, professional learning, and talent management systems.

BUILDING BETTER LESSONS

**TEACHERS FIND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS
TO IMPROVE THEIR PRACTICE**

By Julia Harris

Julie McGough, a 5th-grade teacher at Victor Hodge Elementary School in Azusa, Calif., calls herself as a "pretty good teacher," while at the same time admitting that when she changed from grades 2 and 3 to 5th grade, she was somewhat uncomfortable with one subject in particular.

"I was actually very intimidated by the math," she said. "I knew how to do it, but I didn't know how to explain it to students."

And then she found out about LearnZillion.

Ask Katie Bryant, an 8th-grade physical science teacher in Georgia, what scared her the most about the new Common Core literacy standards, and she'll tell you: "They wanted us to incorporate more reading and writing into our curriculum."

The concept intrigued Bryant, but she was not sure how to implement it with her students. "I feel like I used to do writing for the sake of writing, without a real purpose," she says.

All of that changed when she was invited to take part in an initiative called the Literacy Design Collaborative.

GRAPPLING WITH COMMON CORE

It's no big revelation to say that the nationwide adoption of the Common Core standards has brought about a sea change in K-12 education. So far, according to the Common Core State Standards website, 45 states and three territories have adopted the standards, which were first launched in 2010, and implementation is taking different forms in each one.

As teachers grapple with what that implementation looks like, they are finding innovative solutions — such as LearnZillion and the Literacy Design Collaborative, among others — to help them advance their own effectiveness through professional learning and build better lessons.

"States recognize that you can't just all of a sudden start teaching the Common Core standards," said Posie Wilkinson, academic coordinator at LearnZillion and former teacher. "The Common Core standards require very different things of our teachers. They require a deeper level of content knowledge, a different kind of instruction."

LEARNZILLION

LearnZillion's website describes it as an innovative online learning platform that combines video segments, assessments,
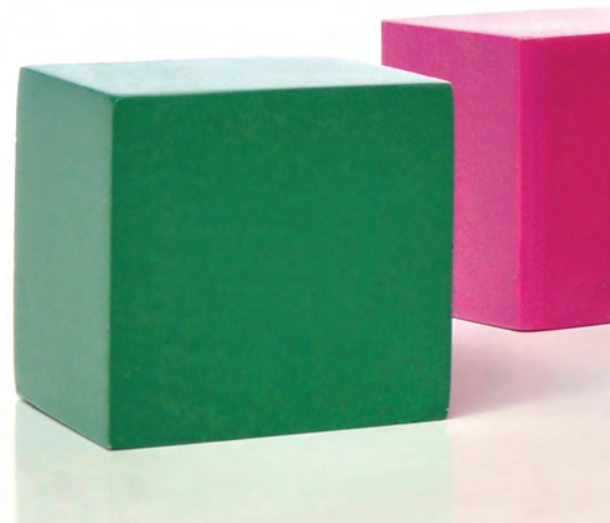
Examples of Common Core lessons are on LearnZillion.com.

Write fractions: using shapes (1) ☆

Core Lesson

Represent three-dimensional figures with nets ☆

6.G.4 | Math | Grade 6

Core Lesson

Dividend → 10 ÷ 2 = 5

Understand multiplication and division relationships ☆
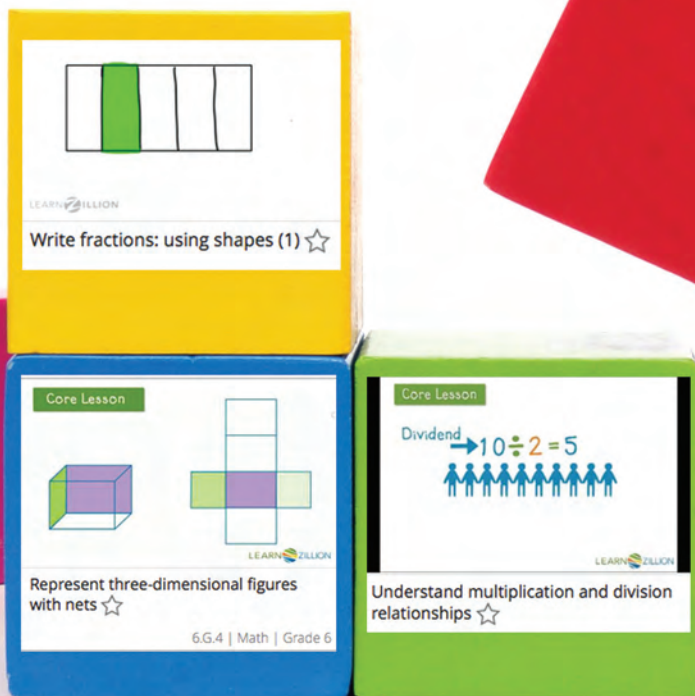
and progress reporting in lessons that correlate to Common Core standards, starting with math in grades 3-9. The project began at E.L. Haynes Public Charter School in Washington, D.C., as a way for teachers to share best practices across classrooms.

"These teachers, just working together, would briefly record a lesson they thought was great, share it with each other, show it to each other's students, and then come back and discuss it," Wilkinson said.

"All along, these lessons were getting better and better — a process we like to call 'polishing the stone' — because the teachers were able to spend their time together focused on discussing the content."

E.L. Haynes Principal Eric Westendorf and Washington, D.C.-area educator Alix Guerrier decided to take this idea public as a way to help other teachers learn the new Common Core standards through the expertise of experienced teachers. In 2011, they launched LearnZillion with funding from the Next Generation Learning Challenge, NewSchools Venture Fund, Achievement Network, and others.

When the site first launched, it included 400 video lessons. Now, thanks to a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Founda-

tion, it has more than 2,000 lessons for K-8 math, high school math, and English language arts. These lessons were created by what LearnZillion calls a "Dream Team" of teacher leaders who hail from 29 of the 50 states. The site, free to all visitors, has more than 40,000 registered teacher users and includes a tool called Common Core Navigator, designed to help teachers zero in on what their students need to know at each grade level and in each subject.

A feature that Wilkinson especially loves is called Coach's Commentary, in which the lesson creator speaks directly to the teacher who is viewing his or her content. "It's essentially a conversation between colleagues, a chance to explain the choices they made," she says. "So you can really get some entrée into the thinking and the content instructional decisions that went on behind this lesson."

For Julie McGough, the LearnZillion approach to learning and building lessons made so much sense that she signed up to be one of last summer's Dream Team members, contributing 20 of her own lessons to the growing database.

The process was both challenging and eye-opening.

"Doing the first 10, it was like pulling teeth to figure it out," she recalls with a laugh. "It was really hard to coordinate

the technology aspect of it, it was intimidating to record myself making the video, and then just unpacking the content was hard, too."

She confesses that her slide presentations took an average of five to 10 hours to build and that her first few attempts are not nearly as impressive as her last few. But she says that the process of creating the lesson helped her to make sense of the content in a way she'd never done before — and in a way that really resonated with her students and fellow teachers.

"I did a lesson on LearnZillion on adding and subtracting decimals," McGough says. "When I showed it to my students, I heard all over the classroom, 'Oh, now I get it!' Somehow, for them, seeing the material presented in this way and having the chance to replay it was really powerful."

McGough says that educators across grade levels and disciplines can benefit immensely by engaging with the content on the site. And since the Common Core standards necessitate what is, for many teachers, a vastly different approach to content, having a wealth of examples of how other teachers structure lessons is invaluable.

"In California, Common Core is a really different way of structuring our learning, and, for many teachers, they're going to have to relearn how to do it, because they content wasn't taught this way when they were in school," McGough says.

MORE FROM THE LEADING EDGE

LearnZillion and the **Literacy Design Collaborative** aren't the only cool tools in the chest when it comes to innovative approaches to teaching and learning. Here are more places teachers can go for support, help with content, and the opportunity to collaborate with educators across the country.

- **BetterLesson.com** is an online community where educators can connect, create, organize, and share curricula. Founded by a group of teachers from Atlanta and Boston public schools, this free site focuses on aggregating and scaling innovative content and practices from high-performing teachers across the country.

- **The Khan Academy (www.khanacademy.org)** is a not-for-profit site that hosts more than 3,600 videos on K-12 math and science topics, as well as some topics on finance and history. All materials on the site are free.

- **The Mathematics Design Collaborative (www.groupgenius. org/mathematics)** is the mathematics counterpart to the Literacy Design Collaborative.

- **Promethean Planet (www.prometheanplanet.com/en-us)** provides lesson planning tips, strategies, content, and resources for a range of topics and grade levels. Membership is free.

BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION

Long-time educator and fellow Dream Team member Ginny Baldwin, an elementary math instructional coach for the Georgia Cyber Academy in Atlanta, shares those sentiments. Baldwin, who has 22 years of experience, admits that learning the Common Core has been a bit like learning a foreign language.

"The Common Core standards are new for everyone, so working with LearnZillion helped me focus on specific standards and learn them at a very in-depth level. Although many of the basic concepts for each grade level are the same, the approach to teaching and assessing student understanding is very different," Baldwin wrote in an email. "The videos and Coach's Commentary that are provided with the lessons provide a glimpse into what each standard means and how to translate abstract math concepts into conceptual activities that make sense to students. The resources provided help teachers just as much as they help students."

Baldwin says teachers at Georgia Cyber Academy use the videos, lessons, and guided practice activities to build a strong foundational knowledge of each standard, and that they use the LearnZillion materials to plan their weekly instruction. They can also use the formative assessment data they gather to determine what skills students may need to work on to build up any weak areas.

And that, in a nutshell, is how Posie Wilkinson suggests users approach the LearnZillion content: "Decide on the standard you're working on, dive into it, figure out what it means, then look at one of our lessons and see how one of our teachers implemented that standard," she counsels.

"Then consider how you should teach this to your own students, where you're seeing gaps and strengths in your student data, and what you might have done differently if you were the one creating this lesson for LearnZillion."

McGough takes it one step further. "I expect that, when all of my colleagues are working from the Common Core, we'll be able to sit down and plan instruction together, how to build understanding for our students."

THE LITERACY DESIGN COLLABORATIVE

While McGough, Baldwin, and Wilkinson are getting the word out about LearnZillion, another cadre of educators is singing the praises of a second effort to bring teachers, curriculum experts, and other stakeholders together to create high-quality lessons and tools based on Common Core standards.

The Literacy Design Collaborative, also funded by the Gates Foundation, is basically a framework for developing reading, writing, and thinking skills within various academic disciplines. The framework embeds Common Core literacy standards into content-area instruction and provides templates, strategies, and tasks for designing units that engage students in thoughtful investigations of their discipline.

It's a wonderful, brilliant, robust tool, users say. It's also complicated, challenging, and — at least at first — a little frustrating

Mary Lynn Huie, a literacy trainer with the Georgia Department of Education, helps teachers across the state learn how to use the framework. She's one of its biggest fans, but clear-eyed about its rigors

"It's not the only way to deliver the Common Core literacy standards, but it has a huge advantage over other methods in that it's a framework that works for teachers who don't have much of an idea what literacy's about," Huie says.

"It's very organized, and it gives people templates to use that can at first seem a little rigid. I have to admit now that, when I use a template and make myself work through it, really make my lesson fit it, I actually have a better, more focused unit."

The Literacy Design Collaborative framework is built around templates that assign tasks based on Common Core literacy standards. Each template is a fill-in-the-blank form teachers use to design their own teaching by selecting content standards to address, texts students will read, and issues they will discuss in their writing.

"We want teachers to understand the concept of writing to learn, that writing is a way to understand your own thinking, and reading is a way to understand the thinking of another person," Huie says. "When you tell science teachers and social science teachers that what we're asking them to do is teach the reading and writing of their discipline, not the fixing of commas, then they start to understand."

GET STUDENTS INVESTED IN CONTENT

Susan Weston, an education consultant for the state of Kentucky and a member of the collaborative's design team, suggests that another potential hurdle for teachers is the fact that the modules are designed to cover two to four weeks of instruction, which is a big chunk of time in a school year. The key, she says, is to provide an engaging task or prompt that students can then delve into, using a set of reading and writing activities based on research articles chosen by the teacher.

"When you're choosing the reading, you really have to be in the content to produce good tasks. You have to know your stuff and have confidence in your content knowledge to turn the students loose with these research articles," Weston says.

"At first, teachers worry their students aren't actually learning the content. But we're finding that students are investing really deeply in the content and that teachers feel empowered with their expertise. It takes a little extra work at the beginning, but it starts to make more sense as you go. It's a very exciting process, taking teachers who are good at what they do and giving them something they can use to be even better at it."

For Katie Bryant, that process has changed the way she thinks about teaching and how she prepares her lessons. It has

definitely changed the way she thinks about writing and how that can be a tool to both solidify knowledge and reveal gaps in that knowledge.

In her classroom, the use of writing and reading has led to deeper understanding and broader horizons.

To find out where her students were weak in their content knowledge, she reviewed data from state tests and discovered that the area of energy and transformation was a topic with which students historically struggled. So she generated writing topics that would help reinforce that content and came up with the following prompt: "How does photosynthesis demonstrate the law of the conservation of matter and the law of the conservation of energy?"

The students weren't the only ones who needed a bit of a refresher. "I had to review photosynthesis myself, because it's been a long time since I've taught biology," Bryant confesses.

At the end of the module, Bryant had a hundred different student papers dealing with photosynthesis, with a variety of perspectives. "Some of the students talked about how photosynthesis is a kind of recycling of energy and matter," she says. "The way they presented things made me look at them differently."

The process also changes the way the students look at things. "They tend to think of thinks discretely instead of thinking of them as one continuum in science," she says. "So this brings in concepts and ties them all together so they can see the relationship between all different subjects."

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TEACHERS WITHOUT BORDERS

**TECHNOLOGY'S ADVANCES
BRING TEACHING
AND LEARNING
OUT OF ISOLATION**
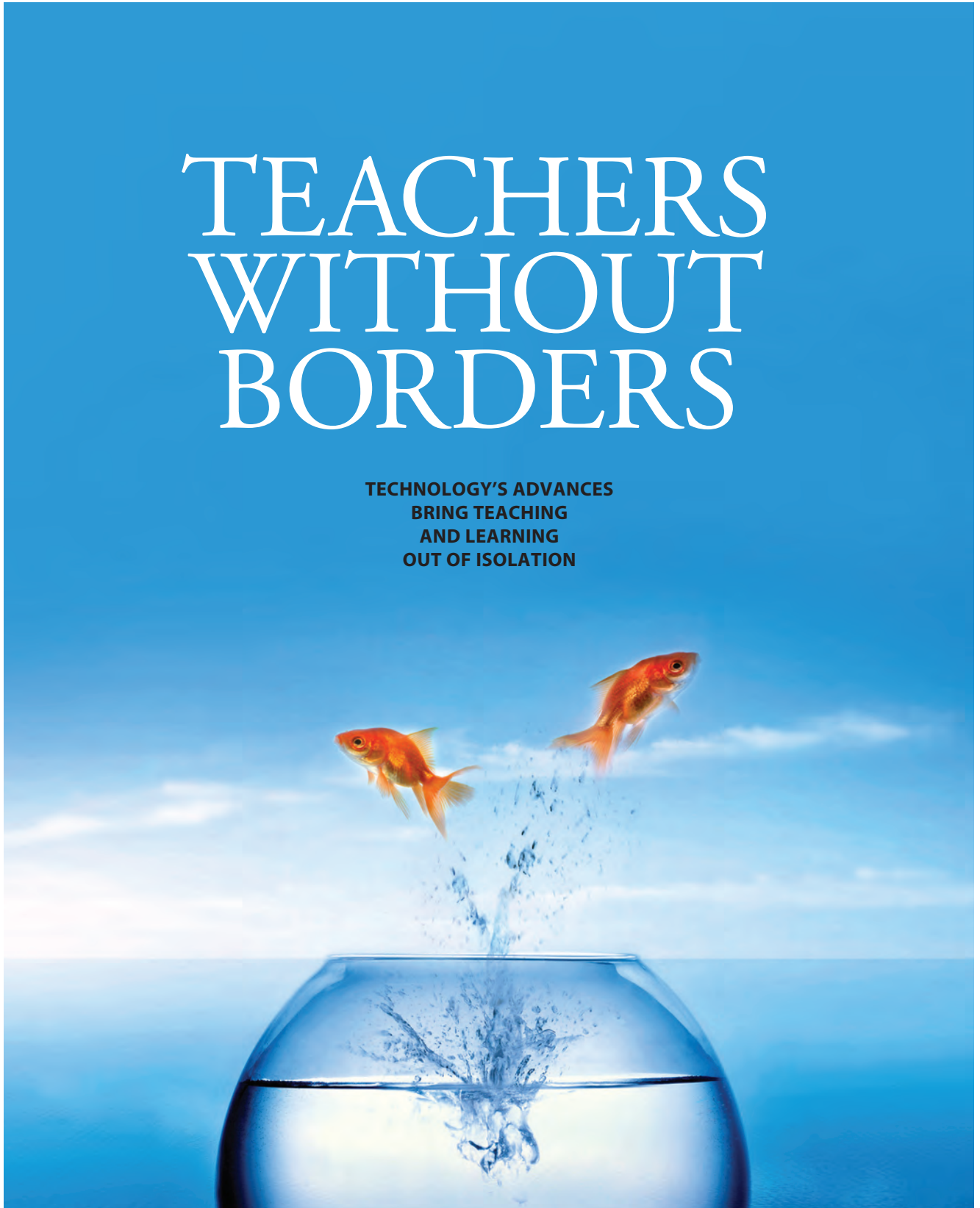
Foggy-Paxton   **Moir**   **Westendorf**   **Rooney**

How can schools and districts leverage technology to create effective professional learning? At Learning Forward's 2012 Annual Conference, several sessions on innovative professional development, called iPD, highlighted the emerging work of districts, organizations, and companies focused on this issue.

Here are excerpts from a panel discussion that covered specific organizations, their innovative strategies, and insights gained along the way.

Moderating the discussion was **Andrea Foggy-Paxton**, program officer in the U.S. Program, College Ready unit at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Panel members were:

- **Ellen Moir**, founder and chief executive officer of the New Teacher Center, who shared how her organization is moving its mentoring support of new teachers into the online environment;
- **Eric Westendorf**, co-founder of LearnZillion, who described how his organization leverages the expertise of teachers to reduce isolation and spread tested lessons to hundreds of classrooms; and
- **Joan Rooney**, vice president of instruction for MyLivePD Online Coaching Service, who explained how her service connects teachers to coaches online for personalized, one-to-one coaching sessions.

HOW DO WE LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY TO EXPAND LEARNING?

Ellen Moir: We don't want to leave the support for new teachers to chance. … We want to step up the pace dramatically to make sure that every new teacher in America gets the support he or she needs. At the New Teacher Center, we're looking to figure out and find the secret sauce of our work, and we've now built it online.

Eric Westendorf: LearnZillion started at E.L. Haynes Public Charter School, where I was principal and chief academic officer for five years. (See "Building better lessons" on p. 32.) During that time, the school experienced dramatic gains in student learning, yet it felt like we were just scratching the surface of what was possible.

The problem was that, in every classroom, it felt like our really talented and hardworking teachers were on their own, having to figure out how to reinvent the wheel over and over again. So a group of us got together and wondered what it would mean to capture the expertise in our individual classrooms and share that with each other and also make it possible to share that with students and parents.

Overall, the idea is we want to move from a world where the teacher is reinventing the wheel in isolation to a world in which we're all working together. Japanese lesson study has a metaphor where we take something that's already strong and work together to make it even stronger. Thanks to the role of technology, we're in a place where a site like LearnZillion can raise up expertise and then invite teachers to study that expertise and contribute to it themselves.

Joan Rooney: MyLivePD is a pilot program funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. We offer one-to-one, online on-demand coaching for math teachers. One thing all of us know is that students learn at different times in different ways at different paces, and those same factors apply to teachers.

Maybe a teacher wants to discuss a lesson, or get some feedback on a lesson that didn't go quite as well as expected. Maybe he or she wants to discuss a plan for getting students more engaged in class, prepare for an observation that's coming up at the end of the week, or drill down on one of the eight math concepts in the Common Core.

If a teacher wants to do any of those things, he or she doesn't want to wait for the next scheduled professional development session. The learning need is *now*. Teachers don't want to sit through a workshop that is addressing issues that are not immediately relevant. They want help that's immediately actionable in their class.

HOW DO SYSTEM LEADERS SUPPORT INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES?

Moir: It's honoring and valuing teachers and walking our talk. The superintendent sets the stage for that vision. I heard the Finland minister of education say, "In Finland, we love our teachers." When superintendents in America understand that when you invest in teachers, our students succeed, then they backward map to think: If teacher and student learning is core, how should we allocate our dollars? Not how we've always allocated our dollars, but now — it's a new day.

In those districts, whether in Long Beach, Hillsborough, or Montgomery County, that's where I've seen a lot of momentum, and I've also seen really strong labor-management relationships. And, frankly, our kids are too important. We have to line up behind improving student learning for every student.

Rooney: I'd like to broaden that question a little bit to ask: How do we allocate the resources? If you take it a little bit further, and look at the comparisons between having professional development that is face-to-face, that requires teachers to leave the classroom and to be replaced by substitutes, that requires onsite staff, and you compare that to online professional development in whatever model.

There are efficiencies and economies to that type of professional development, whether you are doing it as a support to existing professional development or as a portion of it or however the superintendent works it out. The online delivery of professional development in many ways makes it more efficient as well as more effective, and I think there's a better return on investment for the superintendent in many cases that way.

Andrea Foggy-Paxton: It's a great question. The foundation is investing in a set of districts to help them figure that out. How, over time, do you reallocate your professional development resources so you have a comprehensive set of solutions — face-to-face, online, blended learning — that addresses the needs of all your teachers?

HOW DO CONVERSATIONS SUPPORT MULTIPLE LEARNERS?

Moir: There is no point in any of us using coaches unless they're amazingly talented teachers and they've been trained to be amazingly talented teachers of teachers. You've got to have those two.

With this online environment, you have the recordings of every single conversation. When you have

coaches in your school districts or mentors out doing work, we're never in on most of those conversations and we don't know what's going on. But in an online community, we have a chance to read those transcripts, and then you can bring your coaches together online and help them accelerate their own development based on their strength as coaches and areas for growth.

Rooney: Our sessions are recorded from the moment they start to the moment they end. There are lots of benefits to doing that kind of recording. One benefit is that our mentors (every one of our coaches has a mentor) can review the session and provide feedback to the coach. It's also a benefit to the teacher. The teacher can log in and access those sessions, so the teacher can go back and review what we actually talked about, what did I promise I would do. Also that teacher can share that session with someone else. So the teacher could send it to a department head or to a colleague and say, "Why don't you take a look at this? I think this could be helpful to you" or "What do you think, and what's your input on this?"

HOW DO WE ADDRESS CONTENT NEEDS?

Westendorf: We had a situation where we put our initial set of math lessons online, and then we had a number of teachers come to us and say, "I have a significant population of Spanish-speaking students and families. Do you mind if I start translating these?" And they started to translate the lessons.

We have a whole set of teachers now who are working on creating these Spanish translations for the lessons. I'm excited about translating into many different languages, and that's the sort of

thing that technology enables. One hour of work on the translations equals potentially thousands of hours benefited in terms of other teachers getting that support.

Moir: I had an interesting example of new teachers who wanted to learn how to do a science inquiry. I wondered if we could tell by reading the transcripts if they're actually enacting an inquiry. When you read what the new teachers are saying to each other and what the mentors are saying to the new teachers, you see that the new teacher says, "I used to be so afraid. I would hardly let the students move around, I didn't want to let them get out of their seat, I didn't really want them to inquire. I wanted to stay to the script, and now I'm seeing that I can actually engage students much more by doing these kinds of inquiries, and I'm learning from Joe and Mary and whoever." You start to see this community really happening.

It's organic in a lot of ways. It's emanating from what the teachers need. It's not someone from up here saying, "Get these teachers inquiry! They all need it right now." I think we have to kind of flip it and really build off of what teachers need.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING?

Moir: Over the next five years, we're all going to be experimenting with innovative ways to help teachers learn. Some are going to be more effective than others, and we're going to pick them up. What I worry about is that we have a long history of doing professional development that doesn't work — not all, so don't get me wrong — and we have to be really thoughtful about this. My dream is that districts will embrace online and face-to-face professional learning

in ways they've never seen before, in ways that, when you survey teachers, they say, "Oh, my gosh, this is the best."

Westendorf: I imagine there being a public utility of expertise, almost like electricity, where you're not going into the classroom and trying to make this up on your own. There's this spring of expertise that you can plug into that is practical, that gives you what you need when you need it, and then, from that utility, you have these communities where teachers are working together to then contribute back into that community.

Rooney: I think we cannot begin to imagine the possibilities. We think that we're kind of far down the road of online learning, and we're just at the very beginning. Online learning will increase tenfold, one hundred fold, one thousand fold. Teachers will be coming up with new ways to connect and to provide resources. They will be bringing students into that process somehow, and they will be communicating with experts, perhaps in China, perhaps in Norway.

There are possibilities of expanding communication, expanding access to resources, expanding access to real professional expertise when you need it. There are possibilities we can just barely imagine right now. All of us together are moving down that road find out what's next. It'll be exciting. ■
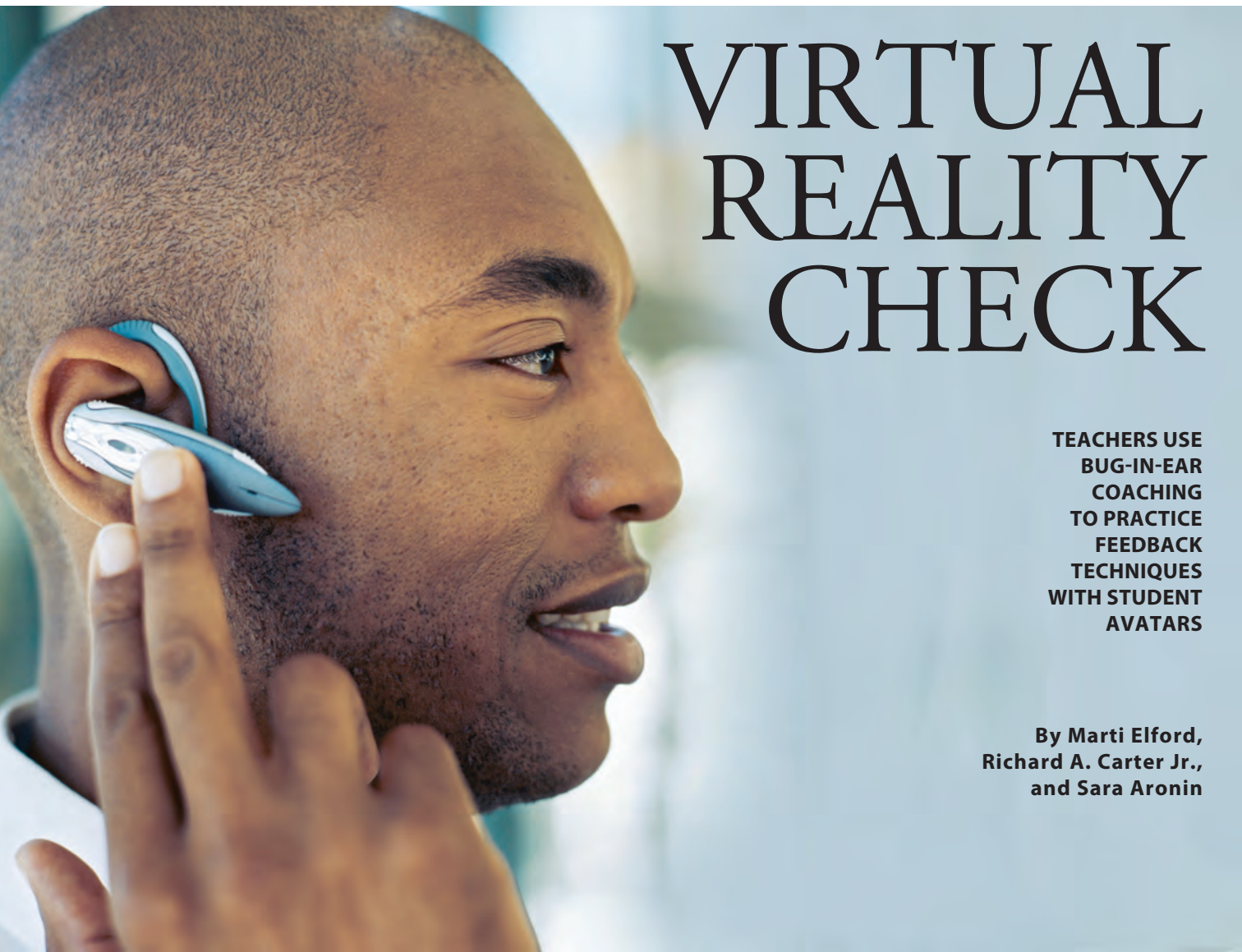
VIRTUAL REALITY CHECK

**TEACHERS USE
BUG-IN-EAR
COACHING
TO PRACTICE
FEEDBACK
TECHNIQUES
WITH STUDENT
AVATARS**

**By Marti Elford,
Richard A. Carter Jr.,
and Sara Aronin**

There isn't just one way to give feedback, nor is there just one kind of feedback. Bug-in-ear technology, which allows coaches to give teachers in the classroom immediate feedback, has been used successfully for 35 years (Rock, Gregg, Gable, & Zigmond, 2009; Scheeler, Bruno, Grubb, & Seavey, 2009). In an updated twist on this method, researchers at the University of Kansas used bug-in-ear coaching in a virtual classroom called TeachLivE (Dieker, Hynes, Hughes, & Smith, 2008) to give four secondary teachers a chance to practice giving feedback to students.

Studies in the last 35 years have shown the positive effects of using bug-in-ear technology to assist teachers with explicit instruction, delivery of feedback, opportunities to respond, and classroom management. Three benefits stand out:

1. Immediate feedback has a significantly positive effect on instructional practice, regardless of the amount of teaching experience.
2. Overall, participants using wireless technology to give or receive feedback react positively.
3. Students react positively to teachers' improved instructional practices (Goodman, Brady, Duffy, Scott, & Pollard, 2008; Scheeler, McAfee, Ruhl, & Lee, 2006; Scheeler, Ruhl, & McAfee, 2004).

To prepare for the TeachLivE KU setting, coaches instructed

the four secondary teachers on how to provide feedback to students as a routine for classroom management. First, coaches explained and modeled the formula for feedback designed for the pilot study: Redirect, re-engage, and reinforce. Next, the teachers practiced the feedback routine in the TeachLivE KU lab by delivering a mini-lesson to student avatars while wearing a Bluetooth device to receive real-time coaching.

ROLE OF COACH

The coach provided the training, modeling, and cuing, then led guided reflection at the end of each session. With the training, teachers were given a one-page summary of the feedback routine, including definitions and examples. The coach modeled the feedback routine for the teachers in the TeachLivE KU lab, where each session would occur. Teachers then practiced the routine and received onsite coaching after the practice session.

The coach also instructed teachers about the cues or prompts they would receive during the TeachLivE KU sessions. The four teachers had time to ask questions, offer suggestions, and practice with the bug-in-ear technology before the coaching sessions began. Finally, the coach led each teacher in a guided reflection at the end of each session.

PROCEDURE

Each teacher presented a lesson divided into four sessions on a topic of his or her choice, including math, language arts, and social studies. The sessions were structured to include three parts:

- **Organization:** The coach outlined each session's objectives, addressed the teacher's concerns, and allowed investigators to assess the teacher's comfort level.
- **Simulation:** Participants spent five minutes teaching their lesson segment to student avatars while using the provided feedback strategies to address behaviors.
- **Review:** The review served as an exit interview to allow teachers to discuss their interactions with the student

PERCENTAGE OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS ADDRESSED USING POSITIVE FEEDBACK

	SESSION 1	SESSION 2	SESSION 3	SESSION 4
Participant 1	75%	70%	90%	100%
Participant 2	70%	90%	80%	100%
Participant 3	60%	75%	80%	75%
Participant 4	55%	55%	80%	80%

Shaded boxes indicate the sessions in which participants were coached remotely.

avatars and their comfort level with the technology, both TeachLivE and bug-in-ear.

During each session, teachers wore a Bluetooth device. Coaching prompts were delivered during two out of the four sessions for each teacher. The delivery of coaching prompts was assigned randomly, as well as the order in which each teacher entered the TeachLivE KU lab for his or her session. The coach observed teacher behaviors from a remote location via Skype and prompted each teacher to follow the management routine to address student behaviors.

OUTCOMES

The teachers wore the Bluetooth device during every session, and coaches followed the same procedure to prepare teachers for each session. None of the teachers knew the sessions in which they would be coached remotely until they heard a prompt during the simulation period of the session.

The percentage of addressed behaviors increased when participants were coached remotely, with positive feedback increasing from 20% to 30% across all participants and all sessions. (See table above.) An unanticipated result occurred in the last session,

WAYS TO GET AND GIVE FEEDBACK

Immediate: Immediate feedback occurs within seconds or moments of the event. Recipients don't need to wait to discover if their efforts are moving them closer to their goal.

Delayed: Delayed feedback occurs some time after the event or action.

Written: Written feedback can be a performance review, a note in response to an observation, or just a few phrases describing what occurred. It offers a permanent record of the feedback that can be referenced at a later time.

Verbal: Verbal feedback is spoken and can be delivered immediately, face-to-face or remotely.

Nonverbal: Nonverbal feedback is often noticed in body language, such as students off-task during class or someone sleeping during a speech. Even a person who fidgets or looks away is giving feedback to the speaker that she is not completely comfortable.

Positive: Positive feedback can be described as anything that encourages a person toward the desired goal.

Negative: Negative feedback can feel like criticism or redirection.

Critical: Webster defines critical feedback as "the act of criticizing unfavorably." However, critical feedback can be constructive feedback when delivered properly and without judging.

Affirming: Feedback that affirms is direct, specific, and nonattributive (Kegan & Lahey, 2001). This type of feedback infuses ongoing regard from the speaker.

Let's get reel: Video brings practices to life

While having a coach at a teacher's side — or in his ear — is a powerful, real-time support system, opportunities to watch and discuss real-life teaching are flourishing, thanks to the use of video cameras. Here is a sampling of tools and strategies.

VIDEOS OF ONE'S OWN PRACTICE

Like the bug-in-ear coaching model described in these pages, having a coach observe and discuss specific practices offers educators authentic input on their actions.

The New Teacher Center's longstanding model of teacher induction relies on a research-based framework supported by processes that guide growth-oriented conversations between mentors and teachers. Technology tools that help mentors implement the center's framework include a video observation platform that allows teachers to upload videos of themselves teaching so that mentors can watch and offer feedback.

Educators also have an array of options for videotaping themselves, whether with their own camera or by participating in a system built specifically to support video observations. For example, **thereNow** offers a suite of video hardware, software, and services created specifically to support teacher observations for individual and collaborative reflection and discussion.

Two recent *JSD* articles explore the use of videotaping lessons and how to make this strategy work. See "Record, replay, reflect: Videotaped lessons accelerate learning for teachers and coaches" from the April 2012 issue of *JSD* and "Pause, rewind, reflect: Video clubs throw open the classroom doors" from the October 2011 issue of *JSD*.

VIDEOS OF OTHER EDUCATORS IN ACTION

PD 360 is part of the School Improvement Network's suite of products and services and hosts thousands of teaching videos in a professional development framework that includes a large online community. Formerly the Video Journal of Education, School Improvement Network has produced

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when two teachers used positive feedback 100% of the time during the simulation even though they were not being coached.

These outcomes indicate that every teacher responded to the prompting he or she received through remote coaching by increasing the rate of positive feedback for addressing disruptive behaviors.

In addition to data collected during bug-in-ear coaching, the reviews following each session were videotaped. During each review, researchers asked teachers a series of open-ended questions related to their experience with bug-in-ear coaching in the TeachLivE KU lab.

Although all teachers felt some trepidation about the TeachLivE KU lab, each one expressed surprise at how quickly he or she stopped being bothered by the computer-generated images and started interacting with the students as if they were real. One participant noted that the behaviors and personalities aligned perfectly with her 9th-grade students, particularly those who are at risk.

The student avatars seemed so real to one teacher that, by the second session, he was talking about one student as if she were human and not a computer-generated image. "I've been thinking about different ways that I can engage Maria, the teacher said. "If she were one of the students in my class, I would probably refer her to the guidance counselor." He followed this comment with some details he had picked up about Maria's home life.

In addition to adapting quickly to the augmented reality environment of the TeachLivE KU lab, teachers also responded favorably to the remote coaching through bug-in-ear. None of the teachers described wearing the earpiece as distracting or uncomfortable. One participant said that she thought she offered more positive feedback because she was anticipating a prompt. Another described the remote coaching through bug-in-ear as a good reminder for addressing behaviors. She said that she normally used the classroom management strategy of ignoring disruptive behaviors, but she found that giving positive feedback added to her relationship with the student avatars.

All four teachers said that it was difficult at first to remember how they were supposed to respond to each of the prompts. However, the teachers agreed that delivering positive feedback to redirect, re-engage, and reinforce students appeared to be effective. One teacher said: "I'd been thinking anyway as we were moving through these experiences about the sequence. It is hard to remember in the moment. … After four times, even though you were prompting me, I was probably going there anyway."

All four teachers agreed that five minutes in simulation was not enough time. For secondary teachers, delivering content holds a certain priority, and all the teachers described their frustration with overplanning or being unable to deliver the entire lesson. None of the teachers thought that the time spent in simulation was too long or created stress.

FEEDBACK ROUTINE

Redirect: Call attention to the disruptive behavior.

Re-engage: Ask a follow-up question.

Reinforce: Make a positive comment about the desired behavior.

videos specifically for professional development for more than 20 years.

Reality PD, part of District of Columbia Public Schools' educator performance evaluation system, offers teachers a range of videos of excellent teaching practices found in the district. Created to enhance the teaching and learning framework, teachers can watch examples of specific instructional moves for discussion and reflection.

Success at the Core is a free set of research-based tools and videos organized in a structure of leadership and teacher development for whole-school improvement. Videos support exploration of specific instructional (for example, checking for understanding) or leadership (for example, using data effectively) concepts. The materials are based on a theory of action that improved instruction

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>
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>
> **thereNow:** www.therenow.net

will improve student engagement and ultimately lift student outcomes.

The Teaching Channel is a free video library that includes hundreds of videos organized by content area, grade level, educator role, and pedagogical topic. Designed to showcase effective teaching practices, the site features an active online community to encourage discussion and allows registered members to make personal notes on what they watch. The site includes discussion questions for the videos and alignments to the Common Core standards.

— Tracy Crow

One participant noted that, even though she was highly motivated to learn, four sessions weren't enough time to learn a new strategy.

From a professional learning perspective, all four teachers said they had learned a lot in a short time. Each gained a heightened awareness of delivering positive feedback to prevent disruptive behaviors before they occur. One participant wondered if the TeachLivE lab could be brought to his high school. He said, "I wish this had been available when I was in college. I know this technology didn't even exist, but getting this kind of practice is so much more meaningful than just listening to someone talk about how to do a certain strategy."

Although bug-in-ear coaching has been around for almost four decades, it is not a widely used method of coaching. TeachLivE KU is a new technology that is gaining popularity in teacher preparation programs. As this pilot study shows, these two technologies combined make a powerful professional learning experience for secondary teachers. Using bug-in-ear coaching to provide immediate feedback definitely changed how teachers addressed disruptive behaviors and delivered positive feedback to the students.

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CAPTURE
THE HUMAN SIDE
OF LEARNING

DATA MAKEOVER PUTS STUDENTS FRONT AND CENTER

By Lyn Sharratt and Michael Fullan

We recently asked more than 500 teachers and administrators, "Why should we put faces on data?" That is, how do we capture the human side of learning? One teacher said playfully, "Because they are so cute." While that's true, the more compelling reason is because it is so important. Educators need to care for students, but they also need to help students get better in the one thing that can serve them for life — their day-to-day learning (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012).

Education is overloaded with programs and data. The growth of digital power has aided and abetted the spread of accountability-driven data — Adequate Yearly Progress, test results for every child in every grade, Common Core standards, formative and summative assessments. Technology accelerates the onslaught of data. All this information goes for naught unless educators can put faces on the data at all points on the learning continuum and know what to do to help the children behind the statistics.

With so much data available to those who want to improve student achievement, where do educators start? In the book *Realization* (Corwin, 2009), we spell out 14 key areas that we have found to be important for schools, districts, and states to become places where high student achievement is expected and delivered year after year by energized teams of professional educators.

These 14 parameters (see list at right) are, in effect, the nitty-gritty of deep and sustainable collective capacity building. Stemming from our work with more than 180 schools in York Region, Ontario, these parameters are the specific reform strategies that — in combination and over time, as the organization progresses to greater implementation of the parameters — cause classroom, school, district, and state improvement.

Within the 14 parameters, educators use several modes of assessment to identify and track performance. For example, attention to assessment practices that improve classroom instruction, inherent in

14 PARAMETERS TO INCREASE ALL STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT

1. Shared beliefs and understandings.
   a. Each student can achieve high standards given the right time and the right support.
   b. Each teacher can teach to high standards given the right assistance.
   c. High expectations and early and ongoing intervention are essential.
   d. Teachers and administrators need to be able to articulate what they do and why they teach the way they do (adapted from Hill & Crévola, 1999).
2. Embedded literacy/instructional coaches.
3. Daily, sustained focus on literacy instruction.
4. Principal instructional leadership.
5. Early and ongoing intervention.
6. Case management approach: Data walls, case-by-case meetings.
7. Professional learning at school staff meetings.
8. In-school grade/subject meetings: Collaborative marking of student work.
9. Centralized resources.
10. Commitment of district and school budgets for literacy learning and resources.
11. Action research/collaborative inquiry.
12. Parental and community involvements
13. Cross-curricular literacy connections in each subject area.
14. Shared responsibility and accountability.

Source: Sharratt & Fullan, 2006, 2009, 2012.

the 14 parameters, enables everyone in the system to follow his or her collective progress in elevating student achievement quickly and sustaining it in the long term.

THE POWER OF FACES

In 2010-11, we asked professional educators in several countries for their views on three questions:
- Why put faces on the data?
- How do you put faces on the data?
- What are the top three leadership skills needed to do this?

The 507 respondents indicated that putting faces on the data helps them to:
- **Know the students:** Encourage colleagues to make the work personal;
- **Plan for students:** Align teaching strategies and specify strategies required for improvement;
- **Ensure responsibility for students:** Promote accountability; and
- **Assess progress:** Understand if the processes and strategies being used are having an impact.

We clustered the 14 parameters into four big ideas that we call improvement drivers: assessment, instruction, leadership, and ownership (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012). From this, we wanted to learn:
- Which practices are so effective that they should become nonnegotiable — that is, become the expected operating norms in every state, school, and classroom?
- How do educators ensure these practices are implemented?

For example, if educators believe that every child can learn and has the right to learn, then they need to determine not just if every child has learned, but also how to optimize teacher effectiveness. Educators need to know that every child is learning by making ongoing assessments and incorporating that information about each child's learning into daily instruction — a nonnegotiable practice.

PUTTING FACES ON THE DATA: WHAT GREAT LEADERS DO!

By Lyn Sharratt & Michael Fullan

The many benefits of personalizing data include increased student engagement and positive impact on school culture. This guide helps readers set goals, adjust lessons, identify students' strengths and weaknesses, and implement interventions. Included is a self-assessment framework for implementing improvement at the district and state levels. By focusing on connecting all the dots between students and data, educators can accomplish the ultimate goal of helping them learn. (Corwin Press, 2012)

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These four improvement drivers come to life in the following case study.

SANGER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Sanger Unified School District, near Fresno, Calif., serves 10,915 students whose diversity mirrors the demographics of the region: high-minority, high-poverty, and high English language learner student population; 49% of students come from homes where English is not the primary language; 28% of parents did not graduate from high school; another 24% are high school graduates but never attended college.

In fall 2004, the California Department of Education put the district into program improvement status under No Child Left Behind. Failure to respond to the learning needs of all students placed the district in the bottom 10% of schools in California in overall achievement gains. District Superintendent Marc Johnson treated the program improvement status as a wake-up call for the district.

As district leaders dug deeper into the data, they found that, while state testing showed 50% of white students were proficient or advanced in English language arts, only 20% of Hispanic students, 19% of low-income students, and 10% of English language learners were scoring at proficient or advanced levels. Only 26% percent of the total student population was meeting standards. In several schools, the results were even worse.

That focused look at the very relevant data caused district leaders to develop an organizational sense of urgency about the need to improve.

After meeting with school principals, Johnson committed the district to becoming a professional learning community with a focus on instructional improvement that benefits all students in the district. The district also committed to organize and use data as a major tool for improvement. Leaders identified three guiding principles to focus the work:
- Hope is not a strategy;
- Don't blame the kids; and
- It's all about learning.

Their work aligns with our four improvement drivers: assessment, instruction, leadership, and ownership (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012).

ASSESSMENT

At each school site, professional learning communities developed and administered common formative assessments to give teachers real-time data about student learning.

Learning teams defined the responses and supports necessary to provide extra opportunities for learning that some students require to master the essential standards for their grade level and courses.

Teachers created data walls and met regularly to discuss what data told them about student learning needs. From this,

they developed support systems for students who needed precise instructional strategies to match their learning needs as evidenced by the data. By monitoring progress regularly and moving students along the data wall, teachers continue to discuss and adjust the instructional strategies to better meet student needs.

They were able to distinguish which students didn't require additional support. These students were given enrichment opportunities, using performance tasks focused on higher-order thinking.

Leaders learned to adopt a nonjudgmental attitude toward data in the early stages of reform, along with transparency of results and practice. A nonjudgmental stance essentially says, "We treat data as the basis for identifying actions for improvement." The nonjudgmental approach and transparency of results leads to greater accountability and greater improvement (Sharratt & Fullan, 2009).

INSTRUCTION

District leaders also realized that no amount of intervention compensates for poor instruction. They began a districtwide focus to develop high-quality instruction in every classroom. Every teacher and administrator in the district learned intentional, differentiated instructional practices and engaged in ongoing professional learning to improve practice.

The district required administrators to participate in all professional learning. District leaders believed that administrators must be expert practitioners in order to serve as learning leaders who can assist schools in implementing effective instruction.

English language learners became an important area of focus. Every classroom in the district had students who needed extra help in developing fluency in English. Meeting those needs required more than buying a program that supports language acquisition.

District leaders realized that supporting these learners as they develop fluency and proficiency must be a function of daily instruction. Using assessment to drive instruction deepened the district's understanding of the students behind the statistics and led the district to provide ongoing training and support at all levels.

LEADERSHIP

District leaders established clear expectations for each school while also providing support to guide schools in building programs that respond to student learning needs, including improving the staff's strengths and skill sets.

They also shifted the organizational culture from focusing on adult needs to focusing on students, knowing that, in order to do so, they needed to go deeper into the data.

To do this, the district launched principal summits. A principal summit is a one-hour presentation made by each principal in the district to senior staff and colleagues, detailing what the school had done and is doing to ensure that all students are learning.

Principals gave an overview of achievement data for a minimum of a five-year period so that participants could focus on trends and patterns over time. This process quickly gave instructional leaders a deep understanding of the data, and they, in turn, led similar conversations with their school teams.

The district made clear that instructional leadership was a requirement of the principalship and underlined this by ensuring that job descriptions, criteria for hiring and promoting, and performance appraisal for school leaders focus on instructional leadership and collaborative work within and across schools.

OWNERSHIP

At Sanger, educators no longer labor as independent contractors in isolation. They work together to meet the needs of all students. They come together as teams, working interdependently (Sharratt & Fullan, 2009) to achieve a common goal while holding one another mutually accountable. Now the culture at Sanger is one of collaboration and a focus on learning for all students and for all staff.

To do this, leaders throughout the system realized that they needed to embrace the concept of reciprocal accountability, which means, "If I have an expectation of you, then I have an obligation to provide you with whatever you need to be successful in meeting that expectation" (Sharratt & Fullan, 2009). The district also began three leadership training cohorts that brought together leadership teams from system and school sites for ongoing conversations on improving student learning.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

In 2004, Sanger was one of the lowest-achieving and poorest-performing districts in the state. Within two years of starting this improvement process, the district had exceeded the state average for student achievement in all areas.

In spring 2011, The Education Trust-West released a study detailing the achievement gains of California's largest unified school districts (The Education Trust-West, 2011). The study showed that Sanger's achievement gains for the last five years ranked in the top three in California for districts of high-minority, high-poverty student populations. The number of students demonstrating high levels of proficiency increases each year.

Sanger Unified School District
Sanger, Calif.

Number of schools: **20**
Enrollment: **10,915**
Staff: **572** teachers
Racial/ethnic mix:

White:	**17%**
Black:	**2.0%**
Hispanic:	**69%**
Asian/Pacific Islander:	**11%**
Native American:	**<1%**
Other:	**1%**

Limited English proficient: **24%**
Languages spoken: **26**
Free/reduced lunch: **76%**
Special education: **6.8%**
Contact: **Marc Johnson**, chief superintendent
Email: **marc_johnson@sanger.k12.ca.us**

However, the win that matters most is recognizing the value of identifying the the students behind the statistics. Achievement gains have been consistent and districtwide:

- The district transitioned from one of the lowest-achieving districts in the state to a district that has seen some of the most dramatic achievement gains in California.
- In the last six years, 18 district schools were recognized as California State Distinguished Schools and 19 schools were named Title I Academic Achieving Schools.
- In the last four years, three schools were recognized as National Blue Ribbon Schools, and the middle school was named a National Middle School to Watch.
- This year, all three K-8 schools were added to the list.

Other signs may indicate even bigger wins. In conversations about their work, teachers no longer say "my kids." Instead, teachers speak about "our kids," demonstrating that they have transitioned to a collaborative culture focused on responding to the learning needs of all students.

The district has shifted from a collection of random acts of self-improvement to shared mission, vision, values, and goals with a focus on student learning driven by relevant data.

GETTING IT RIGHT

The district's focus on quality instruction and coaching has helped establish a career ladder for teachers who want to transition into leadership roles as learning leaders. In the last three years, five new principals were hired from within the district, while the student growth rate continues to grow. Out of 11 comparable districts in the state, Sanger ranked ninth in funding but first in student achievement.

Sanger has successfully implemented the strategies and cultural shifts necessary for this remarkable turnaround and remains focused on its goal to increase achievement for all students. The foundation of the district's reform model is building collaborative relationships. As part of this reform, school leaders are nurturing collaborative relationships with union leadership, state, and county personnel. Once in place, the reforms can continue indefinitely without additional private or government funding. The district's reform work functions within the parameters set by the California Department of Education and the local teachers union contract.

PERSISTENT LEADERSHIP

Our case study research helped us identify the improvement drivers needed to capture the human side of learning. Putting these four drivers into practice requires sophisticated, persistent leadership at all levels:

1. **Assessment** training that supports daily and ongoing assessment practices to improve and differentiate instruction.
2. **Instruction** that is intentional to meet the needs of every student and teacher.
3. **Leadership** that embraces the ability to be knowledgeable, to mobilize others, and to create sustainable improvement.
4. **Ownership** of every student and every teacher every day (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012).

Sanger's drive to increase all students' achievement began with a soul-searching look at data. The overall picture shows a rural district that is changing the image of what can be expected of students living in poverty.

In the heart of California's Central Valley, 10,915 students are performing at high levels, spurred by reform designed to break the cycles of poverty and poor educational outcomes that have plagued the region for generations. Despite living in a state that spends $2,400 less per student than the national average and coming from homes with limited resources, Sanger's students face a brighter future.

This process can be replicated anywhere. However, this will require shifting the role of data from an anemic list of statistics and punitive accountability to the daily learning that comes from informed and committed groups of leaders and learners understanding the students behind the statistics.

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> **The foundation of the district's reform model is building collaborative relationships. As part of this reform, school leaders are nurturing collaborative relationships with union leadership, state, and county personnel. Once in place, the reforms can continue indefinitely without additional private or government funding.**

STANDARDS ASSESSMENT INVENTORY (SAI2)

SAI2 is aligned to the internationally recognized Standards for Professional Learning.
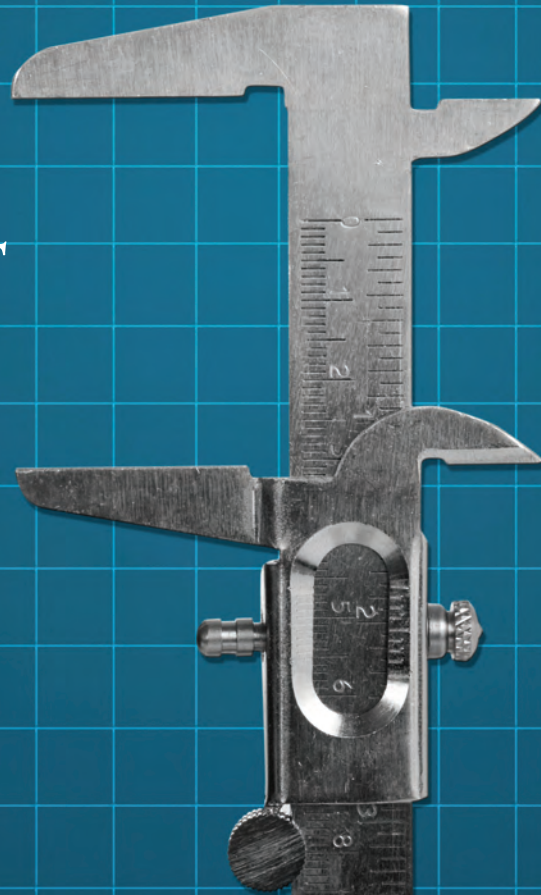
Ensuring that professional learning systems offer all educators the support they need to improve their practices and increase student achievement requires a sophisticated tool. State, local, and regional education agencies can use the Standards Assessment Inventory2 (SAI2) to assess the quality of their professional development. The SAI2 is a valid and reliable instrument that measures the alignment of professional development to the internationally recognized Standards for Professional Learning. But taking the SAI2 to understand the quality of a system's professional learning is just the first step. The Center for Results guides educators to the next level by leveraging data from the SAI2 to maximize the impact of a system's investment in professional development.

The SAI2, available online, is a valid and reliable survey that incorporates feedback from a range of stakeholders to provide important measures of teacher efficacy, school climate, leadership, equity, and the quality of professional development overall to strengthen professional learning systems.

Center for Results

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WHAT RESEARCH TELLS US

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING THAT LEADS TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

By Rolf K. Blank

Today's education policy places a high priority on improving teacher quality and teaching effectiveness in U.S. schools (Obama, 2009). Standards-based professional learning requires teachers to have deep subject knowledge and the most effective pedagogy for teaching the subject. States and school districts are charged with establishing teacher professional development programs, some with federal funding support, designed to address the significant needs for improved teacher preparation. The results of a national study of teacher professional development over a two-year period (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009) show that, while teachers are experiencing more professional learning than in the past, we don't have strong data regarding its effectiveness to improve teaching and learning. What follows is a summary of recent research that measures effects of professional learning on student achievement and identifies characteristics of professional learning that produces positive results for teachers and students

EVIDENCE OF WHAT WORKS

A key issue for public school decision makers is being able to make policy and program decisions based on evidence of what works. Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning call on decision makers to make better use of research findings and outcomes measures (Learning Forward, 2011). Federal law requires programs to be justified and validated based on research evidence, including the federal support for school improvement and teacher development under Title I and Title II of NCLB

(Shavelson & Towne, 2002). Regulations for federal grant programs cite findings that define the characteristics of effective programs of teacher professional development (see Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Hiebert, 1999; Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, & Stiles, 1998; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996; Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Guskey, 2003; Showers, Joyce, & Bennett, 1987; Kennedy, 1998).

However, two problems persist in translating research evidence into policy and practice. First, state policies governing teacher professional learning provide only broad guidance, with the primary state role in defining requirements for teacher relicensure credits (Blank, de las Alas, & Smith, 2008). In U.S. education systems, decisions about the definition, design, and delivery of teacher professional learning have been left to district or school leaders, or often to individual teachers (Corcoran, 2007).

Second, the field lacks well-designed, scientific studies of the relationship between teacher professional learning and the degree of improvement in subsequent student learning. The call for evidence-based programs under NCLB produced renewed efforts to conduct experimental design studies of education initiatives, and more recent reports have begun to identify research findings focused on effects of professional learning (for example, Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007; Clements & Samara, 2011; Scher & O'Reilly, 2007; Harris & Sass, 2007).

META-ANALYSIS DESIGN

In 2007, the Council of Chief State School Officers undertook a meta-analysis study of the effects of teacher professional learning on raising student achievement (Blank & de las Alas, 2009). The goal of the two-year project, funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation, was to identify research that showed clear evidence of

How teacher learning leads to student achievement

HIGH-QUALITY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
- **Content focus.**
- **More time.**
- **Longer duration.**
- **Multiple activities and methods.**
- **Learning goals.**
- **Collective participation.**

↓

TEACHER KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

↓

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

↓

EFFECTS ON STUDENTS
Measure of achievement change compared to control group.

program effects and then to document what common elements of the professional development's organization and delivery could be communicated to education leaders.

The meta-analysis consisted of four steps:

1. Research staff scanned the titles and topics of several thousand studies published in more than 30 U.S. education journals and research compendiums since 1990, including *Review of Educational Research, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Teachers College Record, Journal of Research in Science Teaching,* and *ERS Spectrum.*

2. More than 400 published studies of professional development were identified.

3. Trained staff coded 74 studies focusing on the study design and outcomes.

4. Based on analysis of study results and the design, researchers identified 16 studies that had significant positive effects of teacher professional learning on student achievement.

The logic model shown on p. 51 summarizes existing evidence about what produces positive outcomes from professional development and how teacher learning gets transferred into student learning. This includes characteristics of the delivery to teachers, improved teacher knowledge and skills, change in instructional practices, and effects on student learning.

COMMON ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

The 16 studies identified through the meta-analysis provide important findings about the design and implementation of professional learning that has a significant effect on improving student achievement. The studies showed significant gains in student achievement either using a design that compared outcomes for teachers in a treatment group to students of comparable teachers and classes in a control group (treatment-control design) or a design that measured student gains and improvement in student achievement in comparison to prior achievement (pre-post design) (Blank & de las Alas, 2009).

> The most effective initiatives included multiple and ongoing activities designed to reinforce and follow up with teachers.

A review and analysis of the characteristics of professional learning teachers received in these 16 projects find a number of common elements. These common elements of effective professional learning are consistent across almost all of the programs (Blank & de las Alas, 2009, pp. 19-20).

Content focus. The primary goal of all 16 programs was to improve and increase the content knowledge of teachers in K-12 education — either mathematics education or science education. Content focus was a primary selection criterion for the meta-analysis, and all the programs sought to increase content knowledge of the teachers.

More time (contact hours) for professional learning. The time teachers spent in professional learning varied, with a mean of 91 hours. Four of the programs provided more than 100 hours, while six programs provided 20 hours. A study of local systemic initiatives showed consistent effects in changing instruction with projects offering 100 hours of teacher development time (Banilower, Heck, & Weiss, 2007).

Longer duration of professional learning. The average length of time in which teachers were involved with the professional learning program studied was six months, with several keeping teachers involved up to 16 months. The duration includes follow-up, assistance, and coaching. For example, a program for middle grades math in Nebraska included a summer institute for teachers and professional learning over the following school year.

Multiple professional learning activities and active learning methods. The most effective initiatives included multiple and ongoing activities designed to reinforce and follow up with teachers. The 16 effective programs included from two to six different types of activities, including coaching, mentoring, internship, professional networks, and study groups, in addition to coursework or initial professional learning. Programs described active methods of teacher learning during professional development such as leading instruction, discussion with colleagues, observing other teachers, developing assessments, and professional networks. For example, the Front Range, Colo., math and science teacher program included a summer institute, sessions during the school year, coaching, mentoring, and a professional network to exchange ideas and track progress.

Learning goals in professional learning design. The identified programs focused on improving teacher knowledge of how students learn in the specific subject area, how to teach the subject with effective strategies, and the important connections between the subject content and appropriate pedagogy so that students will best learn. Professional learning maximized time with teachers so that the teacher could directly translate the program's content into improvements in curriculum and instruction.

Collective participation by teachers. In many of the programs, teachers learned with other teachers from their school or department. To maximize collective involvement of teachers, some designs focus on the whole school for teacher development — i.e. all teachers are part of the training and assistance. To increase teacher learning with colleagues, schools conducted follow-up activities such as coaching and observation of instruction, and teachers worked together to build and reinforce their skills. For example, the major goal of a Texas urban teacher initiative was to build a learning team of math teachers.

LINKING LEARNING TO STUDENT RESULTS

The research review and analysis of findings from studies of teacher professional learning address questions that continue

to be the subject of debate among education policymakers and local officials. First, the analysis demonstrates that scientific research methods can and do show significant positive effects of high-quality professional development on teacher learning and student outcomes. Second, a review of the most effective programs shows a consistent pattern in how the initiatives are planned, organized, and delivered for teachers and schools. Teacher professional learning that includes content focus, longer duration, multiple activities, hands-on teacher learning, specific learning goals, and collective teacher participation has a significantly better chance to improve teacher skills and knowledge and, subsequently, to raise student achievement.

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> A review of the most effective programs shows a consistent pattern in how the initiatives are planned, organized, and delivered for teachers and schools.

TOGETHER, WE BUILD A FRAMEWORK.

Belief in the power of relationships drives one principal's efforts to build social capital

Michael Polities is an extraordinary man. Not only is he smart, funny, kind, and generous, he has the ability to connect with staff and students of Jindalee State School near Brisbane, Australia, and with school administrators throughout Queensland at a deep level. This is the key to Polities' success. Human connectivity is the great differentiator, the key to exponential growth, and the only sustainable edge for schools and their students. And when you think about it, who is going to provide this human connection we all crave, if not you and me?

— Susan Scott

By Deli Moussavi-Bock

At Learning Forward's Annual Conference last December, I heard Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan speak about their book, *Professional Capital* (Teachers College Press, 2012), and the importance of social capital as a critical driving force in achieving results.

Social capital is the expected collective or economic benefits derived from the preferential treatment and cooperation between individuals and groups. Hargreaves and Fullan remind us that in a school, or any organization, human capital alone can't drive long-term results. It takes social capital — cooperation among people — to achieve results.

How does an organization create social capital? A similar question struck me after hearing Damen Lopez from Turnaround Schools speak about collaboration as one of the key steps in school turnaround. How does one create collaboration?

THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS

I believe most of us want to collaborate, but we don't know how. In the past decade, I've visited many schools and experienced a wealth of different school cultures. It's a thrill when I come across true camaraderie, a sense of collective responsibility and cooperation at a school. That's what happened when I visited Jindalee State School near Brisbane, Australia, to work with Principal Michael Polities. His belief in relationships as a driving force and his ability to walk his talk help him build community wherever he goes.

I first met Polities eight years ago, and his passion for the power of relationships in his school and at home was clear. What impressed me about Polities was that he was serious about taking himself on as a first step, rather than expecting others to change.

Last November, as I anticipated visiting Polities' school, I was curious how his own learning and development had transferred to his school community. There are leaders who start something by amassing a wealth of human capital and stop there. Then there are transformative leaders who empower their own community to become the driving force of change by equipping the community with the skills to do it.

Moussavi-Bock

The visit to Jindalee State School exceeded my expectations. On an Australian spring day, jacaranda trees in full bloom, a colleague and I toured the school after a warm greeting from staff, amid students in yellow and royal blue uniforms. We visited classrooms, the grounds, the teachers lounge, and the playfields, and spoke with the

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groundskeeper, the librarians, teachers, and students.

Except for the occasional lorikeet flying by, the school looks and feels like the elementary school I attended, which I credit with giving me the best foundation for my education. I remember having had a sense that the teachers, principal, and staff actually liked each other. That's what I sensed at Jindalee.

I don't mean to idolize Michael Polities, the school, or the staff. This school has had its challenges. What I experienced was the culmination of a lot of social capital built one conversation at a time. During my visit, I found it hard to believe that a year ago, a big part of the school was all but destroyed from floods due to a severe storm. The community came together to get the school ready for students.

Michael Polities

TEA AND COLLABORATION

I asked Polities about how his own professional development has helped him with teachers. He said, "Relationships are the most important focus of my leadership. … I have developed my skills to have authentic conversations with people, whether problem solving, coaching, feedback, or conflict resolution. I have learned to be present with people and to diligently pursue the things that are important for our success."

The teachers we observed were capable, engaged teachers with engaged students. It's easy to talk about collaboration and good instruction; it's another thing to see it in action. In a student leadership class we visited, students created posters with words and illustrations of what leadership meant to them. The teacher was so excited about sharing the topic at hand with the students, and the posters were impressive.

We observed teachers interact with one other during morning tea, a time for staff to connect with each other. The teachers at Jindalee create curriculum collaboratively, and it shows in the classrooms. They draw on each other's strengths and put their collective efforts to benefit students and their own working environment.

Like all principals, Polities is in demand, and his daily schedule is full. However, he's built capacity within his staff by equipping them with the same skills that he took on. He says professional learning gives him the confidence to lead collaboratively and to ensure that the decisions he makes are based on a clear perspective of the issue, the people who have a stake in the issue, and those who would be affected by the decision. "It gave me the knowledge and the confidence to lead effectively," he says.

The staff has also benefited from professional learning that developed teachers' ability to interact with one another as well as with students, parents, and other staff. Polities says, "The coaching conversation has become the basis for our professional learning conversations at teacher meetings. It has already given us a common approach, which will be further built on as we bring teacher peer coaching more deeply into the school professional development program."

These same principles have also been written into the school's student handbook and form the basis of the student leadership program.

I learned a lot during the time I spent with Michael Polities. Observing the interactions between adults, between students and teachers, and students and students, it's clear everyone owns a piece of the puzzle at this school.

THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Passionate about transforming his own relationships and results, Polities sought to help other administrators within Queensland through the

Queensland Association of State School Principals. Thanks to this association, Polities' reach has taken on a bigger life.

In a visit to the association office, I sensed camaraderie. Everyone there spoke to one another as human beings beyond roles and titles. The team believes in Polities and shares the same values.

In shadowing Polities, I saw how he promotes a culture of support and collective responsibility in his school, with his partnerships, and in the wider community. In Brisbane, Polities and I co-facilitated workshops for staff, administrators, and teachers from schools and universities around Queensland. Polities treats people in the community at large the same way he treats his staff — with an open heart, a wicked humor, and, most importantly, a desire to pass on tools that give them ownership of their own relationships.

Polities understands what is involved in supporting students, supporting teachers to support those students, and supporting school leaders. It takes relationships. Many of us assume we're good at relationships, but the truth is that almost every person I know needs continued work on it, myself included. It takes commitment, practice, and feedback, and there is no shame in feedback. It is energizing to learn together as a team, a staff, or a community.

We need others' help and cooperation to materialize our common goals. Furthermore, students are watching how we interact as adults. Isn't it unfair to expect them to do something we're not prepared to do ourselves? As Susan Scott says, relationship is our most valuable currency.

Polities' efforts aren't just about him. They're about empowering his community, and the payoff is sweet.

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Deli Moussavi-Bock (deli@ fierceinc.com) is the director of training for Fierce in the Schools. ■

learning forward.org

TEACHER EVALUATION

http://bit.ly/VPIn6Z

The New York State United Teachers led teams from six districts in researching and designing a teacher evaluation system that includes meaningful dialogues and continued professional learning. In the Winter 2013 issue of *The Learning System*, Valerie von Frank describes how the teams transformed the old system to one that incorporates comprehensive reviews that involve multiple measures of teacher performance designed to promote teacher learning and growth. Tools in this issue include a personal learning plan and an overview of the New York State United Teachers teacher evaluation and development process.

IMPACT THE FUTURE

www.learningforward.org/foundation

To impact the future, get involved today with the Learning Forward Foundation. The foundation provides grants and scholarships for individuals, schools or teams, principals, and superintendents. Learn more about the award categories and read about previous award recipients. Support opportunities to lead and learn by donating online, downloading a donation card, or establishing a Learning Forward Foundation scholarship or grant to honor a person, organization, or team.

LEARNING FORWARD ON YOUTUBE

www.youtube.com/learningforward

The Learning Forward channel on YouTube features videos that take viewers inside schools to see principals, teachers, and learning teams in action. *Sam I Am* focuses on school principals making time for instructional leadership. In *Reagan High School: PD in Action*, educators from John H. Reagan High School in Houston, Texas, model Learning Forward's definition of professional learning. Other video subjects include nominees for the Shirley Hord Learning Team Award, discussions about the Standards for Professional Learning, and a look inside the Learning Forward Center for Results and the Learning School Alliance.


A LEARNING SCHOOL'S STORY

http://bit.ly/Xfu6dN

Stephanie Novak, an extended learning specialist at Prairie Elementary School in Buffalo Grove, Ill., writes about her school's experience in the Learning School Alliance.

"As a learning school, we have made the commitment to engage in continuous professional learning of current research which helps us grow and refine our teaching practices in order to help our students reach their fullest potential. Also, we have strengthened our professional learning communities, resulting in more curriculum and data-centered team meetings with strong protocols. We have become a community of learners."
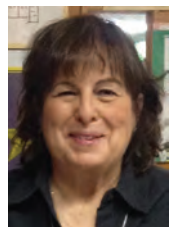
Novak

Tapping technology's potential:
Shrinking budgets, looming standards,
and a dizzying array of innovations
are changing the professional learning landscape.
By Joellen Killion

While technology can enhance professional learning, how it is used will determine the degree to which it can influence educator practice and results for students. As individuals, schools, districts, and states strive to meet the demand for professional learning generated by Common Core standards and other emerging initiatives in education, effective use of technology requires careful consideration and planning.

Creative sparks:
Innovations fuel a new vision
for professional learning.
By Stephanie Hirsh

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has made a significant investment in innovative professional development, known as iPD. In this wide-ranging interview, the foundation's deputy director of education discusses what iPD looks like and how the foundation is challenging districts to rethink what it means to be an effective learning system. *Q&A with Carina Wong.*

The digital toolbox:
An introductory guide
to collaboration technology.
By Anthony Armstrong

The growing acceptance of collaboration as a necessity in high-quality learning has fueled the rapid growth of online tools to better support educators. Determining which tools or services best support a specific professional learning system can be complex and frustrating. This introductory look into collaboration technology groups them into three categories: services that offer a primary purpose tool, services that offer a suite (or collection) of tools, and those that offer a comprehensive system of support specifically for professional learning.

Building better lessons:
Teachers find innovative solutions
to improve their practice.
By Julia Harris

The nationwide adoption of Common Core standards has brought about a sea change in K-12 education. As teachers grapple with what that implementation looks like, they are finding innovative solutions such as LearnZillion and the Literacy Design Collaborative to help them advance their own effectiveness through professional learning and build better lessons.

Teachers without borders:
Technology's advances bring
teaching and learning out of isolation.

How can schools and districts leverage technology to create effective professional learning? At Learning Forward's 2012 Annual Conference, sessions on innovative professional development highlighted the emerging work of districts, organizations, and companies focused on this issue. In these excerpts from one session, panelists discuss how their organizations used innovative strategies and the insights they gained along the way.

Virtual reality check:
Teachers use bug-in-ear coaching to practice
feedback techniques with student avatars.
*By Marti Elford, Richard A. Carter Jr.,
and Sara Aronin*

Studies show the positive effects of using bug-in-ear technology to assist teachers with explicit instruction, delivery of feedback, opportunities to respond, and classroom management. Researchers at the University of Kansas added a new twist: using student avatars in a virtual classroom setting. Combining these two technologies makes a powerful professional learning experience for four secondary teachers.

features

The growth of digital power has aided and abetted the spread of accountability-driven data — Adequate Yearly Progress, test results for every child in every grade, Common Core standards, formative and summative assessments. All this information goes for naught unless educators can put faces on the data at all points on the learning continuum and know what to do to help the students behind the statistics. The authors identify and illustrate four areas for educators to focus improvement efforts: assessment, instruction, leadership, and ownership.

A key issue for public school decision makers is being able to base policy and program decisions based on evidence of what works. An analysis of the characteristics of professional learning teachers received in 16 programs that led to increased student achievement found a number of common elements, including content focus, longer duration, multiple activities, hands-on teacher learning, specific learning goals, and collective teacher participation.

coming up

in April 2013
JSD:

COLLABORATION SKILLS

INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

columns

Michael Polities promotes a culture of support and collective responsibility in his own school, with his partnerships, and in the wider community.

Educators who are wary of the word "innovation" can take heart in knowing that innovation can indeed tackle important issues and propel us forward.

Writing for JSD

- Themes for the 2013 publication year are posted at **www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/upcoming-themes.**

- Please send manuscripts and questions to Christy Colclasure (christy.colclasure@learningforward.org).

- Notes to assist authors in preparing a manuscript are at **www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/writers-guidelines.**

New strategic plan sets bold goals for 2020

After more than 18 months of work, Learning Forward's board of trustees has adopted a new strategic plan. This plan will guide the strategic work of the board and staff for the next seven years.

The plan includes a revised set of beliefs, a new mission statement, a vision (formerly known as Learning Forward's purpose), and three strategic priority areas: leadership and practice, impact and accountability, and advocacy and policy.

The plan also includes three bold goals, at right, that the board will use to determine the progress the organization is making toward its vision and mission.

BY 2020:

- **10,000 education leaders** who participate in effective professional learning will demonstrate significantly improved practice and increased student learning.

- **1,000 schools and organizations** worldwide will demonstrate the relationship between professional learning and improved results for educators and students.

- **100,000 individuals** will advocate for or change policies and practices that advance effective professional learning.

Learning Forward's strategic plan is designed to advance the Standards for Professional Learning nationally and internationally. The standards define the elements essential to educator learning that leads to improved practice and better results for students. With these goals in mind, Learning Forward will work simultaneously to serve its members and influence the wider education field.

Members of the 2010, 2011, and 2012 boards of trustees, affiliate leaders, and all Learning Forward staff members contributed to the plan. The final plan is available on the website at **www.learningforward.org/who-we-are/purpose-beliefs-priorities.**

book club

THE SKILLFUL TEAM LEADER
A Resource for Overcoming Hurdles to Professional Learning for Student Achievement
**By Elisa MacDonald**

All teams face hurdles. What distinguishes the skillful team leader from a less effective one is his or her approach in overcoming them.

Elisa MacDonald offers a skillful approach to team leadership rooted in values, mindset, intelligence, and skill. Reality-based examples illustrate common team hurdles in collaboration, shared leadership, goal setting and attainment, rigorous discourse, and continuous improvement. This practical guide features:

- Research-based and field-tested solutions for preventing and overcoming hurdles;

- Brief follow-up sections with tips for sustaining positive change;
- Ways to work beyond the team to shape and influence school culture;
- Prompts to apply learning to your own leadership hurdles; and
- A common chapter format for easy reference and flexible use.

Through a partnership with Corwin Press, Learning Forward members can add the Book Club to their membership at any time and receive four books a year for $69 (for U.S. mailing addresses). To receive this book, add the Book Club to your membership before March 31. For more information about this or any membership package, call **800-727-7288** or email **office@learningforward.org.**
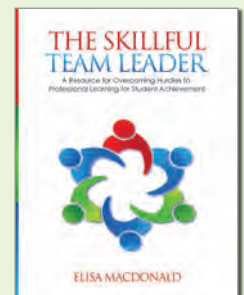
Ambitious goals highlight the important — and difficult — tasks that lie ahead

Jeff Ronneberg is president of Learning Forward's board of trustees.

on board
JEFF RONNEBERG

Peter Senge, an internationally recognized thought leader, defines a learning organization as a place "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (Senge, 2006).

Learning Forward is a learning organization committed to continuously searching for innovative strategies to advance its purpose and vision. This is demonstrated through Learning Forward's recent update to its strategic plan, identifying three priority areas: leadership and practice, impact and accountability, and advocacy and policy.

The first priority area, leadership and practice, reflects Learning Forward's commitment to strengthening the capacity of classroom, school, and system leaders to advance effective professional learning. How will Learning Forward do this? By pledging to:

- Support leaders to develop and sustain cultures and conditions for continuous improvement;
- Develop and disseminate resources to assist leaders in strengthening individual, team, school, and system-based professional learning; and
- Leverage innovation and technology to scale effective professional learning.

To measure the success of these efforts, Learning Forward will document 10,000 education leaders who have participated in effective professional learning and demonstrated significantly improved practice and increased student learning.

Learning Forward's second priority area is impact and accountability, with a focus on increasing the capacity of educators to measure and document professional learning outcomes. One way to do this is by showcasing schools and organizations that demonstrate effective examples of professional learning, providing benchmarks from which others can learn.

You can help Learning Forward achieve this strategy by sharing your own success stories. Whether applying for the Shirley Hord Learning Team Award, telling the story of your school's participation in the Learning School Alliance, or simply sharing the positive impacts of professional learning in your school, you can let the world know that effective professional learning makes a difference for children. Over the next several years, Learning Forward hopes to hear from 1,000 schools and organizations that can document the impact of their work.

The final priority area is advocacy and policy, where Learning Forward's goal is to increase the demand for effective professional learning. This involves informing educators, the public, and policymakers about effective professional learning and its impact on professional practice and student learning, and promoting policies at all levels that align with and advance the Standards for Professional Learning. Learning Forward hopes to enlist 100,000 educators in this effort.

Do those goals sound ambitious? They should. However, the staff of Learning Forward can't do this alone. This will require all educators to engage in and advocate for professional learning so that we create the conditions in all schools that result in all students experiencing success today so they see no limits to what they can achieve in their future. As Albert Einstein once said, "If at first the idea is not absurd, then there is no hope for it."

REFERENCE

Senge, P. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization* (p. 3). New York, NY: Doubleday. ∎

Robert Tess named Learning Forward's director of marketing

Robert Tess

Robert Tess, a veteran of marketing in for-profit and nonprofit organizations, is Learning Forward's new director of marketing.

In this role, Tess is responsible for marketing the Learning Forward brand and for the marketing of memberships, conferences, programs, services, products, and publications. In partnership with Learning Forward's senior staff, Tess will develop specific strategies to elevate the organization's presence.

"Bob's wealth of experience in both for-profit and nonprofit settings will provide strong leadership in how Learning Forward serves its constituents and presents itself to the educa-

tor community," said Stephanie Hirsh, Learning Forward's executive director. "Bob has effectively led marketing efforts from strategy creation through tactical implementation in nonprofit associations with the same scope of operations as Learning Forward and will be an invaluable addition to our team."

Tess's experience includes marketing management roles with Verizon and other for-profit corporations as well as senior marketing leadership roles in nonprofits Meeting Professionals International and Enactus USA.

"I am very excited to be joining the Learning Forward team," Tess said. "The importance of the organization's mission of advancing educator effectiveness and student results has never been more critical."

Tess holds a bachelor's degree in accounting and an MBA from the University of South Florida.

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1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales (not mailed)	None	None
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c. Total paid and/or requested circulation	6,947	5,771
d. Free distribution by mail	1,100	1,000
e. Free distribution outside the mail	None	None
f. Total free distribution	1,100	1,000
g. Total distribution	8,047	6,771
Percent paid and/or requested circulation	86%	85%
h. Copies not distributed		
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17. **Signature and title** of editor, publisher, business manager, or owner. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on this form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including multiple damages and civil penalties).

Tracy Crow

Workbook assesses policies

A new workbook will assist states and districts in conducting a self-guided review of professional learning policies.

Professional Learning Policy Review: A Workbook for States and Districts, a Learning Forward publication, is a six-phase review process that contains 29 tools as well as links to resources for accessing and studying professional learning policies.

Tools include recommendations for the leadership team members, meeting agendas, protocols, analysis guides, report outlines, and follow-up timelines.

The goal of the workbook's review process is to identify strengths and gaps of current professional learning policies, assess their effectiveness, and recommend improvements that will create and sustain a comprehensive professional learning system that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students.

"The policy review workbook is a valuable tool for state and district leaders," says Stephanie Hirsh, Learning Forward's executive director. "In order to develop and promote effective practice of professional learning, we need to establish strong policy, and that is what the workbook aims to help state and district leaders do."

> The workbook is available free at **www.learningforward. org/docs/commoncore/ professionallearningpolicyreview.pdf.**

NETWORKS FOCUS ON COMMON CORE

Building on its Transforming Professional Learning initiative, Learning Forward has launched a new project that will establish three key networks to strengthen educators' capacity to implement Common Core State Standards and new assessments.

The new initiative, Transforming Professional Learning to Prepare College- and Career-Ready Students: District, State, & Affiliate Networks, focuses on large urban school districts, state education agencies, and Learning Forward state affiliates.

The project's goal is to improve student learning experiences in high-poverty schools and school districts by supporting application of findings from the Transforming Professional Learning initiative and related resources.

Network members will have access to bimonthly webinars focusing on free resources and tools, online communities to network and address problems of practice, technical assistance and coaching, face-to-face meetings, and virtual conferences. Project participants receive a free organizational membership in Learning Forward as well as access to an electronic library of resources and tools.

Learning Forward hopes to extend the impact of the Transforming Professional Learning project to every state and large school system through a systematic investment in groups of educators in state departments of education, large school districts, and Learning Forward state affiliates.

LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR

April 1: E-learning program begins: Tools for Moving Standards Into Practice.
April 30: Deadline to save $50 off registration for the 2013 Summer Conference.
July 21-24: Learning Forward's 2013 Summer Conference in Minneapolis, Minn.

Innovation can help us overcome persistent challenges in professional learning

Some educators pause with anxiety when they hear the word "innovation." They have been involved in too many pilot projects or worked with people who were innovation magnets embracing new ideas for the love of change itself. As a result, many educators are innovation phobic, believing about the latest innovation that "this too shall pass."

Today, we have an important opportunity to embrace innovation. The world is changing, the students we serve have different needs and expectations, and education must adapt or schools, as we know them today, risk becoming obsolete. As leaders of professional learning, we have a responsibility to guide people successfully through the transformation that innovation will support. We need to focus conversations about innovation on important issues, such as impact, scale, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Here are some persistent challenges in professional learning and ways innovation can help us overcome them and whet appetites for further exploration.

It is too expensive for teachers to capture their own teaching to support deep reflection on their classrooms. Video cameras are increasingly affordable and can be used effectively to support video capture to support individual reflection or team-based learning.

We can't afford mentors who give every teacher the time and attention they really need to perfect their craft and solidify their commitments to teaching as a career. Online coaching and mentoring technologies can provide new teachers with real-time coaching and support and reduce isolation many experience.

Assessments don't provide the information teachers need when they need it to adjust instruction and help students perform better. Tools that integrate assessment into the learning environment are evolving such that teachers and students can gauge where they stand in relation to what they need to continue learning.

We do not have money for "fancy new technology." Does every student need every textbook? Reallocate textbook or other supplementary materials dollars toward resources that increase access to resources students need to go deeper in their subjects.

K-12 schools and other schools and organizations do not always collaborate well. There are too many examples of successful partnerships to cling to this belief. Consider colleges (local and online) as partners for instruction. What can they offer to move your students on the pathway to college? Consider how their teachers contribute to your staffing and vice versa. View the entire community as your classroom. Operate from the assumption that everyone is vested in the success of your students.

Contracts get in the way of anything we want to do. We see a range of models that counter this conventional wisdom. Rewrite contracts to give you what you want to accomplish. Write memorandums of understanding between employees and employers. Be flexible — and ask for flexibility — as you stay focused on what is great for both students and adults.

This list is just a starting point to show how innovation can propel us forward. It is grounded in several critical assumptions:

- Our focus remains on student success and educator effectiveness.
- Learning must impact action at the individual, team, school, and system levels.
- Effectiveness of innovations must be measured by impact, replicability, scalability, efficiency, and cost.
- Innovation is not always a thing — it can be a structure, process, or product.

I welcome hearing your innovation stories, the barriers you have encountered and those you overcame, and other ways you have moved forward. ■

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Stephanie Hirsh (stephanie.hirsh@ learningforward.org) is executive director of Learning Forward.

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