

## Perspectives on professional learning

By Tracy Crow

As the professional learning association for educators, Learning Forward works with stakeholders in a range of roles and from all kinds of contexts. This provides the opportunity to hear about the great work people are doing in this field. While JSD typically explores a topic in some depth, this issue shares valuable stories and words of wisdom from a variety of perspectives.

### Do you see what I see?

District designs learning plan to develop a clear vision of effective instruction.

By Kay Psencik, C. Todd Cummings, and Larry Gerardot

Fort Wayne Community Schools implemented the RISE Indiana Teacher Effectiveness Rubric to clarify what effective instruction looks like, but an analysis of five years of evaluation data showed that not all principals had a clear or common understanding of the rubric's elements. District leaders created a professional

learning plan that emphasizes inter-rater reliability to ensure that principals are observing instruction in the same way and in agreement on ratings teachers receive.

### Words matter:

Unpack the language of teaching to create shared understanding.

By Genevieve Graff-Ermeling, Bradley A. Ermeling, and Ronald Gallimore

Words are the principal vehicles of classroom instruction and lesson planning. The more clearly teachers articulate what is to be learned and the instructional practices to be used, the better they teach and the more likely students develop knowledge and skills. Diligently and consistently modeled and implemented, practical unpacking strategies can help an educator community develop shared understanding of underlying ideas, uncover gaps in grasp of instructional practices, and prepare lessons with improved clarity and richer opportunities for student learning.

### The 5 habits of effective PLCs.

By Lois Brown Easton

Professional learning communities that are accountable, employ various skill sets to operate, foster good relationships among members and with the larger community, operate according to passion and purpose, and engage in both learning and doing are more likely to be successful than professional learning communities that have not developed these actions into habits. And professional learning communities that demonstrate these habits are likely to achieve the ultimate indicator of success: improved student learning and well-being.

### Make a path for evaluation:

10 stepping stones help leaders build solid practices.

By Robby Champion

Education leaders are responsible for getting the best possible results. Professional learning leaders will be expected to ensure that the connections between their work and enhanced student learning are not just happenstance. Just as they are breaking through new paths to expand the

## columns

### Lessons from research:

Strengthening principal leadership is only one piece of the puzzle.

By Joellen Killian

A study finds positive, statistically significant impacts on variables related to principal self-efficacy

beliefs, principal leadership practices, and instructional climate, yet finds no statistically significant changes in student achievement or in teachers' perception of leadership practices.

### From the director:

How we can stop the cycle of ineffective professional learning.

By Stephanie Hirsh

Take a look at why more educators aren't experiencing the great learning they need and what Learning Forward is doing to change that.

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available learning models and options for adult learners, these leaders will be expected to have the knowledge, will, and expertise to undertake better evaluation practices than were accepted in bygone eras. An experienced professional learning leader offers habits of mind and work that can make a significant difference in the quality of evaluations.

### How leaders can make a big difference.

*By Stephanie Hirsh*

According to the 2015 National Survey on College and Career-Ready Literacy Standards and Collaborative Professional Learning, teachers thrive in schools that prioritize these literacy capacity-building strategies and, in turn, students have greater opportunities for success.

### Don't just survive — thrive!

Develop professional capital to help teachers thrive in times of great change.

*By Roberta Reed and John Eyolfson*

When treated as professionals and given the opportunity to participate

in building and extending the profession, teachers rise to the occasion. School leaders in Colorado's Cherry Creek School District put words into actions by developing teachers' professional capital through the use of high-impact instructional rounds grounded in an appreciative inquiry approach. The process built teacher capacity, developed sustainable teacher leadership, and increased student engagement.

### Beyond professional development:

Breaking boundaries and liberating a learning profession.

*By Bruce Joyce and Emily Calhoun*

Professional development of all types is currently squeezed into little windows of time that are simply inadequate to address student and educator needs on an ad hoc basis. The recognition that teaching is a learning profession where the study of educators is a prominent feature of the work is long overdue. The keys to releasing the energy to build strong, sustained support are remarkably simple, although they will make some people

nervous. Removing or at least bending some barriers is the secret door that lies hidden in plain sight.

### Say goodbye to drill-and-kill teaching:

Authentic reading and writing experiences are enough to reach struggling students.

*By Eric Simpson*

Lewisville Independent School District in Texas partnered with the North Star of Texas Writing Project to redesign state-mandated remediation of struggling readers and writers. Teachers, administrators, and writing coaches worked together to pinpoint instructional issues, develop foundational literacy curriculum for tutorials, and offer sustained, job-embedded professional learning for all teachers in writer workshop instruction. What started as a summer program with just 25 students has grown to voluntary writing camps and after-school tutorial sessions that serve hundreds of students. Increases in student achievement show the program's impact.

## Write for JSD

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