

Lay the foundation for great teaching and learning.

By *Eric Celeste*

Whether they are just building their skill set or need a refresher after decades in the professional learning field, learning leaders will want to fill their development tool kit with fundamental concepts and strategies that are essential to growing leadership capacity.

The sandwich strategy:

No matter how you slice it, analyzing student work together improves math instruction.

By *Lynsey K. Gibbons, Rebecca M. Lewis, and Lisa Nguyen Batista*

How can six students share eight sandwiches equally? A team of teachers at an urban elementary school demonstrates the power of collaborative analysis of student work as teachers and school leaders use students' responses to this question to guide instructional decisions and support professional learning about teaching mathematics. The group works with a coach to examine a formative assessment task, review Common Core standards, and discuss implications.

Expanding excellence:

Teachers cross district lines to learn with peers.

By *Ben Owens and David Strahan*

The Scaling the Pockets of Teaching Excellence project in Western North Carolina is a grassroots model of teacher-to-teacher collaboration and professional development. Recruiting interested teachers from neighboring districts, the project offers a way to identify, share, and leverage best practices across an entire region. Launched in 2014 with eight

middle and secondary teachers in four districts, the project has since expanded to include 26 teachers from a wide range of grade levels and curricular areas in seven districts.

Establish time for learning:

Finding time to collaborate takes creativity and commitment.

By *Joellen Killion*

Implementing new standards and other innovations related to improving student achievement requires time for teachers to plan, analyze, and revamp instruction. It demands opportunities for teachers to engage in professional learning, engage in feedback and coaching, and use the feedback to continuously refine their practices. Coupling effective professional learning that includes school- and classroom-based support with time for collaboration with peers and experts is one strategy available to districts and schools.

An open door to learning:

Inquiry process builds collaborative cultures within and between schools.

By *Lisa Cranston*

The deprivatization of classroom practice means that teachers are no longer working in isolation behind closed doors. However, changing the deeply rooted norm of privacy has been difficult because it requires risk-taking by teachers and leaders. With the support of central office curriculum consultants, educators at three schools in Southwestern Ontario used a collaborative inquiry process combined with classroom observations using a lab class model to investigate student inquiry-based learning while building a culture of openness and professional learning within and between schools.

Nimble navigation:

A constant cycle of assessment keeps learning on course.

By *Wendy James and Terry Johanson*

A professional learning facilitator needs to base planning and instruction on assessment. Adult learners need the learning experience to be as focused as possible on their questions and their teaching circumstances. Whether the professional learning is a half-day session or extends over multiple school years, leaders can plan the learning experience so it is designed to gather data about teachers' needs and respond to that data immediately. The authors outline tools to assist facilitators in collecting data about what teachers understand, value, or may need next.

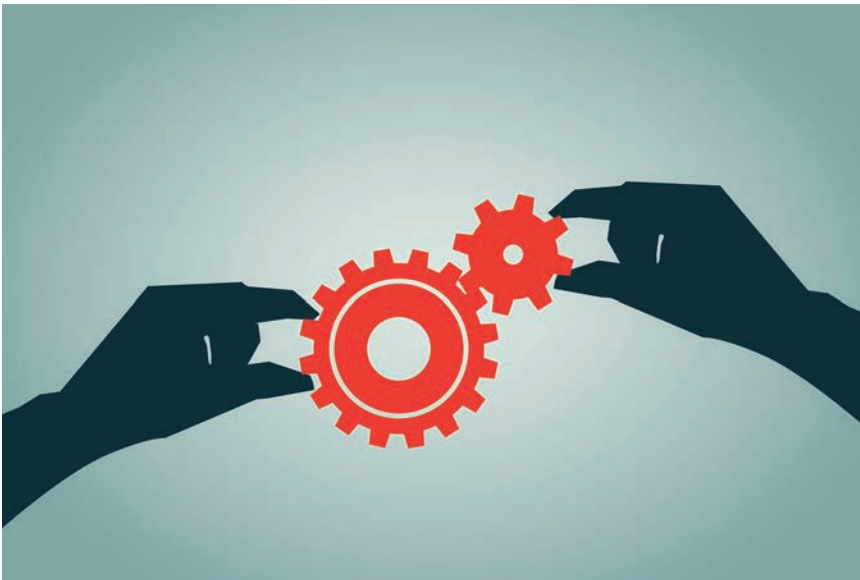
What are we learning about how we learn?

By *Bruce Joyce and Emily Calhoun*

New — and very good — curriculums and technologies are ready for implementation, but states and school districts have few places to get help in designing the amounts and types of professional development that will enable them to fulfill the promise of those advances. For 35 years, the authors and their colleagues have tried to find out how people can learn to use new curriculums and ways of teaching. Here's what they've learned along the way.

Advice from learning professionals.

Learning Forward members from around the country offer words of wisdom to new learning leaders.



feature

The promise of partnerships:

Researchers join forces with educators to solve problems of practice.

By Gail R. Meister and Cynthia L. Blitz

There are several reasons for professional learning leaders to take a closer look at research-practice partnerships. Funders, policymakers, and a growing number of education professionals increasingly expect the use of evidence-based practices to improve student results. With limited budgets and time, practitioners often seek to identify high-impact activities. Research-practice partnerships are a potentially cost-effective vehicle to increase student achievement.

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Lessons from research:

Implementation fidelity affects the degree of change in teacher practice.

By Joellen Killion

High-fidelity implementation of both the content and process principles of professional learning is important in supporting teachers' implementation of new instructional practices.

From the director:

A new role and a new vision for the road ahead.

By Stephanie Hirsh

A learning leader wonders what to expect as she prepares for her new job in a technical assistance agency.

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