

## **How to choose the right learning design.**

*By Lois Brown Easton and Terry Morganti-Fisher*

The recent proliferation of online learning designs — such as edWeb, PD 360, or Teaching Channel — presents a challenge: How can professional learning leaders decide which designs will be the most effective? Choosing the right design requires understanding and balancing context needs with what a design offers and requires. The authors explore elements of a backmapping model for planning professional learning as well as a model for developing, enhancing, and evaluating professional learning designs. Finally, they offer a glimpse into a new publication filled with effective learning designs.

## **Learning side by side:**

Teachers and principals work together to strengthen instruction.

*By Patty Maxfield and Sharon Williams*

The Kent School District, Washington's fourth-largest district, is experiencing rapidly changing demographics. In 2013, the district implemented a professional learning plan in an effort to strengthen instruction and eliminate achievement gaps between student groups. The yearlong plan focused on side-by-side learning: teacher leaders working with principals and teachers working with teachers. To encourage collaboration, the plan incorporated learning walks, professional learning communities, and an inquiry cycle to develop a strengths-based stance for observation and feedback.

## **Change no to yes:**

Leaders find creative ways to overcome obstacles to adult learning.

*By Ellie Drago-Severson and Jessica Blum-DeStefano*

Supporting educator growth is critical for schools. The new challenges facing leaders — evolving teacher and principal evaluation systems, implementing the Common Core State Standards — heighten the urgency around building human

capacity to meet new demands. Nevertheless, effectively supporting adult development on the front lines of schools is no easy task. Participants in a graduate leadership course illustrate how they implemented developmental principles and practices in their work, the obstacles they encountered along the way, and the strategies they use to make schools richer places of learning for adults and children.

## **Stepping stones to leadership:**

Districts forge a clear path for aspiring principals.

*By Amy Burrows-McCabe*

Understanding the need for principals with strong training, The Wallace Foundation drew on 11 years of research to launch the Principal Pipeline Initiative with six participating school districts. Now two years into the initiative, decision makers are looking for evidence of what a strong pipeline looks like. One Georgia educator's experience illustrates how leadership develops when a district creates a clear path that begins with identifying future leaders and guiding their steps with preservice opportunities, support, and partnerships. *This article is sponsored by The Wallace Foundation.*

## **The conference of the future:**

New thinking, new tools, and new ways for adults to learn.

*By Carol François*

Many consider education to be the next frontier for a theory known as “disruptive innovation,” in which new products or services cause evolutionary transformation. In fact, disruption in education is already underway. Changes in the field of professional learning have had considerable impact on how Learning Forward designs its learning offerings. The 2014 Annual Conference blends traditional offerings with additions to the learning menu that reflect the latest professional learning trends.



## features

### The united state of Wyoming:

Teacher-to-teacher initiative boosts reading scores statewide.

*By Sheryl Lain*

When teachers collaborate in schools, taking collective responsibility to improve instruction and achieve goals, student performance improves. When teachers collaborate statewide, the same good results happen. Wyoming is one example of a state that uses peer-to-peer professional learning, and the results are notable. When teachers joined together to form a statewide professional community, reading scores on the state assessment improved 12% in two years — solid evidence that student performance improves when teachers work toward common goals.

### Leading in reading:

Nebraska district nets success with evidence-based learning.

*By Melanie Mueller and Ron Hanson*

With the accountability age in full swing, the Papillion-La Vista School District in Papillion, Nebraska, has taken a proactive stance to improve learning for all students, focusing directly on the human element as the change agent. The district implemented a systemic and systematic continuous improvement process that fosters quality teaching through the work of professional learning teams, and the process has led to double-digit gains in elementary students' guided reading levels and on the state reading test, along with gains in common local reading comprehension assessments.

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in October 2014 *JSD*:

**THE EVOLVING ROLE  
OF CENTRAL OFFICE**

## columns

### Lessons from research:

The quality of professional learning will influence its results.

*By Joellen Killion*

A multiyear professional learning intervention leads to few changes in teacher knowledge and practices in science instruction for English language learners.

### From the director:

Use standards to assess how a conference measures up.

*By Stephanie Hirsh*

How well do the conferences and external learning events you attend and plan live up to the Standards for Professional Learning?

## Writing for JSD

- Themes for the 2015 publication year are posted at [www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/upcoming-themes](http://www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/upcoming-themes).
- Please send manuscripts and questions to Christy Colclasure ([christy.colclasure@learningforward.org](mailto:christy.colclasure@learningforward.org)).
- Notes to assist authors in preparing a manuscript are at [www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/writers-guidelines](http://www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/writers-guidelines).