

JSD

THE LEARNING FORWARD JOURNAL

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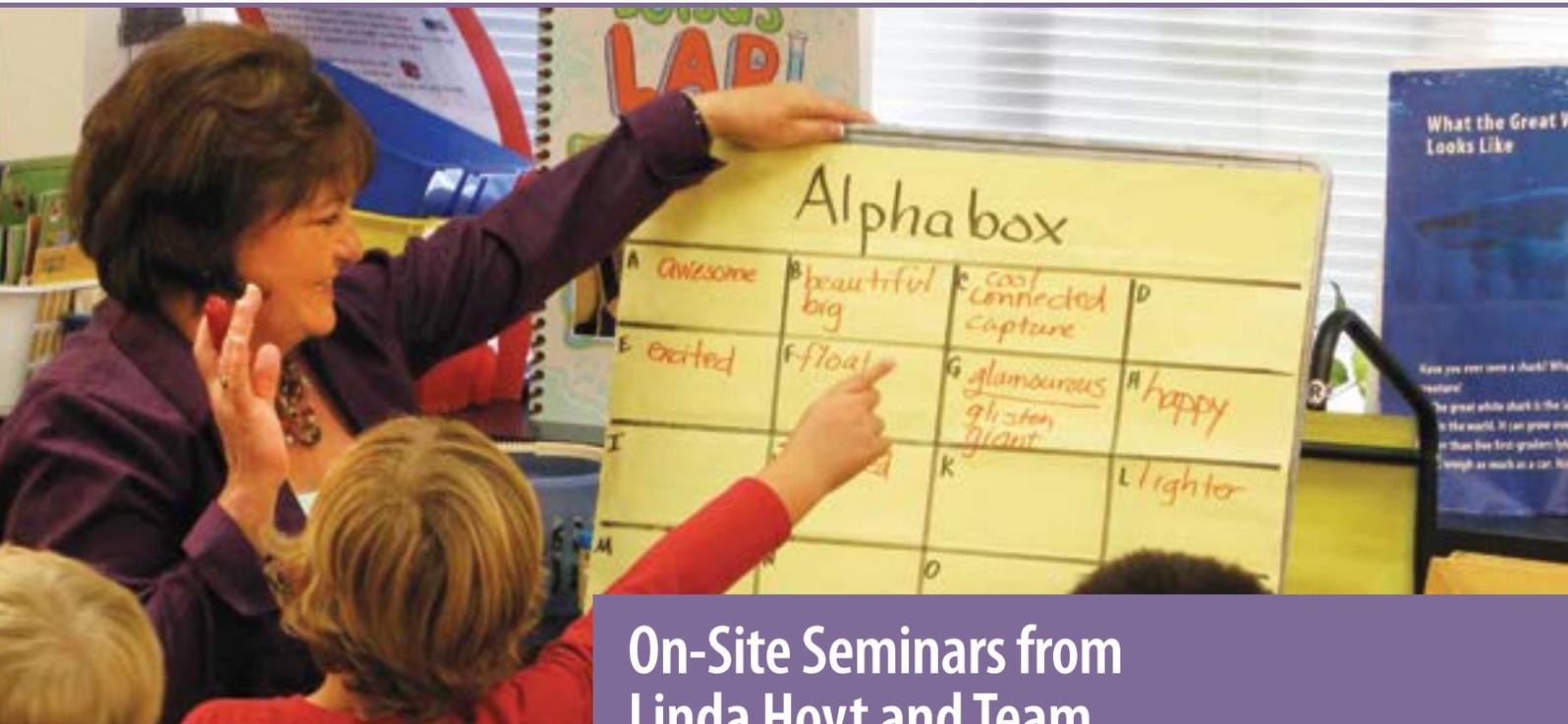
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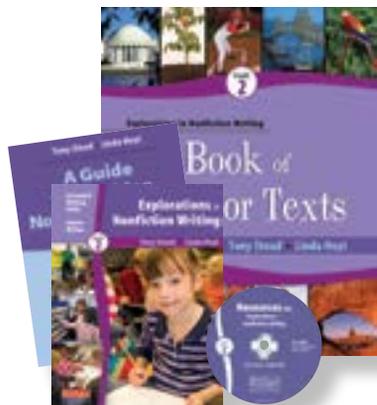
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BY STEPHANIE HIRSH



Serendipity and the search for buried treasure

In our day-to-day lives, the Internet makes locating what we need so straightforward. Need a new winter jacket? Just check boxes that limit selections to your size, preferred colors, and ideal temperature range, then hit search to find what is just right for you. You can use the same kinds of search tools to find a hotel room in Manhattan or the love of your life.

By and large, using data and algorithms to identify choices that meet our needs is both efficient and effective. This certainly applies to professional learning. The Data standard in Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning describes how multiple forms of student, educator, and system data help educators make wise decisions about professional learning, and data are essential in the cycle of continuous improvement.

However, we also need to make room for the unexpected. If we enter every learning opportunity with blinders on, seeing only what we intended to find when we set out on a learning journey, what compelling new idea might be just beyond view?

Conferences or other large-scale gatherings are wonderful opportunities to create learning pathways based on what we need. Strands and topic choices home in on sessions that meet

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our learning goals. Yet conferences are also great opportunities to bump into answers to questions we didn't even think to ask.

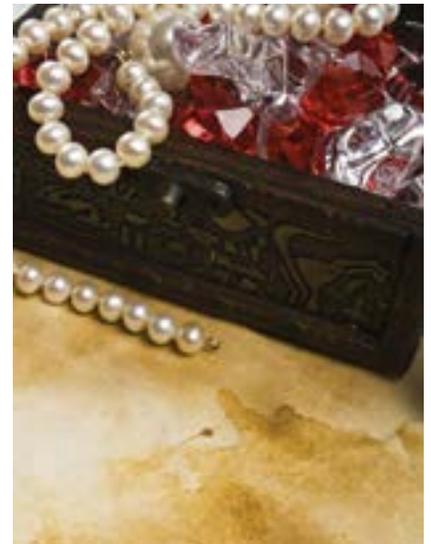
Keynote speeches, for example, are designed to inspire people with a range of needs and levels of experience. Networking opportunities can seat us next to a stranger who has done something amazing.

It is possible to court serendipity, the lucky break that we weren't looking for, whether at conferences, in everyday life, or on the Internet. Here are some suggestions for putting yourself in the best position to stumble across buried treasure:

Sit next to someone new every chance you get. Even when you attend events with a learning team and are eager to corral what you're learning, look beyond your inner circle to invite the unexpected. Make time for your learning team at home.

Read or learn outside your typical circles. This might mean reading a business management book instead of an education leadership title, or picking up a magazine about science discoveries. Every now and then, choosing a learning option based on a gut feeling can yield a new way of seeing an old puzzle.

Take reflection time when you've had a spark of inspiration. Whether your inspiration came from a speaker,



a hallway conversation, or a profound quote in a Twitter chat, don't lose the feeling you had the moment you heard it. Make a note or plan a follow-up to keep that spark lit.

Let yourself wander off track a bit. While no one has time for significant distractions, meandering a bit off course — whether to follow an intriguing link online or wandering into a session on a new topic — can expose us to new thinking, possibly the very idea that helps us solve a tough problem.

Seeking the unsought isn't at odds with a good learning plan — it's a matter of staying open to new possibilities. How will you stay open to serendipity? After all, no one experienced love at first sight through a series of checkboxes. ■

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PUT ASSESSMENTS TO WORK OECD Test for Schools Implementation Toolkit *EdLeader21, 2014*

Any high school interested in assessing its students' problem-solving abilities in reading, science, and math can do so with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Test for Schools. EdLeader21, a professional learning community for school and district leaders, has developed a free tool kit to support the use of the OECD Test for Schools to advance school and district transformation. The tool kit focuses on how to interpret results and tie them to school and district-based improvements for deeper learning. The tool kit includes recommendations for action and case studies from schools across the country.

www.edleader21.com/index.php?pg=27

PEER REVIEW PROCESS Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products (EQuIP) *Achieve*

This initiative is designed to identify high-quality materials aligned to the Common Core State Standards. EQuIP builds on a collaborative effort of education leaders from Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island. From that effort came rubrics and a peer review process designed to determine the quality and alignment of instructional lessons and units to the Common Core. Also available are e-learning modules, training materials, videos, and student work protocol.

www.achieve.org/EQuIP

GLOBAL VIEW

A Global Network of Teachers and Their Professional Learning Systems *Center for Teaching Quality, 2014*

A team of seven teachers in six cities collaborated to document teachers' experience with professional learning systems in Denver, Colorado; Lexington, Kentucky; Seattle, Washington; Shanghai, China; Singapore; and Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Among the authors' recommendations: Rethink how teacher time is allocated; connect teacher evaluations with professional learning; establish career paths for teacher leaders; and expand professional learning offerings and access points.

www.teachingquality.org/globalprofessionalllearning



TIME FOR LEARNING

Time for Teachers: Leveraging Time to Strengthen Instruction and Empower Teachers *National Center on Time & Learning, 2014*

Time for Teachers examines 17 high-performing and rapidly improving schools around the country that have taken advantage of expanded school schedules to provide students with more time for engaging academic and enrichment classes while providing teachers with more time to collaborate with colleagues, analyze student data, create new lesson plans, and develop new skills. The report includes recommendations for practitioners interested in implementing the strategies outlined in the report as well as recommendations for policymakers looking to support teacher excellence.

www.timeandlearning.org/timeforteachers



EQUAL ACCESS**Looking at the Best Teachers and Who They Teach***Center for American Progress, April 2014*

A review of data from the newest evaluation systems shows that poor students and students of color are less likely to get highly effective teaching.

If we want to make sure that every student has access to excellent teaching, then we need to take steps to ensure that there are high-quality teachers in every school. Solutions include identifying high-quality teachers by improving data about teaching effectiveness, increasing the reach of highly effective teachers by creating roles for master and mentor teachers to support and coach their colleagues, and improving the effectiveness of all teachers through high-quality professional learning.

<http://bit.ly/1qnZckH>

**COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES****Making Space: The Value of Teacher Collaboration***Rennie Center & EdVestors, 2014*

The report documents the collaborative practices of five high-performing Boston schools that serve a range of grade levels and student populations. The authors identified structures and cultural practices that support collaboration. Across study schools, educators report that these collaborative practices have enabled them to increase academic rigor, use data to inform instruction and interventions, and better meet students' academic and nonacademic needs — all factors that directly contribute to student achievement.

<http://bit.ly/117v7Uw>

TEACHER EVALUATION**Alternative Student Growth Measures for Teacher Evaluation: Profiles of Early-Adopting Districts***U.S. Department of Education, April 2014*

Administrators in eight districts that were early adopters of alternative measures of student growth were interviewed about how they used these measures to evaluate teacher performance. The study found that districts using student learning objectives chose them as a teacher-guided method of assessing student growth, while those using alternative assessment-based value-added models chose to take advantage of existing assessments. In addition, value-added models applied to end-of-course and commercial assessments created consistent districtwide measures but generally required technical support from an outside provider.

<http://bit.ly/1jx5AQT>

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HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

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IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP

What's the first thing you do when you get back from a valuable conference? How do you build on what you heard? While implementing new ideas requires careful planning and sufficient resources, here are some quick tips to continue the momentum as soon as you unpack your bag.

- **Blog** about it.
- **Tweet** about it.
- **Buy** a book by one of the speakers — and then read it ASAP!
- **Email** one of the session facilitators to explore a lingering question.
- **Identify** one small change you can try tomorrow.
- **Send** a resource you found to one of your peers to start a conversation.
- **Email** the attendees you most connected with to build your learning network.
- **Invite** someone you met to come share ideas at your next professional learning community meeting.
- **Find** the research base behind something you want to implement long term and share it with your administrators.



HAVE A CONVERSATION, TRANSFORM A CULTURE

Atul Gawande, writing in *The New Yorker*, explored why some medical innovations take hold quickly while others take much longer to spread.

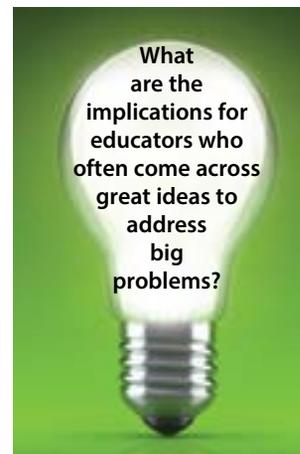
A medical doctor who writes about innovation and change, Gawande identified several elements key to understanding why great ideas don't lead to immediate action.

For one, big ideas often address problems that are important but invisible, and implementing them can require sacrifice or specialized knowledge and skills. Also, sometimes the reward for changing behavior isn't immediately evident.

Ultimately, Gawande writes, getting people to change means transforming a culture — understanding the norms underlying a system and helping to create new norms. While offering instruction and support is essential, it isn't enough.

Gawande quotes Everett Rogers, who wrote decades ago about the diffusion of innovation. "Diffusion is essentially a social process through which people talking to people spread an innovation," wrote Rogers. Gawande follows up with the conclusion that "every change requires effort, and the decision to make that effort is a social process."

SOURCE: Gawande, A. (2013, July 29). Slow ideas. *The New Yorker*. Available online at www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/07/29/slow-ideas.



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Share LEARNING

WITH OTHERS TO BUILD COLLECTIVE EXPERTISE

Learning experiences that take place outside of your day-to-day environment can be powerful for bringing in new ideas and connecting you to educators beyond your typical circles.

One challenge in these learning experiences is how to identify the best actions to take to implement new learning. Another challenge is how to share what you've experienced with your teammates who didn't attend.

After attending a conference, use the prompts below to share your learning with others. Make multiple copies to share notes from more than one session.

1 A session, speaker, or topic that most directly applies to our current challenges and why:

2 Who besides me can learn from this:

3 Three key ideas I heard in this session:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

4 Connections I see between these ideas and our challenges:

5 Possibilities I see for using this information:

6 Resources to share with others related to this:

7 My first step to help others make these connections:

**"Knowledge is like money:
To be of value it must circulate,
and in circulating it can
increase in quantity and,
hopefully, in value."**

— *Louis L'Amour*

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
DESIGNS**

GENERAL

Action research

Case discussions

Coaching and online coaching

Curriculum, instruction, and
assessment

Data analysis

Dialogue and visual dialogue

Gaming

Innovation incubators

Lesson study

Massive open online courses

Online courses

Portfolios and digital portfolios

Professional learning communities

Protocols and online protocols

Rounds, walk-throughs, and
shadowing

Simulations

Teacher-led conferences

SPECIFIC

Collaborative Analysis of Student
Learning (CASL)

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Eduplanet21

Learning School Alliance

Literacy Design Collaborative

PD 360

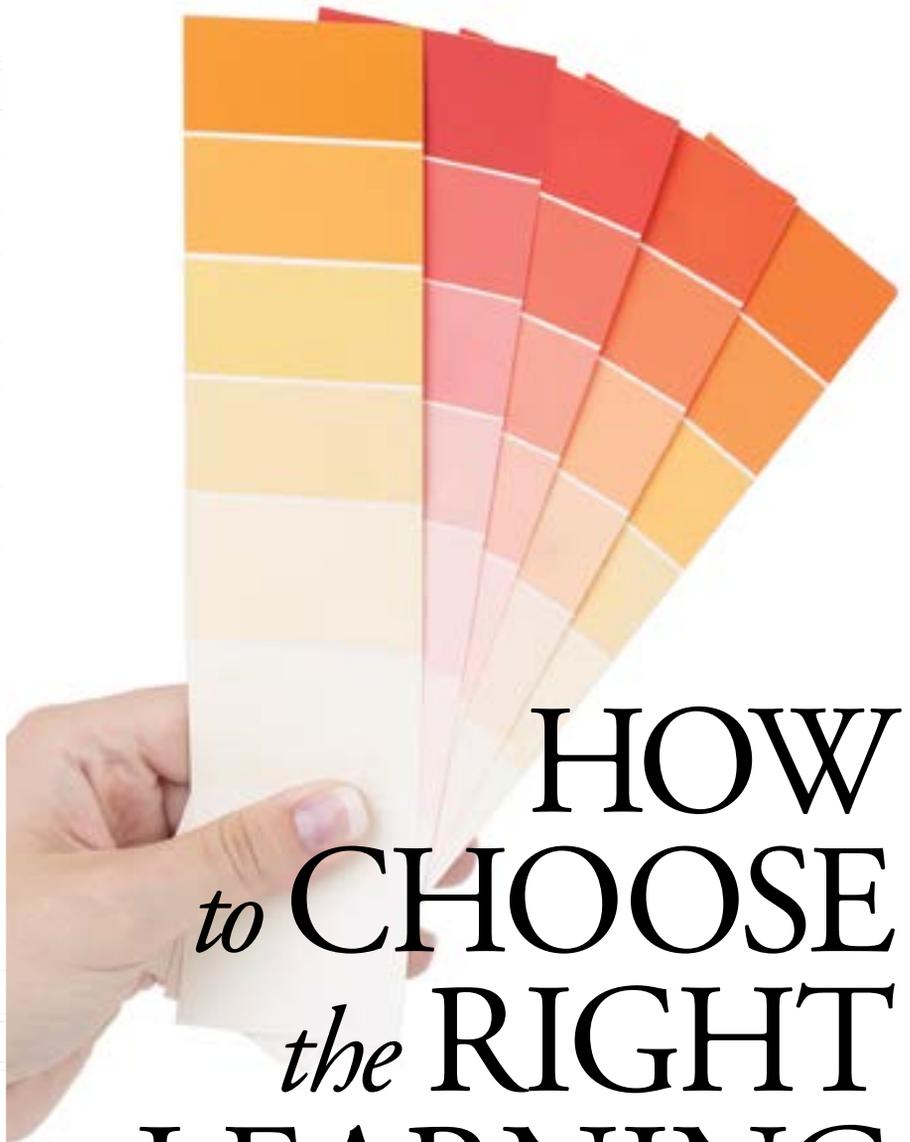
Project-based learning

Project Zero & Visible Thinking

Success at the Core

Teaching Channel

Teachscape



HOW *to* CHOOSE *the* RIGHT LEARNING DESIGN

These 27 professional learning designs were studied by Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership with Learning Forward to determine the “how” of professional learning construction.

Learn more about how to choose effective professional learning designs at Learning Forward's Annual Conference Dec. 6-10 in Nashville, Tennessee.



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?

Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning are immediately helpful. The backmapping model that Joellen Killion and Patricia Roy shared in *Becoming a Learning School* (Killion & Roy, 2009) offers insight into how to choose an appropriate design.

In addition, a recent joint project of Learning Forward and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership provides a way to think about developing, enhancing, and evaluating professional learning designs.

Finally, the third edition of *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning* (Easton, in press) presents 24 designs. While a few of these are updated versions from previous editions, most are new designs, often technology-based. The designs in this edition, which is scheduled for publication this winter, have shown their effectiveness over time with a wide variety of users.

HOW LEARNING HAPPENS

A first step in considering how to shape professional learning is to understand the fundamentals of what

makes learning meaningful to adults. The Learning Designs standard from the Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011) outlines the key elements of effective professional learning. The standard 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.

The key phrases are *integrates theories, research, and models of human learning* and *intended outcomes*.

Adult learning theory is one of the most important sources of information about what works in terms of professional learning. Jane Vella, in her book *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach: The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults* (1994), provides a comprehensive description of adult learning preferences. Here is a summary:

1. Needs assessment: Participation of the learners in naming what is to be learned;
2. Safety in the environment and the process;
3. A sound relationship between teacher and learner for learning and development;
4. Careful attention to sequence of content and reinforcement;
5. Praxis: Action with reflection or learning by doing;
6. Respect for learners as subjects of their own learning;

7. Cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects: Ideas, feelings, actions;
8. Immediacy of the learning;
9. Clear roles and role development;
10. Teamwork: Using small groups;
11. Engagement of the learners in what they are learning; and
12. Accountability: How do they know they know (pp. 3-4).

Think how valuable professional learning would be if it exemplified these characteristics. Integrate this theory with brain-based research, and you have an even more powerful formula for effective professional learning.

David Sousa, in an *Educational Leadership* article, suggests, "The brain's biological mechanisms responsible for learning and remembering are roughly the same for learners of different ages. However, the efficiency of these mechanisms varies with the degree of development of the brain regions involved (Shaw et al., 2006). Emotional and social factors and past experiences also enter into play in terms of the brain's efficiency and an individual learner's motivation. Because these factors are more developed in adults than in children, they have greater influence over adults than they have over children" (Sousa, 2009).

Integrating a well-accepted model of human learning raises the power of this standard. Social constructivism is one such model. Notice how its precepts integrate with the theory of adult learning and research on the brain.

Key assumptions of this perspective include:

1. What the learner currently believes, whether correct or incorrect, is important.
2. Despite having the same learning experience, individuals will base their learning on the understanding and meaning personal to them.
3. Understanding or constructing meaning is an active and continuous process.
4. Learning may involve some conceptual changes.
5. When learners construct a new meaning, they may not believe it but may give it provisional acceptance or even rejection.
6. Learning is an active, not passive, process and depends on the learners taking responsibility to learn (adapted from University College Dublin Open Educational Resources, n.d.).

A PLANNING MODEL

Joellen Killion and Patricia Roy’s backmapping model for planning professional learning (see diagram on this page) essentially begins and ends with students. Thus it is attentive to the second essential phrase in the Learning Design standard: *intended outcomes*.

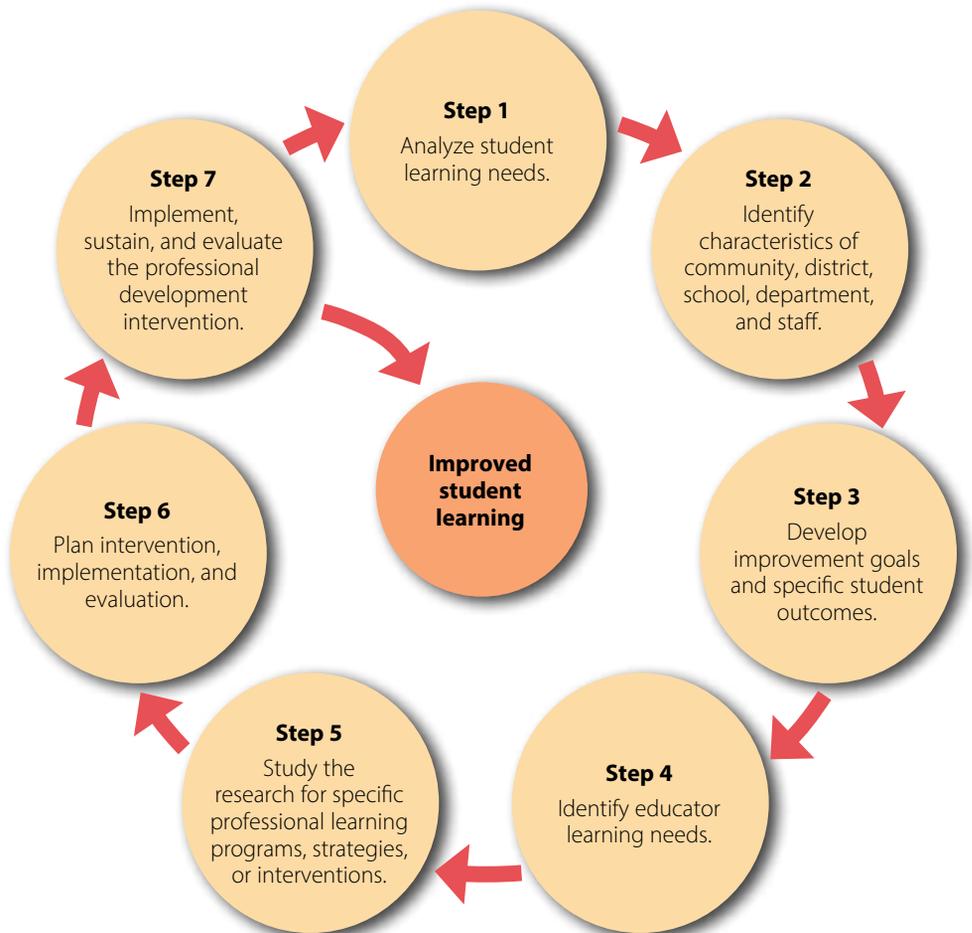
In this model, a learning design achieves purpose when leaders analyze student learning needs (Step 1). In Step 2, they consider the environment of the learning. They develop learning needs into improvement goals and specific student outcomes in Step 3.

From these, they identify educator learning needs in Step 4. In Step 5, leaders study the theory, research, and models already discussed in this article. In Steps 6 and 7, they implement the design and make changes to enhance student learning which is, of course, the desired destination of this cycle, which can be repeated as needs change.

A MODEL THAT SHARPENS THE FOCUS

In 2013, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) asked to collaborate with Learning Forward to investigate the key elements of effective professional learning

BACKMAPPING MODEL FOR PLANNING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



Source: Killion & Roy, 2009. Used with permission.

design — more specifically, “to give greater guidance around the ‘how’ of professional learning construction” (AITSL, 2014, p. 2).

This model builds on the Learning Designs standard. With theories, research, and models of professional learning in mind, the authors of this article — working with AITSL — crafted a simple logic sequence: Within a particular context, educators will engage in learning that will result in implementation of new practices, leading to successful learners.

They then investigated more than 50 professional learning designs. They narrowed the designs they studied to 27. (See the list on p. 10.) Many professional learning designs — such as action research, professional learning communities, and lesson study — have substantial research to support their effectiveness. Others, especially new technology-based designs such as Eduplanet21, Success at the Core, and Teachscape, are just beginning to collect research that attests to their value.

The authors scrutinized the 27 designs, teasing out the factors that made them effective according to research or acclaim. They identified a set of elements that seemed to cut across the



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—Paulette Fitzgerald, principal,
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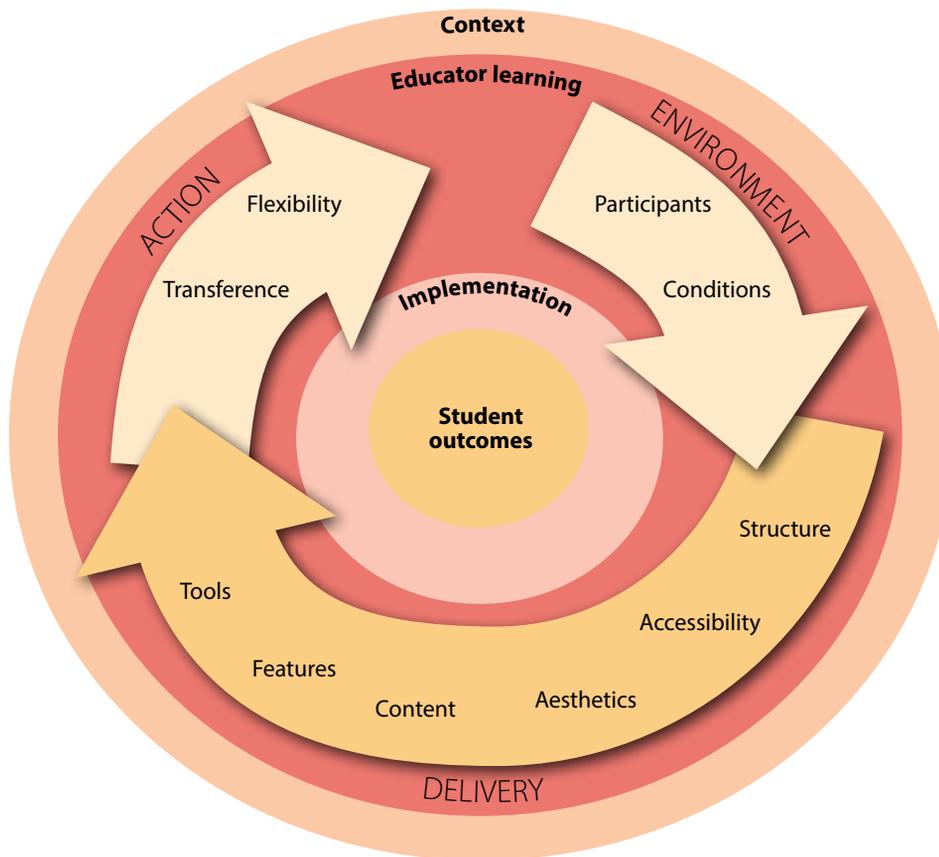
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AITSL MODEL FOR LEARNING



Source: AITSL, 2014, p. 6. Used with permission.

designs and organized these into three major components: environment, delivery, and action. (See graphic above.)

In this model, the environment component focuses on participants and conditions, roughly corresponding to Step 2 of Killion & Roy’s backmapping model. With purpose in mind, professional learning leaders can concentrate on the context or the environment of the learners.

The focus of this model really sharpens in terms of analysis of designs themselves in the delivery component. Within this component, they are encouraged to focus on the elements of structure, accessibility, aesthetics, content, features, and tools. Here are quick definitions of these elements:

Structure is “concerned with the practical arrangements of learning, i.e. the amount of time it takes and decisions about location and sequence of events” (AITSL, 2014, p. 10). Context and purposes for learning usually drive decisions about structure.

Accessibility refers to the ease with which the learner can engage in the design. Accessible learning design is based on strategies that enable the user to participate without difficulty.

Aesthetics “refers to those aspects of a learning design that elicit a sensory response from the participant. Aesthetic choices within a learning design include decisions about the visual,

auditory, and physical construction of the professional learning that enable engagement with the learning” (p. 10).

Content refers to the knowledge, attitude, skills, aspirations, and behaviors (Killion, 2008) that educators will work on through professional learning. Content may be subject-area specific or related to pedagogical, personal, or professional knowledge or practice. Alignment between content, purpose, and context is critical.

Features “are the practices associated with the delivery of, or mode of participation in, professional learning” (AITSL, 2014, p. 11). Choice of features depends on the purposes of the learning, the nature of the activities, the participants’ contexts, and conditions such as time and access to experts.

Tools are “instruments used to enhance knowledge transfer, deepen engagement, and support understanding of content aims” (AITSL, 2014, p. 11). They encourage the learner to test and apply his or her understanding as an active participant in the professional learning through activity, interaction, collaboration, application, or review (AITSL, 2014, p. 11).

The third component, action, “refers to those aspects leading to implementation of learning, translating learning to practice” (AITSL, 2014, p. 18).

Effective designs are likely to help learners engage in integrated and iterative professional learning such as “collaborative problem-solving, inquiry and research projects, peer observation, and feedback programs” (AITSL, 2014, p. 18).

Transference and flexibility are key considerations for this component. Transference is about “the ease with which participants transfer new knowledge and understanding, implementing their learning” (AITSL, 2014, p. 18). Sustaining implementation is key to effective use of a design.

Flexibility means a design is “broad enough to provide professional learning for a variety of situations. It will support educators to link their learning to changes in the classroom or school and implement new learnings, perhaps even in a different way to what was originally intended” (AITSL, 2014, p. 18).

The publication *Designing Professional Learning* (AITSL, 2014) features thorough descriptions of these components and elements as well as examples of designs for many of them. A series of questions helps professional learning leaders consider which designs would be appropriate for developing, enhancing, and evaluating professional learning.



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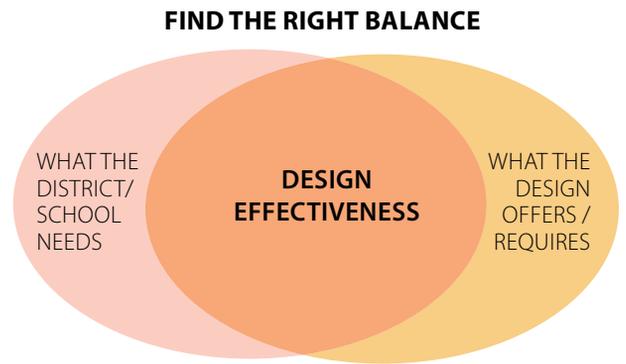
Together with the first and second editions of *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*, the third edition provides a directory of designs that educators around the country have found effective for professional learning. See below for a list of the designs included in the third edition.

The third edition grounds the learning designs within a meaningful context — that is, helping readers to understand not just the specific characteristics of powerful learning strategies, but also the systems in which such professional learning can thrive.

It isn't enough for professional learning designs to address the right criteria. In a coherent system, everyone involved shares an understanding of the role professional learning plays in advancing school purposes, their responsibilities for supporting professional learning, and the time and resources required. Those who work in such a coherent system contribute daily to an ongoing culture of continuous learning.

PULLING THE CRITERIA TOGETHER

So, finally, what matters in terms of selecting powerful professional learning designs? Here, presented as a set of questions,



are criteria for selecting designs according to the standard, theories, research, and models:

- Does the design exemplify accepted research and theory (e.g. adult learning, brain-based research, and social constructivism)?
- Does the design help educators fulfill their purpose for professional learning, based on student needs and desired student outcomes?
- Does the design fit the needs of the environment? What are the needs of the participants? What are the conditions for adult learning?
- Do the elements of the design lead to participant learning and application of learning?
- Is the structure (who, what, when, where, why, and how) suitable? Can it be altered to suit without destroying the integrity of the design?
- Is the design accessible, whether face-to-face, online, or blended?
- Is the design aesthetic, that is, likely to have a positive effect on participants?
- Is the content the right content for the purpose, the participants, and the context?
- How well do the features of the design — the processes — encourage deep learning and implementation?
- How well do the tools help adults learn?
- How well does the design encourage implementation or action as a result of learning? In particular, does the design include activities that help participants transfer and apply their learning?
- How does the design help participants evaluate their own learning and apply it in new contexts?

NO DESIGN IS PERFECT

The number of good professional learning designs available to educational leaders has multiplied in the last 10 years, especially through the use of technology. Choosing the right design requires understanding and balancing context needs with what a design offers and requires. The diagram above offers a way of looking at design choices.

Continued on p. 24



POWERFUL DESIGNS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, 3rd edition

Introduction: Design: Lois Brown Easton

Introduction: Systems: Lois Brown Easton and Ann Delephant

Accessing student voices: Kathleen Cushman

Action research: Cathy Caro-Bruce and Mary Klehr

Assessment as professional learning: Jay McTighe and Marcella Emberger

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LEARNING SIDE BY SIDE

TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS WORK TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN INSTRUCTION

By **Patty Maxfield and Sharon Williams**

The Kent (Washington) School District evaluation team — a partnership of principals, district leaders, and teachers union representatives — had been working together for seven months. The group’s task: to agree on one of three state-approved evaluation tools for the district.

With the aid of a Washington Education Association facilitator, the team adopted the University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership’s 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric and an instructional framework called the 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning. The group

then shifted to creating a professional learning plan for the district’s 1,400 classroom teachers. The plan’s initial goals were to:

- Consistently observe instruction;
- Create a common language to analyze instruction; and
- Develop a growth-oriented stance to build teacher and principal capacity and leadership.

In addition, the group strove to balance the learning needs of teachers, principals, and district leaders.

COMMON LANGUAGE

The correlation between teacher quality and student achievement is unequivocal: Teaching matters above all else, including family income and education (Haycock, 1998; Peske & Haycock, 2006). Differences among stu-

dents, as well as schools, are a small factor compared to differences in the quality of teaching from classroom to classroom (Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002).

A growing body of research evidence suggests that leadership ranks second to teaching in impact on student achievement (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). That illustrates the important role central office leaders play in supporting student learning across a system (Copland & Knapp, 2006; Honig, 2008; Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010).

These realities drive the Center for Educational Leadership to help educators identify and strengthen effective instruction.

According to the 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning, an instructional framework:

- Identifies a vision for high-quality teaching and learning while creating the opportunity for a common language within and across schools in a system;
- Supports the enhancement of teacher and principal instructional expertise and emphasizes continuous learning and improvement; and
- Keeps teachers and principals focused on the way each student learns, while simultaneously providing insight and strategies into how dilemmas around classroom learning can be addressed (Fink & Markholt, 2011).

The 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning framework helps educators

discern the instructional core elements identified by City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel (2009) for continually improving teacher expertise, changing the role of the student as learner, and increasing the complexity of the content that the student is learning. The components of the 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning framework are:

- Purpose;
- Student engagement;
- Curriculum and pedagogy;
- Assessment for student learning; and
- Classroom environment and culture.

KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Kent School District is the fourth-largest district in Washington and one of the most diverse, with more than 130 languages spoken. The 28,000 students in the district attend 41 schools over 71 square miles in South King County in Washington, a suburb in the Seattle metropolitan area with rapidly changing demographics. From 2002 to 2012, the percentage of minority students rose by 19%. More than 50% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

The Washington State Teacher/Principal Evaluation Pilot was created as a result of legislation passed in 2010 that established eight new criteria for teacher and principal evaluation. The Kent School District chose the 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning for an evaluation framework based on the district's changing demographics, increasing achievement gaps between student

Learn more about Kent School District's work to support major district initiatives through effective professional learning at Learning Forward's Annual Conference Dec. 6-10 in Nashville, Tennessee.



groups, and the Center for Educational Leadership's efforts to eliminate the achievement gap.

In June 2013, Kent School District implemented its professional learning plan. The yearlong plan focused on side-by-side learning: teacher leaders working with principals and teachers working with teachers. The plan supported and connected to three of the district's seven strategic goals: high student achievement, highly effective staff, and a culture of collaboration. The evaluation team also connected the professional learning to three districtwide initiatives: the instructional framework and evaluation system, professional learning communities, and implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

To encourage collaboration, the plan incorporated learning walks, professional learning communities, and the Center for Educational Leadership's 5D+ Inquiry Cycle to develop a strengths-based stance for observation and feedback. A strengths-based stance allows for the conversation between teacher and principal to be an objective way to analyze instructional data together. It helps build on the teacher's skills, expanding and deepening those skills over the course of the inquiry cycle.

As part of the professional learning plan, team members thought that it was important to be able to practice and learn the 5D framework together, and learning walks were the perfect way to build on principal and teacher understanding and use of the framework.

COMPONENTS OF A GROWTH-ORIENTED TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM

- Instructional framework.
- Rubric.
- Strengths-based, growth-oriented process.

The director of professional development and the instructional leadership coach collaborated to group schools for learning walks. Schools were grouped according to factors such as principal experience, student achievement status, proximity, and grade configuration. A Center for Educational Leadership facilitator led a series of classroom walk-throughs to help participants practice using the 5D instructional framework within the context of the host school.

During the learning walks — held in October and May — participants gathered evidence of teacher practice and student learning to assist in their analysis of classroom instruction and guide the improvement of teaching and learning. Before the learning walk, the host principal and the facilitator worked together to develop a problem of practice in literacy or mathematics. This problem of practice guided the conversations throughout the day.

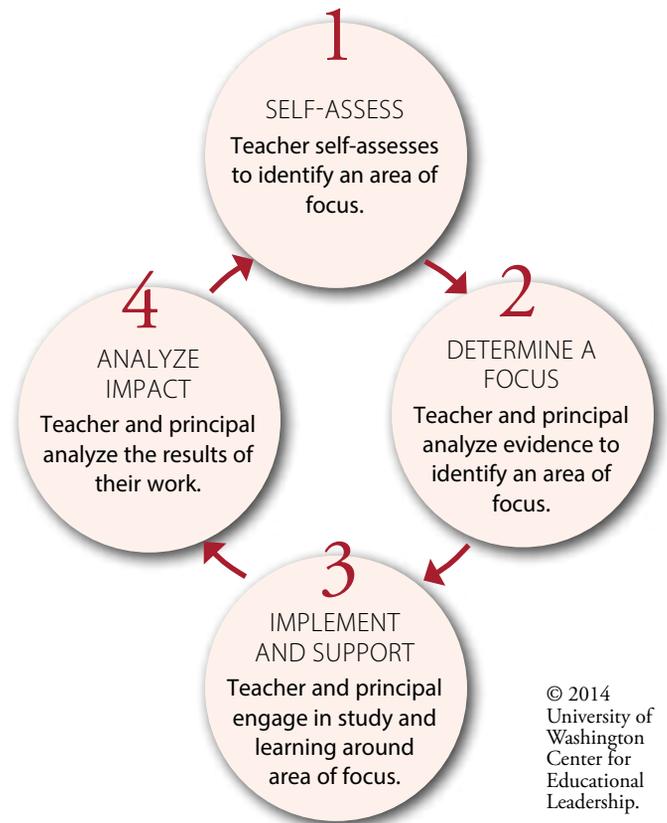
Teacher leaders, principals, and district leaders learned side by side. Principals and teacher leaders attended all components of the yearlong professional learning plan together. Principals recruited teacher leaders to become a part of the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Project teacher leader cadre.

Teachers and principals learned how to use the framework and rubric to collect and analyze instructional practice evidence, what each of the five dimensions for teaching and learning look and sound like in the classroom, and how to engage in the 5D+ Inquiry Cycle. Each stage of the learning emphasized reciprocal accountability and professional scrutiny.

The inclusion of teacher leaders as partners in learning capitalized on Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin's (1996) view that effective teacher learning involves teachers both as learners and teachers and allows them to struggle with the uncertainties that accompany each role. Effective teacher learning must be:

- Experiential, engaging teachers in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection that illuminate the processes of learning and development;
- Grounded in inquiry, reflection, and experimentation that are participant-driven;
- Collaborative and interactional, involving a sharing of knowledge among educators and a focus on teachers' communities of practice rather than individual teachers;
- Connected to and derived from teachers' work with their students;
- Sustained, ongoing, and intensive, supported by the modeling, coaching, and collective problem-solving around specific problems of practice; and
- Connected to other aspects of school change.

5D+ INQUIRY CYCLE



STRENGTHS-BASED STANCE

Traditional teacher evaluation often focused on what teachers weren't doing but should be. It also focused on single lessons instead of ongoing teacher practice. With a strengths-based stance in teacher evaluation, principals and teachers engage in formative feedback cycles that provide immediate, focused, and relevant feedback to teachers about their instructional practice. It builds on what teachers are doing, deepening and expanding their practice across all of the five dimensions of teaching and learning.

The Center for Educational Leadership's teacher evaluation process has three components:

1. An **instructional framework** that is grounded in research-based practice and appropriately represents the nuances of student learning, content, and teacher expertise.
2. A **rubric** that provides a continuum for developing specific practices outlined in the framework. The rubric should contain a single best practice for each indicator so that teachers and their evaluators can identify specific areas of instructional expertise to focus on and ultimately assess each practice without the confusion of assessing multiple practices simultaneously.
3. The third component — the one most often ignored when implementing teacher evaluation rubrics — is a **growth-oriented process** that requires the teacher and evaluator to

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How practice is changing

Using a strengths-based approach has fostered professional conversations that energize teachers and principals. This dialogue leads to changes in teaching practice that impact classroom culture and student learning. Here are examples of how teacher and principal practice has changed in Kent School District.

CARA HANEY, TEACHER
Panther Lake Elementary School



"I KNEW I WAS A GOOD TEACHER before. Now I realize that there is so much more I can do.

"When we were in college, we got the theory. The framework shows us what to do. New teachers feel that they know what they are doing because they have the framework in front of them.

"I definitely know the rubric and the pieces behind it at a deeper level. If I'm going to teach it, I have to know how it works and that it will work in the classroom.

"The stance of the principal is the reciprocal responsibility. ...

The principal has the responsibility to say, 'I want you to be the best teacher, and this is how we're going to do it. What professional learning can I get for you? What videos can I get for you?' The conversation is the most important part. The conversation is the biggest change.

"I'm very proud of what I'm doing. I want people to see."

ELIZABETH (BETH) WALLEN, PRINCIPAL
Panther Lake Elementary School



"I WAS ALWAYS LEADING. Now I have these other experts with me. We check our understandings together, getting us on the same page.

"The shift is that this is a collaborative

process. We are looking at practice together. The stance is moving away from 'Am I doing a good job?' or 'Do you think this was OK?' Now it's 'Let's look at the evidence' or 'Let's look at the script together.' The conversations are the most critical part of it, especially those post conversations.

"Teachers' perception of feedback is different. I used to just give the running record and compare that against the rubric. This is all about their professional growth."

work side by side to develop instructional practice expertise.

5D+ INQUIRY CYCLE

The 5D+ Inquiry Cycle has four steps, each with a specific purpose.

1. Self-assess.

Before meeting with the principal, the teacher engages in self-assessment by examining student work, classroom-based student assessment data, and student feedback to determine the learning strengths and challenges of the students in his or her classroom. The teacher makes connections between student learning needs and building or district initiatives. Finally, the teacher uses the rubric to assess his or her practice.

2. Determine a focus.

The principal and teacher meet to review the self-assessment data, along with any additional evidence the principal provides, and decide on an area of focus within the instructional framework and rubric.

3. Implement and support.

Together, the teacher and principal spend several months working on the identified area of focus. The teacher works to implement what he or she is learning, and the principal works to support implementation through feedback and professional

learning, which might include reading an article, observing or collaborating with a colleague, or attending a class.

4. Analyze impact.

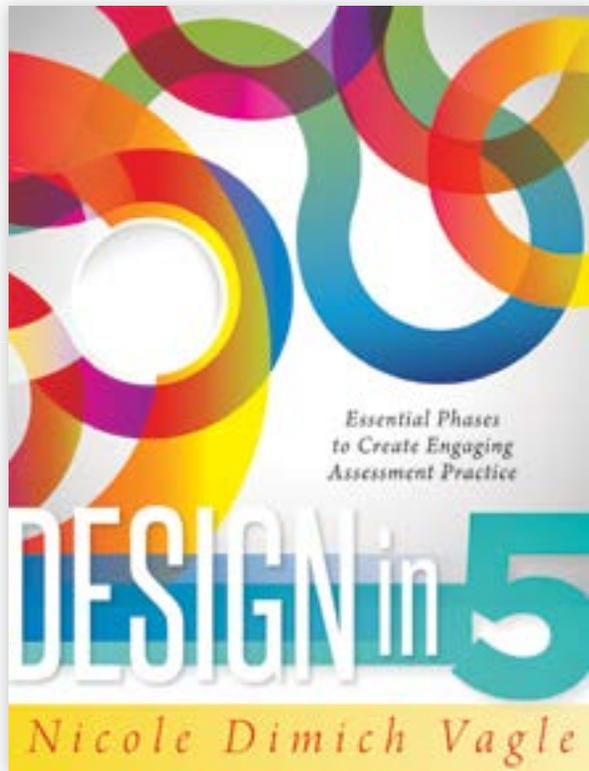
The teacher and principal review what was learned and identify next steps. Throughout the process, evaluators take a strengths-based stance when analyzing observation data and giving feedback to teachers.

Learning this strengths-based stance has allowed teachers and principals in the Kent School District to use the evaluation process to improve instruction. Teachers and principals work together to examine instructional practice and student learning data to determine areas of strength and opportunity.

Together, they use the instructional framework and rubric to determine next steps in the teacher's learning. The principal supports that learning through feedback and professional development. The teacher adjusts his or her practice accordingly. Together, they continually look at instructional practice data, compare it to the research-based practices in the instructional framework, and use the rubric to determine next steps.

A strengths-based stance, with teachers and principals learning side by side, analyzing instructional data, and determining next steps, has allowed the Kent School District to shift its resources to a practice that impacts teacher growth and student learning.

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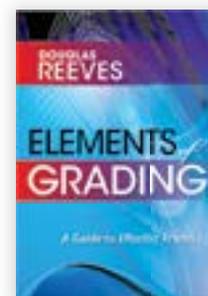
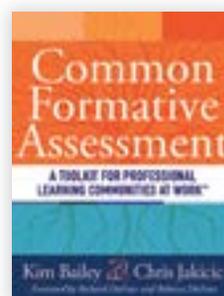
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How to choose the right learning design

Continued from p.16

A design must be flexible enough to fit the needs of the district or school without compromising its integrity. At the same time, since no design is perfect and can fill *all* the professional learning needs of *everyone*, schools and districts need to think about how they will supplement the design with their own devices.

For example, a school or district may decide that a design is somewhat weak on implementation and, therefore, decide to establish a coaching program to be sure that educators apply what they are learning through the design.

One approach to this reality is to think of *design* as plural. It may take multiple designs — coordinated as a program — to fill the needs of the organization, its personnel, and its students.

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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. Recently, we talked with 20 education leaders — principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders, and district-level

administrators — about the most pressing challenges they face in supporting adult development in their schools and organizations.

These leaders participated in a graduate course about supporting adult development as part of their leadership training. We asked them how they use developmental principles and practices in their work and the obstacles they encountered along the way (Drago-Severson, Blum-DeStefano, & Asghar, 2013).

Three of the most common obstacles the leaders cited are:

- Understanding and managing resistance;
- Finding time to support teachers' professional learning; and
- Finding forums to grow as leaders.

Let's examine these challenges in depth and highlight the creative strategies that these leaders employ for overcoming them to make schools richer places of learning for both adults and children.

RESISTANCE

Resistance from colleagues and/or supervisors presents a pressing challenge to developmentally oriented leadership. The leaders we spoke with said this resistance complicated some of their early attempts to lead in developmental ways. They attributed it to:

- The many demands educators face every day;
- The challenge of convincing others of the value of a developmental approach before they've experienced it; and
- Adults' reluctance to engage in work

that feels unfamiliar/beyond comfortable competencies (i.e. resistance may be developmental in nature).

For example, these leaders understood that asking teachers to do something different — even when genuinely offered as support — may feel like too much at first, especially given the demands educators face.

One leader, who works as an education consultant in an urban district, explained: "Doing this work is different for people — it's hard. They don't know how to do it. They don't feel like they have time to do it. These schools that I'm working at have above-average dropout rates and gun violence. These are tough urban schools. They're the lowest-performing school districts, and the teachers are ... working at capacity in every sense of the word. And so when they're asked to be doing something different, of course there's going to be a [challenging] response to that."

Still, leaders suggested several strategies that help them allay colleagues' and supervisors' initial apprehensions:

- Maintain objectivity as a leader, and don't take complaints personally.
- Invite resistant adults to share their thinking/feeling, rather than demanding compliance.
- Invest time to stay in place as a leader, or remain present without pushing for immediate change.
- Remain open to different perspectives.

These leaders recognized that colleagues' discomfort with new initiatives can stem from their developmental orientations toward change and new ex-

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pectations. Keeping this in mind, they explained, was an important strategy for taking the personal sting out of colleagues' or supervisors' initial hesitations.

One course graduate, reflecting on her roles as a school leader and consultant, said: "I think a lot about the concept of complaints [as] signs of passion in teachers, and I felt that that was a huge paradigm shift in me. ... When I work in schools, I'm never overwhelmed by the amount of feedback that teachers have."

Resistance can have many roots. For these leaders, acknowledging the multiple possibilities of resistance while working to understand the reasons behind colleagues' pushback proved a more effective strategy than simply demanding compliance. See the box on p. 28 for additional strategies for managing resistance.

TIME

Not surprisingly, nearly all leaders named time as a significant obstacle, particularly in terms of the hectic and full pace of the workday, competing demands placed on educators, and lack of common planning time.

In particular, finding the time to commit to the developmental work of growing adults was difficult in the high-pressure, high-stakes, evaluation-driven context of schools today, leaders emphasized. As one course graduate, now a high school English teacher leader, said: "Your attention is constantly in demand from all sorts, like colleagues, your administrators, your kids, parents. It's so consuming that I think it's often difficult to even

make the time [for developmental work].”

With all that is increasingly expected of educators, these leaders underscored the importance of deliberately fitting developmental structures and opportunities into their busy schedules, lest it take a backseat to everyday exigencies. To do this, they cited two key strategies:

- Carve out time for collaborative work and reflection within the school day.
- Carefully budget time to meet multiple demands.

Making time to support learning leads to building trust, leaders said. One leader, reflecting on her work as an academic dean, said: “In an actual leadership role, the logistics are sometimes just as important [as a leader’s beliefs]. ... You can value it [adult development], but if you don’t give teachers the time and support they need and the space, then you’re not really showing that you value it. ... Giving the time and space — the logistics of that — is just as important, because you’re putting your money where your mouth is.”

Failing to merge intention and action — even in the logistical details of scheduling — can significantly hinder a leader’s work and inadvertently send mixed messages. See the box at right for additional strategies for making time for learning.

SELF-DEVELOPMENT

The leaders in our research understood the importance of — and challenges to — self-development, both in growing one’s own developmental capacities and occasionally stepping out of the role of expert to assume a learning stance.

An awareness of one’s own way of knowing — and all of its strengths and limitations — was key to maximizing and growing their own leadership. One leader, an academic dean in her school, said that meeting teachers where they are and helping to support them in a developmental sense also requires “recognizing where you are on that spectrum.” Leaders’ developmental capacities color the types of supports and challenges they offer, as well as their expectations of other adults, so awareness and growth are essential to effective leadership.

Likewise, many leaders in our research said that adults often expect leaders to know the right answers or best course of action when faced with difficult dilemmas. Given the pressure to establish authority and maintain respect as a leader, it was hard at times for these leaders to publicly or even privately acknowledge their own journey as lifelong learners. Still, they understood that maintaining and sharing a commitment to one’s own development was key to supporting others because it modeled the type of openness and vulnerability necessary for growth.

As one leader, a middle school principal, explained, “It can be very difficult to say, ‘I don’t have the answers, and I’m learning.’ ... When you’re in a leadership role ... you’re supposed to have all the answers.” Yet, for this principal and others, moving past this pressure was a challenge, an opportunity, and an imperative.

To grow as leaders, they read and keep abreast of current

STRATEGIES FOR ...

MANAGING RESISTANCE

1. Share short articles about developmental theory and learning-oriented leadership to help others understand key ideas, and explain why this is important to you.
2. Explain the direct link between supporting adult learning and increasing student achievement.
3. Meet adults where they are in development by being present to them without pressing them to change immediately.
4. Scaffold adults’ understanding as they strive to grow by offering developmentally appropriate supports and challenges.
5. Help them understand that you are with them — that you know change is hard and that it takes time.
6. Ask questions to learn more about what they are resisting and why.
7. Ask how you can help. What supports might be useful? What, in particular, are they finding challenging?

MAKING TIME

1. Invite adults to meet before or after school. Provide food.
2. Create lunch clubs where educators discuss practice, articles, initiatives, or problems of practice.
3. Ask publishers to offer free or discounted books for book clubs.
4. Host monthly dinner meetings during which teams can share experiences, reflect on practice, discuss challenges, and engage in collegial inquiry.
5. Reframe existing meeting and collaborative times with developmental practices.

SELF-DEVELOPMENT

1. Seek opportunities to collaborate with others.
2. Find or create relationships for collegial inquiry and/or mentoring.
3. Carefully consider and reflect on your own way of knowing and how it influences your work.
4. Reflect privately through journaling.
5. Carve out space for your own learning and growth.

ideas. They also reflect deeply about their practice, seek advice from trusted others, and solicit feedback from key stakeholders. See the box above for additional strategies for supporting self-development.

WHY ADULT LEARNING MATTERS

When adults learn and grow in schools through effective professional learning, students do, too (Guskey, 2000). Research shows that supporting authentic learning in adults has been positively linked to improving student achievement (Donaldson, 2008). However, traditional sit-and-get professional learning adds almost nothing to teachers' long-term development — and has no lasting effect on student performance (Murnane & Willet, 2010).

This discrepancy stems from the fact that conventional professional development often fails to account for the different ways that educators, like all adults, experience the world and their practice. Research over the past 40 years (e.g. Kegan, 1982, 1994, 2000) indicates that adults have different developmental orientations and capacities — or ways of knowing — that influence the ways they think about and experience teaching, learning, and leadership (Drago-Severson, 2004, 2009, 2012; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2013).

While each way of knowing has strengths and limitations, the mounting demands placed on all educators call

for increases in their internal capacities — not just technical or pedagogical expertise, though these are also important. Likewise, because educators have different ways of knowing, they will need different supports and challenges in order to grow and improve their instructional practice and leadership, whether it is related to taking in feedback, exercising leadership, or collaborating with team members.

With appropriate supports and challenges, adulthood can be a time of immense growth. Leaders can, for instance, strategically and intentionally differentiate practices that help adults build their internal capacities. Leaders can also use these practices to support their own growth.

References

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GROWING THROUGH CHALLENGES

Through their experiences, these leaders came to see developmental intentionality as an enduring core of effective leadership, rather than a simple add-on or supplement. Eager to implement developmental ideas in their own contexts — given their connection to both student and teacher growth — these leaders learned that supporting adult development is neither simple nor straightforward.

As a process of building and sustaining growth-oriented cultures over time, learning-oriented leadership requires vision, adaptation, responsiveness, and imagination in order to challenge resistance, build time, and create the conditions for everyone — including leaders — to grow.

REFERENCE

Drago-Severson, E., Blum-DeStefano, J. & Asghar, A. (2013). *Learning for leadership: Developmental strategies for building capacity in our schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

•

Ellie Drago-Severson (drago-severson@tc.edu) is a professor of education and Jessica Blum-DeStefano (jesscblum@yahoo.com) is a junior co-instructor in the Summer Principals Academy at Teachers College, Columbia University. ■

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Learning Forward is the only association focused solely on the most critical lever in improving schools — building the knowledge and skills of educators. Learning Forward leads the field in understanding what links professional learning to improved student achievement. **For a limited time, sign up your team for membership in Learning Forward at a discounted rate.**

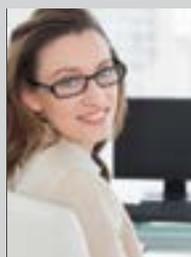
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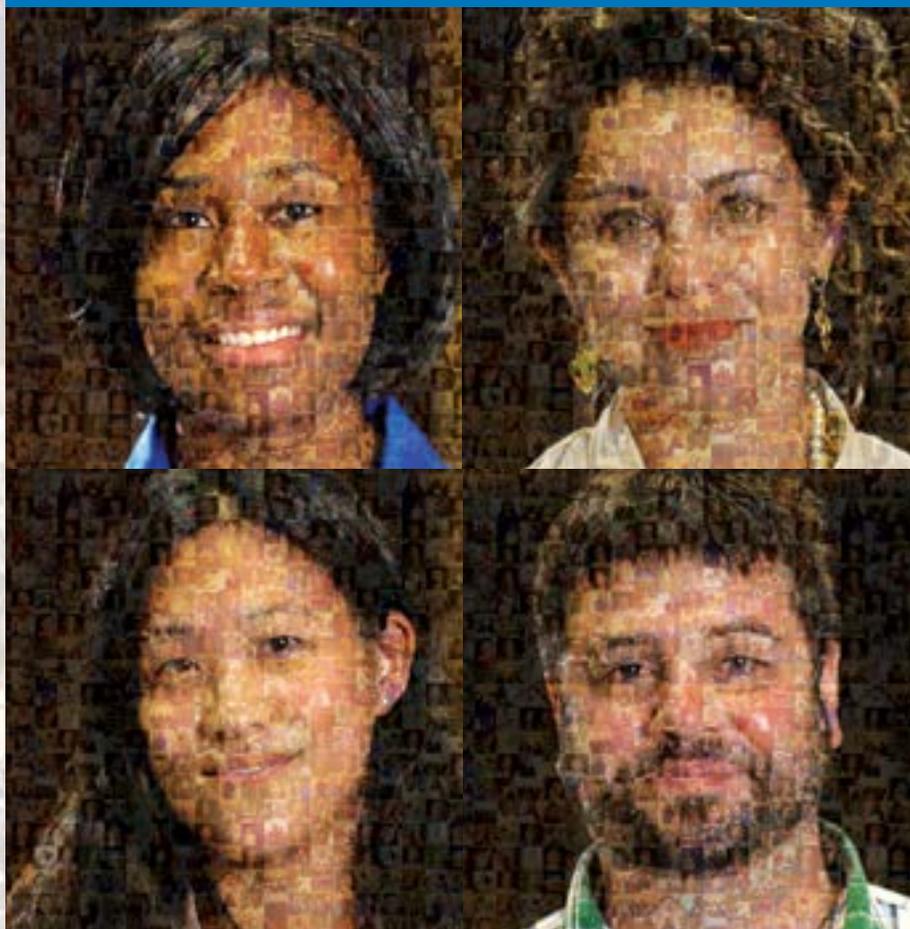
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for 3-day or 5-day
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attendance.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE PREVIEW



Welcome. Learning Forward's 2014 Annual Conference is the premier opportunity for educators who want to ensure that professional learning drives improved results for teachers and students. Join us and get recharged, refocused, and ready to implement positive change in your school, district, or organization.

NASHVILLE *learningforward*
**2014 ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**
DEC. 6-10, 2014



What Makes Learning Forward's Annual Conference THE Learning Conference?

Learning Forward conference participants become a community of learners as they experience cutting-edge keynotes and general sessions, participate in interactive learning sessions, and form lasting professional relationships. Learning Forward's Annual Conference is the best investment you can make to promote professional learning that advances educator and student performance. Attendees rank this conference as the top priority in their annual travel requests because of Learning Forward's high standards for relevant and informative sessions.

The Program

- Develop new knowledge and hone existing skills.
- Engage in meaningful conversations with thought leaders and colleagues.
- Acquire tools and strategies to apply to your work with teachers and students.
- Attend preconference sessions to delve more deeply into priority areas.
- Learn about colleagues' accomplishments, challenges, and lessons learned.
- Attend Networking Meet-Ups, FastForward sessions, and other unique opportunities that match your individual learning style.

The Experience

- Family-style sit-down meals encourage conversation and promote relationship building.
- Reserved space in ticketed sessions means your presenter is expecting you and has materials ready.
- Small discussion groups allow reflection on new learning and its application.
- More than 60 exhibitors offer valuable products and resources specific to professional learning.
- Share your conference experience via social media with our Twitter and Instagram hashtag, #learnfwd14.

Who Should Attend:

- Central office administrators
- Superintendents
- Policymakers and decision makers
- Teacher leaders/coaches
- School-based teams
- Principals/assistant principals
- Technical assistance providers

Access new ideas
Gain new knowledge
Learn from
thought leaders
Identify resources
Make connections

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Friday, December 5, 2014

- 8:30 am – 4 pm Academy 2015 & 2016 Sessions
- 5 pm – 7 pm Registration

Saturday, December 6, 2014

- 7:30 am – 5 pm Registration
- 8:30 am – 4 pm Academy 2015 & 2016 Sessions
- 9 am – 4 pm Preconference Sessions
- 12 pm – 1 pm Preconference Lunch

Sunday, December 7, 2014

- 7:30 am – 6:30 pm Registration
- 9 am – 4 pm Preconference Sessions
- 12 pm – 1 pm Preconference Lunch
- 4 pm – 6 pm Exhibit Hall Open
- 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm iPD Showcase & Learning Hangout Sessions
- 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm Academy Graduation & Reception
- 5:30 pm – 6:15 pm Learning Forward Experience for First-Time Attendees
- 6 pm – 7 pm Member Reception

Monday, December 8, 2014

- 7:30 am – 5 pm Registration
- 7:45 am – 9 am Continental Breakfast in the Exhibit Hall
- 7:45 am – 6 pm Exhibit Hall Open
- 8 am – 9 am Networking Meet-Up Sessions, iPD Showcase, & Learning Hangout Sessions
- 9:15 am – 11:15 am Thought Leader Lectures TL01 & TL02
- 9:15 am – 11:15 am Concurrent Sessions (A & B)
- 11:30 am – 12:15 pm Lunch
- 12:15 pm – 1:30 pm General Session 1
- 1:45 pm – 2:45 pm Keynote QA1 and Panel Discussion
- 1:45 pm – 3:45 pm Thought Leader Lectures TL03 & TL04
- 1:45 pm – 3:45 pm Concurrent Sessions (A & C)
- 1:45 pm – 3:45 pm Leadership Forum Sessions (LF1 & LF2)

Monday, December 8, 2014 (continued)

- 4 pm – 5 pm Concurrent Sessions (D)
- 4 pm – 5 pm FastForward Sessions
- 4 pm – 5 pm Networking Meet-Up Sessions
- 4:30 pm – 6 pm Exhibit Hall Reception
- 4:30 pm – 6 pm iPD Showcase Sessions
- 6 pm – 7:30 pm Host State (Texas, Tennessee, and D.C./Md./Va.) Affiliate Receptions
- 7 pm – 8 pm Affiliate Networking Reception
- 8 pm – 10 pm Foundation Concert featuring Little River Band

Tuesday, December 9, 2014

- 7:30 am – 3 pm Registration
- 7:45 am – 9 am Continental Breakfast in the Exhibit Hall
- 7:45 am – 1:45 pm Exhibit Hall Open
- 8 am – 9 am Networking Meet-Up Sessions, iPD Showcase, & Learning Hangout Sessions
- 9:15 am – 11:15 am Thought Leader Lectures TL05 & TL06
- 9:15 am – 11:15 am Concurrent Sessions (E & F)
- 11:30 am – 12:15 pm Lunch
- 12:15 pm – 1:30 pm General Session 2
- 1:45 pm – 3:45 pm Keynote QA2, Panel Discussion with Tennessee Leaders QA3
- 1:45 pm – 3:45 pm Thought Leader Lectures TL07 & TL08
- 1:45 pm – 3:45 pm Concurrent Sessions (E & G)
- 1:45 pm – 3:45 pm Common Core Forum Sessions (CCF1 & CCF2)
- 4 pm – 5 pm Concurrent Sessions (H)
- 4 pm – 5 pm Networking Meet-Up Sessions
- 4 pm – 5:30 pm TL09 and Business Meeting

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

- 7 am – 10 am Registration
- 8 am – 10 am Thought Leader Lectures TL10 & TL11
- 8 am – 10 am Concurrent Sessions (I)
- 10:15 am – 11 am Brunch
- 11 am – 12 pm General Session
- 12 pm Conference Adjourns

SUNDAY

DECEMBER 7

4 pm - 6 pm

EXHIBIT HALL OPENS

Visit vendors and gain familiarity with the latest resources, products, and tools available and their best uses.



iPD SHOWCASE & LEARNING HANGOUT SESSIONS

4:30 pm - 5:30 pm



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2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
DEC. 6-10, 2014

Learning Forward Experience

5:30 pm - 6:15 pm

for First-Time Attendees



MEMBER RECEPTION

6 pm - 7 pm



MONDAY

DECEMBER 8

Three speakers in a TED-talk style format

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS FOR MONDAY: 12:15 pm - 1:30 pm

- Barrington Antonio Irving Jr.
- Pearl Arredondo
- Michael Ungar



7:45 am - 9 am

Continental Breakfast
in the Exhibit Hall

NETWORKING MEET-UPS

Informal meet-ups with job-alike attendees or around topics of importance.

8 am - 9 am and 4 pm - 5 pm

THOUGHT LEADER LECTURES

Examine the latest research and findings with leaders and visionaries in the field of professional learning.

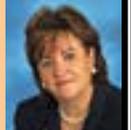
TL01
Kristen Weatherby



TL02
Michael Casserly



TL03
MaryEllen Elia



TL04
Michael Fullan



&
Andy Hargreaves



FastForward

Experience lightning-fast learning in PechaKucha-style presentations with 15-20 slides in 7 minutes.

4 pm - 5 pm

LEARNING HANGOUT

8 am - 9 am

iPD SHOWCASE

8 am-9 am and 4:30 pm-6 pm

KEYNOTE Q&A

and Panel Discussion

1:45 pm - 2:45 pm

featuring **LITTLE RIVER BAND**



8 pm - 10 pm

FOUNDATION CONCERT

Enjoy the sounds of Little River Band at this Learning Forward Foundation event.

\$20 in advance
\$25 at the door

TUESDAY

DECEMBER 9

12:15 - 1:30 pm

KEYNOTE SPEAKER JOHN HATTIE

John Hattie will share his work on visible learning and teaching.



EXHIBIT HALL LAST DAY

7:45 am - 1:45 pm



7:45 am - 9 am

Continental Breakfast
in the Exhibit Hall

THOUGHT LEADER LECTURES

TL05
Joseph Murphy



TL06
Max Silverman



Josh Edelman



TL07
Kathi Littman



TL08
Beverly Cross



TL09
Stephanie Hirsh



Julie Blaine



LEARNING HANGOUT

8 am - 9 am

iPD SHOWCASE

8 am - 9 am

KEYNOTE Q&A

QA2
John Hattie

1:45 pm - 2:45 pm

QA3

Panel Discussion with Tennessee Leaders

2:45 pm - 3:45 pm

Jamie Woodson, Gregg Morton, Philip Bredsen Tammy Grissom



NETWORKING MEET-UPS

Informal meet-ups with job-alike attendees or around topics of importance.

8 am - 9 am and 4 pm - 5 pm

WEDNESDAY

DECEMBER 10

11 am - 12 pm

KEYNOTE SPEAKER STEVE GROSS

"How joy and optimism ignite the best in all of us."



THOUGHT LEADER LECTURES

TL10
Elise Foster



TL11
Dan Pontefract



Brunch

10:15 am - 11 am



DAILY KEY EVENTS AT-A-GLANCE

Register online today...

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

Conference Registration Form

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School Dist./Organization _____ Position _____

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Is this address: business home *(All membership materials will be sent to this address)*

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Please print your e-mail address legibly — your conference confirmation will be e-mailed to you.

PLEASE CHECK (✓)

- This is my first Learning Forward Annual Conference.
- I am willing to host a session(s) I am attending. Be eligible to win a free conference registration! Hosts will be contacted with details.
- I am willing to volunteer for 3 hours during the conference.
- Special diet required:

- Check here if you do not wish to have special promotional material sent to you from our conference vendors.

2 REGISTRATION FEES:

Check (✓) each fee that applies and fill in amount. Trial memberships do not apply.

	Member	Non-member <i>(includes complimentary digital membership)</i>
1-Day Preconference (indicate day attending)	\$230	\$299
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday 12/6 <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday 12/7 <i>(includes coffee break/lunch)</i>		
2-Day Preconference or two 1-Day Preconference	\$430	\$499
Saturday 12/6 AND Sunday 12/7 <i>(includes coffee breaks and lunch both days)</i>		
1-Day Regular Conference	\$189	\$258
<i>(indicate day attending)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Monday 12/8 <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday 12/9 <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday 12/10 <i>(includes breakfast and lunch Mon./Tues. or brunch on Wednesday)</i>		
3-Day Regular Conference	\$430	\$499
Monday 12/8, Tuesday 12/9, Wednesday (a.m.) 12/10 <i>(5 meals, Sunday Reception, Exhibit Reception, and Affiliate Networking Event included)</i>		
★ 5-Day BEST DEAL	\$689	\$758
Saturday 12/6 through Wednesday (a.m.) 12/10 <i>(7 meals, Sunday Reception, Exhibit Reception, and Affiliate Networking Event included)</i>		
Foundation Concert / Little River Band (Onsite cost \$25)	\$20	
Subtotal \$		

- Center for Results Sessions** (no charge)
- Ignite Professional Learning and School Improvement with the SAI2 (Saturday, Dec. 6)
- Pathway to Achievement (Sunday, Dec. 7)

4 DISCOUNTS: Check (✓) if applicable and fill in amount.

- Deduct \$50 early discount
- (on 3- or 5-Day registration only) if postmarked before October 15, 2014*
- Enter group discount code _____ (Phone 800-727-7288)
- Subtotal \$**

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Renew or upgrade your membership at special conference rates.

	If you paid the member conference fee, renew	If you paid the non-member conference fee, upgrade the free digital membership
<input type="checkbox"/> Digital Membership	\$ 49	
<input type="checkbox"/> Standard Membership	\$ 99	\$ 30
<input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive Membership	\$139	\$70
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Membership	\$279	\$210

Five people can attend using one organizational membership number. Five subscriptions include one print plus four digital. List 5 names and mailing and email addresses on a separate sheet.

These are one-year memberships. Go to www.learningforward.org/join-renew/ membership-options for a complete description of membership benefits.

Subtotal \$

5 TOTAL AND PAYMENT: Add 2 and 3 and subtract 4

Subtotal Registration 2.....	\$
Subtotal Membership 3.....	\$
Subtotal Discount 4.....	-\$
TOTAL \$	

Registration fees made payable to Learning Forward must accompany this form. Invoice(s) issued on purchase order(s) must be paid prior to the conference.

- Fees are payable by:
- MasterCard Visa Discover
- Check Purchase order *(must accompany form)*

Billing Address _____

Card No. _____

Exp. Date _____ 3-Digit Security Code _____

Signature _____

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FAX 513-523-0638

Session Registration Form

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Name: _____

	Early morning	Morning	Afternoon	Late afternoon / evening
SATURDAY Dec. 6, 2014		Preconference / 9-4 pm / Ticketed		
SUNDAY Dec. 7, 2014		Preconference / 9-4 pm / Ticketed		Learning Hangout / iPD Showcase 4:30 -5:30 pm / Unticketed
MONDAY Dec. 8, 2014	Networking Meet-Ups, Learning Hangout, iPD Showcase 8-9 am / Unticketed	Set A / 9:15-11:15 am continuing 1:45-3:45 pm / Ticketed	Set D / FastForward / Networking Meet-Ups 4-5 pm / Unticketed iPD Showcase 4:30-6 pm/ Unticketed	
		TL01 & TL02 / Set B 9:15-11:15 am / Ticketed		
TUESDAY Dec. 9, 2014	Networking Meet-Ups, Learning Hangout, iPD Showcase 8-9 am / Unticketed	Set E / 9:15-11:15 am continuing 1:45-3:45 pm / Ticketed	Set H / 4-5 pm / Unticketed	
		TL05 & TL06 / Set F 9:15-11:15 am / Ticketed		
WEDNESDAY Dec. 10, 2014		TL10 & TL11 / Set I 8-10 am / Ticketed	Adjourn	

PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOP SELECTIONS: December 6 and 7. Please indicate three choices (mark 1, 2, and 3).

SATURDAY – December 6, 2014

- | | |
|---|--|
| ___ PC101 Jonathon Saphier | ___ PC108 Rob Ramsdell |
| ___ PC102 Carolyn McKanders & Michael Dolcemasclo | ___ PC109 Brian Newsom |
| ___ PC103 Carol Ann Tomlinson & Michael Murphy | ___ PC110 Sara Ray Stoelinga & Melinda Mangin |
| ___ PC104 Kathleen Ponder | ___ PC111 Jan Chappuis |
| ___ PC105 Jamie Almanzán | ___ PC112 Margery Ginsberg |
| ___ PC106 Callie Riley | ___ PC113 Lois Easton, Lyn Hilt, & Joellen Killion |
| ___ PC107 Donna Micheaux & Jennifer Parvin | ___ PC114 Margie Johnson & Adam Taylor |

SUNDAY – December 7, 2014

- | | |
|---|--|
| ___ PC201 Vivian Elliott & Mark Wilding | ___ PC211 Cindy Harrison & Justin Darnell |
| ___ PC202 Steve Barkley | ___ PC212 Victoria Bernhard & Bradley Geise |
| ___ PC203 Marcia Tate | ___ PC213 Jim Knight |
| ___ PC204 Robert Garmston & Diane Zimmerman | ___ PC214 Frederick Brown, Kay Psencik, & Wendy Robinson |
| ___ PC205 Thomas Guskey | ___ PC215 Victoria Duff & Linda Munger |
| ___ PC206 Andy Hargreaves & Alan Boyle | ___ PC216 Albert Bertani |
| ___ PC207 Candice McQueen | ___ PC217 David Nagel & Kristin Anderson |
| ___ PC208 Bruce Wellman & Laura Lipton | ___ PC218 Emily Barton |
| ___ PC209 Kenneth Williams | ___ PC219 Masa Uzicanin & Joellen Killion |
| ___ PC210 ReLeah Cossett Lent | |

TICKETED CONCURRENT SESSION SELECTIONS:

MONDAY – December 8, 2014

Morning Concurrent Session Choice:

Identify your top three choices for this time period. Remember: Set A takes the entire day and should be marked in the same order in your afternoon schedule.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Afternoon Concurrent Session Choice: Identify your top three choices. Remember: If you previously chose a session from Set A you need to list it in the same order below, as it is an all-day session.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

TUESDAY – December 9, 2014

Morning Concurrent Session Choice:

Identify your top three choices for this time period. Remember: Set E takes the entire day and should be marked in the same order in your afternoon schedule.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Afternoon Concurrent Session Choice: Identify your top three choices. Remember: If you previously chose a session from Set E, you need to list it in the same order below, as it is an all-day session.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

WEDNESDAY – December 10, 2014

Morning Concurrent Session Choice:

Identify your top three choices.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

LECTURE TRACK

LECTURE TRACK Check here to register for all Thought Leader Lectures, panels, and Q&As.

4 simple ways to register.

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For special conference hotel rates, register through www.learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/annual-conference.



TRANSPORTATION GUIDE

GROUND TRANSPORTATION

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AIRPORT SHUTTLE

The Gaylord Opryland roundtrip shuttle service from the Nashville International Airport to the hotel departs every 30 minutes daily from 5 am to 11 pm. Look for the Gaylord Opryland welcome desk on the lower level of the airport. Required reservations can be made by calling 615-883-2211. The cost is \$40 per person for roundtrip fare and \$30 per person for one-way fare.

TAXI Taxi fare is about \$25 one way.

PARKING Onsite parking is \$20 per day for self-parking and \$28 per day for valet.

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Focus on teaching: How video changes everything



In this webinar, author Jim Knight explores the potential of video recording to reach new levels of excellence in schools. Explore how video can improve teaching methods by helping educators understand what their current teaching methods are. Knight outlines a clear process for using video to promote professional growth and teacher effectiveness.

Topics of discussion include how to integrate the use of video to maximize the effectiveness of coaching, professional learning communities, and authentic assessment by administrators. Learn strategies for harnessing video to create immediate and long-lasting change.

www.learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/webinars

Keep learning communities focused

Professional learning communities have proliferated dramatically over the past several years, becoming almost commonplace as a strategy for addressing student learning problems. Much to the disappointment of many educators, though, the presence of learning communities does not always bring significant changes in student learning.

In order to keep the focus on effective professional learning, there are three critical elements that effective learning communities have: Continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and alignment and accountability. Read more in *Transform Professional Learning*.

www.learningforward.org/publications/transform



TALIS findings invite deeper discussions

Learning Forward Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh reflects on the value of survey data:

“We need to remember that averages are built

from wildly disparate numbers and extremely varied experiences. Maybe our higher-performing systems are engaging in more hours. Or maybe they are engaging in better hours — or both.

In any case, I’m excited to move from understanding the averages to understanding the exemplars. From there, our job is to reduce the disparities in quality among what all educators experience.”

<http://bit.ly/TXCI41>



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Learning Forward and Learning Forward’s Center for Results are on Google’s social networking site, Google+. Join in the conversation, get the latest organization announcements, and access professional learning content.

Learning Forward: <http://bit.ly/1nIQI3n>

Center for Results: <http://bit.ly/1mSq0eq>

STEPPING STONES *to* LEADERSHIP

DISTRICTS FORGE A CLEAR PATH FOR ASPIRING PRINCIPALS

By Amy Burrows-McCabe

As the stakes for improved student achievement increase, administrators, teachers, and districts are looking for quick fixes. When Glenn Pethel, assistant superintendent of leadership development in Gwinnett County, Georgia, is asked for quick fixes, he responds, “Here is what we know [about leadership]: It is not quick, and it is not easy. It’s not magic, and it’s not secret.”

The Wallace Foundation has invested in a comprehensive strategy for developing a larger corps of effective principals. The Principal Pipeline Initiative, launched by The Wallace Foundation in 2011, is working to strengthen school leadership by documenting and evaluating leadership development in six urban districts. The goal is to find out what works.

Consider Molly McAuliffe, who started her

teaching career 11 years ago. She never thought of becoming a principal. She loved the students and the classroom.

However, her district — Georgia’s Gwinnett County Public Schools — had in place a system to identify leadership potential. Early in McAuliffe’s career, her principal saw her leadership qualities and gave her instructional support and mentoring. He made sure that she was aware of professional learning opportunities.



Molly McAuliffe

McAuliffe took advantage of those opportunities and tackled growing leadership responsibilities in her school and district. Because the district had developed clear standards guiding what the expected outcomes for its leaders should be, McAuliffe had stepping stones to follow.

She felt ready to tackle new challenges. In

2009, she became the internship coordinator at the Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology. She built on her training and collaborated with business partners in the community who were essential to the internship program's success.

She joined a community leadership governance committee. In the business community, she again saw the importance of leadership, networking, guidance, and support. With success behind her, professional evaluations aligning her work to district goals, and multiple examples of good leadership guiding her, she realized, "It was time to take the next step."

McAuliffe started the rigorous application process for Gwinnett County's Aspiring Leader Program — a program intended to foster leadership skills for educators wanting to become assistant principals.

The application required that she demonstrate what she had done to share her knowledge with others in the county. The district used the PrincipalInsight web-based interview tool designed by Gallup to document the required skills (Gordon, 2013).

McAuliffe was accepted, finished the training, and completed a required residency position as a summer school assistant principal. This fall, she will become assistant principal at Peachtree Ridge High School in Suwanee, Georgia.

McAuliffe has systematically followed a pathway created by her district. "My mentor had completed the Aspiring Principal Program earlier, and I have had

the outstanding opportunity to shadow many others," she says. "I am not worried. I feel prepared for the challenges."

McAuliffe exemplifies a professional in the early stages of the process described in the Principal Pipeline, a six-year initiative to research and document best practices to support a corps of highly effective principals (Turnbull, Riley, Arcaira, Anderson, & MacFarlane, 2013). She was identified and nurtured early in her career. To strengthen her skills, she took advantage of standards-aligned ongoing professional learning, evaluations, and mentoring.

To document her leadership development and potential, McAuliffe's district uses a leader tracking system that includes information about any relevant professional learning and supervisor feedback. The platform helps the district identify future leaders and was part of the selection process to move McAuliffe into an assistant principal role.

The goal is for McAuliffe to move from an assistant principal training ground to becoming a principal who can lead change. A decade of research has es-

Learn more about district efforts to recruit, train, and support new principals at Learning Forward's Annual Conference Dec. 6-10 in Nashville, Tennessee.



tablished that leaders are key to student classroom success (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004) and much work has been done to establish how leaders can guide schools to better teaching (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyer-son, & Orr, 2007).

THE PRINCIPAL PIPELINE INITIATIVE

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 that already demonstrated commitments to the four components identified as crucial to building capacity for effective leaders: leadership standards that align work, evaluations, and support; preservice preparation, including highly selective admissions; selective hiring in which the district uses a consumer approach; and on-the-job evaluation and support (Turnbull, Riley, Arcaira, Anderson, & MacFarlane, 2013).

The six districts participating in the initiative are: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, North Carolina; Denver Public Schools, Colorado; Gwinnett County Public Schools, Georgia; Hillsborough County Public Schools, Florida; New York City Department of Education, New York; and Prince George's County Public Schools, Maryland.

Now two years into the initiative, decision makers are looking for evidence of what a strong pipeline looks like. An evaluation by Policy Studies Associates (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013) collected and reviewed qualitative data,



This article is sponsored by The Wallace Foundation.

including interviews with 113 administrators and surveys of novice principals and assistant principals.

Evaluation of the six districts showed evidence of these desired features in all of the targeted programs:

- Selective admission;
- Standards-based content;
- Problem-based learning;
- Cohort models; and
- Clinical experience.

The types of leader support vary, but the essence is that all of the districts have brought in help to support capacity building of coaches, mentors, and supervisors.

PIPELINE SYSTEMS IN ACTION

Prince George’s County

Prince George’s County Public Schools is one of the districts participating in the Principal Pipeline Initiative. Doug Anthony, executive director of the office of talent development for the district, says, “Work is an ongoing evolution of best practices. We need to be publicly transparent about the direction we’re moving, and we’ll continue to make inroads.”

Anthony says the district has shifted its focus to collaborative professional learning and revamped its curriculum under the guidance of the National Institute for School Leadership, a provider of professional learning for school leaders.

Principal professional learning is now more grounded in theory and instructional improvement and less focused on management. The district has instituted residency and clinical requirements.

This shift in approach is forcing the district to think differently about professional learning, focusing on adult learners’ needs. There are no more sit-and-get trainings.

Another priority is alignment of resources. A leadership group meets weekly to coordinate the district’s initiatives. This ensures that valuable resources aren’t siphoned off in many directions. “It keeps us moving forward,” says Anthony, who is helping to lead that change in a complex county school system that serves a diverse student population from rural, urban, and suburban communities.

In Prince George’s County, 90% of first-year principals and 40% of assistant principals receive coaching and mentoring (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013, pp. 46-47). Anthony says succession planning is important to the district, which offers leadership opportunities to assistant principals so the pipeline will continue to support well-prepared leaders.

Anthony cites better coordination and a strong vision from the district’s chief executive officer. “We are more thoughtful about where we put resources now,” Anthony says. “We also look for new sources of support, including outside partnerships.”

Gwinnett County

In Gwinnett County Public Schools, visionary leadership

is also committed to developing principal leaders on a large scale in Georgia’s biggest school district. Because of tremendous growth over the last few years, the district has added 53 principals and 133 assistant principals.

To manage these changes, the district turned to the use of analytics to track leader data with an electronic leader tracking system. While many schools track student data, the leader tracking system includes data from teachers and principals over the course of their careers and holds the data in a central depository.

Data include what professional learning teachers and principals have participated in and why, the impact of the learning, the mentoring or support in place, conversations that have occurred, and the main focus of support.

A dashboard gives a quick overview, but users can drill to deeper levels (IBM, 2012). McAuliffe benefitted from the district’s individual tracking and evaluation. Glenn Pethel, assistant superintendent of leadership development, says the leader tracking system “has empowered us to do our work.”

Using data to track and inform professional learning goals is called for in the Principal Pipeline Initiative. Districts are encouraged to work with external partners to accomplish these goals both within districts and between districts and university programs that graduate educational leaders.

PRESERVICE, SUPPORT, AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Policy Studies Associates evaluation of the Principal Pipeline progress also focused on preservice opportunities, support for novice leaders, and the role of partnerships in preparation and support.

Preservice

All six districts were building on strong preparation experiences in instructional leadership. The cohort model, problem-based learning, and clinical experiences were widespread. Content instruction tailored specifically to a district was not as widespread but was growing.

The average time frame of five years for typical principal preparation was seen as too long for effective implementation of change. This points to the need for developing a large number of assistant principals who hope to become principals as key to building capacity in the pipeline (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013).

Support for novice leaders

Districts implemented changes to improve the support systems already in place. Effective strategies included:

- Individual goal setting with supervisor and/or coach mentor;
- Weekly 90-minute one-on-one support sessions;
- Small cohort group professional learning communities;
- Executive coaching focused on leadership behaviors;
- Mentoring provided by trained, high-performing principals;
- Analysis of principal time use; and

- Nonevaluative feedback (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013, p. 43).

In Gwinnett County, first-year principals interacted regularly with lead mentors who were retired principals. The new leaders do a lot of shadowing to increase their perspectives. Second-year principals might also work with mentors. Some principals participated in a professional learning process developed for school administration management and received coaching on time management and instructional leadership (The Wallace Foundation, 2011).

All new leaders are assigned mentors — and can't opt out, Pethel notes. "Having someone to support you and be a confidante and someone who understands the job at a deep level is essential," he says.

New leaders and mentors are expected to make a two-year minimum commitment, and the expectation is for frequent and ongoing communication. "Most [new leaders] are overjoyed that there is someone out there pulling for them," Pethel says. "They candidly discuss their frustrations and other struggles."

Gwinnett County also offers different tracks of support for different leader training. The Quality-Plus Leader Academy provides a leadership development model that drives improvements in seven areas. The goal is to impact and improve student achievement (Cheney, Davis, Garrett, & Holleran, 2010, p. 143).

In Prince George's County, novice principals and assistant principals receive coaching and content-specific professional learning. All first- and second-year principals are assigned a mentor principal trained by the National Association of Elementary School Principals. The district also worked with the School Leaders Network, including monthly meetings focused on problems or practice for principals and assistant principals.

Districts reported facing several challenges in supporting novice leaders. District leaders want to support new principals in taking initiative and leading change — not just in complying with district directives, as principals had expected to do in the past (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013). This represents a change from the traditional culture of the school districts.

Long-term funding also presents a challenge. Jody Spiro, director of education leadership at The Wallace Foundation, says, "One of the greatest hurdles is to find ways to keep mentoring and coaching going at the system level."

The Policy Studies Associates evaluation reports that some districts believe mentoring is an extra and a volunteer role or that districts chose to staff coaches for other areas but not for principal leaders. The evaluation notes the need for a sustainable model so that roles are clear and integrated with other district priorities (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013).

Survey results from participating principals and assistant principals show the need for a stronger link between professional learning and mentoring and coaching. "As districts move forward in developing their evaluation systems, it will be critically important that they systematically connect evaluation feed-

back with support, as the Principal Pipeline requires," the report states (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013, p. 51).

Partnerships

All six districts in the Principal Pipeline Initiative put serious effort into forging university and organizational partnerships for their programs in leader preparation or novice support (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013, p. 63).

Prince George's County has forged strong connections with many outside partners, including the School Leaders Network, to organize and facilitate peer learning for new principals and assistant principals. Some novice principals also participated in the network's professional learning.

The district expanded its participation in the National Association of Elementary School Principals' Leadership Immersion Institute, where mentor principals develop knowledge of adult learning and techniques to help adults develop strengths to become effective leaders (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013, p. 46).

The Quality Measures for Education Leadership Systems and Programs, developed by the Education Development Center, has been used in many districts and includes tools and indicators for assessing leader preparation programs using a data-based process.

The evaluations are centered on six program components that draw from the work of effective leadership preparation by Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2007). These components include: course content and pedagogy, clinical practice, recruitment and selection, and three components related to graduate performance outcomes (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013).

Conditions reported to foster positive working relationships with outside partners include clarity in roles and responsibilities from the beginning of the relationship, frequent communication through established channels, and accountability around clear objectives.

Other contributing factors that were traced to good working relationships include leaders or champions who had previously worked with the district or the partner and outside incentives driving collaborations.

For example, university training programs that require clinical placements were required to collaborate with districts in order to secure those placements. Hurdles to district-university collaboration included state accreditation requirements that made it difficult to adjust curriculum or student requirements.

Tying universities' programs more tightly to districts also has the benefit of allowing districts and programs to track their effectiveness (Zubrzycki, 2012). Outside partners can provide specific leadership skills, including instructional leadership and change management that district level coaches and mentors need to help principals develop.

Partners also bring expertise in coaching techniques and

Continued on p. 47

NEW WAYS TO LEARN AT THE 2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Learning Forward has expanded its conference content and design to engage participants and allow them to personalize their learning. Along with traditional offerings such as keynotes and preconference sessions, Learning Forward's 2014 Annual Conference features additions to the learning menu that reflect the latest professional learning trends.

Extended learning. Concurrent sessions will begin several months before the onsite conference and extend well after the conference is over. About 60 sessions will include virtual online communities where attendees can engage with fellow session participants, chat with the session presenter, access session materials, and begin work on session content before they meet face-to-face at the conference.

Experiential learning. Participants also can learn experientially in the Learning Hangout and iPD Showcases, interactive playgrounds for experimenting with and manipulating a variety of learning technologies. Here, attendees can find solutions to challenges facing their organizations, schools, or classrooms in engaging demonstrations. The 25-minute hands-on sessions are designed for participants to discover free or low-cost tools. All that is needed for success is an open mind, a mobile device, and a desire to learn some new tricks.

For more information, visit
[www.learningforward.org/
learning-opportunities/annual-
conference](http://www.learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/annual-conference).



THE CONFERENCE *of the* FUTURE

NEW THINKING, NEW TOOLS, AND NEW WAYS FOR ADULTS TO LEARN

By Carol François

The explosion of readily available information can make tracking trends in almost any field — especially education and professional learning — seem like an impossible task.

But there's no doubt that learning and education, along with the organizations and institutions that support them, are undergoing rapid change. 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 and, with it, disruption in the field of professional learning — including how, when, why, and what Learning Forward offers.

One of the standard tools in professional learning is the large-group learning experience known as the annual conference. Among education associations, Learning Forward has offered one of the most successful conferences for more than 40 years. Futurists warn, however, that we cannot ignore the implications disruptive innovation theory presents for this particular learning design. And Learning Forward is ready to meet this challenge.



THE WIKIPEDIA STORY

Joseph Bower and Clayton Christensen first described the original theory of disruption, now known as new market disruption or disruptive innovation, in “Disruptive technologies: Catching the wave” (Bower & Christensen, 1995). In *The Innovator’s Dilemma*, Christensen (2003) describes how companies ignore new technologies that don’t serve the needs of their customers or fit within their existing business models. However, as the new technology continues to mature, it eventually takes over the market (Thompson, 2013).

A classic example of a disruptive innovation is Wikipedia. The traditional form of general encyclopedias — carefully edited, printed in hardcover volumes — has been replaced by this free, nonprofit, community-edited online encyclopedia. Former market leader Encyclopedia Britannica ended print production in 2012. Because Wikipedia is free, has unlimited size, and initiates instant updates, it has effectively eliminated challenges for profitable competition in the consumer market.

The hardcover encyclopedia is as anachronistic now as the door-to-door encyclopedia salesmen of the past. People still want access to information that en-

cyclopedias store, but they aren’t willing to purchase printed volumes when a free, paperless alternative is easily available. Their need is for information, not for a collection of books to occupy several feet of bookshelf space.

REVOLUTIONIZE THE CLASSROOM

In the book *Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns*, Clayton Christensen and co-authors Michael Horn and Curtis Johnson apply disruptive innovation theory to education. They write, “For a revolution to take place in education, changes will have to occur that will disrupt the status quo. The key to revolutionizing the classroom is not just by adding technology, but rather by the ways that technology will be introduced to make schools student-centric, personalized, and customized. Under the current system, customizing education is expensive.” *Disrupting Class* recommends computer-based learning as the path to revolutionizing the classroom (Christensen, Horn, & Johnson, 2008).

In a report published by Cisco titled *The Learning Society*, the new technologies Christensen references in *Disrupting Class* are seen as ways to increase possibilities

Share your creative ideas with Carol François and help design the conference of the future at Learning Forward’s Annual Conference Dec. 6-10 in Nashville, Tennessee.



Fast-paced learning. At Fast Forward sessions, attendees will hear fast-paced, concise presentations, also variously known as PechaKucha, Ignite, or Bytes. Each presentation is seven minutes long with 15 to 18 slides and designed to challenge learners to think fast and absorb quickly.

Custom learning. Participants can stop in for some or all of the presentations presented continuously in the Learning Hangout space outside the Exhibit Hall. Conversely, for those who want concentrated doses of learning on a single topic but from the perspective of different experts, the Leadership Forum or the Common Core Forum are good options. Each forum will feature 10 to 15 speakers on each of the two topics, and attendees can make the circuit to each table to hear each speaker’s take on the subject.

Informal learning. Another new conference feature is an example of informal learning and part of the networking meet-up series designed for attendees to gather casually either with colleagues who perform similar jobs or with those who share an interest in an education hot topic. Nationally known facilitators will lead the groups, but the real learning will come when participants bring their knowledge, spontaneity, and interests to the sessions.

for learning throughout life, improve access, and intensify and spread the process of knowledge creation leading to a “Learning Society.”

These emergent innovations help create a new vision of learning — learning as an activity, not a place, where it is wide open to new people with new ideas. In the Learning Society, “we’ll find learners ‘pulling’ learning toward themselves rather than teachers ‘pushing.’ And learning systems that spread far beyond school and involve learners and parents as contributors as well as customers” (Cisco, 2010).

The report goes on to say, “We need to change the question. Rather than ‘How can we get people into school?,’ we need to ask, ‘How can we enable people to learn most effectively throughout their lives?’”

The authors contend that education systems will have a role to play, but only if they are radically reformed in ways that enable them to interact with and shape the Learning Society that surrounds them.

Their vision of a Learning Society is one that engenders a culture of learning throughout life while aiming to develop motivated, engaged learners who are prepared to conquer the challenges of tomorrow as well as those of today. Society takes learning to the learner, seeing learning as an activity, not a place, while at the same time believes that learning is for all, so no one should be excluded (Cisco, 2010).

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING’S ROLE

Creating such a society requires professional learning to be at the center of the change process. Educators will need to learn in ways they never have before using tools they never have before. In short, disruption is on the horizon for professional learning. So what might the new formats, content, and tools of professional learning be?

In a blog post on the website Edudemic, author Katie Lepi describes trends in education technology that teachers support and want to learn how to use. Citing research that gathered data from European and North American teachers to learn what they thought about the most prevalent education trends, Lepi lists these 10 technology tools educators are interested in either learning how to use or that they understand to be important to the future of education:

- Web tools for education;
- Online education resources;
- Digital literacy;
- Personal learning networks;
- Blended learning;
- Social media in education;
- E-moderation (facilitation of online communication or learning);
- Mobile learning;
- Digital games in education; and

- Interactive whiteboards (Lepi, 2013).

Zaid Alsagoff, e-learning manager at International Medical University, expanded on Lepi’s list in a SlideShare program titled “16 learning trends we simply can’t ignore!” While his list overlaps with Lepi’s, he noted a few additional trends that impact how professional learning is supported. Alsagoff says these technologies will also be commonplace in classrooms and professional learning:

- Massive open online courses (MOOCs): A type of online course aimed at large-scale participation and open access via the web;
- Interactive e-books;
- Classroom engagement student response systems that empower teachers to engage their students via smartphones, laptops, and tablets;
- Augmented reality connecting the physical and digital worlds; and
- Alternative assessments such as rubrics, e-portfolios, peer assessment, and learning analytics (Alsagoff, 2013).

These lists leave little doubt that education and educators are about to experience disruptive innovation requiring new thinking, new tools, and new ways for adults to learn and move traditional education to another plateau — a plateau where things look dramatically different than the schools and classrooms of today.

NEW TOOLS FOR NEW LEARNING

To get to the next plateau, educators need a solid framework for understanding what is available for their own learning as well as methods for evaluating the effectiveness of these tools.

In a June 2014 report, EdSurge researchers described their efforts to map the professional learning landscape. The mapping exercise produced a framework that explores how technology supports professional learning as well as the components of strong professional learning systems. The researchers developed a four-way classification system to describe the professional learning tools:

- 1. Educators need tools to engage.** New professional learning tools must engage educators by enabling them to join groups and online communities, ask questions, and share resources through webinars, online courses, and modules.
- 2. Educators need tools to learn.** Educators need to access content-rich tools presented in a variety of ways that help them implement skills and ideas.
- 3. Educators need support tools.** Professional learning has to support educators to connect and share their practice with experienced mentors for feedback and coaching.
- 4. Educators need tools to measure the effect of profes-**

sional learning. Educators need some form of collecting data on their practice as well as growth or progress in adopting new practices or acquiring new skills (EdSurge, 2014).

The research on disruptive innovation, Lepi's list of preferred technologies, and EdSurge's work to scan the professional learning landscape have had considerable impact on how Learning Forward designs its learning offerings and particularly how the organization approached the 2014 conference content and design.

Conferences no longer can be one-event wonders quickly forgotten once the conference program and notes are discarded, but rather must be part of attendees' ongoing, long-term personal learning network that uses blended learning, social media, and mobile learning as part of their professional learning tool box.

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Stepping stones to leadership

Continued from p. 43

protocols, i.e. refraining from solving problems but instead asking questions that facilitate principals' on-the-job learning (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013).

PULLING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Ongoing evaluations continue for the Principal Pipeline Initiative. As districts head into the next school year, changes that foster success for student outcomes continue. And the data show progress: In Gwinnett County, 94 out of 112 recent graduates from leadership programs were promoted into new leader roles.

Spiro sees these changes as positive. "Partnerships with business sectors, teachers, and other districts can help streamline resources and open up other opportunities," she says. Strong leadership and vision can pull all of these pieces together.

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SHAPE A VISION *of* SUCCESS

During the past decade, there has been a growing recognition among educators and policymakers that school principals must be instructional leaders who ensure that high-quality teaching occurs in every classroom. This view is backed up by a solid body of evidence showing that leadership places second only to teaching among school-related influences on learning.

In culling lessons from 13 years of research that describes what effective principals do well, The Wallace Foundation has found they perform five key practices:

1. Shape a vision of academic success for all students;
2. Create a climate hospitable to education;
3. Cultivate leadership in others;
4. Improve instruction; and
5. Manage people, data, and processes to foster school improvement.

These practices are explored in depth in the Wallace Foundation report, *The School Principal as Leader: Guiding*

Schools to Better Teaching and Learning (The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Learning Forward has developed a web-based professional learning guide using excerpts from the PBS documentary film, *The Principal Story*, to illustrate the five practices.

The guide is intended to help those who prepare and support aspiring and current principals probe these essential practices. By following the five units in *The Principal Story Professional Learning Guide*, learners can read the research, discuss practices, view film clips, and complete a range of activities as individuals or in groups.

The tool on pp. 49-51 is from Unit 1 of the learning guide, which explores the first key practice: shaping a vision of academic success for all students. Use this tool as part of the learning guide or on its own to explore, individually or with a group, several assumptions related to this practice and implications for principals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- **The Principal Story Learning Guide**

www.learningforward.org/publications/the-principal-story-learning-guide

- **The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning**

www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/effective-principal-leadership/Documents/The-School-Principal-as-Leader-Guiding-Schools-to-Better-Teaching-and-Learning-2nd-Ed.pdf

DISCOVER PERSONAL ASSUMPTIONS

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess your own assumptions and actions about the practice of shaping a vision. To discuss how personal attitudes and experiences relate to the principal's actions, behaviors, and choices observed in a film clip from <i>The Principal Story</i>. To determine implications of those assumptions for yourself and others.
Time	65 minutes
Roles	Participants, facilitator
Materials	Film clip: www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEEI5x-dpac

Personal assumptions, actions, and practices		TIME: 10 minutes
Independently, read each assumption, and use codes to indicate your level of agreement with each statement. For each assumption, identify potential implications for the role of school principal.		
* = Strongly agree + = Somewhat agree	? = Uncertain — = Somewhat disagree	! = Strongly disagree

Assumptions	Code	Implications for principals
1 Every student deserves effective teaching every day.		
2 The capacity of educators to invent solutions to educational problems is a powerful untapped resource.		
3 A school's vision is essential to achieving school goals for students.		
4 The success of educators' daily work depends on effective professional learning.		
5 Shared responsibility and collaborative learning combine to improve student results.		
6 School is the center of change.		
7 Vision that aligns school system, school, and individual goals exponentially increases results for educators and students.		
8 Effective professional learning requires collaboration among educators.		

Group discussion

TIME: 25 minutes

The facilitator will organize small groups and guide them through a round-robin session to share thoughts about ratings and respond to each of the questions below.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 1 | Review your responses in the assumptions chart. In the space below, note the assumption with which you agree most strongly and the assumption with which you disagree most strongly. Share why you agree and why you disagree. |
| 2 | Review your responses to implications for principals in the assumptions chart. Make note of the implications for the assumptions you just highlighted. Discuss those implications within your small group. |

I most strongly **agree** with the following assumption:

Why I agree:

Implications

I most strongly **disagree** with the following assumption:

Why I disagree:

Implications:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 3 | Write how you, as a principal, will model behaviors for others as you act on these assumptions. Discuss each within your small group. |
|----------|---|

Discussion about the film clip

TIME: 25 minutes

After you have identified your own assumptions, aspirations, actions, and practices, look again at those in the film clip, "Shaping a vision of academic success for all students," available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEEI5x-dpac.

In small groups, share thoughts, reactions, and interpretations using the following questions to guide discussions. Debrief salient points with the larger group.

1	How do visionary leaders challenge the status quo?
2	Tresa is a novice principal; Kerry is a veteran. How might different levels of experience affect principals' abilities to enact change within their schools?

Individual reflection

TIME: 5 minutes

Following the larger group debrief, independently respond to these reflection questions.

1	In preparing to serve as a school principal, think about the complexities of shaping a vision. Using what you learned from reading about and observing Tresa and Kerry, how will you approach shaping a vision for academic success?
2	What would you do similarly? Differently?

Source: Learning Forward. (n.d.). *The Principal Story learning guide*. Oxford, OH: Author. Available at www.learningforward.org/publications/the-principal-story-learning-guide.



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 (Wyoming Department of Education, 2014).

Other data confirm that Wyoming's teacher-to-teacher professional learning produces positive results. In 2011, more than 60 Wyoming schools did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress in special education. However, in 2012, the number dropped to about 40 schools (Wyoming Department of Education, 2014). Arapaho School in Fremont County School District #38, recipient of a School Improvement Grant, saw reading scores on the state assessment increase from 18% of 3rd graders scoring proficient or above in 2011 to 58% of 4th graders scoring proficient or above in 2012 (Conner, 2012).

Wyoming residents like to say that their state, with more than 98,000 square miles and 500,000 population,

is a small town with long streets. The state has 48 school districts and 350 public schools. These schools serve a student population of about 90,000 students.

Wyoming's teacher-to-teacher program got its start in 2011 after a visit from Dr. James Popham, national assessment expert and member of the Wyoming Department of Education's Technical Advisory Team. Popham expressed dismay that critical information about Wyoming's state reading assessment, touted as instructionally supportive, had not been disseminated statewide to teachers.

While the assessment provider was willing to take this on, teachers responded through a survey that they preferred a different form of professional learning, and thus the teacher-to-teacher program began.

Using a statewide professional learning model, a cadre of expert teachers traveled throughout the state, engaging teachers in professional learning right in their own backyards. Afterward, participants continued learning by sharing blogs, writing and posting responses to research conducted in their own classrooms, and viewing and responding to teaching videos.

While the Wyoming Department of Education does not compel districts to participate in its professional learning, about one-fifth of Wyoming's teachers took part voluntarily during the summer and on weekends.

When teachers joined together to form a statewide professional community, reading scores on the state assessment improved 12% in two years.

Teacher-to-teacher professional learning is not new. Peer-to-peer delivery underpins the National Writing Project (www.nwp.org), which began in 1973. The facilitators for Wyoming's teacher-to-teacher model were predominantly teacher consultants for the Wyoming Writing Project, affiliated with the National Writing Project.

In April 2004, the U.S. Department of Education rolled out the Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative, which was also based on peer-to-peer professional learning. In fact, the lead teacher for Wyoming's peer-to-peer program is a former presenter for the national program.

Other highly effective peer-to-peer models include Reading Recovery (www.readingrecovery.org), which makes use of expert practitioners coaching their peers. Even teacher evaluation systems such as Charlotte Danielson's (2007) use teacher mentoring to improve teacher practice. Across the country, schools are creating teaching communities where grade-level teachers routinely meet to conduct book studies, examine student data, share student products, and set common goals (The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2009).

ADVANTAGES

Wyoming's teacher-to-teacher approach to engaging teachers statewide is sustainable, consistent, practical, and fiscally responsible.

Wyoming's teachers prefer to learn with expert colleagues from their "small town" — knowing that they are best served by the opportunity to learn from those teachers who work daily in classrooms and schools and have proven success.

Teacher-to-teacher professional learning is sustainable. Teachers who teach and learn from their peers not only practice the newly acquired knowledge in their classrooms, but also share with their peers.

In Wyoming, participation is voluntary, and professional learning is held on weekends to avoid pulling teachers away from their classrooms. For certification and graduate credit, teachers extend their learning beyond the weekend, the better to embed the content and pedagogy into routine practice.

These extensions of learning include working in school-based learning communities watching and discussing videos of expert teachers in classrooms, using and sharing lesson plans posted on the web, and participating in additional learning to deepen practice. In this way, the cycle of continuous school improvement is fostered — all with

the outcome of improving student reading ability.

Wyoming's teacher-to-teacher professional learning is also consistent. The purpose and content is stable because it is built around fairly consistent state standards and assessment. Stability is maintained because all professional learning uses the same materials, including grade-level texts, sample prompts, and

scored student constructed responses to serve as anchor papers. Classroom videos are posted so teachers can watch how their colleagues share content while practicing exemplary pedagogy.

Emulating the National Writing Project, novice professional learning leaders work with seasoned facilitators, shadowing their experienced peers before assuming the full responsibility of leading instruction on their own. In these ways, Wyoming maintains consistency in content.

Teacher-to-teacher professional learning is practical. Though the research behind the content of the professional learning is theoretical, the information is practical.

Teachers attend because they want to know the content that will help students achieve. They want to apply what they learn in their own classrooms, and they want to adapt the methods to fit their own styles. The professional learning follows a workshop model, which allows teachers time to practice with one another during the workshop. Simultaneously, professional learning leaders model best teaching pedagogy while they work, sharing with their peers.

Teacher-to-teacher professional learning is reasonable in cost. A small cadre of professional learning leaders engaged one-fifth of Wyoming's teachers, driving to more than a dozen communities across the state.

The financial cost of contracting a team of teachers to do this work was one-tenth the amount the assessment provider would have charged. In addition to a lower financial cost, attendees realized a greater value by engaging in professional learning with other Wyoming teachers who know Wyoming's state standards and assessments, the idiosyncrasies of the disparate districts, and Wyoming student data.

CONTENT

In *All Systems Go*, Michael Fullan, former dean of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, says that a state educational system must discipline itself to focus its efforts. Ontario schools took his advice, beginning with literacy, and schools saw results (2010).

The Wyoming Department of Education took Fullan's lessons to heart. Because the state reading test was termed "instructionally supportive" by the technical advisory committee composed of national assessment leaders, the mission of the state's professional development was to share the essential learnings that forms the basis of the state test (Popham, 2003).

This reading content is universal, however, and can be used to improve reading performance in any context. Teachers shared the work of reading expert Roger Farr, professor emeritus of the University of Indiana (Popham, 2003).

Farr synthesized the world of reading instruction and assessment to eight high-powered cognitive skills. According to Farr, good reading instruction teaches students what to expect from three different common kinds of texts and how those texts fulfill eight essential purposes for reading (Popham, 2003).

Wyoming's teacher-to-teacher professional learning leaders used the principles outlined by Farr. Wyoming's professional learning modeled the use of constructed response to assess reading and comprehension. In this approach, teachers determine whether students are comprehending text by asking the students to write reader responses (constructed response). These responses then are used as a common classroom assessment to take to grade-level professional learning groups.

Professional learning focused on the three essential kinds of texts that students must be able to read and comprehend in order to be successful: narrative, expository, and functional (i.e. maps, graphs, brochures, advertisements). The professional learning models how classroom teachers reinforce to their students that each of these texts is read for certain purposes:

1. **Narrative:** to comprehend plot, theme, and story elements affecting the story;
2. **Expository:** to comprehend main idea and supporting details, organizational structures, and broad issues;
3. **Functional:** to comprehend relevant information and application of this information.

These three essential texts and the eight purposes for reading them are assessed on the state test through multiple choice and constructed response questions. Teachers focused on the constructed response — how to select texts, how to write prompts for students, how to teach students to write relevant, accurate, and sufficient responses, and how to score the student products with inter-rater reliability. (See the box at right for sample prompts written by teachers using Farr's principles.)

After practicing in the weekend workshop, attendees returned to their schools armed with a valid assessment tool to use as a grade-level common assessment in their professional learning groups. This statewide professional teaching community produced improved scores, but what really matters is that students began to read and comprehend texts better — a life skill that goes far beyond performance on a state test.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Wyoming educators, like educators across the country, realize that federal and state scrutiny on teacher effectiveness is intensifying. In this environment, it is critical that teachers have optimal opportunity to learn and grow together.

Wyoming's program produced evidence of the success that peer-to-peer work brings to schools at the grade, school building, and state levels. Wyoming's teachers prefer to learn with expert colleagues from their "small town" — knowing that they are best served by the opportunity to learn from those teachers who work daily in classrooms and schools, who have proven success, whose work is authentic and worthy of emulation, who have deep content knowledge, and who artfully model their pedagogy for the benefit of their professional colleagues.

According to researcher John Hattie (2009), the quality of the classroom teacher is the most significant indicator of

SAMPLE PROMPTS FOR CONSTRUCTED RESPONSES

Students write a response based on prompts from Roger Farr reading three kinds of texts. Teachers score the response on accuracy, relevance, and sufficiency.

- **Narrative:** What is the theme of this story, and what happened in the plot that led to this lesson?
- **Expository:** What main ideas and supporting details in the text lead to the author's claim?
- **Functional:** Imagine you are trying to find a landscaper for your grandparents. What details in this ad make you think this company would be the right one for the job?

student success. While other characteristics are also common across great schools, ultimately, raising student achievement depends on teachers.

Wyoming recognized that teachers need and deserve professional learning designed to improve their content knowledge and pedagogy and to meet the learning needs of their students. Meeting this need resulted in professional growth of teachers across the state, as well as improved student scores.

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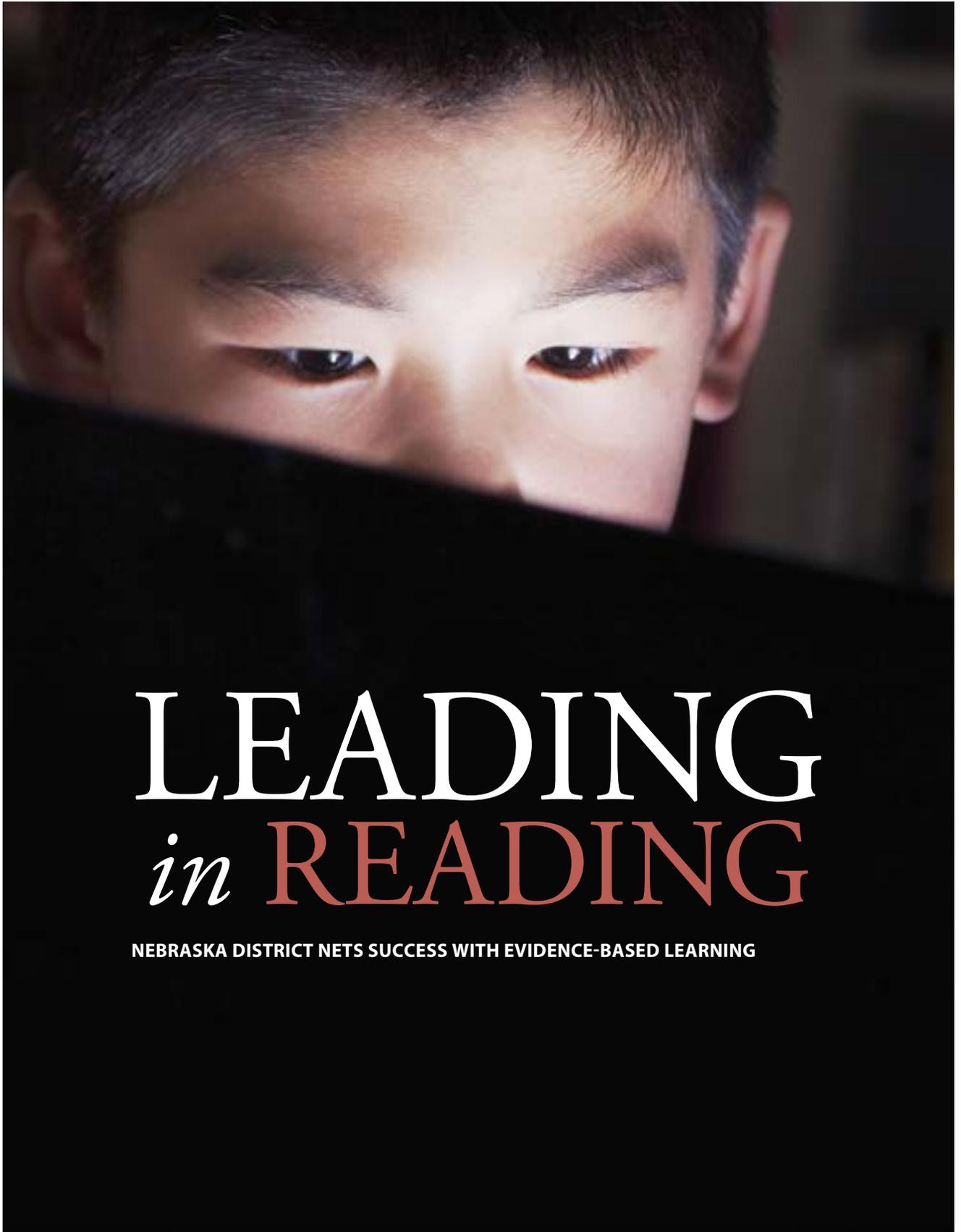
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LEADING *in* READING

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 has 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 improved student achievement.

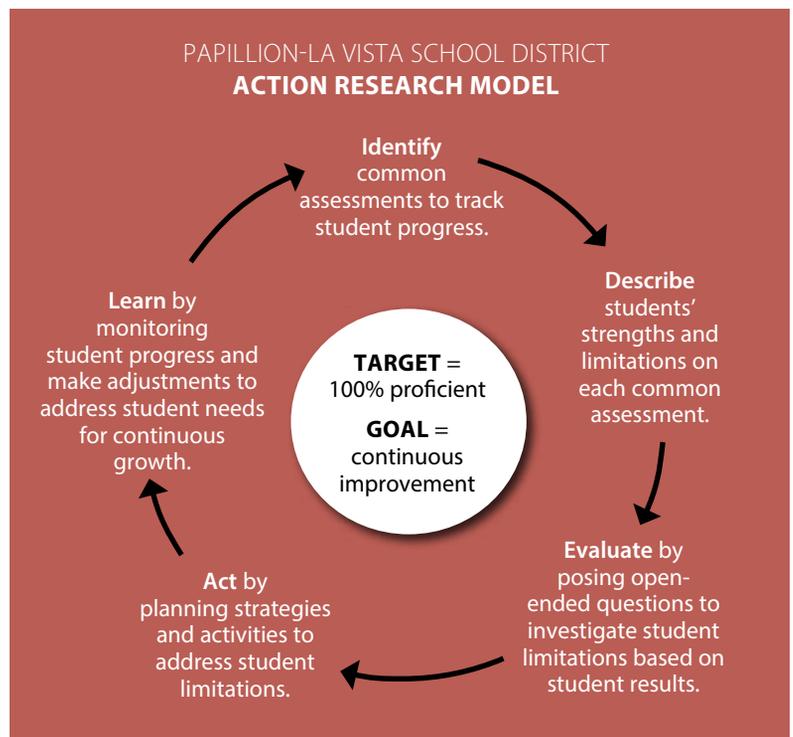
This continuous improvement process is known as IDEAL (see diagram at right), which is derived from the elements of the action research model the districts uses:

- **Identify** common assessment outcomes to be tracked regularly;
- **Describe** students' strengths and challenges across those outcomes;
- **Evaluate** by posing open-ended questions and elaborating on the assessment outcomes;
- **Act** by planning evidence-based adult actions (Hattie, 2009); and
- **Learn** by regularly reflecting within professional learning teams.

In the IDEAL process, professional learning teams use data to inform decision making, challenge one another's thinking, and embrace the conviction that all students can achieve (Blanc, Christman, Liu, Mitchell, Travers, & Bulkley, 2010). Pam Lowndes, principal at Portal Elementary, says, "The IDEAL process has given my staff permission to question practices and change things up without taking things personally."

DIGGING DEEPER FOR RESULTS

For more than a decade, the district has researched,



implemented, and continues to refine and enhance the work of its professional learning teams. Initially, professional learning teams used the guiding questions posed by DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Karhanek (2004):

1. What do we want students to know and be able to do?
2. How will we know to what level students have learned?
3. What do we do when students have not learned?
4. What do we do if students already know it?

However, even with these essential components embedded into the learning team culture, something was missing: the ability to evaluate the most effective adult actions having the greatest impact on student learning.

So, with a renewed commitment for building instructional capacity, the district implemented the IDEAL action research process for use at the classroom, building, and

district level.

The process began in earnest in August 2010. Continuous improvement leadership teams used the train-the-trainer model to showcase the updates and rigor added to the district’s professional learning communities and classroom goal-setting practices.

The IDEAL process enhances the district’s previous methodology by including evaluation and requiring teachers to complete the first three phases before establishing a classroom goal action plan. The addition of the term “action plan” to the goal process emphasizes the shift from simply stating a SMART goal to developing an action plan that requires quantitative and qualitative data related to student outcomes and the subsequent impact of professional learning on achievement outcomes.

This is evident in the learn phase at all levels, including early childhood and English language learner action plans. Professional learning teams meet regularly to discuss adult actions and the impact those actions have on student learning. Each quarter, professional learning teams meet with their supervising administrator to reflect on their progress.

The power of the IDEAL process is its ability to reinforce,

and in some cases even model, what adult actions have the greatest impact on student learning — taking on the form of evidence-based professional learning.

In fact, the IDEAL process has created a culture for leading learning (Fullan, 2014). Lydia Gabriel, principal at Parkview Heights Elementary School, came to Papillion-La Vista with administrative experience from two other metropolitan districts. “Although the IDEAL process is quite complex and the learning curve was huge, I knew I would love the process once I got it figured out,” Gabriel says. “The IDEAL process is designed in a way that provides a structure that I truly appreciate and need as a leader. ... I could never go back to using a process that didn’t provide this much structure and support.”

Robust professional learning teams armed with the IDEAL process have become the driving force for continuous improvement and professional learning. This human element, via shared quality pedagogical content knowledge, has proven to be the most effective and efficient way to use existing resources to impact student learning.

John Schwartz, secondary assistant principal at Papillion-La Vista High School, says, “Professional learning teams requested even more time to devote to the IDEAL process to ... develop other building-specific strategies to improve student learning relative to local and state student achievement outcomes.” This commitment, based on his feedback, has been a focus area and a continued emphasis of department teams at the secondary level over the last three years.

In 2010-11, the district identified elementary reading as one area in need of improvement. Since implementing the IDEAL process, the district has seen double-digit gains in elementary students’ guided reading levels and on the state reading test, along with gains in common local reading comprehension assessments (see tables at left).

In addition, the Papillion-La Vista School District was one of four schools in its educational service unit whose students scored at or above the state average on all state tests in all grades tested for two consecutive years (Nebraska Department of Education, 2013).

REINFORCE ASSESSMENT LITERACY

Recognizing that teacher quality is a key element when it comes to improving student outcomes and “a teacher’s effectiveness stays with students for years to come” (Tucker & Stronge, 2005, p. 5), the district knew it needed to reinforce assessment literacy to

LONGITUDINAL ELEMENTARY READING OUTCOMES: **Papillion-La Vista School District**

Goal	Grade	% proficient				% change
		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	
Increase achievement in reading comprehension and vocabulary as measured by state accountability reading assessments.	3	75%	76%	87%	86%	11%
	4	77%	81%	85%	87%	10%
	5	76%	77%	85%	87%	11%
	6	79%	84%	85%	89%	10%

Goal	Grade	% proficient				% change
		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	
Increase the percentage of students reading at or above end of grade level guided reading targets as measured by Pinnell & Fountas (2007).	1	81%	89%	90%	93%	12%
	2	75%	89%	91%	89%	14%
	3	66%	84%	87%	91%	25%
	4	64%	83%	86%	89%	25%
	5	57%	81%	83%	87%	30%

Source: Papillion-La Vista School District Student Information Management System.

Goal	Grade	% proficient				% change
		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12 new assessments	2012-13	
Increase achievement in reading comprehension and vocabulary as measured by local common summative assessments.	3	62%	83%	78%	81%	3%
	4	69%	85%	83%	87%	4%
	5	68%	88%	83%	84%	1%
	6	68%	85%	71%	80%	9%

Source: Papillion-La Vista School District Student Information Management System.

support the action research taking place in classrooms and professional learning teams.

To do this, the curriculum department worked with core area content teams to align their district assessments with the state standards. The district uses a curriculum development process based on *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Teacher teams aligned curriculum standards and indicators with assessments to determine if students are learning the intended curriculum.

In addition, curriculum leaders learned about Webb's Depth of Knowledge (Webb, 2002), which provides a vocabulary and a frame of reference when thinking about how students engage with the content. Jan Hoegh, then director of assessment for the Nebraska Department of Education, worked with elementary and secondary leaders on quality assessment development and use, and those leaders shared what they learned within their schools.

Professional learning teams also used this information to construct common formative assessments. The district has since created an assessment literacy module that is required of all new staff. Developing assessment literacy has led to high-quality local common summative assessments and built capacity of all stakeholders using classroom-based assessments to inform teaching and learning.

Technology has been a key to the effective use of data. The curriculum and technology departments teamed up to provide teachers and administrators with real-time data in the form of data dashboards, which increase teachers' capacity for instructional decision making and identifying professional learning needs.

Dashboards have been labeled a "game changer" by continuous improvement teams as well as teachers using the dashboard. Before implementing the data dashboard, professional learning in data use consisted of a one-day retreat in August where teachers reviewed achievement data and set goals.

Implemented in 2010, dashboard technology has expanded to include a real-time, 24/7, general dashboard for daily use by professional learning communities, department, and grade-level teams, a quarterly aggregate dashboard for building and district use that includes subgroups of interest, and an individual student profile dashboard for longitudinal and transitional needs.

EMPOWERED AND ACCOUNTABLE

The district now sees the ability of all certified staff to efficiently drill down to individual teacher and student outcomes to improve both teaching and learning as a 21st-century skill for continuous improvement. In a timely fashion, teachers are empowered and accountable for addressing student learning needs as well as their own professional learning needs from a variety of angles using data dashboards and the IDEAL action plan process.

Furthermore, professional learning teams in the district

are high-functioning because they focus on the fundamental elements that have the greatest impact on student learning (Schmoker, 2011). The district's focus continues to be on curriculum, instruction, assessment, continuous improvement, productive professional learning teams, and authentic literacy.

Because professional learning teams have a sense of collective responsibility for student learning, teachers are implementing evidence-based instructional strategies with fidelity, and students benefit as a result. Staff and principals collaborate and share effective strategies as a team to improve teaching and learning in every classroom at their respective buildings. As a result, all students have the opportunity to improve continuously.

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The district now sees the ability of all certified staff to efficiently drill down to individual teacher and student outcomes to improve both teaching and learning as a 21st-century skill for continuous improvement.



The quality of professional learning will influence its results

WHAT THE STUDY SAYS

The effects of teacher professional development are related to teachers' degree of exposure to professional development, the accountability context in which they teach, their grade level, and background in science.

The study confirms previous findings that multiyear interventions tend to produce changes in content knowledge and practice in year one and stabilize over the remaining years of the intervention.

In addition, researchers note that even well-designed curriculum units specifically designed to promote reform-oriented instruction in which teachers facilitate inquiry are adapted to align with teachers' traditional instructional practices.

The study looked at predictors of teacher change that included grade level taught, experience teaching, and courses in science. Only grade-level taught proved consistently to be a predictor of change.

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At a glance

While contributing to some change in teacher knowledge and practices in science instruction for English language learners, primarily in the first year of the intervention, the five-year professional development intervention consisting of workshops and curriculum units generated only limited instructional changes.

THE STUDY

Lee, O. & Maerten-Rivera, J. (2012). Teacher change in elementary science instruction with English language learners: Results of a multiyear professional development intervention across multiple grades. *Teachers College Record*, 114(8), 1-44.

Study description

Researchers studied the effects of a five-year professional development intervention that incorporated workshops and curriculum units for all teachers (198) in six elementary schools in an urban district. The intervention responded to changing student demographics, teachers' insufficient preparation to meet the needs of English language learners in urban schools, and heightened demands for accountability.

Teachers participated in a three-day summer workshop in the first year and three one-day workshops throughout the school year. In their second and third years of participation, teachers attended a one-day summer workshop and three one-day workshops during the school year, for a total of 14 days of workshops. Teachers who were new to the school and new to the project after its inception participated in a three-day summer workshop.

The workshops focused on

curriculum implementation, emphasizing how to use the curriculum units for reform-oriented science instruction to promote student learning. The curriculum units replaced the regular curriculum in grades 3-5. Each unit addressed grade-level specific topics recommended in national science standards and included comprehensive teacher guides and student books that scaffolded instruction and learning.

The workshops incorporated key research-based features of professional development, including duration over time, focus on science content and content-specific pedagogy, alignment with state content standards with an emphasis on English language development, active engagement, and collective participation.

The science components of the workshop emphasized inquiry-based instruction. Teachers discussed how to promote and support student-initiated inquiry while gradually releasing the amount of teacher guidance. Teachers

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PRACTITIONERS

This study provides an important lesson for practitioners: The quality of the professional learning will influence its results. The intervention to change teacher knowledge and practice neglects some of the critical features of effective professional learning.

While satisfying some attributes of effective professional learning, the study's intervention falls short in providing implementation support or differentiated learning designs to accommodate for the small amount of change in year one. It mentions no engagement or specific role for leadership in supporting change and neglects to examine the effects of teacher practice on student learning.

The intervention does not include sufficient time for teachers to remodel instruction based on the new units, provide formative data or feedback to teachers throughout the intervention, differentiate

support, or offer classroom-based support.

The results of this study are a disappointment to the field. On the surface, the results add to the stockpile of professional development studies that produce little change in teacher knowledge and practice.

When researchers plan interventions, even based on features of effective professional learning, they neglect some of the basics related to the Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011). The intervention in this study demonstrates little application of those standards beyond the surface level. It is particularly weak in Learning Communities, Leadership, Implementation, and Outcomes.

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discussed key science topics and explored the application of science concepts in real-world situations.

In years two and three, teachers implemented the practices, reflected on their practices, and examined student work samples to understand how students think about science.

Five areas specifically designed to develop teachers' knowledge and practice with English language learning included literacy development such as activating background knowledge, language support structures such as hands-on activities and real objects, linguistic scaffolding, using the students' home language for instructional support, and building students' knowledge resources through integration of culturally relevant and community resources in teaching.

Questions

Researchers asked these questions:

1. What were teachers' knowledge and practices related to four domains (teacher content knowledge in science; teaching practices to promote scientific understanding; teaching practices to promote scientific inquiry; and teaching practices to support English

language development) at the inception of the intervention?

2. Were there differences among teachers in predictor variables, including highest degree, number of college courses in science, years of teaching experience, and grade level taught?
3. Was there any change in teachers' knowledge and practice in each of the four domains?
4. What were the differences by predictor variables?

Methodology

Researchers implemented a five-year professional development intervention with a pre- and post-test design beginning in 2004-05. Participating teachers included all grade 3-5 teachers in six elementary schools in a large urban school district in the Southeast. Teachers participated for three of the five years. One hundred and ninety-eight teachers participated in the study.

Researchers measured change in teacher knowledge and practice using two instruments. The first was a questionnaire given at the inception of the study to serve as a baseline and then each year of participation. The self-report questionnaire measured the

four domains outlined in the research questions. Researchers also collected data through a fall and spring classroom observation using an observation guide aligned with the four domains.

Mobility of teachers, typical in urban school systems, contributed to missing data across the years of participation. For example, the total number of twice-yearly observations (149 in the fall and 139 in the spring) in year one fell to 32 in the fall and 33 in the spring in year three.

Researchers handled the substantial amounts of missing data through a model-based rather than case-based approach. Most missing data is a result of teacher mobility.

Analysis

The questionnaire included four to six items related to four scales, each associated with one domain as well as additional items not used in this study. Researchers used means for each scale for each administration to compute change over time.

Trained observers conducted the fall and spring observations. Observers generated field notes and a quantitative score for each domain using a five-point rating system.

Researchers examined two levels of change, within-individual changes and between-individual changes, over time. Teacher mobility contributed to missing data across the years of participation. As a result, researchers were unable to confirm that missing data due to attrition was random. Because of missing data resulting in insufficient sample sizes, researchers were unable to add a third level, school, to the analysis.

Results

Analyses of the questionnaire indicate that significant change between initiation of the intervention and the end of year one occurs in scientific understanding, scientific inquiry, and English language development. Beyond year one, differences are not significant.

Predictors associated with primary changes, those occurring in year one, include college courses in science, time between inception and end of year one, and grade level taught. Following year one, no statistically significant changes occur in the questionnaire scales, although changes do occur across the years.

Analyses of the first fall observation data indicate that teacher practice in all four domains is about three on a five-point rating scale, with scientific inquiry the lowest at 1.78.

For the fall observation results, no predictors were statistically significant. The initial spring observation scores were similar to the fall ratings. No changes were significant. For the spring observations, grade taught was a common predictor of change.

For primary changes, from fall to spring in year one,

grade taught, college courses in science, and number of years taught predicted change in scientific understanding, scientific inquiry, and English language development.

Across all years of the intervention, teacher practice in scientific knowledge and English language development improved, although not significantly. In assessing linear change across all three years of the intervention based on spring observation ratings, no changes or predictors were statistically significant.

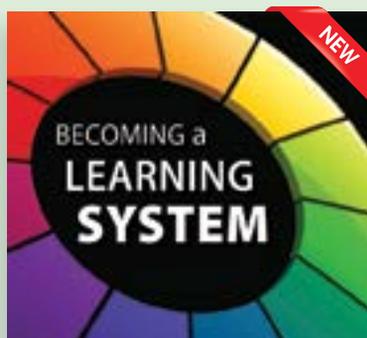
Limitations

This study demonstrates that change in teacher knowledge and practice can be observed and measured using appropriate instrumentation. Yet the study fails to take advantage of the value of baseline data in observations.

An important limitation of this study is the lack of baseline observation data collected prior to the inception of the intervention. Other limitations include:

- Using a pre- and post-test design rather than a randomized trial;
- Missing data due to high levels of attrition in teachers and inadequate sample size to determine if missing data occurred at random;
- Not including student effects resulting from teacher practice, particularly for English language learners.

Perhaps the greatest limitation of the study is the design of the intervention. It falls short of meeting current standards for professional learning, therefore signaling challenges in achieving change in teacher knowledge or practice. ■



Becoming a Learning System

By Stephanie Hirsh, Kay Psencik, and Frederick Brown

Every student should have the opportunity to attend a great school filled with great teachers. For this to happen, school districts must become learning systems, where every educator in the district shares responsibility for student and adult learning.

Based on Learning Forward's definition of professional learning and Standards for Professional Learning, *Becoming a Learning System* outlines the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors district leaders need to lead, facilitate, and coach school leaders and leadership teams to embed the definition and standards into schools' daily routines.

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Foundation selects 2014 award winners

The Learning Forward Foundation has selected its 2014 winners of grants and scholarships. These awards provide recipients opportunities to develop their expertise in leading professional learning within their schools and districts and engage them in the broader Learning Forward community for ongoing professional collaboration and support.

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. Funds raised by the foundation provide grants and scholarships for individuals, schools or teams, principals, and superintendents to further Learning Forward's purpose. For more information, visit www.learningforward.org/foundation.

Chidley Fund Academy Scholarships:

Molly Cassidy, principal at A.J. Mitchell Elementary School in Nogales, Arizona, and **John Willis**, district instructional coach for staff development for Gwinnett County Public Schools in Sugar Hill, Georgia.

Patsy Hochman Academy Scholarship:

Suzanne Newell, director of humanities in Grapevine-Colleyville ISD in Grapevine, Texas.

The Principal as a Leader of Professional Learning Scholarship:

Vanessa Stuart, principal of Degan Elementary in Lewisville, Texas.

Learning Forward Foundation Team Grant:

Worcester Arts Magnet School, Massachusetts, under the leadership of Principal **Susan O'Neil**.

Learning Forward Foundation Affiliate Grant:

Learning Forward Louisiana, under the direction of **Holly Howat** and **Gypsye Bryan**, and Learning Forward Michigan, under the direction of **Amy Colton**, **Cindy Carver**, and **Lauren Childs**.

book club

GOOD TO GREAT TO INNOVATE:

Recalculating the Route to Career Readiness, K-12+

By **Lynn Sharratt and Gale Harild**

How can schools best prepare students for the highly competitive job market and global economy? This book presents a transformative approach to college and career readiness within the public education system, based on data and best practices contributed by outstanding schools on five continents.

Written for education leaders at all levels, this resource shows how to:

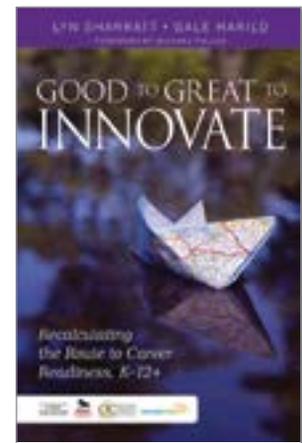
- Design an innovative pathways approach to career readiness that empowers students as informed decision makers;
- Integrate career training into curriculum through a network of local community partners; and

- Develop an inclusive approach to life skills preparation.

Learn how educators — and entire school systems — can consistently support career development, helping students find rewarding paths forward.

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 Sept. 15. For more information about this or any membership package, call 800-727-7288 or email office@learningforward.org.





See learning through the eyes of students

While Learning Forward's 2014 Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, offers an impressive lineup of keynoters, thought leaders, and expert presenters, my friends and colleagues in Missouri are especially looking forward to hearing John Hattie, author of *Visible Learning and the Science of How We Learn* (Hattie & Yates, 2014). Professional learning in Missouri is steeped in his research.

In 2012, Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education embarked on an initiative to improve the educational achievement of all students — especially students with disabilities. Because conventional forms of professional learning (i.e. one-shot workshops and conferences) don't provide the support needed to modify teaching practices, the initiative works to provide professional learning that is authentic, ongoing, and on-site for more than 350 buildings statewide.

The big idea of Hattie's book is, "Know thy impact!" In practical terms,

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

on board JULIE BLAINE

this translates our work into helping teachers develop the expertise to focus regularly on evaluating the effects they have on students. It also translates into assisting them in learning to adjust their practices using researched-based teaching methods.

I'd like to demonstrate how this type of professional learning might look if you were to shadow our regional center consultants for a day in Sedalia 200 School District in Sedalia, Missouri. Here's what you'd likely see.

It is the first week of the month, nearing the deadline to submit student data on common formative assessments. Consultants sit side-by-side with elementary and secondary school staff as they meet throughout the day in data teams.

Collaboration time begins with discussions about how students demonstrated their proficiency levels on the targeted learning objectives. We hear teachers explain how they used the reciprocal teaching strategies designed inside their units.

Each participant openly shares student work samples of a collaborative assignment. The group looks for what students did well. Then the group inspects the assignment for error analysis. Were the errors factual errors? Procedural errors? Transformational

errors or misconceptions?

As each data team meeting comes to an end, we notice teachers recording an instructional feedback strategy for processing the evaluations of the assignments with students. Teachers will use these strategies tomorrow to help students discern the answers to metacognitive questions like, "Where am I going? Where am I now? How will I get there? What are my next steps?"

Some teachers speak about putting students in small groups for feedback, while others plan to use cooperative learning structures. Data team facilitators linger to converse with center consultants. They are curious about what feedback the consultants might provide on their data team processes.

It is easy to detect in these schools that teachers believe their fundamental task is to "know thy impact." Teachers in Sedalia are beginning to see learning through the eyes of their students. They also know they need to ensure that their students see themselves as their own teachers. I think Hattie would agree that this rural Missouri district seeks to embody the tenets of visible learning through high-quality professional learning.

REFERENCE

Hattie, J. & Yates, G.C.R. (2014). *Visible learning and the science of how we learn.* New York, NY: Routledge. ■



Photo by KRISTIN BUEHRIG

The Academy Class of 2016's Daredevils team poses in Chicago. From left, Staci Sohn, Rynna Kidd, Barbara Patterson, Carlton Mable, TJ Franey, Michael Stoudt, and Gina Yonts.

ACADEMY CLASS OF 2016 MEETS

The Learning Forward Academy Class of 2016 convened for the first time in July in Chicago.

The latest cohort has 77 members whose learning is facilitated by three coaches. During their first meetings, Academy members clarify the problem of practice they'll address during their 2½ years in the Academy. They also learn about Learning Forward fundamentals, including the Standards for Professional Learning.

One important task during the first session is for participants to get to know the other members of their Academy learning team (see photo). While all participants will focus on their own problems of practice, they gain new knowledge and skills in collaboration with other learners in groups of six to seven. At other times during their Academy experience, participants also engage in large-group learning or discussions in role-alike or other team configurations.

While the latest Academy cohort was meeting for the first time, the Academy Class of 2015 met for its third session in Chicago. The Academy Class of 2014 will conclude its learning time together when class members graduate in Nashville at the 2014 Annual Conference.

Learn more about the Learning Forward Academy at www.learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/academy. The application process for the 2017 class will open later in the fall.

LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR

- Sept. 4:** Becoming a Learning System webinar. Free for all Learning Forward members. See the full fall schedule at www.learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/webinars.
- Oct. 15:** Last day to save \$50 on registration for the 2014 Annual Conference Dec. 6-10 in Nashville, Tennessee.
- Dec. 6-10:** 2014 Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee.



LEARNING FORWARD'S PURPOSE: Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves.

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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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coming up

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.
- 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.



Use standards to assess how a conference measures up

In Learning Forward's definition of professional learning, conferences such as the events we offer each December have a specific purpose and role. Admittedly, professional learning that isn't embedded in the day-to-day work of schools has certain limitations. However, Learning Forward does everything possible to make sure its conference aligns with and supports the Standards for Professional Learning. Assess how well the conferences and external learning events you attend and plan live up to these standards.

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Conferences where learners spend time together learning collaboratively can build learning communities of a sort. To meet the spirit of the standards, participants in such communities commit to not only learning together but also to integrating the learning into an ongoing cycle of continuous improvement.

LEADERSHIP

Because Learning Forward believes leaders are essential for effective professional learning that impacts all teachers and students in systems and schools, standards-based learning must include opportunities for leaders to engage in deep learning. Leaders benefit

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from attending conferences with others in their system.

RESOURCES

Attendance at any off-site learning opportunity is typically a very visible use of professional learning funding and time. Education leaders have a responsibility to document the impact of that investment for those who support it. Do your learning events help you to think about how to accomplish this goal?

DATA

Any initiative at work in school systems today has a data aspect associated with it. Implementing student standards, for example, requires constant assessment of progress. Therefore, any effective learning experience encourages individuals to use data to guide decisions about learning and determine how new learning will be assessed.

LEARNING DESIGNS

Different designs are used to promote different outcomes. Gaining clarity about the outcomes an individual intends to achieve with a learning opportunity is key to success. Exceptional learning opportunities recognize that individuals arrive with different backgrounds, expectations, and goals. Therefore, such conferences offer a wide range of learning options that lead to different outcomes.

Alignment with the Learning Designs standards also means that

conferences make effective use of technology to enhance the learning experience, both on-site and before and after the face-to-face meeting.

IMPLEMENTATION

Achieving the Implementation standard requires a sustained approach to learning that is difficult to reach through a single conference experience, so it is critical to determine how to build on participants' learning from conference attendance.

Attending conferences with colleagues can lead to more sustained learning in teams or through school-based coaching. Others may find support in joining communities launched during the conference experience.

OUTCOMES

The first question to ask in weighing a potential conference is, "How will this learning experience help us better ensure improved system growth, educator practice, and student outcomes?" If the answer is, "It won't" or "I can't see the connection," look elsewhere. Any professional learning — conferences included — must help educators boost their knowledge and skills to better reach students.

I'm curious to hear if you think conferences can meet these standards. Have you seen it in your recent experiences? And, if you attend Learning Forward's Annual Conference in Nashville this December, let us know how it measures up as well. ■

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