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Learning Forward members can now stay up-to-date with the latest in professional learning news with our newest publication, *Professional Learning News*. Learning Forward has partnered with MultiView, an industry leader in e-news publishing, to create an informative e-news brief that delivers the most relevant professional learning content to members' inboxes every week.

Learning Forward members are already receiving these news briefs each week by email.

If you are not a current member of Learning Forward and would like to subscribe, sign up at www.learningforward.org/newsbrief.



book club

TEACHING MATTERS MOST: A School Leader's Guide to Improving Classroom Instruction

By **Thomas M. McCann, Alan C. Jones, and Gail A. Aronoff**

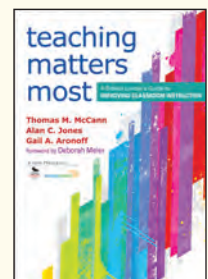
Saying "teaching matters most" seems obvious. Making it the top priority for school leaders and staff is not so easy. If we want to change how students write, compute, and think, then teachers must transform the old "assign-and-assess" model of teaching into engaging, compassionate, coherent, and rigorous instruction.

The authors outline a three-step process that involves envisioning good teaching, measuring instruction quality against this standard, and working to move closer to the ideal.

The book includes guidance on hiring, induction, professional

development, mentoring, and teacher evaluation. Each chapter offers action steps for building a blueprint for improvement. Also included are frameworks for completing instructional audits and protocols for measuring and tracking instruction quality.

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 \$59. To receive this book, add the Book Club to your membership before June 15. It will be mailed in July. For more information about this or any membership package, call 800-727-7288 or email office@learningforward.org.



CARRY LEARNING FORWARD TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Do you know about your state or provincial Learning Forward affiliate organization? If you aren't already actively involved with the affiliate that serves your area, visit www.learningforward.org/about/affiliates.cfm to explore this opportunity to engage at a deeper level with the organization.

State, regional, and provincial affiliates vary in the kinds of activities they use to connect learning leaders. Some hold annual conferences or learning institutes, others offer newsletters or resources to place professional learning information in a more local context. One thing affiliates have in common: They are all eager to hear from the educators they exist to serve.



Successful implementation doesn't end at the beginning of a new initiative

In March, I attended the Celebration of Teaching and Learning, a two-day conference for educators in New York. Teachers, state and district leaders, and national experts gave presentations on reform initiatives facing our schools and districts today: Common Core State Standards, teacher evaluation systems, college and career readiness initiatives, and STEM education, among others. As I talked with participants and noted questions and comments from teachers and administrators, a common refrain emerged: “These are critically important reforms, but what supports will be in place to help me understand and implement these new changes?”

This question reminded me of my experiences as a classroom teacher and teacher leader and the challenges of implementing innovations. As a high school biology teacher, I participated in the National Academy for Curriculum Leadership to support Boston’s adoption of inquiry-based science curriculum. A shift to inquiry-based teaching represented a significant change for many classroom teachers, both at my school and in the district. How could we ensure that this inquiry approach would be implemented successfully?

We used the Concerns-Based Adoption Model to plan professional

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learning (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987). The Concerns-Based Adoption Model helped us plan for different levels of need. Teachers would face certain challenges in the early stages and others down the line. Many teachers would begin with self-oriented concerns (“How will this new approach affect me?”) before they could focus on instructional tasks (“How do I use these new materials and approaches?”). Only then could teachers start thinking about impact (“How is this approach affecting student results?”). Once teachers had a general awareness and an understanding of inquiry, we could engage in ongoing sessions that would help them address management questions and delve deeper into how student materials fit into the overall curriculum. In the late stages of implementation, we supported networks of teachers who came from different schools to reflect and collaborate. This structure served as a model for how learning communities could be developed at the school level; teams reviewed student work, recognized progress, discussed ongoing issues, and analyzed student results.

Of course, this final step — demonstrating the relationship between an innovation and student results — is the outcome that matters

most. However, setting goals related to ongoing implementation can be valuable in revealing the bumps along the road. Hord et al. (1987) describe how assessing practitioners’ levels of use through teacher interviews and classroom observations can be helpful in monitoring change. Increasingly, technology-based tools, including online surveys or wikis, for sharing student work and teacher lessons can also provide data on the depth and fidelity of implementation.

We cannot underestimate the importance of professional learning in supporting the implementation of Common Core, teacher evaluation systems, and other efforts. But we need to plan well beyond the typical orientation that accompanies new initiatives. Instead, we must construct professional learning experiences that help educators make sense of innovations, support the complex changes necessary for success, and serve as the common thread that binds together our efforts to increase results for all students.

REFERENCE

Hord, S.M., Rutherford, W.L., Huling-Austin, L., & Hall, G.E. (1987). *Taking charge of change.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD. ■



New standards resource available to download

Facilitator guide units

The units below are organized to support a full-day learning session on the standards with suggested variations for a two-hour introduction. Facilitators can also adapt the units to suit their particular schedules and learners.

1. Opening and introductions
2. Why standards?
3. Standards overview
4. The role of the standards
5. Unpacking the standards
6. Standards in practice
7. Standards in action
8. Assessment and follow-up
9. Closing and reflections

Learning Forward has posted *Facilitator Guide: Standards for Professional Learning* on its website as a free resource for all members and website visitors. Designed to assist facilitators in introducing and helping others implement the standards, this guide is for educators new to the Standards for Professional Learning as well as those familiar with the previous Standards for Staff Development.

Included in the guide are practical activities, reflection questions, and tools to deepen users' understanding of the standards and how effective professional learning leads to effective teaching practices, supportive leadership, and improved student results. Each unit includes introductory and intermediate tasks for use with small groups, teams, or large groups to encourage collegial dialogue, promote active engagement, foster a culture of collective responsibility, and take users deeper into the standards, demonstrating the role they play in schools, school systems, and states or provinces.

With many interactive learning opportunities for participant discussion, conversation, and involvement, this guide models the kind of professional learning described in the standards. The tasks, discussion questions, and tools frame reflections and dialogue about



the standards and provide opportunities to apply them in users' own work. Slide presentations are provided as guidance for short 10- to 20-minute lectures. Times allotted for each unit are approximate and may vary according to audience size, levels of interaction, and background knowledge.

Handouts and slides are included at the end of each module and should be copied for participants before the session.

Download the *Facilitator Guide* PDF from www.learningforward.org/standards.

powerful WORDS

“Being ignorant is not so much a shame as being unwilling to learn.”

— Benjamin Franklin



Watch the latest standards video

www.learningforward.org/standards/data

Meet practitioners experienced with the key concepts in the Standards for Professional Learning through free online videos. The latest video, on the Data standard, features Eric Brooks, education program specialist at the Arizona Department of Education. Brooks describes how the use of data in professional learning has advanced the goals of the adults and students in the state. Visit each standard's web page to watch the videos.

Learning Forward selects Kentucky task force members for Common Core initiative

As part of Learning Forward's initiative to develop a statewide, comprehensive professional learning system to support educators in Kentucky as the state implements Common Core State Standards, more than 40 members of the Kentucky education community have been selected to serve on a task force to lead the initiative.

The task force, which includes representation from all stakeholders impacted by the initiative, will review current policies and recommendations to charter a new course in statewide professional development standards that is tied to the Common Core. In partnership with the initiative's advisory council, critical friends, and Learning Forward staff, the task force will develop tools such as materials, protocols, and strategies to sustain the planning and improvement of professional development in preparation of the Common Core implementation in Kentucky.

Representatives from six additional states, Georgia, Illinois, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Utah, and Washington, serve as critical friends to Kentucky in their effort to transform professional learning. Joellen Killion, Learning Forward senior advisor, and Kathleen Paliokas, director of InTASC at Council of Chief State School Officers, facilitate the task force.

"We are thankful the task force members have taken on this important work in Kentucky," said Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh. "This team of experts is hard at work advancing professional learning and enhancing Common Core instruction in the states."



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

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LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR

- May 31:** Last day to save \$75 on registration for Learning Forward's 2012 Annual Conference in Boston. www.learningforward.org/opportunities/annualconference.cfm.
- June 15:** Deadline to register for the 2012 Summer Affiliate Leaders Meeting in Denver July 20-22. Download the registration form: www.learningforward.org/about/affiliates.cfm.
- July 22-25:** Learning Forward's 2012 Summer Conference in Denver. www.learningforward.org/summer12/index.cfm.
- Dec. 1-5:** Learning Forward's 2012 Annual Conference in Boston.

Win a free registration to Learning Forward's 2012 Annual Conference

Learning Forward members understand the impact professional learning has on educator effectiveness and student achievement. Now members can share the valuable tools and resources they receive as part of the Learning Forward community by referring a friend or colleague to join.

As part of Learning Forward's membership referral program, each referral enters members into a drawing for a free five-day registration to Learning Forward's 2012 Annual Conference, Dec. 1-5 in Boston. Members will also receive \$10 off their next membership renewal for every new member they recruit.

There is no limit to the membership discounts for referring new members, and no limit to the number of entries for the free conference registration. The winner of the free conference registration will be selected Sept. 14. For more information, contact the Learning Forward Business Office at 800-727-7288 or office@learningforward.org.