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JSD

The
Learning Forward
Journal

theme THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPE OF ADULT LEARNING

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Grab hold of the future

There's an awful video making the rounds right now of a roomful of educators in a professional development workshop. It's the classic horror show, at least from what we can see of it — a presenter speaking at rows of adults, asking them to recite sentences and phrases back to her. There's nothing that indicates anyone, presenter included, is engaged or reflective or even learning — except the person who took the initiative to record, presumably surreptitiously, this portion of the workshop. Admittedly, this moment in time is taken entirely out of context.

At its best, the clip is a glaring example of how not to build effective professional learning. Unfortunately, it also stands out as a potential weapon for those stakeholders eager to contend professional learning is worthless. In reality, such workshops persist because, for a variety of reasons, they are easy for systems to offer.

The theme on the cover of this issue of *JSD* — the shifting landscape of adult learning — invites us to address how learning for educators must transform in these times. The shifts go much further than moving away from the scene in the video mentioned above. However, the fact that such professional learning environments still endure

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suggests that we still have much to do in moving the field.

Today's shifts that influence adult learning come from many directions. And in the end, they still require the same fundamentals to be effective.

With **technology**, new tools, apps, and ways to communicate are proliferating continually. The tools created specifically for education offer more options to gather and create instructional resources, customize learning, and integrate information across systems. Social media allows educators to connect with one another in new ways, spawning Twitter chats — by now an "old" tool.

New **standards for students** shift some of the content educators teach and how they teach it. It isn't only career- and college-ready standards that influence how and what we expect students — and, in turn, adults — to learn, though in part they encompass much of what we envision for 21st-century learners.

Evolving **student demographics** also influence what and how educators need to learn, including a growing recognition of the critical need to build the capacity of educators in high-poverty systems.

These aren't the only factors at work in schools that require shifts in learning practices. Regardless of the influences, the fundamentals remain. Adult learning must be shaped and driven by:

• The data about where students struggle.
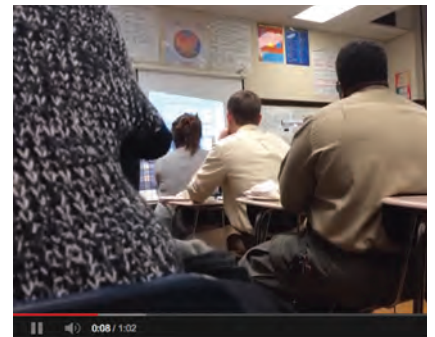
You can see the video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAy3vJn4pbs.

• The goals educators set for themselves based on student learning needs.
• The need to engage all adult learners at whatever stage of career they are or level of knowledge and skills they have.
• The alignment of learning designs to the learning goals and needs of adult learners in the room.
• The requirement for all learners to have opportunities for active engagement, which is tied to deep understanding and knowledge.

When school systems create connections between all of the exciting shifts in education to shifts in adult learning and cover the fundamentals of effective learning for educators, that's when they'll see results. Sadly, it won't be as easy as hiring a consultant to drone on in the front of the room. However, the size of the task doesn't take away the obligation school systems have to every learner they serve. ■

TEAM UP

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essentials

STATE POLICIES
2013 State Teacher Policy Yearbook
National Council on Teacher Quality, January 2014

The National Council on Teacher Quality offers its annual analysis of every state policy that affects teaching. In 2013, states averaged C- for their teacher policies. Florida, with a B+, earned the highest overall teacher policy grade; Montana, with an F, was lowest. Among the report's key findings: Teacher effectiveness is increasingly being factored into personnel decisions; there has been much less action on policies aimed at recruiting and retaining the best teachers; and states need to do a better job of providing flexible pathways into teaching.
http://bit.ly/1byNz1v

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION
Using Teacher Evaluation Data to Inform Professional Learning
Center on Great Teachers & Leaders, January 2014

This professional learning module is designed as a workshop to help leaders and staff members from regional and state education agencies understand the link between teacher evaluation and professional learning and to ensure that school and district structures support a teacher evaluation system focused on professional growth. The module can be modified for use with district leadership teams, principals, or teacher leaders. Materials include a facilitator's guide, handouts, sample agenda, and slide presentation, all available free for download from the website.
http://bit.ly/1h6REgY

BLUEPRINT FOR ASSESSMENT
Creating Systems of Assessment for Deeper Learning
Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, 2013

Authors David Conley and Linda Darling-Hammond describe how state policymakers and education leaders can design assessment and accountability systems in ways that support learning for students, educators, and systems. They offer a blueprint that supports the development of deeper learning skills, generates instructionally useful diagnostic information, and provides insights about a wider range of student capacities. They recommend combining traditional tests with classroom-based assessments that allow students to demonstrate their abilities to design and conduct investigations, solve complex problems, and communicate in a variety of ways.

http://stanford.io/1c2RgwJ

REFORMS IN ACTION
Progress: Teachers, Leaders, and Students Transforming Education
U.S. Department of Education

PROGRESS, a U.S. Department of Education resource, highlights state and local innovative ideas, promising practices, lessons learned, and resources informed by the implementation of K-12 education reforms. These lessons from the field showcase reforms in action spurred by programs such as Race to the Top, Investing in Innovation, School Improvement Grants, Promise Neighborhoods, and ESEA Flexibility and are intended to provide insight into the transformations taking place in classrooms, schools, and systems across the country through the leadership of teachers, school, district, and state leaders and their partners.
www.ed.gov/edblogs/progress

TIME FOR LEARNING
Redesigning and Expanding School Time to Support
Common Core Implementation
Center for American Progress, January 2014

The Center for American Progress and the National Center on Time & Learning believe that expanded learning time is critical to meet the demands of the Common Core State Standards. Among their recommendations:
- States and districts should pass legislation and enact policies that are school-redesign friendly.
- Districts and schools should increase the amount of time teachers have for collaboration and professional learning during the school day and year.
- States, districts, and schools should use existing federal and state resources to fund high-quality expanded learning time school models.

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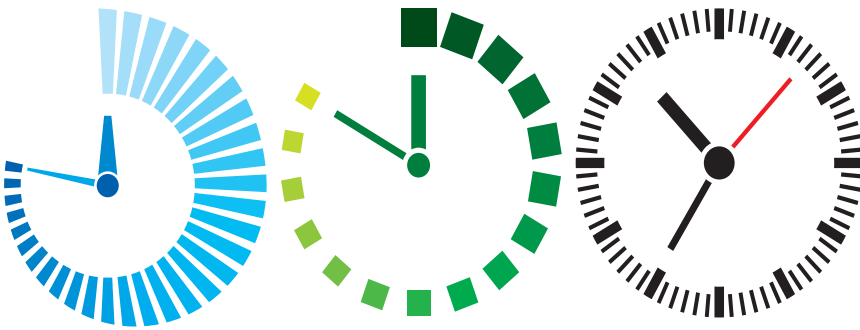
GUIDES TO LEARNING
Essential Guide to Professional Learning series
Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

The Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders describes the characteristics of high-quality professional learning culture and of professional learning. The Essential Guide to Professional Learning series unpacks the research behind key themes of the professional learning charter. School leaders and teachers can use this series to reflect on and inform professional learning in their school. Series topics include evaluation, leading culture, and innovation.

http://bit.ly/1d1xCBy

DESIGN SOLUTIONS
Design Thinking for Educators
IDEO

IDEO, a global design firm, created this Design Thinking Toolkit for Educators specifically for the context of K-12 education. The tool kit outlines the process and methods for designing collaborative solutions for classroom, school, and community. The design process involves five stages: discovery, interpretation, ideation, experimentation, and evolution, and each is spelled out step by step with examples of and worksheets for each step.

http://designthinkingforeducators.com

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HOW TO GET IN TOUCH
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THE FUTURE OF LEARNING

Chief Learning Officer recently hosted a webinar on the future of learning from the perspective of the corporate world. During the hour-long session, the two speakers investigate how learning is changing on the job and look to new practices and strategies, including some from the education field.

Discussion topics include:

- Social learning and how it will continue to evolve to meet new social technologies;
- What the Khan Academy could mean for corporate learning;
- The role of accreditation in the next generation of learning;
- Strategies for accelerating development of new employees; and
- Augmented reality and the implication for just-in-time learning.

The recorded webinar is available at http://clomedia.com/events/view/the-future-of-learning.
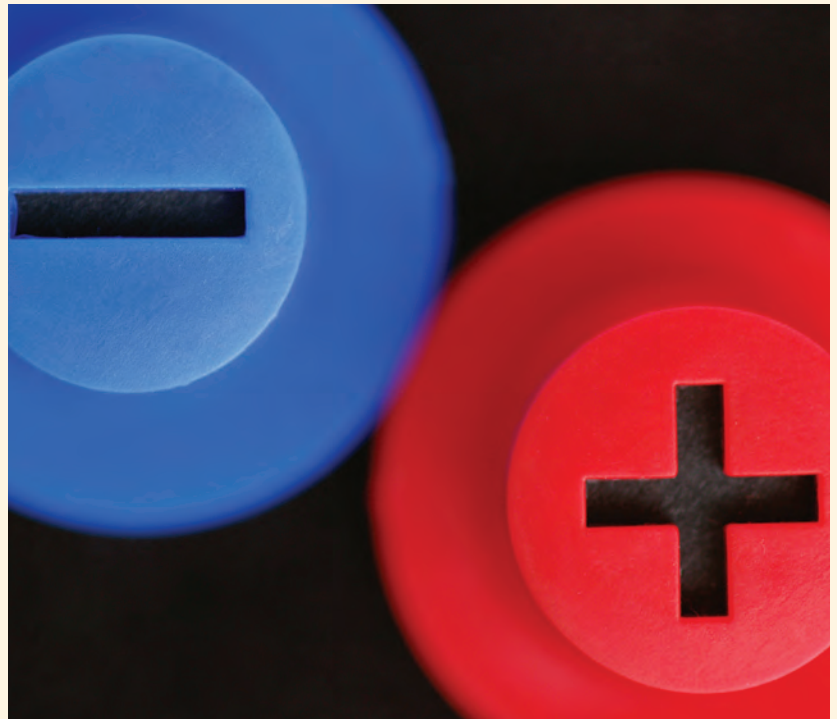
LESS OF THIS, MORE OF THAT

By Stephanie Hirsh

Just as we identify shifts for student learning called for by the Common Core, what are the required shifts that need to accompany them for professional learning?

In planning professional learning that leads to changed educator practices and improved student results, five shifts must occur (see table on p. 9). These changes in practices will occur in schools and school systems that align planning, implementation, and evaluation with Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning.

The ideas in this piece have been informed by Learning Forward's Transforming Professional Learning initiative.

HOW DO YOU SCORE?

HOW TO MEASURE THE TEAM

To see how your state, system, school, or learning team measures up, review the five shifts in the table, then use this number system to score yourself in each of the five (A-E) categories:

5 The **MORE** category defines how we work all the time.

4 The **MORE** category defines how we work most of the time.

3 We operate sometimes in the **LESS** and other times in the **MORE** category.

2 The **LESS** category defines how we work most of the time.

1 The **LESS** category is most characteristic of how we work.

5 SHIFTS IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

CATEGORY	LESS OF THIS	MORE OF THAT	MY SCORE (1-5)
A	Driven by educator preference.	Driven by student, educator, and system data.	
B	Individual learning.	Collaborative, team-based learning engaged in defined cycles of continuous learning to build deeper expertise, powerful lessons, and authentic and meaningful assessments.	
C	Large-group, formal, one-size-fits-all activities to build awareness and deliver content.	Transformative learning experiences that replicate expectations for classroom practice.	
D	Occasional, episodic adult pullout learning opportunities	Regularly scheduled learning opportunities as part of the workday and week.	
E	Low expectations or support for application of learning	High expectations for application of learning coupled with coaching and other forms of workplace support for implementation.	
		TOTAL	

SCORING

If you scored 21-25	Give yourselves a hand. More importantly, give some others a hand; they can benefit from your support.
If you scored 17-20	Feel good about being on the right track and recognizing what is essential for professional learning to achieve better outcomes.
If you scored 13-16	Write an action plan on what steps you will take in the next few months to move yourselves more quickly along the continuum of effectiveness.
If you scored 9-12	Seek others' views on what you can do to improve your professional learning and the strategies you are currently employing.
If you scored 5-8	It's time to redesign professional learning. Share this with others on your team and start a discussion about effective professional learning that impacts educator practice and student achievement

EVERYONE AT SCHOOL IS A LEARNER

Years ago, Learning Forward (then NSDC) had a tagline that said, "At school, everyone's job is to learn." This is true in any workplace that calls itself a learning organization. To achieve continuous improvement, every professional has the responsibility to engage as a committed learner, willing to acknowledge and explore what he or she doesn't understand.

Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning emphasize the needs and responsibilities of adults as learners. This is especially true for the Learning Designs standard, which states: *Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.* Within the standard are three critical concepts. The articles throughout this issue of *JSD* will help to develop deeper understandings of these concepts.

APPLY LEARNING THEORIES, RESEARCH, AND MODELS

Educators, through both planning and practice, continually explore how students learn best, and the answers are different for each student. The same level of inquiry is necessary for adult learning. Educators consider elements that best support adult learners and use their understanding of learning models to shape valuable learning experiences.

"Student learning is developmental, and educators know that effectively supporting that learning should take into account the way a student learns and the way that learning changes over time. The complex, developmental nature of learning is easily accepted when educators think about students, but this same idea is often overlooked when they consider the learning needed to improve their own practice. Adult learning is also developmental" (Fahey & Ippolito, p. 32).

"With the exponential rate of innovation, and the creation of websites, apps, and devices, roles are changing. The person whose disposition is to be curious, confident, and eager to try something new, explore, engage, and try again learns what is needed to teach and lead regardless of age or position" (Gullen & Sheldon, p. 36).
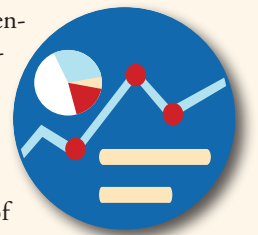
"Why are critical thinking and metacognition important to professional learning? Research and personal ex-

perience have shown that when educators are engaged in critical thinking about the process of learning, they are empowered to take ownership of their learning. Whether in the classroom or in everyday life, this type of thinking creates a sustainable, ongoing process that promotes metacognition" (Donnelly & Linn, p. 42).

"How do we move novice educators from the initiation stage to proficiency? … Are there strategies that we can use to facilitate and accelerate the transition? Can these strategies be employed for aspiring and novice principals? Will the same strategies that help aspiring and novice leaders help other aspiring or novice educators in various roles? Can we develop a process to intervene early for those at risk and get them back on track before they fail?" (Carlson, Harsy, & Karas, p. 51).

SELECT LEARNING DESIGNS

Professional learning leaders not only understand how adults learn and multiple appropriate models, but also know how to select a learn design appropriately. The learning design supports specific learning goals and advances learners from accessing information to knowledge application.
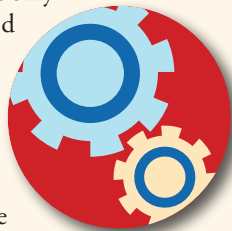
"… [P]latforms for professional learning must engage educators in purposeful collaboration with a community of learners designed to meet not only individual learning goals, but also those of teams, schools, districts, and programs" (Killion & Treacy, p. 16).

"During Teacher Rounds, teachers teach individual lessons while other teachers in their rounds group observe. Through rounds, more experienced practitioners can pass on knowledge and experience to the less experienced. There are opportunities for both veteran and novice teachers to learn, and those opportunities are encouraged. The teachers — one of whom is the group's facilitator — are in control of the process of observing, analyzing, learning, and making a strategic commitment to change their practice based on what they have learned" (Troen & Boles, pp. 20-21).

"Nothing is more frustrating than participating in professional development that doesn't support learning. Therefore, when educators begin to plan both short- and long-term professional learning, they must begin by asking the same critical questions that they want teachers to ask their students:
- What do we want participants to learn?
- What are the purposes of this learning?
- How will I model for my learners?
- How will I know they understand?" (Donnelly & Linn, p. 42).

PROMOTE ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Adults actively engaged in learning take responsibility for shaping their own growth and are able to authentically apply what they learn. As active learners, adults interact with the content and with other learners, collaborating for collective growth that impacts all students.
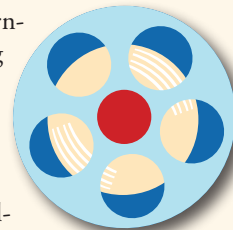
"Change in professional practice begins with knowledge and ends when the educator thoroughly analyzes available resources, contemplates how to adapt them to his or her unique circumstance, makes those adaptations, applies the adaptations in practice, and reflects on the effectiveness of the practice in terms of benefits for students" (Killion & Treacy, p. 14).

"However, content knowledge as well as practical knowledge, good judgment, expertise, and accumulated wisdom in schools is often confined to the classroom of the teacher who possesses that knowledge, wisdom, and expertise. To become better places for adults to learn, some schools intentionally become places where educators learn with and from one another. These schools develop a socializing learning practice" (Fahey & Ippolito, p. 34).

"Deepening the level of cognitive demand by applying, integrating, and communicating what we have learned to authentic real-world situations is essential" (Gullen & Sheldon, p. 37). ■

MY

THS

ABOUT TECHNOLOGY-SUPPORTED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

By Joellen Killion and Barbara Treacy

The future of professional learning is shaped by its present and past. As new technologies emerge to increase affordability, access, and appropriateness of professional learning, three beliefs are visible in current practices related to online learning. Each contains a premise that merits identification and examination. We call these beliefs myths that may emerge from faulty assumptions about what learning is, how it occurs, or how to bring about its transfer to practice.

This article examines these three commonly held myths about technology-supported professional learning. Each has significant implications for how state or provincial agencies, school systems, or schools support professional learning and how individual educators experience it. In addition, these myths have implications for vendors and providers of technology-supported professional learning.

Myth 1: Access equals learning.

Myth 2: Knowledge improves practice.

Myth 3: Individualized learning alone transforms schools.

MYTH 1
ACCESS EQUALS LEARNING.

"You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink."
— *English proverb*

Education agencies are rapidly developing platforms to support educator professional learning aligned with educators' individual growth and development goals. These goals, often drawn from an educator's evaluation, are intended to expand and refine professional practice based on thoughtful analysis and constructive feedback of a supervisor or team of reviewers.

Individual goals use observation of practice, student achievement, and other forms of evidence to identify areas for growth. The platforms are intended to provide easy access to a rich array of resources to support achievement of individual goals.

The idea of individualized goals for development based on individual data makes sense. Providing access to rich resources to support professional growth is not only logical, but is also a responsibility of education systems.

States, districts, and other education agencies approach this work differently, yet nearly all are creating platforms

that incorporate marketplaces, embedded resources purchased from vendors, or access to vendor products; developing their own resources; or using some combination of these approaches.

Educator effectiveness is associated with student success. Most educator standards incorporate one about professional responsibility for continuous improvement. Providing access to resources for educator learning and growth acknowledges that education agencies are committed to supporting educator professional growth and development. Making resources convenient to access and aligned to state or district professional educator standards and student curriculum reinforces the link between educator growth and student learning.

Yet in most cases, the circle is not closed. Providing access is not equivalent to learning. Access is one step of the learning process. It puts information, models, relevant resources, and opportunities to network with other educators at the fingertips of educators — provided the bandwidth, hardware, and software are available.

Easy access facilitates the process of seeking answers to perplexing instructional challenges, reading an article about different ways of knowing, searching for instructional materials or fresh ideas, or connecting with other educators about how to meet the needs of students with limited English in a social

ALIGN RESOURCES TO STANDARDS

Access contributes to learning, yet educators must use what they access to strengthen their practice to impact student success. Those making decisions about educator support systems should align resources to the educator performance standards and student learning standards. The more aligned and relevant resources are to educator and student standards, the more likely it is that accessing support systems will contribute to professional learning that results in change in practice and student success.

studies classroom.

So these questions must be asked: Does access constitute professional learning? Does the process of choosing a lesson plan from an instructional support system or watching a model lesson via videostreaming equate to learning if a teacher's goal is to design effective lessons that integrate the core components of the district's instructional framework? Does the process of accessing information or resources alter what an educator knows, is able to do, believes, and actually does in practice?

MYTH 2
KNOWLEDGE EQUALS PRACTICE.

"One must learn by doing the thing, for though you think you know it, you have no certainty until you try."

— *Sophocles*

Many developers of online learning products base their work on the assumption that knowledge leads to application. The research of Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers (2002) counters this assumption. They surmise from multiple research studies about changing instructional practice that presenting theory, information, concepts, or principles alone is insufficient in promoting application of learning.

They further suggest that seeing models or demonstrations does little to promote application. Even intentional practice has little influence. What is most influential in promoting application of new learning is deeper study, coaching, and feedback.

Benjamin Bloom places knowledge and comprehension at the lowest levels of his taxonomy of levels of understanding. The premise is that knowing and comprehending are less cognitively complex than those levels of understanding that follow — application, analysis, evaluation, and creating.

Donald Kirkpatrick and James Kirkpatrick (2006) de-

scribe levels for the evaluation of training that place acquisition of knowledge at the second of four levels, application at the third level, and results for clients as the final level.

Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (2005) identify explaining — providing thorough and justifiable accounts of phenomena, facts, and data, as the first of six facets of understanding.

Knowing or comprehending may initiate the change in knowledge and skills that lead to application of learning and eventually produce results for students; however, alone they are insufficient to be equated with professional learning. Too often, some models of online learning depend on a knowledge transmission approach to learning. If it fails to include application of learning in multiple contexts, plus an analysis of and reflection on practice, is it professional learning?

Change in professional practice begins with knowledge and ends when the educator thoroughly analyzes available resources, contemplates how to adapt them to his or her unique circumstance, makes those adaptations, applies the adaptations in practice, and reflects on the effectiveness of the practice in terms of benefits for students. Professional learning is measured in expanded knowledge and skills, refinements in practice, and impact on student learning.

MYTH 3
INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING ALONE TRANSFORMS SCHOOLS.

"Episodic and ineffective professional development is replaced by professional learning that is collaborative, coherent, and continuous and that blends more effective in-person courses and workshops with the expanded opportunities, immediacy, and convenience enabled by online learning."

— *U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Technology, 2010*

Technology enables powerful new online learning opportunities for educators to experience individualized, interest-driven, just-in-time learning that can be pursued anytime, anyplace, and with any device. This kind of personalized learning addresses common challenges of one-size-fits-all professional development and removes the barriers of time and place that limit busy teachers' access to the professional learning they need and want.

For these reasons, individualized online learning models are growing rapidly, with an increasing number of educators engaging in their own online personal learning networks using a variety of social media tools and accessing online journals, encyclopedias, tutorials, other media, and resources based on their own needs, with just-in-time support where and when they need and want it.

Twitter chats, blogs, Nings, Google+ groups and communities, Open Education repositories, digital museum resources, and online libraries all offer a proliferation of educator-focused online resources. An *Education Week Teacher* article titled "Fighting teacher isolation with technology" describes how individualized, interest-driven learning is rapidly spreading in popularity (Magiera, 2013).

The U.S. Department of Education-funded Connected Educators initiative is an example of a large-scale, free, online professional opportunity that is engaging thousands of educators from across the country on a range of topics of interest to them. The initiative sponsored a Connected Educators Month in October 2013 with more than 600 events.

While self-directed online learning models provide effective ways to address individual educator learning goals, educators are not solo contractors, nor is learning a solitary process. Educators work interdependently with other educators to achieve team, school, district, and state goals for student learning.

Individual learning therefore may increase variance among classrooms, leading to higher differences in student learning. Individual learning is insufficient to achieve success for all students within a school. In a recent study of the diffusion of professional development, researchers found that sharing expertise through collegial interactions has nearly the same effect on changes in instructional practices as direct engagement in professional development (Sun, Penuel, Frank, Gallagher, & Youngs, 2013).

Ideally, platforms for professional learning should blend individual and collaborative learning to diffuse effects among educators. Educator professional learning plans should include a combination of both individualized and collaborative online approaches within a continuum of learning opportunities, both online and face-to-face.

As a result, platforms for professional learning must engage educators in purposeful collaboration with a community of learners designed to meet not only individual learning goals, but also those of teams, schools, districts, and programs. Such communities can provide powerful ways to address specific school, district, and programmatic learning goals systemically — goals that may not be as easily or fully achieved by individuals engaged in independent, online, or face-to-face professional learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Developers and providers of technology-supported professional learning platforms or products have a responsibility to examine the beliefs upon which their products or services are based and analyze the design against learning theory, standards for professional learning, and research- and evidence-based practices. Here are recommendations to ensure that technology-supported professional learning translates to improved teacher practice and student learning outcomes.

Promote collaborative learning to reduce isolation and variance in students' opportunity to learn. Teaching is an isolating profession. Online professional learning, designed with a learning community model, enables educators to build strong connections with other educators, give and receive feedback, share and analyze student work, collaborate on curriculum and instruction, interact with local and distant experts and colleagues, and engage in reflection in, on, and for practice.

"A new culture emerges as teachers shift away from a paradigm of isolation and closed doors," reports the *Connected Educator Starter Kit.* "As educators grow into connected learners, they not only start to ask more critical questions of each other related to practice, but they also begin to actively listen and closely attend to varied perspectives that may help the community of learners to move forward" (Powerful Learning Practice, 2013). The effect of peer excellence spills over across classrooms and promotes a culture of continuous improvement.

Advance professional learning as a social and collaborative process. In the Knowledge Age, where information is abundant, no one can know everything he or she needs to know. A knowledgeable person has more than a collection of information, but rather is competent in information acquisition and analysis and the use of social connections and networks for collaborative construction of new knowledge emerging in a rapidly changing world.

James Paul Gee, an education and games researcher at Arizona State University, noted, "Success in the 21st century at work and in life requires collaboration, collective intelligence, and smart teams using smart tools" (2013).

Increase collaborative professional learning to increase impact on educator and student learning. Learning Forward's widely recognized Standards for Professional Learning include a standard focused on the importance of 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" (Learning Forward, 2011). For nearly 30 years, researchers have confirmed the positive impact of collaboration on educators, school cultures, and students.

Design and disseminate technology-enhanced programs, products, and services that support effective professional learning that builds educators' knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practices. Paulo Friere (1998) acknowledges that learning is a social process. He pairs praxis — a cycle of theory, application, evaluation, reflection, and new or adjusted theory — with dialogue — the process of working collaboratively and respectfully with one another to listen, question, and construct understanding. Building on Freire's critical pedagogy theory, online learning has tremendous potential to integrate application, analysis of, and reflection on practice.

Learning experiences that engage learners in adapting learning for application within their own unique contexts or in diverse contexts allow learners to personalize their learning, link it to their specific grade level and content area, and use it to support student learning.

Overall, individual and collaborative online models, combined in an effective balance, enable new models of professional learning that address a continuum of ongoing learning that educators need, both formal and informal, both individually and collaboratively driven.

The interplay of both of these models speaks directly to the National Education Technology Plan goal for teaching: "Professional educators will be supported individually and in teams by technology that connects them to data, content, resources, expertise, and learning experiences that can empower and inspire them to provide more effective teaching for all learners" (U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Technology, 2010).

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards incorporate performance, knowledge, and dispositions and define them as follows:

" 'Essential knowledge' signals the role of declarative and procedural knowledge as necessary for effective practice, and 'critical dispositions' indicates that habits of professional action and moral commitments that underlie the performances play a key role in how teachers do, in fact, act in practice" (CCSSO, 2011, p. 6).

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ROUNDS
PUTS TEACHERS IN CHARGE OF LEARNING

By Vivian Troen and Katherine C. Boles

Most people are familiar with the practice of medical rounds, in which interns and mentoring physicians visit patients in an institutional setting, observe their various conditions, discuss what they observed, and analyze possible treatment options and outcomes. In the medical profession, making these rounds is viewed as a significant and highly important form of professional learning.

While medical rounds for physicians and instructional rounds for teachers — called Teacher Rounds to distinguish it from the practice of rounds by administrators — are not precisely the same, the comparison is a shortcut way to begin thinking about what constitutes this kind of school-based professional learning.

Teacher Rounds is a strategy many schools use as part of a comprehensive program for improving teaching and learning. Teacher Rounds is based on these core assumptions about what it takes to create a culture of professional growth and learning:

- Teaching practice is best when it is public and collaborative.
- Teaching is strongest when teachers collect data and act on it rather than rely on intuitive judgments.
- Teachers who are self-reflective about their teaching are more effective teachers.
- Significant improvements in teaching practice occur slowly, in small steps.
- Development of teacher leadership improves instruction.

The practice of Teacher Rounds is professional learning that embodies all of these assumptions.

WHY DO ROUNDS?

Teacher Rounds is an advanced form of critical colleagueship — a professional learning environment that helps teachers expose their classroom practices to other educators and enables them to learn from data-driven feedback offered from a stance of inquiry.

During Teacher Rounds, teachers teach individual lessons while other teachers in their rounds group observe. Through rounds, more experienced practitioners can pass on knowledge and experience to the less experienced. There

PROCESS

are opportunities for both veteran and novice teachers to learn, and those opportunities are encouraged.

The teachers — one of whom is the group's facilitator — are in control of the process of observing, analyzing, learning, and making a strategic commitment to change their practice based on what they have learned.

ALIGNED WITH STANDARDS

From now on, educators will devote a fair amount of time struggling with the "what" of the Common Core State Standards. Schools will hire outside experts to provide workshops and other events designed to help teachers learn how to change their practice in order to implement the Common Core. But there is little chance that this professional learning will help teachers figure out how to embed the Common Core State Standards into their practice — and professional learning will certainly not focus on how teacher collaboration can play a central role in teachers learning how to teach to those standards.

Here's something to think about: While the focus of the Common Core State Standards is on teachers' *teaching*, the Standards for Professional Learning, developed by Learning Forward with contributions from 40 professional associations and education organizations, are focused on teachers' *learning*.

Learning Forward's widely accepted multilevel set of standards "outline the characteristics of professional learning that lead to effective teaching practices, supportive leadership, and improved student results. The standards make it explicit that the purpose of professional learning is for educators to develop the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions they need to help students perform at higher levels" (Learning Forward, n.d.-b). The Standards for Professional Learning call for "professional development that fosters *collective responsibility* for improved student performance" (Learning Forward, n.d.-a).

Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning help create the conditions so that teachers will learn what they need to learn in order to improve teaching and assist all students in meeting challenging state academic achievement standards.

This does not guarantee that all teachers will be equally effective. But it does create an intellectually stimulating climate and a process through which educators' collaborative learning and mutual accountability can focus on improved student performance. This will enable educators

to consider learning as an integral part of their work week, and the standards posit that teacher learning "must be as easily accessible in their schools as walking to a room down the hall" (Mizell, 2008).

By design, Teacher Rounds is perfectly positioned to give teachers the tools, skills, strategies, and supports they will need in order to align their practice with the Standards for Professional Learning and thus open the door to the Common Core State Standards. The table on p. 24 shows how the core elements of the Standards for Professional Learning align with Teacher Rounds.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT ROUNDS
1. Lay the cultural groundwork.
- School leaders (principal, assistant principal, deans, department chairs) should regularly observe and give teachers explicit feedback that is focused on teacher growth. Make it clear that this feedback is not connected to evaluation.
- Talk with small groups of teachers about plans for Teacher Rounds, collect their concerns, and then address them as the plans for rounds develop.

2. Assess teacher strengths.
Who can serve as a Teacher Rounds group facilitator? Look

THE ROUNDS PROCESS

Rounds group identifies the problem of practice it will work on for a year. Then the rounds cycle begins.

1 Facilitator prepares the host teacher with the problem of practice in mind: What do you want students to know and be able to do? What is to be observed?

2 Rounds group observes the host teacher's class.

3 Teachers debrief the observation.
• Observations.
• Wonderings.
• Learnings.

4 Teachers commit to a change in practice. Experiment with change in their classrooms; document student outcomes.

5 Teachers share a record of practice.

Source: Troen, V. & Boles, K.C. (in press). *The power of Teacher Rounds: A guide for facilitators, principals, & department chairs.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press & Learning Forward.

for faculty who:
- Are respected by other faculty;
- Have skills in observing teaching;
- Have the temperament suited for a facilitator (good listening skills, good social cognition, not overbearing, good collaborator, not afraid to push people gently); and
- Understand that teacher leadership as exerted through Teacher Rounds facilitation is a delicate cultural process of balancing authority and collegiality.

3. Choose the best candidates.
The best candidates for Teacher Rounds are:
- Teachers who are willing to participate and desire to improve teaching practice;
- Teachers who have had satisfactory evaluations and are secure in their jobs;
- Those whose participation will reinforce the credibility of the process for administrators and other teachers.

4. Provide support.
Build in time for reflection and mutual support among those planning, running, and facilitating Teacher Rounds. This might include an outside coach/consultant with experience in running a successful Teacher Rounds program.

The figure at left illustrates the five stages of the Teacher Rounds process.

ROUNDS IN ACTION
Let's examine the work of the teachers in a grade 3-5 Teacher Rounds group. They have identified a problem of practice, which they developed after agreeing that their math students lack persistence and perseverance in using mathematical discourse. After discussion, they understand that this problem is closely aligned to a Common Core Standard: constructing viable arguments and critiquing the reasoning of others. This key practice becomes the focus of their Teacher Rounds group, and they use the following strategy.

STEP 1
The Teacher Rounds group learns how to observe a lesson on video.

STEP 2
The group develops its problem of practice:
Teachers do not consistently provide *daily differentiated rigorous* tasks that encourage students to explain their mathematical thinking and build math fluency.

The group begins its work on the problem by investigating the following question:
How do we use Number Talks (a newly adopted math program in the school district) to plan math discussions that enable students with different math abilities to explain their thinking and build fluency?

Possible areas of focus for the observers:

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ALIGNMENT OF TEACHER ROUNDS TO STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

STANDARD	CONNECTION TO ROUNDS
LEARNING COMMUNITIES Core elements: • Engage in continuous improvement. • Develop collective responsibility. • Create alignment and accountability.	• Commits to collective improvement through observations, feedback, and targeted action. • Focuses on "our" students instead of "my" students. • Adjusts and improves practice, holding all participants accountable for their work.
LEADERSHIP Core elements: • Develop capacity for learning and leading. • Advocate for professional learning. • Create support systems and structures.	• Builds capacity of teachers to serve as facilitators. • Defines the role of facilitator; requires the skills of a teacher leader. • Develops a culture in which teachers are willing to make their practice public and transparent. • Creates collaborative structures for work with peers to support mutual learning through rounds.
RESOURCES Core elements: • Prioritize human, fiscal, material, technology, and time resources. • Monitor resources. • Coordinate resources.	• Uses internal resources by developing teachers to learn with and from each other. • Experiments with and monitors new teaching strategies in classroom teaching. • Achieves the highest levels of return for teachers and students through a low-cost, high-impact professional learning initiative.
DATA Core elements: • Analyze student, educator, and system data. • Assess progress. • Evaluate professional learning.	• Gives teachers opportunities to collect data from students and peers during an observation. • Develops teachers' capacity to assess instruction and analyze results. • Evaluates professional learning by using records of practice as a focus tool for teacher learning. • Uses data from student and teacher classroom practice.
LEARNING DESIGNS Core elements: • Apply learning theories, research, and models. • Select learning designs. • Promote active engagement.	• Provides job-embedded collaborative learning. • Encourages teachers to voice their concerns about their teaching; teachers are receptive to learning from one another. • Offers group-developed online resources in Google Docs; includes videos and records of practice. • Implements facilitator coaching. • Specifies professional reading.
IMPLEMENTATION Core elements: • Apply change research. • Sustain implementation. • Provide constructive feedback.	• Applies change research; teachers create an action plan, take action in their classrooms, refine action based on feedback. • Provides ongoing professional learning for teachers regardless of years in the field; recognizes the importance of continuous improvement for all teachers. • Extends, refines, and sustains learning through specific feedback.
OUTCOMES Core elements: • Meet performance standards. • Address learning outcomes. • Build coherence.	• Aligns with Common Core as well as any school or district initiative; can be focused on implementation of the initiative. • Reinforces teachers' observation and analysis skills; coordinates these to adjust practice and assess growth. • Links professional learning to student learning with a focus on student content standards.

Source: Adapted from **Learning Forward. (2011).** *Standards for Professional Learning*, p. 61. Oxford, OH: Author.

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- How does the teacher model the use of high-level math vocabulary so students can use it independently when they explain their thinking?
- How does the teacher listen to and follow her students' math thinking?
- What procedures are in place to allow students to share their thinking?
- What conditions are present that foster a safe learning community?
- How is student communication encouraged and valued?

STEP 3

A. The host teacher completes a host teacher preparation form. A sample of this form is at right.

B. The host teacher videos her class doing Number Talks.

STEP 4

The teachers convene a Teacher Rounds debrief meeting using a Debriefing Protocol (see box on p. 28).

Observation: Teachers report what they've seen (without interpretation), with a particular focus on their agreed-upon problem of practice.

Wonderings: Teachers wondered about these things that could impact their practice.

I wonder:

- How I'm going to make sure kids are using the most effective math tool rather than the one they're most comfortable with.
- How I'll keep track of what happens during one Number Talk and how it affects the next one based on what happens.
- How I get students with a communication disability to express their thinking.
- How I can get students to commit to try new or different strategies.

Teachers share their learnings:

- I want to emulate four quadrants (a method of recording on the white board) so students could see that there were differences among strategies.
- There's a benefit to writing what students were saying while they were saying them. I learned it's important to connect those two things while they're doing them.
- I want to emulate some of the language she used as students defended their answers or when a student realizes he or she made an error. There was no judgment in words or tone.
- I want to emulate the clarifying questions she asked.
- I learned that the kids seemed to be fine with the routine — fine with the expectation that they were not being recognized for the quality of a response.
- I want to emulate the pace of the lesson. The video is only about 7 minutes long and 20 out of 24 students answered.

HOST TEACHER PREPARATION FORM

1   **Review or explain the problem of practice.**

With the goal of building on number relationships to solve problems while building efficient strategies, we will investigate how we use Number Talks to plan math discussions that enable students with different math abilities to explain their thinking and build fluency.

2   **Provide context for the lesson.**

- What is the task?

Using mental math, students will solve the equation 368+191.

Students show a visual cue when they are ready with a solution, and students signal if they have found more than one way to solve the problem.

This form allows students to think, while the process continues to challenge those that already have an answer.

I collect answers correct/incorrect and record answers. Students share their strategies and thinking with their peers.

- What is your role as the teacher?

My role is to act as a facilitator, questioner, recorder, and learner in addition to creating a safe and accepting classroom community.

- What are the students going to be doing?

Students will reason with numbers and make mathematically convincing arguments. Students will be listening to their peers' responses and sharing mental math strategies.

3   **On what should the observers focus their attention?**

- How do I listen to and follow students' math thinking?

- How do I encourage and value student communication?

- What conditions are present that foster a safe learning community?

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- Develop a curriculum in alignment with the CCSS.
- Identify priority and supporting standards.
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It felt brisk, but not rushed. I think there was enough time. At the end of the round, each teacher makes a commitment to make a change in practice.

Commitments:

- I commit to doing Number Talks with my own group and the lower group together. I'm going to attempt to do it with the whole group with fractions and see what happens. I want to facilitate so my students share air time.
- I'm going to try to do Number Talks with nonjudgmental words and tones — neither positive or negative.
- I'm going to try to do Number Talks with less check-in with students to see how that affects the pacing.
- Instead of writing in quadrants and numbering the different strategies, I will ask students to name the strategy and record that. To build the skills of the four silent students, I'll video one student in an individual Number Talk, video again in a few weeks, then tape him in a group.
- I'm going to do Number Talks in small groups. I will see if it works well. I want to do it in small groups before I do it as a whole class.

STEP 5

The next Teacher Rounds meeting begins with records of practice that teachers bring to report on their commitments. Two examples:

Video 1: The teacher videoed a student who had had trouble participating in Number Talks. Her video shows her escorting him to the white board and tutoring him by practicing a Number Talk. She felt that individual attention could build his confidence. Indeed, when he wasn't working in the whole class group, he did better than she thought he would. (This is evident on the video, her record of practice.) She wondered about trying a few Number Talks with students who weren't as confident as the others. In a subsequent record of practice, she showed that some of the more silent students participated more actively in the whole group activity.

Video 2: The teacher is working on pacing, and there is a picture of solutions on the white board. The question she is working on is finding a balance between brisk pacing vs. ensuring that a majority of students understand. She said she is particularly interested in this because she teaches students in the bottom third of math performance for the grade. The host teacher's video reflected her commitment to combine two groups of students. This artifact was supplemented by a second artifact — a photograph of the whiteboard.

The teachers see that taking the time to work a handful of high-yield strategies into their routines brings significant gains to their students.

CONTINUAL TEACHER LEARNING

Successful schools — whether charter, traditional, or independent — have features in common: a clear mission, talented

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PROTOCOL FOR DEBRIEFING SESSION

1. All observers take a few minutes to review notes and jot down specifics on the lesson with a focus on how the lesson attempted to address the problem of practice.

2. Teacher reflects on the lesson. Teacher explains what his or her goals were for addressing the problem of practice, in what ways goals were or were not met and shares data on what students learned. *(5 minutes)*

3. Observers share data from the observation.

Part 1: What did you see? Descriptive data only. *(10 minutes)*

Part 2: What do you wonder about during the class? *(10 minutes)*

Part 3: Host teacher responds to those wonderings/questions he or she chooses while participants are silent. Host teacher reflects aloud on ideas and questions that seemed interesting. *(2 minutes)*

Part 4: What did you learn? *(6 minutes)*

4. Commit to how you will modify your instruction based on what was learned during the observation and debrief.

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teachers, time for teachers to work together, feedback cycles that lead to continuing improvements. That's what the practice of Teacher Rounds promotes — a structure and process by which talented teachers work together with an expectation of continual teacher learning and student improvement.

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Adults in schools must learn new programs, new strategies, new ways of working together, and even new ways of thinking about who their students are and what it means to be a teacher.

HOW TO BUILD SCHOOLS WHERE

ADULTS LEARN

By Kevin Fahey and Jacy Ippolito

I n the current, very complex, and even conflicted discourse about schools, one thing is clear: Schools need to be about student learning. Schools need to ensure that students are good readers, proficient writers, capable mathematicians, competent scientists, and knowledgeable historians. Students also need to learn to work together, be healthy, be resilient, and care about others. There is a lot of learning to be done.

However, some leaders of this student learning also understand that, in order for students to learn at high levels, the adults in schools must learn new programs, new strategies, new ways of working together, and even new ways of thinking about who their students are and what it means to be a teacher. In other words, there is a lot of adult learning to be done.

Over the past few years, we, along with our colleagues, have been documenting the work of learning leaders who unmistakably understand that schools need to be places where both students and adults learn (Breidenstein, Fahey,

Glickman, & Hensley, 2012; Ippolito, 2013). This simple insight has broad implications for leadership practice.

Leaders of schools where adults learn understand that:
- Educators need a *learning practice* as well as a *teaching practice*;
- Adult learning practice changes over time; and
- How adults' learning practice changes makes a difference in their teaching practice.

WORKING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

To improve teaching practice in classrooms, adults in schools need ways to work and learn together — a *learning practice* — that builds on and challenges their teaching practice and persistently focuses on student learning (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010).

Doug Lyons describes the learning practice at the Parker School in Reading, Mass., where he is principal: "In order to learn more and improve our practice, we have to dig deeper into what we do, what our kids need, and what we already know. We need to learn from each other" (Breidenstein et al., 2012, p. 29).

Jennifer Flewelling, former principal of the North Bev-

erly Elementary School in Beverly, Mass., describes the learning practice in her school in simple terms: "Any time we are together as faculty is a time for learning" (Breidenstein et al., 2012, p. 77).

These learning leaders subscribe to a common thesis: School improvement is built on adult learning, which changes over time and can be encouraged and supported by savvy school leaders. Moreover, a learning practice, like a teaching practice, develops in complex ways as teachers grow and learn, and is dependent on critical support from colleagues and principals.

UNDERSTANDING ADULT LEARNING PRACTICE

Educators broadly accept the notion that *how* a child learns changes over time. From childhood to adolescence to adulthood, students become less concrete and more abstract thinkers. They move, for example, from struggling with memorizing a specific letter's sound to writing three-paragraph essays to synthesizing multiple documents and viewpoints in an analytical college essay.

Student learning is developmental, and educators know that effectively supporting that learning should take into account the way a student learns, and the way that learning changes over time. The complex, developmental nature of learning is easily accepted when educators think about students, but this same idea is often overlooked when they consider the learning needed to improve their own practice. Adult learning is also developmental.

A useful lens for helping learning leaders understand the complex nature of adult learning practice in schools is constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1998). Constructive-developmental theory makes two broad claims: Adults continually work to make sense of their experiences (constructive), and the ways that adults make sense of their world can change and grow more complex over time (developmental). One implication of these claims is that in any school, each teacher will have her own learning practice — just as she has her own teaching practice.

For example, a new teacher who is worried about shepherding students to the lunchroom without disturbing other classes, as well as supporting the gifted, special education, minority, and privileged kids in her class, will have a very different learning practice from the established teacher who has a broad teaching and classroom management repertoire but questions how her academic language instruction might be improved to better meet the needs of second-language learners.

The first teacher is desperate for a clear, concrete, right answer to hold on to, while the second teacher might refuse prescriptive answers and prefer an inquiry-based stance toward improving instruction. Both teachers have something to learn, but those things will be learned in different ways.

HOW LEARNING PRACTICE CHANGES

It is hard to imagine that any teacher would ask 3rd graders to learn the quadratic equation. Most students at that grade level have neither the mathematical content knowledge nor the developmental capacity to understand concepts such as variables, equations, and factors. Nor would a kindergarten teacher hand out copies of *Hamlet* to students who learn primarily by sounding out words and mimicking the teacher.

Good teachers understand that *how* students learn makes a difference. Similarly, in schools where adults learn, leaders understand that the learning practice of teachers, departments, grade-level teams, and schools can be in very different developmental places.

Constructive-developmental theory can be used to characterize two typical adult learning practices as *instrumental* and *socializing*. Understanding the distinction between *instrumental* and *socializing* can help leaders build schools where adults learn.

Instrumental learning practice. An instrumental learning practice is built on precise solutions, specific processes, and unambiguous answers. The new teacher who is having difficulty understanding how to organize and manage guided reading groups might simply want a clear, tangible procedure, not an inquiry question or a chance for reflection.

Her learning practice is instrumental because she wants concrete steps and specific advice about how to group kids to read. "Instrumental knowers orient toward following rules and feel supported when others provide specific advice and explicit procedures so that they can accomplish their goals" (Drago-Severson, 2008).

An instrumental learning practice is particularly useful for teachers, teams, departments, schools, and districts needing concrete solutions, practical information, or specialized advice. And while what these schools need to learn can change over time, a school or teacher with an instrumental learning practice always wants to learn clear procedures for making students better writers, or specific strategies for teaching in longer blocks of time, or concrete steps for implementing inquiry-based science lessons.

Publishers, professional learning providers, universities, and researchers have lots of instrumental answers — concrete processes, specific advice, highly articulated programs and initiatives — and many of them have merit. Leaders who support instrumental learning practice in their schools have expertise with explicit teaching and learning strategies, or they need to be able to easily access that expertise.

Sue Snyder, principal of the Hannah School in Beverly, Mass., had a straightforward approach to developing an instrumental learning practice in her school. "We just figured out

> **Constructive-developmental theory makes two broad claims: Adults continually work to make sense of their experiences (constructive), and the ways that adults make sense of their world can change and grow more complex over time (developmental).**

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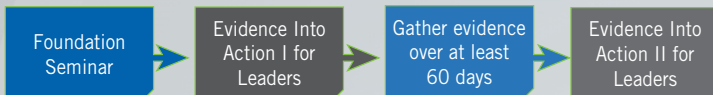
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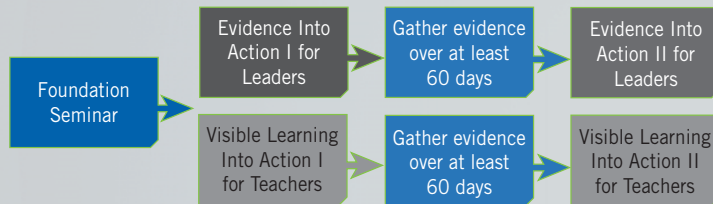
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that our faculty meetings needed to be classes" (Breidenstein et al., 2012, p. 15). Working with Sue Charochak, an elementary principal in the district, Snyder turned faculty meetings into classes, complete with lesson plans, homework, essential questions, guided practice, and opportunities for reflection.

Beginning with a focus on building classroom community and behavior management, the schools used this instrumental learning practice to address a variety of learning needs. Charochak noted, "It is interesting that in order to have my greatest success as a leader, I became a teacher" (Breidenstein et al., 2012, p. 14).

As teachers implement new learning in their classrooms, the limits of instrumental learning become noticeable. Instrumental learning helps teachers learn the *content* of a new program or strategy, but not necessarily a *process* to integrate that new practice into their teaching.

Integrating a new practice requires discussion, feedback from colleagues, classroom learning experiments, and collaborative work (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). Instrumental learning can be useful, but it tells particular teachers little about how to implement new learning in their particular classrooms with their particular students.

Socializing learning practice. A socializing learning practice is not dependent on straightforward, concrete answers. Instead, a socializing learning practice focuses on learning about the perspectives of others and taking them into account as part of systematic experimentation with different teaching practices.

Educators who have a clear capacity for reflection, flourish when working in teams, and can sacrifice their own interests to benefit the group have a socializing learning practice. "These adults are most concerned with understanding other people's feelings and judgments about them and their work" (Drago-Severson, 2008, p. 61).

Developing and supporting a teacher's socializing learning practice requires a very different kind of leadership. In most schools, there are exceptional teachers of reading, math, social studies, and science, teachers who are expert in helping students think scientifically or adept at engaging students in making historical judgments.

However, content knowledge as well as practical knowledge, good judgment, expertise, and accumulated wisdom in schools is often confined to the classroom of the teacher who possesses that knowledge, wisdom, and expertise. To become better places for adults to learn, some schools intentionally become places where educators learn with and from one another. These schools develop a socializing learning practice.

Jennifer Flewelling developed a socializing learning practice at North Beverly Elementary School. Describing that approach, she says, "There is no other way than collaboration, collegiality, and collective responsibility. This is what we do. We look at our practice and figure out how to make it better. Because you

know what? You don't have it all figured out" (Breidenstein et al., 2012, p. 2).

Flewelling's goal was to create a socializing learning practice by building more collaborative school groups, supporting reflective practice, and creating a coherent learning-focused school culture.

Flewelling was unambiguous about her role in developing a socializing learning practice: "My job is not to be expert on everything — I have to be focused on adult learning" (Breidenstein et al., 2012, p. 105). Unlike Sue Snyder, Flewelling was not the content expert. Her goal was to teach teachers to learn with one another, to share what they knew, and to make transparent what they needed to learn. She directed resources to support collaborative work and created a school that had a socializing learning practice.

Flewelling began to advance a socializing learning practice by creating a structure called STARS Club, in which members of the parent and business community regularly came to the school to offer enrichment activities to the students while the faculty worked together in new ways.

During these collaborative times, the STARS Club teachers looked together at student work, analyzed how writing was taught, gave each other feedback about dilemmas of practice, examined the coherence of the curriculum, and developed SMART goals. Flewelling quickly discovered that teachers were very interested in jointly pursuing a wide range of questions connected to their practice.

As the school community became more comfortable taking a socializing learning approach, the faculty took on more challenging topics and incorporated more demanding processes that required them to give one another feedback and build consensus about good teaching. In other words, they shifted the focus from isolated, individual, *instrumental* practice toward a collective, *socializing* emphasis on improving teaching and learning.

At the heart of socializing learning practice is the regular use of protocols to look at student work, adult work, and texts (Ippolito, 2013). For example, the faculty regularly used text-based protocols to build shared understandings of practice, the Tuning Protocol to help each other with lesson planning, the Consultancy Protocol to consider dilemmas of practice, and peer observation protocols to give each other feedback (School Reform Initiative, 2013). Flewelling and the North Beverly faculty used these structures and many more to teach the skills of socializing learning: reflection, collaboration, shared practice, and focus on student learning.

LEADING SCHOOLS WHERE ADULTS LEARN

The leadership lesson from our work is twofold. The first is simple: Think like — and consequently lead like — a teacher. Think about how the adults in the building learn, think about what they need to learn, and let your teaching/leading decisions

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SYNERGY SPARKS DIGITAL LITERACY

REDEFINED ROLES CREATE NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

By Kristine Gullen and Tovah Sheldon

Learning and leading happen everywhere — and technology unlocks access to information.

Want to visit a local museum, but you're not sure how to get there? Download directions from a map app, key the address into a GPS or your phone, and a voice provides turn-by-turn instructions to the destination.

Interested in an exhibit at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, but can't get to Washington, D.C.? A website provides a self-directed virtual tour (www.mnh.si.edu/vtp/1-desktop).

Students — even preschoolers — are curious and boldly confident in knowing how to access information on a multitude of devices. Why are some adults uneasy about using technology?

Knowledge has become an accessible commodity, and reaching for information on the Internet is remarkably comfortable and intuitive to most youth. Yet the unrestricted access and unabashed confidence of students using digital devices has placed many educators on unfamiliar and sometimes uncomfortable footing. Educators are often no longer the only experts on the information, tools, and know-how used to gain knowledge.

For teachers, becoming proficient with digital tools isn't enough. With the exponential rate of innovation, and the creation of websites, apps, and devices, roles are changing. The person whose disposition is to be curious, confident, and eager to try something new, explore, engage, and try again learns what is needed to teach and lead regardless of age or position.

What are the implications for the classroom? How do educators cultivate and grow this new type of learner? How do educators **become** this type of learner?

TEACHER REFLECTION

As educators who support and develop the global and digital literacy of teachers and leaders in Michigan, we see a spectrum of responses, from confidence to curiosity to defensiveness and even nostalgic reflections.

At a workshop on technology integration, a veteran teacher, visibly frustrated with trying to negotiate a website, said, "Remember the three R's? When it comes to reading, writing, and arithmetic, that I know how to teach. Why do I need to learn this?"

Leadership and teacher preparation are shifting. While there is foundational content contained in the three R's and in every discipline, in this age of connectivity and information growth, obtaining knowledge is just the beginning (Gullen & Zimmerman, 2013). Deepening the level of cognitive demand by applying, integrating, and communicating what we have learned to authentic real-world situations is essential. Tony Wagner (2008) states, "In today's world, it's no longer how much you know that matters; it's what you can do with what you know" (p. 111). Technology can be a lever in transforming instruction and empowering learners and leaders with a whole new set of emerging literacies.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Reading, writing, and arithmetic now fall under a broader category of literacy, which encompasses knowledge from any or all disciplines along with the ability to create, question, critique, and communicate verbally, graphically, digitally, globally using a variety of platforms, devices, texts, images, and sounds.

At first glance, it might seem overwhelming. Teachers often lament, "I am a math teacher (or science or music or business or history). I am not trained to teach reading, literacy, or whatever you now call it." How can every teacher possibly be expected to know how to do all of this? Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011) can provide support. Enacting the Learning Communities standard within a classroom can reframe the role of the teacher and student to compel a new type of classroom design — one that is "committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment" (Learning Forward, 2011).

Experts who can support educators with the knowledge, tools, and processes to elevate content into 21st-century literacies are all around us. For instance, educators can engage students in creating a classroom learning community by learning and leading together.

ENGAGING STUDENT VOICES

Taking a first step to re-create this new synergetic structure of learning, we invited a series of student groups in spring 2013 to provide insights and recommendations into the redesign of learning, projects, and instruction. Students were asked three questions:

1. How do you learn what is important to you?
2. When you think of the most engaging classwork and

INTERNET EVOLUTION

1995	2013
Users of the internet	
16 million	2.75 billion
World's population that is online	
0.4%	38.8%
Registered domains	
15,000	265 million

Sources: Internet World Stats, 2014; Verisign, 2013.

projects you have completed this year, what did you do?

3. If you could design or reimagine a class, how would you integrate technology?

As a warm-up, students introduced themselves and shared their favorite thing in school. Socializing with friends, engaging in sports or clubs — even before launching the planned questions, students were teaching us. We wondered: If socialization was a favorite part of being in school, how do we link peer-to-peer interaction with the content we want them to learn (Erickson-Guy & Gullen, 2013)?

Student responses to our first question — "How do you learn what is important to you?" — confirmed this concept. There was great consensus within and between groups that most of what they want to learn they find online, whether on social networking sites, twitter feeds, or just browsing.

Yet students also talked about dynamic teachers, ones with passion for their subjects and for their students. Students described the classes that connected real-world issues to what they are studying — whether it was in reading great literature, exploring historic events, or learning the background of a mathematician or scientist. Students liked learning about the people behind the theories.

There was also talk of classrooms that were engaging, and teachers who willing to learn with and from them. One student said, "My teacher didn't have all the answers. She asked real questions, and we figured it out together."

When asked to describe engaging classwork or projects, students shared times when they debated, had to study different perspectives, and the online research they needed to do in order to prepare.

Students spoke about classrooms that encouraged them to tap into resources such as neighbors, relatives, and online searches, and the need to search and re-search again. They described projects where they could bring in all sorts of technology, not just what the teacher knew how to use, and that

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www.21things4teachers.net

50 Education Technology Tools Every Teacher Should Know About
www.edudemic.com/50-education-technology-tools-every-teacher-should-know-about

13 Free Web Tools Students and Teachers Should Know About
http://blogs.kqed.org/mindshift/2013/07/13-free-web-tools-students-and-teachers-should-know-about

International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Resources
www.iste.org/learn/resources

GROUND RULES FOR STUDENT DIALOGUES

When gathering a group of students to hear their opinions and suggestions, be ready. We found most students are very comfortable, willing, and eager to share with adults who listen. Positive outcomes often happen if these conversations are planned well. Setting ground rules is an important first step. We would suggest asking students to agree to:

- Speak from their own experience, not what they have heard from others;
- Describe the characteristics of the learning, not the people involved; and
- Remember that the conversation is to help design or redesign instruction. Think about positive examples of current lessons or projects and also suggestions for future planning and design.

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students became the experts and the leaders.

REIMAGINING A CLASS

When we posed the final question — "If you could design or reimagine a class, how would you integrate technology?" — the room erupted. In great detail, students described apps, talked about websites, video clips, and attempted to describe all sorts of media and new technologies. Finally, one student asked, "Can I show you on my phone?"

Within moments, students began reaching for their out-of-sight devices. They began showing, sharing, laughing, and adding to the conversation. They made suggestions on how to use a shared document for group planning and creating group projects as one student showed a collaborative report he had created with others. Others shared online video conferencing tools that enhanced communication inside and outside the classroom.

One student shared a favorite feature from YouTube called Spotlight and launched the online tutorial on how to make an interactive lesson (www.knewton.com/blog/edtech/2010/12/15/how-to-make-an-interactive-lesson-using-youtube). Others shared their videos that were already created and available on YouTube, TeacherTube, and SchoolTube.

As web addresses and ideas came faster than we were able to capture, another student took a leadership role for the group and launched a live chat using TodaysMeet (http://todaysmeet.com). Students readily signed in and created a text thread. Suggestions were captured instantly.

WILLINGNESS TO LEARN

It's hard to imagine going back to the flip phones from just a few years ago, much less conquering the unknown devices next year's upgrades will bring. What is essential is the willingness to learn.

Cultivating and intentionally using new technology takes a disposition to risk and try again. It begins by redefining the roles of teacher/student and learner/leader. When educators create inclusive-synergetic learning communities, students often share insightful perspectives and create new possibilities.

Using digital tools to access information and to connect with others is common practice outside the school day. In the classroom, if educators want to learn how to leverage 21st-century skills, opportunities abound to create a classroom learning community where all members are learning and leading together.

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How to build schools where adults learn

be driven by these two considerations.

Kathy Bieser, principal of the International School of the Americas in San Antonio, Texas, says that, in the same way that good teachers plan with particular students in mind, she plans every faculty learning experience with the learning practice and needs of the adults in mind. "I have to be open to what is going to happen and adjust, adapt, keep working at it with the teachers, the leadership team, and myself" (Breidenstein et al., 2012, p. 99).

The second lesson is more complicated. It is quite clear that when a group needs an instrumental approach, a socializing approach will not be helpful. Sue Snyder made the right choice in turning her faculty meetings into classes. The adults needed concrete procedures and specific knowledge. However, there are limits to instrumental learning practice.

Jeff Price, principal of Serna Elementary in San Antonio, articulated the limits when he encountered them in his school: "We ask ourselves: Why aren't we going to scale on this? Why aren't we seeing whole school learning? When we are not, we know it's often because teachers aren't sharing their work and learning, especially from our success. We can't go to scale without sharing our work" (Breidenstein et al., 2012, p. 95). An instrumental learning practice helps individual teachers improve their teaching practice; a socializing learning practice improves the school.

Building schools where adults learn requires leaders to be persistent, intentional, and transparent in their efforts connecting a learning practice to improvements in teaching practice. While this is easier said than done, with time and systematic experimentation, learning leaders can meet teachers where they are by providing professional learning that both supports current learning and teaching practices and nudges faculty toward more complex and collaborative ways to work and learn.

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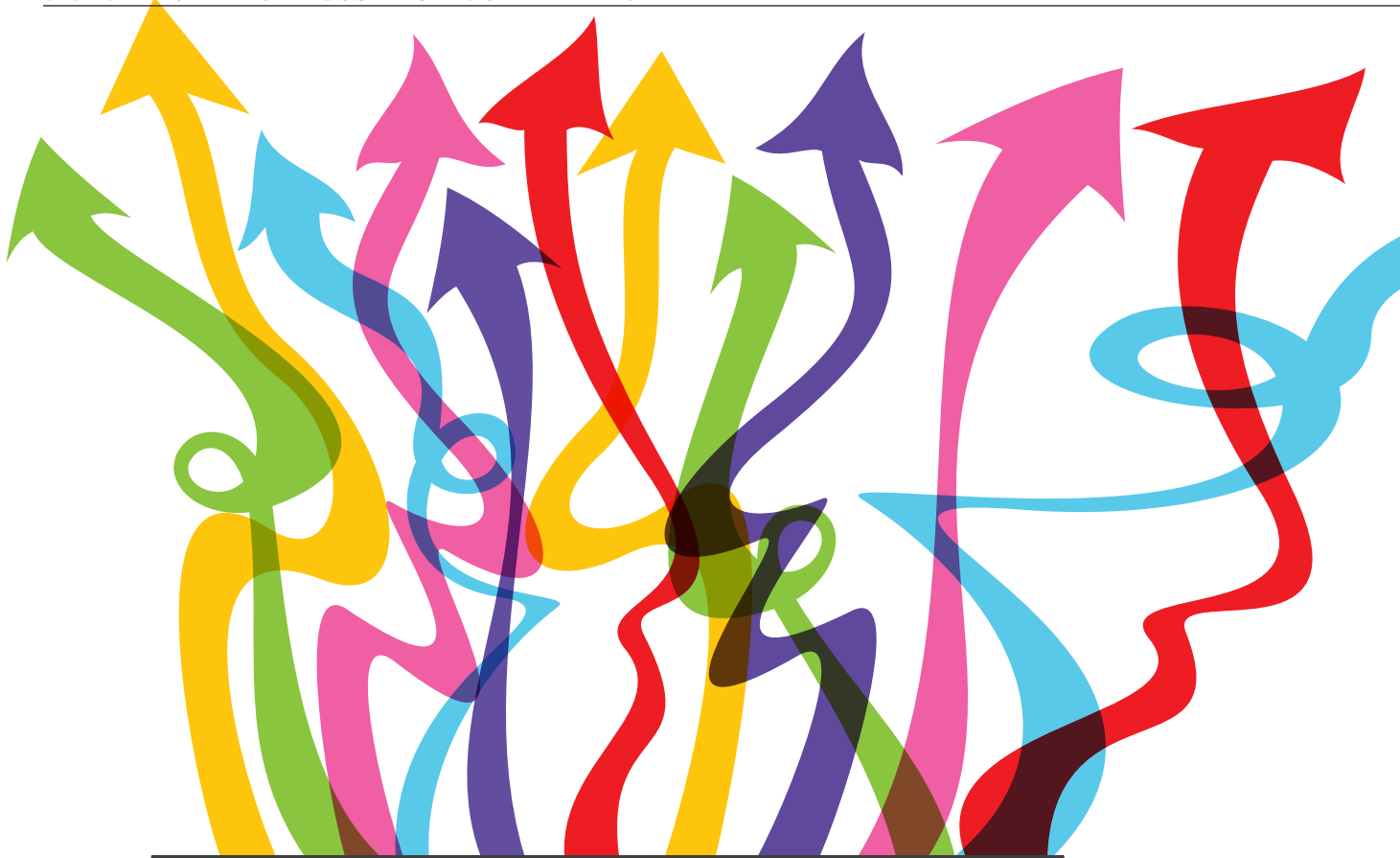
CRITICAL
THINKING
SKILLS
FIRE UP
TEACHER
LEARNING

By Heather Donnelly and Jeffrey Linn

With increased teacher accountability and decreased funding, effective professional learning is more critical than ever. Teachers and educational leaders need to be fully and continuously supported in their professional growth around the changes they face, such as implementing Common Core, learning to interpret and use student data, and supporting teachers as they adjust to revised teacher evaluation models.

The challenge is to design and implement successful professional learning that allows for continuous and sustained growth by giving the learner some measure of control and the opportunity to embrace that growth.

Too often, the breakdown of professional learning occurs in the transition between the training room and the classroom. When professional learning follows the structure of sit-and-get, there is little transfer of new learning into practice.

Professional learning for educators is not generally a learner-centered environment. Educators are often introduced to new content or concepts without engaging in critical thinking about their practice.

For example, many educators are being introduced to Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching (2007). While Danielson's framework is being used to assess teacher practice and compile scores as part of teacher evaluation models, too often educators are presented with a brief workshop that offers a surface-level overview of the instructional practices inherent in the framework.

This type of professional learning does not offer the level of reflection Danielson suggests: "The most powerful use of the framework — one that should accompany any other use — is for reflection and self-assessment" (p. 168). The framework's intention supports designing professional learning that promotes metacognition and empowers educators to become instructional decision-makers.

So what lies at the core of professional learning? To be most effective, professional learning needs to focus on what matters most: thinking and learning.

METACOGNITION AND CRITICAL THINKING

The concept of metacognition refers to an individual's ability to monitor his or her thinking. A metacognitive learner recognizes what he or she understands, when he or she needs more information, and what his or her strengths and weaknesses are related to the learning.

The National Research Council's committee on developments in the science of learning (2000) found that metacognitive approaches to instruction help people take control of their own learning and that in the science of learning, individuals must:

- Recognize what they understand and when they need new information.
- Recognize the strategies they need to assess their own understanding.
- Realize the importance of building their individual theories.
- Recognize their intellectual strength and weaknesses.

Metacognition and critical thinking are often used interchangeably. Similar to metacognition, critical thinking describes a self-guided intellectual process of analyzing and conceptualizing problems and issues by closely examining reasoning, assumptions, evidence, beliefs, and biases.

The idea of critical thinking is also the thread connecting the student learning standards of the Common Core, indicating that metacognition is the outcome of implementing these standards. However, being a critical thinker is not synonymous with being metacognitive. There is a

difference between educators thinking critically about new standards and thinking critically about how their practice will change in order to implement those standards.

Why are critical thinking and metacognition important to professional learning? Research and personal experience have shown that when educators are engaged in critical thinking about the process of learning, they are empowered to take ownership of their learning. Whether in the classroom or in everyday life, this type of thinking creates a sustainable, ongoing process that promotes metacognition.

If the United States is embracing the idea that student learning should be grounded in critical thinking and metacognition, then isn't it reasonable that the people who educate these students be metacognitive, critical thinkers as well? If so, professional developers should focus on the processes of critical thinking and metacognition in conjunction with content as the core of professional learning.

PLANNING FOR CRITICAL LEARNING

While some learners are naturally metacognitive in their thinking, not everyone will take professional learning to metacognition. Therefore, it is important to plan experiences that engage learners in critical thinking, shifting the focus of professional learning to the process of professional growth.

Nothing is more frustrating than participating in professional development that doesn't support learning. Therefore, when educators begin to plan both short- and long-term professional learning, they must begin by asking the same critical questions that they want teachers to ask their students:

- What do we want participants to learn?
- What are the purposes of this learning?
- How will I model for my learners?
- How will I know they understand?

Rather than asking participants to sit through staff development in which they gain familiarity with a new program or new standards, we plan learning experiences that engage participants as critical thinkers about their instructional practice as related to these new programs, standards, or any new learning.

To engage participants in this type of reflection about their practice, effective professional developers act as instructional coaches who plan purposeful questions that focus on what they want participants to learn.

We recently worked with teachers designing a differentiated unit of study. We asked them to reflect on these questions:

- How will I be able to tell if the students really understand?
- What might students misunderstand?
- Does it have the rigor to challenge all students at their instructional reading level?

Using this method of teaching forces the professional developer to think more about critical thinking processes while engaging the teachers in metacognition.

In another recent experience, we worked with K-6 English and language arts teachers to revise and align curriculum with their Common Core State Standards. Rather than asking teachers to read the standards and fit them into the current district curriculum, we focused on the six English and language arts shifts inherent in Common Core and how these shifts connect with what they already know about effective instruction (see table on p. 43, top).

Next, we asked teachers to examine their current curriculum document for what's missing in making the shift to Common Core — a shift in planning for doing to planning for learning — once again focusing on the instructional practices that promote the level of rigor present in these standards (see table on p. 43, bottom).

Both of these examples capture how planning for critical thinking and learning that promotes metacognition creates change in teacher practice. For example, teachers who completed the chart of English language arts Common Core shifts identified shared expectations of instructional practice, such as asking critical thinking questions, which they aligned with their teacher evaluation rubric. Once teachers embedded high-level focus questions in their curriculum-planning document, we observed increased use of these questions in instruction.

GRADUAL RELEASE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Professional developers strive to design a professional learning model that supports staff in becoming independent thinkers and learners. The key is to align professional learning with what we know about how people learn and process information so that educators feel supported.

Traditional models of staff development can be ineffective: New information is delivered, and everyone hopes that instructional practice changes. What's missing in this approach is the supported application component of the Gradual Release of Responsibility model, where teachers implement new learning in an authentic setting. As noted by Pearson & Gallagher (1983), "The critical stage in the model is the 'guided practice,' the stage in which the teacher gradually releases task responsibility to the students."

Knowing this, professional developers have to plan for how to provide this gradual and guided support to promote deeper understanding and successful change to teacher practice.

While the Gradual Release of Responsibility model is often presented as a linear approach to student learning, a fluid and flexible model more effectively supports professional learning and allows for differentiation to meet educators' individual needs (see figure on p. 44).

Each stage of this process is essential to professional learning, yet we know that everyone is at a different place in understanding. Therefore, it seems logical for these components to be flexible based on the needs of the learner.

As the figure shows, the essential components of Gradual Release of Responsibility within professional learning — coach-

MAKING THE SHIFT TO COMMON CORE

Common Core content shift	What this is not	What it is and what it means	Instructional shifts
Balancing informational and literary text	Reading nonfiction during content areas; always teacher-directed; adding more nonfiction to your library.	More student opportunity to choose text; differentiation; student-interest centered; teaching students how to match strategic thinking with informational text.	More rigor; higher-level questioning; increased teacher emphasis on metacognition; explicit instruction on organization of text.
Building knowledge of the disciplines	Lecture-based, isolated instruction; telling the facts.	More integration of thinking; purposefully integrating the disciplines; more student processing/inquiry; authentic investigations.	Metacognition; understanding organization of text; asking high-level questions; student application of thinking.
Staircase of complexity	Surface-level reading or more difficult words with low-level understanding; just harder books; limiting students to their Lexile level all the time.	Increase in deeper understanding and thinking; all learners involved in reading at complex levels; the thinking someone has to do in order to comprehend the text.	Scaffolding; more thoughtful questioning; high-level questions; modeling; differentiation; monitor and repair (and monitor combinations of strategies).
Text-based answers	Recall, surface questions.	Student-generated discussion about their thinking around content; how readers authentically use text to explain the change in their thinking.	Modeling; gradual release; higher-level questions to facilitate discussion.
Writing from sources	Copying information from a source; writing conventions; teacher-selected topics and students following an outline to guide their writing.	Knowing process of thinking behind the writing; mentor texts; authentic writing situations; monitoring their writing; research process.	Mentor text (examples); specific resources to push their thinking; model: how am I going to write from a variety of sources?
Academic vocabulary	Isolated word lists, copying definitions from a dictionary.	Words encountered in texts as students read; using strategies to build meaning within context.	Monitor and repair when you read; rereading; cross-curricular connections; strategies that help us learn words.

WHAT'S MISSING IS ESSENTIAL

Course outline	Common Core: What students will do	Learning focus: What students will learn	Focus questions	Recommended resources
	• Read with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. • Read on-level text with purpose and understanding. • Read on-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.	Students will learn how to monitor their comprehension when reading independently by identifying how they know they are confused.	• How do you know when you are confused when you're reading? • What do you do when you realize that you are confused/you have stopped understanding what you have read? • How did using context clues help you decode unfamiliar words? • How did using context clues help you repair your understanding?	Variety of fiction, nonfiction, prose, and poetry.

ing, modeling/think-aloud, collaboration, whole-group learning, and independent application and reflection — become more of a menu than a checklist, allowing professional learning to be adjusted based on how to build metacognition for every learner.

At the center of this model is what professional learning is striving for — critical thinking about practice. Professional learning can promote critical thinking through a variety of processes that are gradually released to the learner based on his or her understanding and sophistication, knowing that some will need more scaffolding and some less.

The outer circle represents what drives and shapes the model: formative assessment and metacognition. Through continuous, nonevaluative assessment of professional practice, we identify strengths and opportunities for growth and provide customized support for individuals and systems based on our assessment.

For example, when observing classroom instruction, we can assess the effectiveness of a teacher's planning and use of high-level questions to push student thinking. Then, based on what we learn about this teacher's specific questioning practice, we might decide to model questioning in the classroom and provide job-embedded coaching.

Modeling allows the teacher to experience, in a classroom setting, how to implement high-level questions and the imme-

diate impact it has on student thinking. Scripting the teacher's questions and students' responses provides specific evidence that can be used when coaching to promote critical thinking and change to practice.
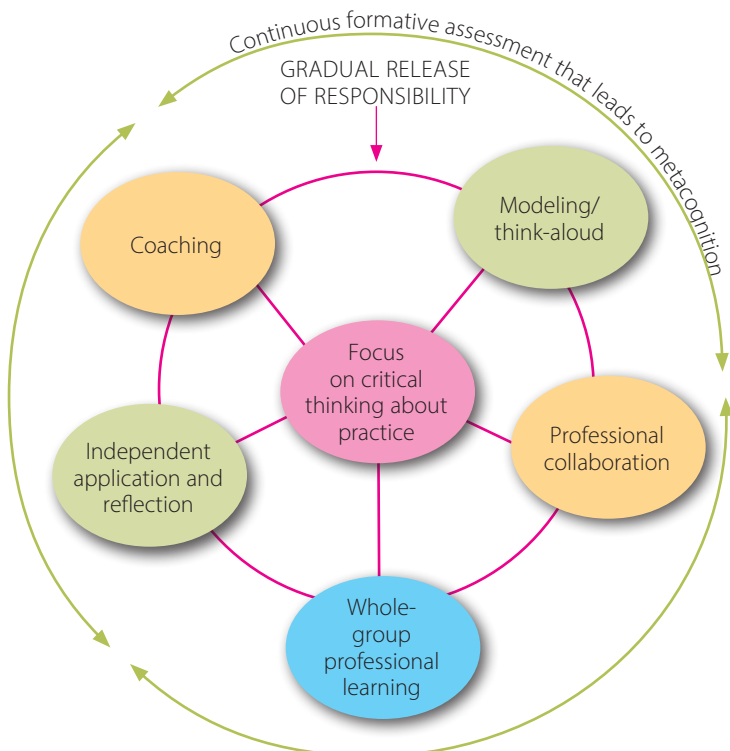
Whether facilitating collaborative conversations or whole-group sessions, working with a small group or one-on-one, the key to effective professional learning is to remain focused on critical thinking about practice, rather than the lesson, program, or other initiative.

For example, a recent collaboration with a group of mixed grade-level and content-area teachers featured a facilitated conversation about instructional practice, beginning with the question, "What changes have you made to your practice, and what evidence have you seen of increased student learning as a result?"

Gradually, the teachers began to take over the conversation, and we were able to step back, allowing the participants to guide the process. At their request, participants returned to their classrooms and modeled a specific instructional practice for the group, i.e. think-aloud, guided reading, or close reading, and these minilessons served as a springboard for continued collaboration.

After the day's session, teachers assumed responsibility for continued learning by requesting released time from their administrator to observe one another again. Using purposeful and focused questions throughout the process, we kept the focus on thinking and learning and promoted independence through metacognition.

EMPOWERED LEARNERS

The thread that connects all of us is our belief that to be a teacher is to be a learner. To accomplish this, professional learning must support educators in becoming metacognitive decision-makers who can meet today's increased demands.

Students win when educators are empowered learners and instruction improves — and that is a win we can all celebrate.

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THE PROCESS OF METACOGNITIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

KNOW HOW? SHOW HOW

EXPERIENCED TEACHERS SHARE BEST PRACTICES THROUGH ONTARIO PROGRAM

By Lindy Amato, Paul Anthony, and Jim Strachan

"Every day in classrooms, there are miracles happening. Absolute miracles. Teachers are doing fantastic things. And the teacher in the classroom next door has no idea about the miraculous things that the teacher next to him or her is doing. The teacher in the next school doesn't know it, and the teacher in the next district certainly doesn't know it. How do we take those miracles and share them?"

— A teacher in the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program

In 2006, the Ontario Ministry of Education partnered with the Ontario Teachers' Federation to explore these questions:

- What would authentic professional learning look like for experienced teachers?
- How might experienced teachers be engaged and inspired to learn from and with each other?
- How could classroom practice become deprivatized and shared beyond the four walls of individual classrooms?
- How might this type of intentional sharing of knowledge and practice foster teacher leadership?

While the province introduced a New Teacher Induction Program, both the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Teachers' Federation also wanted to address the professional learning needs of teachers beyond their first few years in the classroom.

Some of these experienced teachers would pursue traditional formal leadership paths, such as becoming a principal, but many more teachers were already engaged in leadership within their classrooms, schools, or districts and/or online. These experienced teachers whose choice of career is the classroom were the inspiration for the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program.

Launched in 2007, the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program operates on the belief that classroom teachers know their learning needs and the needs of their students best. Additionally, the program assumes teachers have the greatest knowledge of how to build and foster multiple learning networks in order to share their expertise both within and beyond their schools.

Each year, the Ministry of Education provides funding for proposals from teacher-led teams seeking to examine,

learn, and share the evidence-based instructional practices they are engaging in with their students.

The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program allows experienced teachers to assume peer leadership roles in curriculum, instructional practice, and supporting other teachers. The three goals of the program are to:

- Support experienced teachers in undertaking innovative, self-chosen professional learning in areas that are meaningful to them.
- Foster teacher leadership.
- Facilitate the sharing of exemplary practices with others for the broader benefit of Ontario's students.

LEARNING CONNECTED TO PRACTICE

Andy Hargreaves, the Thomas More Brennan Chair in the Lynch School of Education at Boston College, spoke about the program at a Share the Learning Summit in November 2011.

"Most reform that comes from somewhere else really tries to push change through a system," Hargreaves said. "It tries to push new strategies into the classroom, push teachers further forward, have them confront the strategies that may not be working and that they may need to change. We call these challenging conversations at the moment between principals and teachers.

Andy Hargreaves

"(The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program) takes a different point of view, which is really more about pulling change from people. And the way we pull change from our learners. So we talk about drawing things out of people rather than forcing things into people" (Hargreaves, 2011).

In the past, much of the professional learning for Ontario's teachers has consisted of a traditional, one-size-fits-all format where all teachers received the same required basic input and direction in an effort to ensure consistent implementation of specific initiatives or strategies.

The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program uses a different approach, recognizing that effective professional learning is not something that is "done" to teachers. The program provides funding and support for teachers to develop professional learning that is connected to classroom

practice and student learning.

This approach aligns with Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning and demonstrates what can be achieved when experienced classroom teachers are empowered to collaborate with colleagues to pursue authentic learning goals and then share their learning within their schools, school districts, and throughout the province.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

While the learning of the teacher leaders involved in these projects represents a tremendous reserve of educational knowledge, the leadership skills fostered in teacher participants are an even more powerful legacy. Listening, mentorship, collaboration, flexibility, project management, and attentiveness to diverse learning styles and learning needs are just some of the attributes of teacher leadership that participants develop, model, and share with their colleagues.

One participant notes a key benefit of the program: "Great teachers who might otherwise never have a chance to share their tremendous work get to take on a macro-level leadership role."

In their report on the program, Campbell, Lieberman, & Yashkina (2013) write, "The evidence from our research and from the [Teacher Learning and Leadership Program] is clear: These teacher leaders will do amazing things; they will initiate, innovate, implement, and share a wide range of topics and activities which can develop professional learning, improve practice, and support student learning; they will experience success in tangible outcomes — such as changes in professional practice for instruction and assessment — and also importantly in the sometimes immeasurable benefits of being empowered, enabled, and valued; they will navigate personal, interpersonal, and practical challenges as their leadership is tested and grows; they will learn how to collaborate and share to spread knowledge and sustain changes; and they will demonstrate the professional, educational, and financial value of self-directed, teacher-led innovative and effective practices."

> **"So we talk about drawing things out of people …"**
> — Hargreaves, 2011

Building the relational trust essential to any learning relationship has been a key learning not only for participants but also for the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Teachers' Federation. As learning partners in the program, the ministry and teacher federation have built a collaborative partnership based on the ability of both parties to listen and learn from each other, and more powerfully from the teacher leaders across Ontario.

The ministry and teacher federation hope to deepen their knowledge and understanding of teacher leadership by embarking on longitudinal research where participants will be studied over a period of years in an effort to determine the program's long-term impact on instructional practice, learning, and leadership and how the sharing of their learning impacts colleagues within their school, across their districts, and throughout Ontario.

A COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND THE TEACHER LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Traditional professional learning	Teacher Learning and Leadership Program
Outside-in reform.	Inside-out transformation.
Top-down planning.	Collegial involvement in planning.
System-centered.	Student-centered.
Goals for learning are determined by others.	Teachers determine their own learning goals.
Knowledge consumption by individuals.	Knowledge construction by collaborative teams.

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ONTARIO AT A GLANCE

- Ontario is Canada's most populous province with 12.8 million residents.

- More than 2 million students attend 5,000 schools in its publicly funded education system.

- The system has 72 school boards that represent four sectors: 31 English public, 29 English Catholic, four French public, and eight French Catholic.

- In addition, there are 11 school authorities, consisting of four geographically isolated boards, six hospital-based school authorities, and the Provincial Schools Authority.

- Boards are spread across both urban and rural areas, with schools ranging in size from small (less than 100 students) to very large (more than 2,000 students).

- The Ontario Teachers' Federation represents all teachers (about 150,000) in Ontario's publicly funded schools. The teacher federation has four affiliate organizations.

- 27% of Ontario's school-age children are born outside of Canada, while 20% identify themselves as members of a visible minority.

WALKING THROUGH A TEACHER LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM PROJECT

Awareness
September to October 2013
- School board and teacher federation promote the program to experienced teachers.

Application and review process
November 2013 to February 2014
- Interested teachers submit application to the director of education of their school board.
- Board-level program committee reviews applications and submits two recommended proposals to the Ministry of Education.
- Committee comprised of ministry and teacher federation staff reviews submitted projects and notifies selected applicants.

Orientation and professional learning for teams
May 2014
- Teacher federation and ministry implement professional learning to assist new project teams in developing leadership, sharing, and project management skills.

Project implementation
September 2014 to June 2015
- Teacher-led project teams implement program learning and sharing activities at the school and district level.
- Ministry and teacher federation staff provide ongoing communication and support for implementation.
- Participants engage in an online community of practice: http://mentoringmoments.ning.com.

Reporting
June to July 2015
- Teacher participants submit final report to their school board.
- School board submits the teacher participant final report and board final report to Ministry of Education.

Sharing and celebration for program teams
November 2015
- Teacher federation and ministry hold Sharing the Learning Summit where project teams celebrate and share their learning with colleagues from across the province.

Extended sharing and learning across Ontario
November 2015 and beyond
- Previous project teams may continue to share their learning across their districts and the province with funds provided by the ministry.
- Through the Provincial Knowledge Exchange, school boards can apply for ministry funding to access innovative and effective practices from participating teacher leaders across Ontario.

SAFE
PASSAGES

JOURNAL PROCESS INSPIRES COMPETENCE AND CONFIDENCE IN EMERGING LEADERS

By Karen Glinert Carlson, Kathleen Ann Harsy, and Susan M. Karas

Beginning school leaders' lives are stress-filled and lack support. When asked how they are doing, novice leaders often say they are fine, even when they aren't.

A candidate in the principal leadership program at Dominican University, who rarely spoke up during formal meetings, is a prime example. While it appeared on the surface that everything was going well, a journal entry she submitted as part of the program told a different story.

"When I left class on Monday, I was still extremely frustrated," she wrote. "It seemed most people had already had their paperwork completed and their projects mapped out. I really hate feeling behind. It's one thing when you are behind because you are procrastinating, but when it is something beyond your control? Well, it is not a good feeling. … I am about five minutes from jumping off the nearest bridge (I think 71st and Pulaski is the closest)."

Clearly, this candidate needed immediate support.

A question posed by school leaders and professional developers alike is: How do we move novice educators from the initiation stage to proficiency?

As we worked to improve the principal leadership program at Dominican University, our questions dug deeper: Are there strategies that we can use to facilitate and accelerate the transition? Can these strategies be employed for aspiring and novice principals? Will the same strategies that help aspiring and novice leaders help other aspiring or novice educators in various roles? Can we develop a process

to intervene early for those at risk and get them back on track before they fail?

We chose the Reflective Dialogue Journal as a systematic strategy to help aspiring leaders between formal meetings. After two years of implementation with 60 principal interns from public, charter, and private/parochial schools, we have more than 1,500 journal entries, enough evidence to show that Reflective Dialogue Journal has potential to advance novice leaders and may also help other novice educators in a variety of roles.

WHAT IS A REFLECTIVE DIALOGUE JOURNAL?

The Reflective Dialogue Journal is a private, written, informal exchange between the candidate and university internship supervisor that includes a reflection of the week's activities and the aspiring leader's questions, concerns, major learnings, and ahas. This exchange continues over the course of a year.

The internship supervisor responds with probing questions to help the participant think about the experience and ways to solve leadership problems. The Reflective Dialogue Journal allows early intervention through frequent and immediate feedback.

We implemented the Reflective Dialogue Journal to support the growth of aspiring school leaders during their pivotal internship year. Integrating self-analysis and reflection supports the learning process of aspiring leaders. The Reflective Dialogue Journal provides university internship supervisors and district mentors a platform to better coach

their protégés, help them frame their experiences, build their repertoire, and clarify their theories in action.

The internship supervisor serves as a thought partner to the novice and responds to the journal via email, raising questions and offering suggestions. The goal is to support each candidate to become a reflective practitioner who can reflect in action (Schön, 1987) and a reflective leader who can frame and reframe as needed (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

Note: The Reflective Dialogue Journal is not a diary, an internship log, or a place to vent. Although expressing personal matters and documenting internship hours are important, the Reflective Dialogue Journal is not the place.

OUTCOMES

A significant outcome of the Reflective Dialogue Journal process was stress management. Becoming a school leader is an engaging, consuming task in which people find themselves under large amounts of seemingly unmanageable stress. The Reflective Dialogue Journal creates a support system for novice leaders.

After analyzing candidates' journal entries, we noted a clear necessity for stress management. How can we help support emerging leaders with stress management throughout the internship and in their first years as a leader? To do this, the internship supervisor must establish a trusting relationship before and throughout the journals.

Candidates' experiences with the Reflective Dialogue Journal were more beneficial when they first developed a strong relationship with their internship supervisor. With this meaningful relationship in place, participants felt more of a connection and were able to share reflections that would turn into learning experiences.

Another lesson learned was the internship director's ability to alter monthly seminar discussions because of increased insight into the challenges and successes of each of the interns. Through the Reflective Dialogue Journal process, candidates are encouraged to reflect, refocus, and reframe their thinking about a situation in the early stages of their internship, rather than when panic has set in.

To strengthen the Reflective Dialogue Journal process, surveyed candidates suggested that journal entries be used to show exemplars, provide a format, model the experience, and teach emerging leaders to use the journals more effectively.

WHY IT WORKS

The Reflective Dialogue Journal works because it is a systematic use of technology to support a mentoring relationship that fosters reflection and professional growth. Through observation, surveys, and discussions with our candidates, we learned that the following conditions are critical to the success of the Reflective Dialogue Journal process:

- **Relationship trust:** This trust is built through confidential-

ity, playing a supportive role, not serving as an evaluator, relationship building, consistency of interaction, and availability of mentor to the candidate.
- **Credibility:** Credibility is established though experience, knowledge of the field, valuable commentary, responsiveness to candidate's needs, and solid professional judgment.
- **Skilled coaching support**: Support includes good listening skills, ability to identify key issues and concerns, knowledge of change, transition leadership, and adult development, excellent coaching skills, and knowing when to intervene.

The skill of the internship supervisor to build a strong relationship built on trust, credibility, and skilled coaching is critical.

MOVING FROM INITIATION TO COMPETENCE

The transition to leadership competence includes five stages: initiation, emerging, developing, proficient, and competent. Here are characteristics of these stages and Reflective Dialogue Journal entries that reflect each stage.

Initiation

In this phase, the candidate is unsure of his or her role and about leaving the classroom, exhibits insecurity and excitement in the new position, feels overwhelmed, and has difficulty handling the multitude of things to do.

Journal entry: "It is new staff week at my school, and watching the new teachers take a tour of our building today brings me back to anytime I am new in any situation — those feelings of anxiety, excitement, nervousness stay constant anytime I am new to a position. It was oddly reassuring to me to see the new staff walk by my room and for me to put myself in their places and know that there are always nerves at the beginning of any new adventure, endeavor, or challenge, and that this master's program is no different in that sense."

Emerging

A candidate at this stage has a better understanding of the principal's role and is not as grounded to the classroom. In addition, the candidate has developed the ability to see situations from multiple perspectives.

Journal entry: "I loved *Pathways to School Leadership* by Bolman and Deal; I found their style easy to read, and the comparisons spot on, including being very strategic about the political factors in a school and who to empower and when to empower them. … I also think the way the authors depicted the energy and excitement a new person brings to a leadership position (new teacher, new principal) was extremely helpful to read; prior to reading this book, I might have approached a situation in a similar manner to Mr. Rodriguez — excited, charged up, determined — without thinking of the way that energy or excitement might be perceived by teachers who have worked in education for many years (perhaps even those older than me)

or by those who already have personal stake in a school that I would be new to entering."

Developing

The developing leader is gaining leadership experience, learning to step out of his or her comfort zone, and beginning to frame and reframe situations.

Journal entry: "How will I deal with this difficult support staff? How do I motivate people who don't have a work ethic? How do I change a culture that has been in place for years? How do I motivate my staff to take ownership? How do I get them to work as a team and view themselves as teammates?"

Proficient

At the proficient stage, the candidate displays more confidence in leadership roles, has gained experience leading meetings, committees, professional learning, and coaching.

Journal entry: "Perhaps one of the most significant lessons I learned is the importance of remaining true to my inner passion and personal values and morals. … Secondly, I want to remember that it is OK to not have all of the answers. … I believe the most adept of individuals are those who have enough guts and understanding to admit when they do not know something. I believe these are the people who strive to learn, grow, and better themselves with honor and integrity, rather than masking their relative lack of knowledge.

"I also want to remember to serve others with kindness, fairness, and respect. … I want to foster a safe and nurturing environment for all of my stakeholders — for both children and adults alike. I have a strong conviction that people who feel valued, appreciated, and loved will work harder and give more for the greater cause.

"Finally, I want to continue to embrace the process of deep self-reflection. … Journaling my thinking has really helped me to grow as a student, teacher, future administrator, and individual in the real world."

Competent

A candidate who reaches the competent stage has accepted leadership responsibility, has built a repertoire of strategies, and displays confidence in his or her abilities.

Journal entry: "How fitting for me to be in the final week of my internship and I am the one in charge of the school for three days straight while the head of the school was out with strep throat. At the beginning of it all, I would have freaked out to be on my own, but now it was nothing! I wasn't afraid, fearful, or nervous. I took it in stride and made decisions that needed to be made, fixed a substitute fiasco, and whisked a bunch of sophomores on their overnight retreat. Yes, crazy things happened, but I took everything in stride.

"I have grown more confident as a administrator and even realize that I have a voice that others listen to. I used to not say anything because I was afraid of my ideas getting shut down. Now I stand up for what I believe and I offer opinions for situations. I am first and foremost an advocate for students and also the teachers. … I feel very confident moving forward, and I feel confident in becoming a capable and understanding leader of a school in the future."

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

Using the Reflective Dialogue Journal approach, though labor-intensive, provides leadership candidates critical support and a partner to share ideas and test theories on a regular and as-needed basis.

Critical feedback can help guide the novice, present questions to help him think through a situation, provide tools or resources tailored to the learner's needs or coaching that allows in-depth analysis of a particular issue, and, in some instances, provide intervention and counseling.

With Reflective Dialogue Journal, a candidate doesn't need to wait until the next seminar to discuss concerns and risk sharing failures, to extend his or her understanding of and make connections with course-embedded readings or discussions, and to problem solve in action.

Timely feedback helps candidates deepen their understanding and move to competence more quickly. It also provides an early warning system that allows for early intervention.

This approach could also be used with student teachers, novice teachers, and beginning leaders in a variety of roles, including assistant principals, principals, directors, and superintendents.

Reflective Dialogue Journals build confidence and competence, creating reflective practitioners who learn to think in action.

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The 4th-grade team studies graphic organizers. Clockwise from front left, Daisy Rivas, Jennifer Ponce, Ana Baltazar, Katie Kyle, Kelly Thomas, Margo Lewallen, Lucero Munoz, Jennifer Medina, and Nuri Gonzalez.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

4TH-GRADE TEAM REACHES THROUGH CLASSROOM WALLS TO COLLABORATE

By Sue Chapman

Imagine, for a second, a school where teachers see themselves as leaders and work together to ensure that all children have access to engaging, high-quality instruction every day. How might these teachers define teacher leadership and articulate its purpose? What suggestions would they offer about how teacher leadership can be grown and supported? What might these teacher leaders say about their reasons for choosing to participate in leadership work?

The actions and reflections of the 4th-grade teacher team from McWhirter Elementary Professional Development Laboratory School in Webster, Texas, offer an inside look at the self-organizing system of team-based teacher leadership that stands ready to help transform schools.

During a team meeting, the group had sketched out its professional learning plan for the next semester. Teacher Nuri Gonzalez voiced the question on everyone's mind: "How will we measure whether our learning is making a difference to our students?"

Teachers across the district had just received electronic tablets to support teaching and learning. Each student in 4th grade would be provided with a tablet within the next

year. Meanwhile, all teachers would attend traditional professional development to learn to use this new tool.

However, the 4th-grade team knew that, unless it took ownership for this school improvement initiative, the impact on classroom practice and student learning would be negligible. The team decided to collaborate in crafting lessons that would incorporate the use of this new technology and then study the effects of these lessons on student engagement and learning.

Team members developed a rubric to assess engagement and chose to measure students' use of targeted academic vocabulary in writing samples collected before and after the lessons. Once teachers had implemented the lessons, the team would review the data to determine whether the technology-enhanced lessons had increased student engagement and use of academic language.

Teacher learning teams provide a structure that can focus and accelerate school-based instructional improvement initiatives. In high-functioning teacher teams such as this one, teacher leadership flourishes. This shared leadership enables teachers to reach through the isolation of their individual classroom practice and build a collaborative community dedicated to the success of all students.

LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Instructional leadership and professional learning are parallel processes. In this 4th-grade team, teachers participate in job-embedded professional learning and instructional leadership as a regular part of their teaching responsibilities.

Professional learning is considered a form of leadership because it enables teachers to find answers to problems of instructional practice that result in improved student learning. Sergiovanni describes this form of shared leadership as "a community of practice within which teaching, leading, and learning are thought of as a single practice shared by many" (2005, p. 13).

A leading-learning practice acknowledges that the work of teaching is both important and complex and, as a result, educators must learn from and with each other every day so

that schools can improve every day. This model of school leadership maintains that schools learn as teachers work together to construct shared professional knowledge. When members of a school community think, problem solve, and learn together, schools are transformed into learning organizations committed to the continuous improvement of student achievement.

DEFINING TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Teacher leaders are key players in this model of collaborative school leadership. Teacher leadership is a term used to describe the developing concept of teacher involvement in school improvement.

According to Reeves, "Teaching and leadership are inseparable qualities" (2008, p. 1). Teaching is the act of facilitating learning. Leadership can be understood as the act of facilitating organizational learning (Chapman, Leonard, Burciaga, & Jernigan, 2013). Harris suggests that when we place the word teacher in front of the word *leadership*, this combination of terms does not simply suggest that teachers will participate in leadership activities, but advocates "a fundamental redistribution of power and influence within the school as an organization" (2003, p. 322).

When teachers choose to extend their sphere of influence beyond the four walls of their classrooms, school leadership evolves from a top-down process to a multidirectional practice performed by people across the school community.

Leadership work takes place in the interactions that

occur between teachers and with other members of the school organization. Leadership is stretched over both teachers and administrators as they work together to improve opportunities for student learning (Spillane, 2006).

This collaborative leadership practice is strengthened by the diverse perspectives and experiences of all members of a school community. Teacher leadership does not require a formal role — all teachers are invited to participate in the work of leadership for school improvement. At McWhirter, teacher leadership is an accepted feature of school culture. Informal teacher leadership is performed as teachers experiment with their instructional practice and share their learning with colleagues. Teachers are encouraged to generate professional knowledge that improves learning opportunities for students.

As McWhirter intervention teacher Jennifer Medina says, "Teacher leadership occurs when a teacher has the desire to make a difference without an expectation for recognition. This type of leadership happens on our team every day and, because of its genuineness, it cannot be stopped. It is contagious, touching the hearts of everyone and setting in motion a cycle of motivation, growth, and success."

This organic form of teacher leadership is complemented by the more formal teacher leadership of McWhirter's team leaders and instructional coaches who provide focused and intentional support for instructional improvement initiatives.

LEADERSHIP WITHIN TEAMS

Teacher leadership and teacher learning teams are both essential to shared school leadership. Teacher leadership is the driving force behind effective teacher learning teams. Teacher learning teams, in turn, ignite and intensify teacher leadership as a dynamic within the school. As teacher learning teams and teacher leadership grow stronger, a school's ability to maximize student learning grows exponentially.

Teacher leadership is vital to high-functioning teacher learning teams. Teacher leaders work with others to tackle tough challenges and help colleagues see new possibilities. They are highly attuned to the interdependent nature of school dynamics.

McWhirter's 4th-grade team includes four bilingual and three general education classes. Literacy instruction in the four bilingual classes alternates between Spanish and English units across the year. When teacher Mariel Moreno became concerned about her English language learners' reluctance to participate in classroom discussions during English units, she turned to her team for help.

Together they brainstormed ways to build students' skill and confidence speaking in English. The team then met with school administrators to propose combining ELLs and non-ELLs during English units to provide ELLs with English-speaking role models and an authentic purpose for conversing in English.

As a result, ELL student participation increased during classroom discussions conducted in English. An added result was a visible improvement in student respect for diversity and cultural proficiency across the grade level.

According to Ackerman and Mackenzie, "Teacher leaders live and work with other people, and their connection with others is where their leadership lies. Colleagueship, the role of the individual in and of the collective, concerns them most" (2007, p. 147).

This concept of teacher leadership is related to the idea of *holonomy*, the notion of individual behavior within interdependent systems (Costa & Garmston, 2002). A holonomous teacher leader consciously learns and accepts support from her team. She also recognizes that she can contribute to her team's success and influence its standards for professional behavior.

Teacher leaders know that, by working together with colleagues, they can positively impact learning for students across the school community. Teacher Stefanie Friedman, a member of the 4th-grade team at McWhirter, agrees: "Our team recognizes that each teacher has her own style, but we are united by a desire to see our children succeed. We each have unique strengths and, when we pull together, it seems that we can solve any problem. When a student is not making progress, the team comes together to offer suggestions and create a plan. Every child benefits from the team's collective intelligence."

Teacher leaders are self-directed learners. Teacher learning teams take initiative and responsibility for their own professional learning. As teachers create and share professional expertise, "they are on the way to building a true profession of teaching, a profession in which members take responsibility for steady and lasting improvement" (Hiebert & Stigler, 2004, p. 14). When teachers see themselves as knowledgeable professionals capable of refining their instructional practice, they take on the stance and spirit of teacher leadership.

Participation in teacher learning teams awakens teachers' leadership identity. Lambert says, "Teachers become fully alive when their schools and districts provide opportunities for skillful participation, inquiry, dialogue, and reflection. They become more alive in the company of others. Such environments evoke and grow teacher leadership" (2003, p. 422).

When teachers participate in professional learning alongside colleagues, they build their instructional expertise while simultaneously practicing leadership skills. Teacher-initiated professional learning in learning teams contributes to instructional reform, which results in increased teacher leadership. This cycle strengthens a school's shared leadership practice and builds momentum for continuous school improvement.

When the 4th-grade team's analysis of student learning data pointed to the need to strengthen students' skills in expository writing, the team decided to invest time learning how to integrate writing activities into content-area instruction. The team requested funds to purchase copies of a professional book for a team book study.

Later, a member of the team worked with a colleague from another grade level to offer an online version of this book study to interested teachers across the school. This teacher-initiated study sparked schoolwide interest in improving writing instruction and using writing as a scaffold for student learning.

Katie Kyle, team leader, says, "We use the strengths of our individual team members, but we also encourage each teacher to stretch in new ways. We know that, over time, some team members will move on to other leadership opportunities, so we're always aware of the need to build capacity within our team."

Once the team has decided on its professional learning goals and plan, team members take turns facilitating meetings. Team members share and rotate responsibilities to give all members experience with various leadership roles.

THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE

Even when teachers recognize the need for their involvement in school improvement efforts, they frequently find they are not fully prepared for leadership work. Leadership within a teacher learning team requires specialized knowledge and abilities.

Effective participation in instructional improvement requires that teachers have a repertoire of collaborative skills and an understanding of school improvement processes (Troen & Boles, 2012). School administrators play a critical role in helping teachers develop these collaborative leadership abilities.

Principals serve as important mentors to their developing teacher leaders. They provide coaching assistance as these novice leaders encounter challenging leadership situations. Principals can grow team-based teacher leadership by providing three forms of support: Time, touchstones, and tools.

Time. Principals communicate their value of team-based teacher leadership when they allot time for teams to work together and spend time helping teachers learn the skills of collaborative leadership. At McWhirter, teams are expected to meet weekly, and most teams choose to meet more often. Extended team time is scheduled periodically with substitute coverage of classrooms and on professional learning day.

McWhirter administrators hold an annual leadership retreat and monthly meetings for team leaders. These sessions are used to address specific leadership skills, including development of team norms, meeting facilitation, goal setting, data analysis, and conflict resolution. These administrators recognize that leadership development is a multiyear process and are, therefore, willing to invest the time necessary for teacher leaders and teams to learn and grow from their experiences.

Moreno underscores this point. "I've learned the skills of teacher leadership through a lot of trial and error. Some situations were difficult, but I learned from them. My administrators were there to provide guidance and to push me to grow."

Touchstones. Principals establish the standards for team-based leadership work. These expectations must be clearly communicated and regularly reinforced until they are embedded into the norms of team life. At McWhirter, the following standards guide teams in their collaborative professional learning work:

- **Team time is learning time.** Team meetings are used for professional learning in support of instructional improvement.
- **Teams use data.** A variety of forms of data are gathered and analyzed as teams identify student and team learning goals and evaluate their progress towards these goals.
- **Teams generate and share professional knowledge.** Team members reflect, question, and dialogue as they learn together. They regularly spend time observing in each other's classrooms.
- **Teams recognize that learning involves change.** Team members support each other in refining teaching practices and navigating the change process.
- **Teams take collective responsibility for the success of all students.** Team members collaborate to find ways of accelerating the learning of students who are not yet meeting grade-level standards.

McWhirter administrators help teacher teams internalize standards for collaborative professional learning and teamwork by attending team meetings and providing feedback about the alignment of their leadership activities with these standards. Administrators used the Learning School Innovation Configuration map from the book *Becoming a Learning School* (Killion & Roy, 2009) to design simple meeting observation checklists that provide teams with feedback about their team processes.

Books that support team-based teacher leadership development

Easton, L.B. (2011). *Professional learning communities by design: Putting the learning back in PLCs.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Conzemius, A.E. & Morganti-Fisher, T. (2012). *More than a SMART goal: Staying focused on student learning.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Garmston, R.J. & Zimmerman, D.P. (2013). *Lemons to lemonade: Resolving problems in meetings, workshops, and PLCs.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Hord, S., Roy, P., Lieberman, A., Miller, L., & von Frank, V. (2013). *Reach the highest standard in professional learning: Learning communities.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Killion, J. & Roy, P. (2009). *Becoming a learning school.* Oxford, OH: NSDC.

MacDonald, E.B. (2013). *The skillful team leader: A resource for overcoming hurdles to professional learning for student achievement.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Troen, V. & Boles, K.C. (2012). *The power of teacher teams: With cases, analyses, and strategies for success.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Tools. Teacher teams need to have structures and processes in place if they are to remain focused on instructional improvement and use their time efficiently. Principals can support teams by providing tools and resources that help to build team processes and strengthen outcomes such as:

- Formats for team agendas and minutes;
- Structures for goal setting and progress monitoring;
- Protocols for team discussions;
- Designs for team-based professional learning; and
- Professional learning resources (articles, videos, books, outside experts).

At McWhirter, specific tools are introduced and discussed in monthly team leader meetings so that team leaders are comfortable using these tools with their teams. McWhirter relies on the SMART goal process (Conzemius & Morganti-Fisher, 2012) to guide and focus team efforts across the school year.

At the beginning of each quarter, teams establish goals that meet SMART criteria (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound) for student learning in reading and mathematics. Throughout the quarter, they gather data to measure their progress towards these goals. Teams' accomplishments are reported and celebrated at faculty meetings.

Each semester, teams also establish their own professional learning goals and develop professional learning plans to achieve these goals. The 4th-grade team continues to focus on strengthening its instructional practice in writing. Recently, teachers videotaped themselves teaching writing minilessons and then worked in pairs to observe these videotaped lessons and offer each other feedback using an observation protocol developed with the literacy coach.

Teams know that a portion of the school's professional learning budget is set aside for their use and that they may request funding for resources to support team professional learning goals. Teams are encouraged to invite the school's instructional coaches and others with specialized knowledge to their meetings as consultants.

See p. 57 for a list of books that provide principals with strategies and tools for supporting teacher leadership in learning teams.

'WE'RE ALL LEADERS'

"On our team, we're all leaders. We each do whatever we can to help all of our students grow," teacher Daisy Rivas explained to a teacher who would be joining the team at the start of the new school year.

McWhirter's learning team members have redefined the role of teacher to include shared responsibility for the success of students across classrooms, their colleagues, and the school as a whole. They have reshaped the work of teaching to include ongoing professional learning to continually improve student learning.

The challenges faced by today's schools are overwhelmingly complex and too difficult to be solved by dedicated teachers working in isolation (Reeves, 2008). If school improvement efforts are to succeed, teachers must redefine their roles to include shared responsibility for school leadership.

The 4th-grade teacher learning team, along with other McWhirter teams, plays a central role in school leadership because these teachers see themselves as leaders and choose to join hands with colleagues in efforts to improve student learning through ongoing professional learning. Their collaborative teacher leadership exemplifies Learning Forward's vision: "Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves."

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Hiebert, J. & Stigler, J.W. (2004). A world of difference: Classrooms abroad provide lessons in teaching math and science. *JSD, 25*(4), 10-15.

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Spillane, J.P. (2006). *Distributed leadership.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

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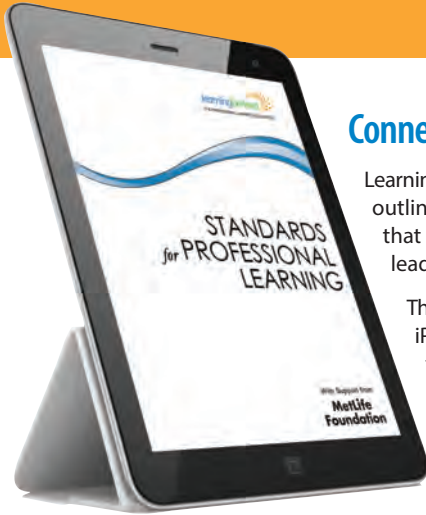
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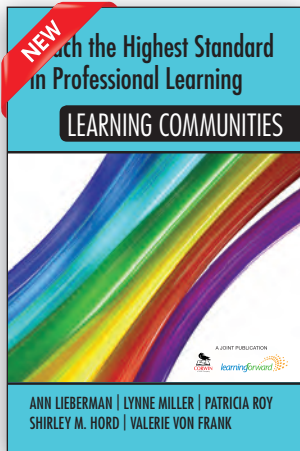
Reach the Highest Standard in Professional Learning: Learning Communities

Ann Lieberman, Lynne Miller, Patricia Roy, Shirley M. Hord, and Valerie von Frank

This book is the first in a series exploring each of Learning Forward's seven Standards for Professional Learning, which outline the characteristics of effective professional learning. In this book, the authors help readers understand what it takes to establish and maintain professional learning communities that align with the Learning Forward standards and increase educator effectiveness in order to provide the best outcomes for students.
*Corwin, 2013*

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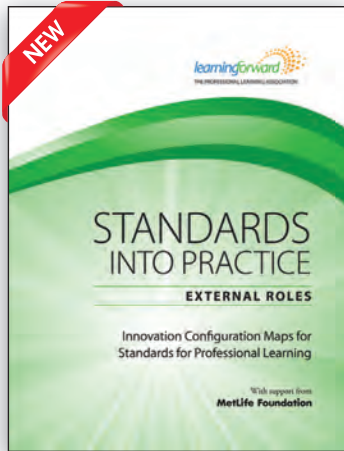
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Innovation Configuration (IC) maps are essential tools for identifying the precise actions educators take to guide implementation of Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning. The third volume of Innovation Configuration maps pinpoints the actions of those learning leaders working in roles outside of schools and school systems: education agencies, external partners, institutes for higher education, and professional associations.

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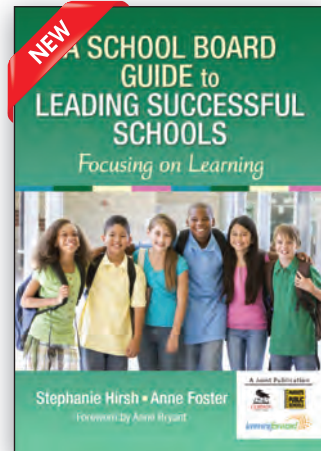
A School Board Guide to Leading Successful Schools

Stephanie Hirsh and Anne Foster

This invaluable guide addresses the top challenges experienced by nearly every school board and shows how professional learning can assist in overcoming these challenges and support positive changes.
Corwin, 2013

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learningforward
THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION

PUT the 'PARTNER' in
PARTNERSHIPS

While effective professional learning necessitates identifying and leveraging the expertise that exists in schools already, external vendors and technical assistance providers also have an important role to play in building educators' capacity.

Expectations for these third-party vendors are shifting and may now include reframing their roles so they act as collaborative partners, critical friends, coaches, and experts who bring new perspectives and help manage change.

Use the tool on p. 61 as a guide for developing productive relationships.

Given the spectrum of possibilities for engaging in external partnerships, educators will need to carefully align their needs, goals, processes, and expectations to achieve the best results for students.

• Collaborative relationships: Educators may consider today's external assistance providers as extended members of their learning teams, working in collaboration toward mutual goals and benefits, ultimately for the purpose of student success. Transparency, trust, strong communication, and the ability to honestly assess results are key to these types of partnerships.

• Careful planning: While it may be tempting to forgo a complicated planning process and jump into implementation, especially when a provider has a ready-to-go system at hand, a thorough planning process builds a strong foundation for a productive, sustainable relationship. There are many important questions for educators to answer in the initial phases of selecting and working with an external partner.

• Ongoing review: Just as any effective professional learning system operates within a cycle of continuous improvement, so, too, do effective external assistance partnerships. From the beginning, measures of success and reflective touch points are helpful to guide and monitor the relationship, content, delivery, and results of partnerships.

Access Transform Professional Learning at www.learningforward.org/publications/transform.

TRANSFORM PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Each issue of Learning Forward's action brief, *Transform Professional Learning*, examines an essential professional learning topic, featuring system, school, and teacher leader perspectives and tools to advance practitioner knowledge and skills. A one-page summary of each issue is available as a free download to share with colleagues (see image at right).

The January 2014 issue focuses on developing effective vendor relationships in professional learning. Practitioner perspectives include:

Teacher leader: Corrie Freiwaldt, an instructional facilitator in Washington, explains three important steps she took to successfully integrate high-quality and freely available resources into her district's professional learning system.

Principal: Dwayne Young, a principal in Virginia, shares how he and his leadership teams manage the process for vetting, initiating, and nurturing relationships with multiple external assistance providers.

System leader: Vicki Kirk, a superintendent of schools in a rural Tennessee system, provides a comprehensive look at how she manages her relationship with a consultant to build sustainability.

Partner

MAKE SURE YOU PUT THE 'PARTNER' IN PARTNERSHIP

POTENTIAL PARTNERS SHOULD CAREFULLY CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THEMSELVES IN DEVELOPING A PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIP.

#	Question	
1	How will this partnership add value to our existing goals and planned strategies?	
2	What benefits, real or intangible, will each partner realize?	
3	What are the costs — real, intangible, or possible — of the partnership?	
4	What are the expectations and requirements for each partner with specifics about a timeline for delivering?	
5	What procedures or protocols will be used if one partner wants to alter any aspect of the partnership plan or terminate the relationship?	
6	Which decisions related to the partnership will both partners make together? Which ones may partners make independently?	
7	What is the communication process? Who will speak for the partners?	
8	How will disagreements be handled?	
9	Who will be responsible for managing or supervising the partnership?	
10	What criteria will be used to measure success? What benchmarks?	

Source: Adapted from "The perfect partnership," by Joellen Killion, 2011, *JSD, 32*(1), pp. 11-15. Copyright 2011 by Learning Forward. Adapted with permission.

Special supplement to *Transform Professional Learning*, a digital action brief from Learning Forward, www.learningforward.org.

learning forward.org

ADVICE FOR PLANNERS

http://bit.ly/1kavfBW

Which of the seven Standards for Professional Learning should planners address? For Learning Forward Senior Advisor Joellen Killion, the answer is simple: All or none.

"The decision about which Standards for Professional Learning to include is not a difficult one. The actions to incorporate the seven standards may initially seem complex, yet their application in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning is not only logical, it is essential to achieve high levels of results for educators and students. The question about which professional learning standards to include can be answered simply based on the level of results desired."

KNOWLEDGE BRIEFS

www.learningforward.org/publications/knowledge-briefs

In the debut issue of Learning Forward's new Knowledge Brief series, co-authors Joellen Killion and Stephanie Hirsh explore how professional learning drives Common Core and educator evaluation. Key points: Effectively integrating and implementing new initiatives requires professional learning, and high-quality professional learning occurs regularly among teams at the school level. Published quarterly, the knowledge briefs explore the theory and practice of effective professional learning. Available to members, these digital publications help practitioners build a deeper foundation and take next steps on specific school improvement questions. An executive summary is available to share with colleagues and nonmembers.
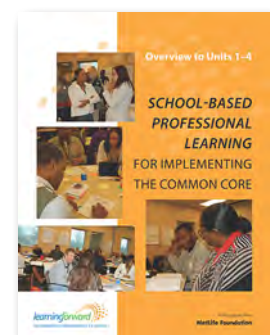
REFERRAL REWARDS

www.learningforward.org/join-renew/referral-program

Learning Forward members understand the impact professional learning has on educator effectiveness and student achievement. Now they have a chance to share the valuable tools and resources they receive as members of the Learning Forward community by referring friends or colleagues to join. Current members receive a $35 gift card to the Learning Forward Bookstore whenever a new member fills in their name in the "referred by" section on the membership form.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING UNITS

www.learningforward.org/publications/implementing-common-core/professional-learning-units

These resources were created to help principals and teacher leaders develop their capacity to facilitate school-based collaborative professional learning focused on teaching and learning. The four units cover key topics in leading professional learning tied to implementing content standards: managing change; facilitating learning teams; learning designs; and Standards for Professional Learning. Each unit includes a facilitator's packet with background, handouts, and protocols as well as slides in PowerPoint and PDF formats. Also available is an overview of the purposes, audiences, and uses of this set of professional learning units.

Study shows no difference in impact between online and face-to-face professional learning

WHAT THE STUDY SAYS

Adopting new curricula presents both a need and an opportunity for professional development to advance teacher content knowledge and instructional practices for achieving curriculum-specific student outcomes. This study examines two modalities of professional development: face-to-face in a summer workshop and online that included two days of face-to-face orientation and subsequent online learning over several months. Extensive analysis of teacher factors and student learning demonstrates no significant differences between modalities.

Study description

The research team examined professional development for teachers to support the adoption of a yearlong high school environmental science curriculum, *Investigations in Environmental Systems* (2005). The curriculum, designed with support from the National Science Foundation, is now licensed to a publisher for commercial distribution. The professional development accompanied the adoption

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Joellen Killion (joellen.killion@ learningforward.org) is senior advisor to Learning Forward. In each issue of *JSD*, Killion explores a recent research study to help practitioners understand the impact of particular professional learning practices on student outcomes.

At a glance

This study employed a cluster randomized trial to examine the difference in teacher and student effects in two modalities of professional learning, online and face-to-face. Researchers concluded that both conditions produced results and the differences between modalities were negligible.

of a high school science curriculum and focused on developing teacher knowledge, beliefs, and curriculum-specific instructional practices and increasing student learning in high school environmental science.

The study examines two distinct modalities for teacher professional development. One modality includes a six-day, 48-hour, face-to-face summer workshop. The second modality, called online, included a two-day, 12-hour face-to-face orientation and subsequent online professional development workshop which teachers completed asynchronously and at their own pace. The amount of time teachers engaged in the online workshop ranged from three to 52 hours, with an average of 20 hours of online professional development over the several months following the orientation session.

Researchers emphasized that the opportunity to learn and the content in both modalities were consistent,

thereby strengthening internal and external validity of the comparison. Teachers in both conditions had access to the same computer-based simulations and print-based support materials.

While the content remained consistent, researchers acknowledge taking advantage of each condition's medium, such as how teachers interacted with each other, materials, and facilitators, and the time they spent on professional development activities.

Questions

Researchers posed one overarching question and three subquestions:

How does online professional development compare with face-to-face professional development in terms of effects on teachers and students when the professional development content is held constant?

• Are there differences in teachers' learning in terms of changes in beliefs and knowledge as a

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PRACTITIONERS

As a result of this study, practitioners have more evidence that professional learning through both online and face-to-face modalities produces similar effects for teacher learning necessary for early-stage adoption of a defined curriculum program and for student effects.

Given the tremendous demand for professional learning related to implementation of new curriculum, especially as districts and states develop and implement new curricula and curricula frameworks aligned with new student standards, districts and states may increase access and cost-effectiveness of professional learning by employing professional learning through both an online and face-to-face modality.

This is especially true if the professional learning is constant over time and will be repeated multiple times so as to recoup the initial cost of design and deployment of effective online learning.

The study, however, does not provide evidence that professional learning for all purposes or all types of teachers is equally effective through both modalities. In fact, professional learning frequently sets goals such as increased collaboration for sharing expertise and increasing consistency in instruction and student learning.

This study looked only at individual learning with no expectation for teacher collaboration to generate shared understanding and expertise.

The introduction of the online modality in a two-day, face-to-face orientation session raises questions about the effectiveness of online professional development alone with no face-to-face component. This study examines teachers who all have responsibility to teach the adopted curriculum.

This finding opens doors for using both face-to-face and online professional development to achieve outcomes related to curriculum adoption and potentially for other purposes. It also suggests that designers of professional development may tap the particular benefits of both online and face-to-face professional development for accomplishing outcomes related to each approach.

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function of different professional development modalities?

- Are there differences in teachers' classroom practices as a function of professional development modalities?
- Are there differences in student learning outcomes as a function of professional development modalities?

The research team acknowledges that asking about the effects of either professional development modality is a question that begins with asking, "Most effective for what purpose?" This study focuses specifically on the purpose of curriculum adoption.

Methodology

Forty-nine teachers (24 face-to-face and 25 online) from six urban, 22 suburban, and 17 rural schools that had adopted the curriculum were randomly assigned to either face-to-face or online professional development. Students were clustered by teacher, with approximately 23 students per teacher for a total of 1,132 students (522 face-to-face and 610 online).

The study employed pre- and post-test measures of teacher content knowledge, self-efficacy, feeling of preparedness to teach environmental science, and general beliefs about science teaching and student content knowledge.

In addition, teachers submitted videotapes of classroom practice, which raters coded using rubrics designed to assess teaching strategies related to the curriculum. The coding examined the degree to which teachers enacted specific strategies from the curriculum, employed general teaching quality, engaged students, and modified or adapted the curriculum.

Analysis

Analysis primarily focused on the independent variable of the online professional development, with face-to-face professional development serving as the comparison group. Researchers conducted multivariate analyses and linear regression models of teacher characteristics such as years of experience, years of teaching science, and certification in environmental science, student demographics and grade point average, and school features including location and socioeconomic status with teacher outcomes and covariate analysis of student outcomes.

Results

Essentially, researchers found no significant difference in effects between online and face-to-face professional development modalities. The list of findings below summarizes specific analyses.

- Teachers' content knowledge was not affected by the professional development condition, meaning that there was no significant difference in content knowledge gained.
- Teachers in both conditions improved in relation to their personal beliefs with no significant difference between the modality through which they receive professional development.
- Teachers in both conditions did not improve in relationship to impersonal belief in either condition.
- Four of the six variables related to teacher beliefs about teaching environmental science were

positively impacted in both conditions.

- Only five of the 23 teacher outcomes related to teachers enacting the core features of the curriculum had significant differences.
- There was no difference in environmental science scores between students in the two professional development conditions.

The findings of no difference in effects between the modalities may appear to suggest no finding at all, researchers note. Yet examined at another level, the finding of no difference is significant. It conveys that, regardless of the modality of professional development, the effects for teachers and students are similar.

This finding opens doors for using both face-to-face and online professional development to achieve outcomes related to curriculum adoptions and potentially for other purposes. It also suggests that designers of professional development may tap the particular benefits of both online and face-to-face professional development for accomplishing outcomes related to each approach.

For example, when participants are in proximity to one another or when the professional development design requires discussion among participants, face-to-face professional development may be more appropriate. When access across time and space or personalization of learning are needed, online professional development may be more appropriate.

Limitations

The study raises questions about the use of various modalities for professional learning. Researchers offer no information about the design of the professional learning beyond the modality through which it was offered. The degree to which the design of the professional development contributed

to the similar effects is unknown.

The subjects in this study may not represent typical teachers new to curriculum. They were teachers whose districts had adopted the curriculum and who had responsibility for teaching the curriculum. Their mean years of experience in teaching was just over 10 years, with almost five years of teaching environmental science, and almost 80% held certification in environmental science.

This particular study examined the adoption of a specific curriculum and pedagogy associated with the curriculum. It does not provide guidance about the difference between online and face-to-face modalities if the content and teacher and student outcomes varied, if the professional learning focused on outcomes beyond early-stage implementation, if teacher experience is more limited, or if teachers' experience with the curriculum were more mature.

For example, in this study, teachers in the online modality worked independently with no expectation for collaboration with peers or calibration of

instructional practice across classrooms.

While the researchers label the online professional development as such, it is important to note that teachers' engagement with the online professional development modality began with a two-day face-to-face orientation.

Most would label this form of professional development as blended rather than online, even though researchers make a point that their program was completely online and because they did not reveal in the orientation the type of data they would collect throughout the study, they were justified with this label.

Perhaps actual modality matters less than the design of the learning experience itself, and unfortunately the researchers provide no information about that aspect of the study. Multiple other research studies confirm that blended professional development is a stronger modality for engaging adults in online learning, increasing completion rates, and for teachers, improving teaching practices. ■

abstracts

Everyone at school is a learner.

To achieve continuous improvement, every professional has the responsibility to engage as a committed learner, willing to acknowledge and explore what he or she doesn't understand. The three critical concepts in the Learning Designs standard spell out the needs and responsibilities of adult learners, and the articles in this issue of *JSD* help to develop deeper understandings of these concepts.

Myths about technology-supported professional learning.

By Joellen Killion and Barbara Treacy

As new technologies emerge to increase affordability, access, and appropriateness of professional learning, three commonly held myths are visible in current practices related to online learning. Each has significant implications for how state or provincial agencies, school systems, or schools support professional learning and how individual educators experience it. In addition, these myths have implications for vendors and providers of technology-supported professional learning.

Rounds process puts teachers in charge of learning.

By Vivian Troen and Katherine C. Boles

In the medical profession, making rounds is viewed as a significant and highly important form of professional learning. While medical rounds for physicians and instructional rounds for teachers — called Teacher Rounds — are not precisely the same, the comparison is a shortcut way to begin thinking about what constitutes this kind of school-based professional learning. Teacher Rounds is a strategy that helps teachers expose their classroom practices to other educators and enables them to learn from data-driven feedback offered from a stance of inquiry.

How to build schools where adults learn.

By Kevin Fahey and Jacy Ippolito

Good teachers understand that how students learn makes a difference. Similarly, in schools where adults learn, leaders understand that the learning practice of teachers, departments, grade-level teams, and schools can be in very different developmental places. Understanding the distinction between two typical adult learning practices can help leaders provide professional learning that both supports current learning and nudges faculty toward more complex and collaborative ways to work and learn.

Synergy sparks digital literacy:

Redefined roles create new possibilities for teachers and students.

By Kristine Gullen and Tovah Sheldon

Students — even preschoolers — are curious and boldly confident in knowing how to access information on a multitude of devices. Why are some adults uneasy about using technology? Cultivating and intentionally using new technology takes a disposition to risk and try again. It begins by redefining the roles of teacher/student and learner/leader. When educators create inclusive, synergetic learning communities, students often share insightful perspectives and create new possibilities.

Critical thinking skills fire up teacher learning.

By Heather Donnelly and Jeffrey Linn

To be most effective, professional learning needs to focus on what matters most: thinking and learning. When educators are engaged in critical thinking about the process of learning, they are empowered to take ownership of their learning. Whether in the classroom or in everyday life, this type of thinking creates a sustainable, ongoing process that promotes metacognition. A learning model that allows for differentiation to meet educators' individual needs can promote critical thinking through a variety of processes that are gradually released to the learner based on his or her understanding and sophistication.

features

Know how? Show how.
Experienced teachers share best practices through Ontario program.
By Lindy Amato, Paul Anthony, and Jim Strachan

The Ontario Ministry of Education partnered with the Ontario Teachers' Federation to create a program that addresses the professional learning needs of experienced teachers. Launched in 2007, the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program operates on the belief that classroom teachers know their learning needs and the needs of their students best. Each year, the Ministry of Education provides funding for proposals from teacher-led teams seeking to examine, learn, and share the evidence-based instructional practices they are engaging in with their students.

Safe passages:
Journal process inspires competence and confidence in emerging leaders.
By Karen Glinert Carlson, Kathleen Ann Harsy, and Susan M. Karas

The principal leadership program at Dominican University chose the Reflective Dialogue Journal process as a strategy to move novice leaders to proficiency and provide early intervention to help candidates at risk of failure get back on track. After two years of implementation with 60 principal interns, journal entries show that the process works. Leadership candidates gain critical support and a partner to share ideas and test theories on a regular and as-needed basis.

Building community:
4th-grade team reaches through classroom walls to collaborate.
By Sue Chapman

The actions and reflections of the 4th-grade teacher team from McWhirter Elementary Professional Development Laboratory School in Webster, Texas, offer an inside look at the self-organizing system of team-based teacher leadership. Teacher learning teams provide a structure that can focus and accelerate school-based instructional improvement initiatives. In high-functioning teacher teams such as this one, teacher leadership flourishes. This shared leadership enables teachers to reach through the isolation of their individual classroom practice and build a collaborative community dedicated to the success of all students.

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Study shows no difference in impact between online and face-to-face professional learning.
By Joellen Killion

Practitioners have more evidence that professional learning through online and face-to-face modalities produces similar effects for teacher learning necessary for early-stage adoption of a defined curriculum program and for student effects.

From the director:
Learning is no longer an option — it's a necessity.
By Stephanie Hirsh

The future demands change on the part of students and educators. Those changes just don't happen without learning.

Writing for JSD

- Themes for the 2014 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.**

Learning guide focuses on principals

L earning Forward has launched a free web-based professional learning guide using excerpts from the award-winning PBS documentary, *The Principal Story*, to illustrate five key practices of effective principals.

The Principal Story is a one-hour film portraying the challenges principals face in turning around low-performing public schools and raising student achievement. The film focuses on two principals: Tresa Dunbar, a Chicago elementary school principal, and Kerry Purcell, an elementary school principal in Springfield, Ill.

The Principal Story Learning Guide, geared toward those who prepare and develop aspiring or current school leaders as well as for educators working to improve their own practice, takes learners through a progression of directed experiences using a mix of film clips

The Principal Story Learning Guide is available at **www.learningforward. org/publications/the-principal- story-learning-guide**

and activities.

The learning guide is divided into five units, each based on a key practice of effective principals identified from research sponsored by The Wallace Foundation. The units guide learners so they will be able to:

- Consider ideas about effective leadership practices before viewing film clips;
- Observe and discuss film clips of selected principal behaviors;
- Read an excerpt from the required text; and
- Complete activities that allow them to review research, link research with practice, take action, and reflect on what effective leadership practice means for their own choices, development, and growth as school leaders.

Facilitators can access a 23-minute film clip with excerpts from the original documentary available from The Wallace Foundation at **www.wallacefoundation.org/principalstory/ clips-from-the-film/Pages/default.aspx.** The full-length documentary is also available for purchase.

book club

THE POWER OF TEACHER ROUNDS
A Guide for Facilitators, Principals, & Department Chairs
By Vivian B. Troen and Katherine C. Boles

T he practice of Teacher Rounds is a professional learning design that promotes teacher collaboration through making teaching practice public. *The Power of Teacher Rounds* traces the development of an effective Teacher Rounds group from formation to choosing a problem of practice, conducting the first round, observing, debriefing, making a commitment to a change of practice, and evaluating outcomes. The focus is on the individual teacher's classroom, and there is a strong emphasis on accountability. A chapter on expected outcomes offers a "vision of the possible," with a realistic picture of what a successful

rounds group may look like and what it will be able to accomplish.

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 June 15. For more information about this or any membership package, call **800-727-7288** or email **office@ learningforward.org.**
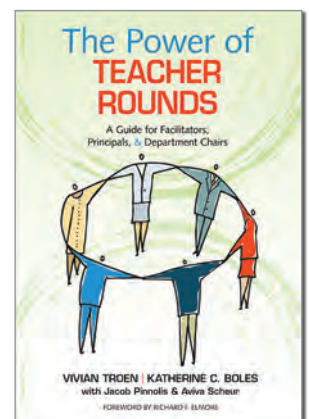
Technology provides a new context for collaboration

on board
JULIE BLAINE

I believe in the future of professional learning. I've heard that to believe in the future, you must be able to see it. I know this is true. But sometimes seeing the future starts with capturing nostalgic pictures of the past. Take Missouri's Outreach Teachers' Academy, for example.

The Outreach Teachers' Academy began more than a decade ago as a way to engage small, rural agricultural districts in our region in monthly consortium-like, collaborative learning experiences. Twelve years ago, we ventured out into this satellite landscape with no specific long-term goals for teacher learning.

We believed we were innovating, but we had no overall expectations for implementation and no accountability measurements. The term "accountability" wasn't even part of our professional vocabulary.

We gathered a group of teachers from several Missouri school districts in Vernon County to talk about the challenges of teaching in rural Missouri. We felt successful if participants carried away at least one new idea per session that might be used in classrooms the next day. That's how the academy started. It was simple, fun-filled, low-keyed, low-risk professional learning.

Fast-forwarding into preparations

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Julie Blaine is president of Learning Forward's board of trustees.

for this year's academy, it's easy to celebrate how far we've traveled. The academy is now designed with purposeful intentions and standards in mind. Its goal this year is focused: to increase student performance through the use of effective questioning. School districts are expected to form collaborative partnerships and examine student work that demonstrates expected academy learning targets.

When I asked participants about classroom changes that have occurred as a result of academy membership, one long-term participant said that frequent collaboration with peers helps her stay focused on student growth and the latest research in education.

Another participant said the academy is an opportunity to open a new window of professional learning for her rural school. Teachers in the academy are now collaborative risk-takers. They expect to be challenged, and they absolutely expect to see changes in practice and performance.

As I look ahead, my professional learning vision for rural academy teachers holds close the truth that the most fundamental impact on student achievement is an effective teacher in each classroom. I also see continued economic challenges for our rural schools. Teacher growth requires

funding, and that funding must include investment in technology.

When — not if — this happens, I see a new context for collaboration. I envision a new platform for learning and discussions. This new virtual classroom will allow rural Missouri educators to analyze student work alongside classroom practices. Videotaped lessons will be commonplace. Academy peers will use digital technology to interact, providing feedback and challenges via live cues

and prompts. This new learning will be self-directed and self-reflective, but steeped in teaching standards.

We aren't there yet, but we've come a long way. And we have unstoppable momentum. Stop by in a couple of years and say, "Show me your vision!" We'll be glad to have you log in. ◼

Foundation welcomes new board members

The Learning Forward Foundation has added four new members to its board.

Steve Barkley is executive vice president of PLS 3rd Learning and a former New Jersey elementary school teacher. For the past 30 years, he has served as a consultant to school districts, teacher organizations, state departments of education, and colleges and universities.

Heather Lageman is Race to the Top Local Education Agency Director for the Maryland State Department of Education and secretary of the Learning Forward Maryland affiliate.

Ronni Reed is a New Jersey educational consultant who has been a presenter at Learning Forward's Annual Conference and a former staff development leader for the Monmouth County Vocational School District.

Jody Westbrook Bergman is a former school principal, a longtime Learning Forward member and former director of the Learning Forward Texas affiliate.

The Learning Forward Foundation is dedicated to impacting the future of leadership in schools that act on the belief that continuous learning by educators is essential to improving the achievement of all students. The monies raised by the foundation provide grant opportunities and scholarships for individuals, schools or teams, principals, and superintendents to further Learning Forward's purpose, "Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves."

As part of its 2014 Annual Giving Campaign, the foundation has established a Leadership Society. Levels of membership are based on annual donations:

- Copper: $20 to $99;
- Bronze: $100 to $299;
- Silver: $300 to $499;
- Gold: $500 to $999; and
- Platinum: $1,000 or more.

To donate online or download a donation card, visit: **www.learningforward.org/foundation.**

LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR

April 15: Manuscript deadline for December 2014 *JSD*. Theme: Teacher evaluation.

April 15: Applications due for Learning Forward Foundation scholarships and grants.

June 30: Last day to save $75 on registration for 2014 Annual Conference in Nashville, Tenn.

Dec. 6-10: Learning Forward's 2014 Annual Conference in Nashville, Tenn.

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www.learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/annual-conference

Look for the 20-page conference preview included with this issue of the JSD!

DEC. 6-10, 2014 NASHVILLE

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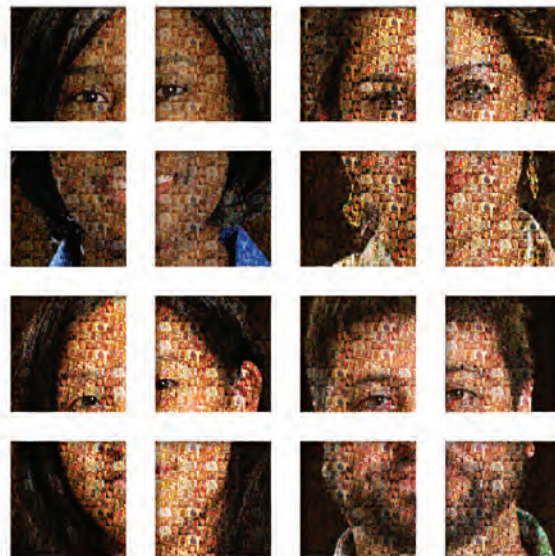
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Supplement to the *JSD*

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Barrington Antonio Irving Jr.

Pearl Arredondo

Michael Ungar

John Hattie

Steve Gross

Learning is no longer an option — it's a necessity

Throughout my career, I've met educators who have expressed a disdain for professional learning. I don't doubt that many have had experiences that didn't help them see a link between professional learning and what they needed to accomplish in the classroom. And then I've met others who were confident that they had already learned everything necessary to do their jobs well.

Those were the days before disaggregated data, higher standards, benchmark exams, smart technologies, and shifting demographics. But even then, when I heard educators speak this way, I thought, wow, we're all in the learning profession. How could any educator think she or he had learned everything necessary to help every student achieve success? I know that when I was teaching, our school's mission statement was to instill a love of lifelong learning in our students, and yet we had many staff members who were not models for our mission.

I wonder how many other schools have a similar disconnect. They adopt a mission statement that indicates a commitment to instill a love of lifelong learning and yet have teachers protesting any expectations about their own continuous learning. Learning Forward faced a similar disconnect

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when the organization finally decided to address the problem of its previous name: National Staff Development Council.

With National Staff Development Council, every word was wrong. It did not represent our vision, our mission, or how we wanted to represent ourselves to educators. As we began a process of considering new names, the one nonnegotiable was that our new name must include the word learning. So, filled with the spirit of hope for the future, we became Learning Forward, committed to serving those intent on building a learning profession.

In our field, learning isn't optional anymore. Educators don't have the luxury of saying they don't need to learn. They may have options in what they learn, how they learn, and when they learn — at least I hope they do. And while I know that all professional learning is not of the quality it should be or aligned with our Standards for Professional Learning, the need for adult learning is universal.

Fortunately, the ways educators can and do learn has changed drastically. Learning can take place 24/7. Learning that influences our practice happens informally through hallway conversations and Twitter chats. Learning that improves practice occurs also through more formally organized support, including coaching, scheduled collaboration, conferences, and courses.

Our responsibility to our colleagues and students is to ensure that we
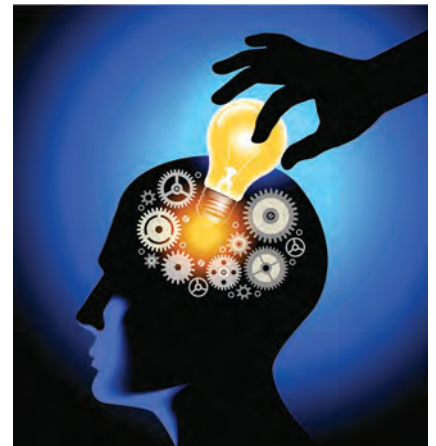
stay up to date on new designs and technologies that support learning and growth. Those of us in the learning profession must find ways to honor and support access to learning in all its various manifestations.

Some policymakers and educators see these developments as supporting an individualized approach to learning. Focusing only on individualized learning is a mistake — educators and students alike benefit from learning communities. In the best of all possible worlds, educators experience both personalized and collaborative professional learning.

At a time when professional learning is often under attack, we know that the future — the one staring us in the face right now — demands change on the part of students and educators. Those changes just don't happen without learning. I am eager to hear how you're moving learning forward. ■

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