

THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

THE LEARNING FORWARD JOURNAL

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Cover photo by
CHRISTINA MILLER

Prekindergarten teacher Marcus Murphy assists a student with reading in the classroom library at AppleTree@Perry Street Preparatory School in Washington, D.C.

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Specialized professional learning is key to high-quality early education.

By Eric Celeste

We've been talking about the unique aspects of professional learning for early education teachers for a long time, but many of the challenges are still largely the same. The progress being made in pockets across the country is just the first step toward a system of professional training, learning, and monitoring that can lead to improved outcomes for all students in early education.



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By Steven Ebell, Holly Hughes, Scott Bockart, Susan Silva, and Stephanie McBride
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I SAY

Regen Fearon

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EARLY MATTERS DALLAS, AN EARLY EDUCATION ADVOCACY COALITION OF BUSINESS, CIVIC, AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS TEXAS.



On how professional learning should be adapted for early education teachers:

“The other piece of the puzzle that needs addressing is the actual teaching of literacy and reading. Even the existing professional learning programs do not do a good job of educating future teachers about the process of helping a child learn to read effectively. If most of your program is focused on the content of what a teacher is teaching, you don’t spend much, if any, time on the science of literacy.”

Find the full Q&A with Regen Fearon at www.learningforward.org/learningprofessional.

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HERE WE GO Eric Celeste

The term ‘high-quality’ makes all the difference

When I first met Alan Cohen, he was trying to explain to me what he meant when he used the term “high-quality early education.” This was about four years ago, when Cohen was first put in charge of early education in Dallas ISD, a large urban district composed of 220-plus campuses and nearly 160,000 students. We were discussing how some researchers suggested praise for pre-K programs was overstated, that improvement in student outcomes didn’t always occur, or at least often faded.

“That’s true,” he said, “if the programs aren’t high-quality.” Cohen then opened a spreadsheet on which he’d scored every early education campus in the district on the 30 factors he said a classroom must meet to be considered “high-quality”: everything from more district support for out-of-class professional development for pre-K teachers to hiring pre-K coaching specialists to work in class with instructors. “High-quality early education, though, improves student outcomes,” he said. “I know it does.” The results he achieved in Dallas back up that assertion: From 2013-15, kindergarten readiness for Dallas’ disadvantaged pre-K population rose dramatically, from one in three kids being kindergarten-ready to one in two.

This was a seminal conversation for me. Once I realized the distinction, I viewed the research around that topic through the high-quality lens. It became clear to me that much of the research

suggests that *high-quality* pre-K programs make a real difference in educational outcomes.

A few years later, I came to Learning Forward, and I quickly began viewing the research around professional learning the same way. People often talk about inconclusive evidence of the positive effects of professional learning. But once they learn that there is a vast difference between many programs and high-quality professional learning, their faith in the effectiveness of professional learning is usually rewarded.

Drawing that link between the student outcome benefits of high-quality early education and high-quality professional learning helped me explain not only to myself but to others the importance of both educational approaches. It’s also a big reason I was excited to put together this issue focusing on professional education — marrying the two topics, if you will. (Or, at least, seeing at what points they intersect and support each other.)

That’s why I asked Cohen, now president and CEO of Thrive Washington, Washington state’s lead nonprofit partner in advancing high-quality early learning, to write a feature for this issue. His article (p. 42) explores one innovative program trying to better train high-quality instructors for early education — a specialty only now being given widespread consideration by



Alan Cohen

researchers.

It’s not all early ed in the following pages, of course. One of the signature changes to *The Learning Professional* since our February redesign has been to include a variety of other feature topics in our Ideas section, and this issue is no exception. We’re especially

pleased to bring you an article on the work Learning Forward is doing with eight Galveston County superintendents and their leadership teams to improve teaching and learning across the county. The article (p. 58) focuses on the principal learning community in one of those Texas districts: Clear Creek ISD.

Elsewhere in the issue, we’re excited to introduce you to Elizabeth Foster, Learning Forward’s associate director of standards, research, and strategy. She discusses an important new report, *Effective Teacher Professional Development* (p. 12) from the Learning Policy Institute, a paper that provides new evidence about the positive impact effective professional learning has on student outcomes. Again, a look at how high-quality professional learning is ultimately about improving student outcomes — a thread that runs through not only this issue, but all our work. Hope you enjoy.

Eric Celeste (eric.celeste@learningforward.org) is associate director of publications at Learning Forward. ■

THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

THE LEARNING FORWARD JOURNAL

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VOICES

“By elevating the voice of teachers and showing politicians how those funds directly benefit public education, we became a very powerful voice in support of Title II.”

— *Scott Laurence,*
Being Forward, p. 20

“Focusing on goals and measuring progress toward meeting them is necessary. It’s just not sufficient. What’s needed is one additional, but absolutely essential, ingredient: support.”

— *David I. Steinberg,*
What I’ve Learned, p. 16

“Our goal is to build teacher capacity and get teachers to take those leadership roles from the classroom and be professional developers in their school sites.”

— *Shannon Bogle,*
Member Spotlight, p. 8

“School-based instructional coaching has the power to influence teacher practice, student learning, and school culture, and coaches play an essential role in ensuring the continuous learning of everyone in a school.”

— *Tom Manning,* Ask, p. 14

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Shannon Bogle

Position: Supervisor,
teacher training,
Hillsborough County
Public Schools, Florida

In education: 17 years

**Learning Forward
member since:** 2014

Learning Forward origin story:

I became a member because the Gates Foundation asked us to participate in the Learning Forward Redesign PD Community of Practice. That's how I got involved in Learning Forward on the large scale. But I've been a member of our state organization and would go to the state conferences even before that.

How Learning Forward helped her:

When we joined the Redesign PD Community of Practice, we were restructuring what our professional development looked like. It was a perfect time for us to share current practices and how we could make them better. It really helped us to step outside of our four walls and have an opportunity to network with other districts. We could get feedback from colleagues around the country with very similar contexts to ours. It has really empowered our district and helped us implement many new practices.

It didn't take Shannon Bogle long to realize she wanted to be a teacher leader. Bogle has been with Hillsborough County Public Schools in Florida, the eighth largest district in the United States, for 17 years, starting as a K-2 classroom teacher. Within a few years, she was a K-5 reading resource teacher, where she coached teachers and helped build their capacity in reading instruction. She then got involved in professional development at the high school level, working with Title I schools.

Bogle then moved in to the district's professional learning department and worked primarily with the induction of new teachers, eventually working her way to her current supervisory position. She's also a Learning Forward "triple threat," to borrow a sports term: Her district has been part of the Redesign PD Community of Practice, working on coherence and relevance as its problem of practice, and she's working with the Learning Forward Academy and the Orlando Host Committee of Learning Forward's 2017 Annual Conference.

When did you know you wanted to transition from classroom work to professional learning?

Working with teachers in this capacity had always been something I was interested in. I got a lot out of working with adults, and I really enjoyed it. And more so than administrative paths, my strength was clearly the development of teachers. I was very, very fortunate in that I was able to find a way to be



"Our job now is to go into the schools and develop a strong site-based professional development plan that includes follow-up and implementation."

— Shannon Bogle

a part of this professional development team, now going on 10 years.

How have the department and your role changed in those 10 years?

We've gone from doing a lot of district-based training to a model where teachers come out of their schools to our center to get training. We hope that they do some follow-up back at their sites with their

resource teachers and their coaches or their administrators. But, because our district is so large, our staff doesn't have the capacity to do that follow-up ourselves. ... Our job now is to go into the schools and develop a strong site-based professional development plan that includes follow-up and implementation. Our goal, ultimately, is to build the capacity at every site so that they have people that can do those things at their site.

What professional learning challenge is your district currently working on?

Building that teacher capacity at school sites because, to district staff, it's just impossible to support all 250 schools on a regular basis. Our goal is to build teacher capacity and get teachers to take those leadership roles from the classroom and be professional developers in their school sites.

What does a normal day look like for you?

[laughs] There is no normal day. Our division covers principals and assistant principals, so a typical time for me now would be collaborating with the leadership side — working with them on their projects as well as our projects, putting together learning opportunities for teachers, going to school sites and coaching principals through their professional development plan, helping them develop tools and training to support their work in their schools.

Given the diversity within your district, do you differentiate that training?

We do a lot of individualized

training based on the needs of the schools. We work with the schools to gather data to figure out what that need might be. We work with our area leadership team [the district is divided into eight areas], like our principal coach and a generalist from the elementary department and then the professional development specialist as well.

That team works together to support schools with all of their needs, but the professional development specialist's role is to support the professional development at the schools. The goal is to have a person in every area where that's his or her only job. Eventually, the idea is that I would be supervising those professional development specialists by going out coaching — providing training and feedback and so forth.

How much did the community of practice work help?

What we developed through our [Learning Forward Redesign PD] Community of Practice was creating professional learning plans out of each school. This has been the first year that we've really used it districtwide. It's still a work in progress, but I see principals starting to take hold of that idea of professional learning being at the forefront of their thinking and prioritizing it at their school site.

What drives those plans school-by-school?

Student achievement. The first thing we do when coming up with a design for a school is to get the

data — all the data that we can bring to the table: student achievement data, observational data, surveys, or climate surveys. Student achievement is definitely at the center of all of our work.

Given that your problem of practice was coherence and relevance, this would become particularly important as you're going to site-based professional learning, right?

Yes, but I think we're just getting started. We're definitely seeing more coherence and relevance at the site level. ... And now we're starting to back up and look at the district-level training and how we can continue to improve. But we're certainly not done. To be honest, that's why I wanted to join the [Learning Forward] Academy, because I felt like we made so many strides as being a part of the community, and I wanted to continue the learning.

And what will you be working on in the Academy?

Building teacher capacity. We're basically working on our own teacher leader academies — instructional coaching across the district. There are a lot of components to it, and we'll be working with the University of Florida so people can earn their instructional coaching certificates. ... That way, we can build more of a systemic way of coaching in our district. I'm excited I'm going through that process with the Academy and that I can bring that thinking and learning back to our district. ■



CALL TO ACTION

Stephanie Hirsh

Make the connection between Learning Forward’s standards and ESSA

It should be easy for states that have adopted Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning to ensure that federal dollars used for professional development meet the new definition in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

While both documents are presented differently, fundamentally they address the same points — and they should. The ESSA definition is the result of many years of many people’s efforts to transition the previous definition to one that aligned with the evidence on professional learning that affects educator and student practice.

A crosswalk demonstrating the alignment will assist states and districts to see the similarities and accelerate the application of both.

I call on all educators to use this crosswalk as a source of support in planning, designing, assessing, and advocating for the professional learning you need most to support the outcomes you must achieve on behalf of the students you serve.

Stephanie Hirsh (stephanie.hirsh@learningforward.org) is executive director of Learning Forward. ■

LEARN MORE

- Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning: www.learningforward.org/who-we-are/professional-learning-definition
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) background and definition of professional learning: www.learningforward.org/get-involved/essa

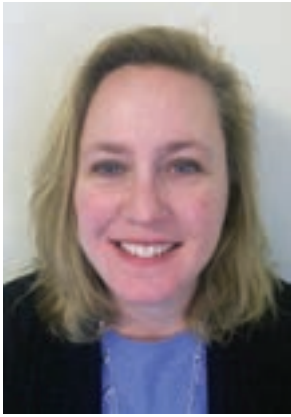


ESSA DEFINITION	LEARNING FORWARD’S STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	HOW THEY ALIGN
<p>“PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT — The term ‘professional development’ means activities that —</p>	Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students ...	
<p>“(A) are an integral part of school and local educational agency strategies</p>	<p>Leadership: ... requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.</p>	Both establish that professional learning is a critical strategy in educational improvement and require leadership to create the systems essential to support it.
<p>for providing educators (including teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and, as applicable, early childhood educators)</p>	<p>“Educator describes the members of the education workforce, those employed within schools and school systems and in other education agencies ...” (Learning Forward, 2011)</p>	Both identify “educator” broadly, including leaders and teachers.

Table continued on p. 11

Table continued from p. 10

ESSA DEFINITION	LEARNING FORWARD'S STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	HOW THEY ALIGN
<p>"PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT — The term 'professional development' means activities that —</p>	<p>Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students ...</p>	
<p>with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the challenging State academic standards; and</p>	<p>Outcomes: ... aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.</p>	<p>The Outcomes standard specifically addresses student academic standards.</p>
<p>“(B) are sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short term workshops),</p>	<p>Implementation: ... applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.</p>	<p>Both call for sustained learning as necessary to achieve intended outcomes.</p>
<p>intensive,</p>	<p>Learning Designs: ... integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.</p>	<p>Effective learning designs assist educators in moving beyond comprehension of the surface features of a new idea or practice to developing a more complete understanding.</p>
<p>collaborative,</p>	<p>Learning Communities: ... occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.</p> <p>Learning Designs: ... integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.</p>	<p>The Learning Communities standard addresses the values, culture, and structures that enable collaboration.</p> <p>The Learning Designs standard is the application of collaborative learning.</p>
<p>job-embedded,</p>	<p>Resources: ... requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.</p> <p>Learning Designs: ... integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.</p>	<p>The Resources standard rationale specifies that “professional learning embedded into educators’ workdays increases the opportunity ... and such job-embedded learning aligns the focus of adult learning to student needs” (Learning Forward, 2011, p. 33).</p> <p>Job-embedded is a learning design.</p>
<p>data-driven,</p>	<p>Data: ... uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.</p>	<p>Data is used to ensure educators meet performance standards and have the competencies to address student learning needs. Data drive and inform ongoing evaluation for improvement.</p>
<p>and classroom-focused,</p>	<p>Implementation: ... applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.</p> <p>Learning Communities: ... occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.</p>	<p>The essential components of implementation —follow-up, coaching, practice, feedback, and reflection — must take place in the classroom.</p> <p>Learning communities focus on establishing the collective responsibility for student success.</p>
<p>and may include activities that — ”</p>		<p>We recommend weighing the use of the optional activities that follow against these shared elements of the definition and Standards for Professional Learning.</p>
<p>REFERENCE: Learning Forward. (2011). <i>Standards for Professional Learning</i>. Oxford, OH: Author.</p>		



OUR TAKE

Elizabeth Foster

New report and tool kit build momentum for effective professional learning

Across the country right now, states and districts are thinking about their ESSA plans — the funding, the requirements, the changes that are in the plan that will need to be implemented in the coming years. While there is a lot to consider, ESSA can potentially create real opportunity to improve teaching and learning because of the way it defines and lays out expectations for professional learning.

Because of the call for equity along with excellence as well as for an increased use of evidence and data, ESSA could catalyze new visions of professional learning systems and greater emphasis on what the evidence says constitutes effective professional development. However, given concerns about funding and the other requirements competing for attention, how do we seize this opportunity?

With all of this in our heads, Learning Forward joined with the Learning Policy Institute and the Center for American Progress in early June to discuss Learning Policy Institute's new report about how professional development has a positive impact on student outcomes. *Effective Teacher Professional Development*, written by Linda Darling-Hammond, Maria E. Hyler, and Madelyn Gardner, is based on an analysis of 35 rigorous studies and provides examples of effective strategies, detailed and interesting program profiles, and recommendations for

practice and policy. In brief, Learning Policy Institute found that effective professional development:

- **Is content-focused**, with an intentional focus on discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogies;
- **Incorporates active learning** that provides teachers with opportunities to design, test, and refine teaching strategies using authentic and relevant activities;
- **Supports collaboration and “creates space for teachers to share ideas and collaborate in their learning, often in job-embedded contexts”;**
- **Uses models of effective practice** to provide teachers with a clear vision of what effective practices, plans, and student work look like;
- **Provides coaching and expert support** that addresses teachers' individual needs by calling on expertise about content and evidence-based practices;
- **Offers feedback and reflection**, including observation and discussion time built in to encourage teachers to move toward their vision of accomplished teaching; and
- **Is of sustained duration** with adequate time to learn, practice, implement, and reflect on strategies that facilitate changes in their practice.

ESSA TOOLS AND RESOURCES
FROM LEARNING FORWARD

www.learningforward.org/get-involved/essa/essa-tools-and-resources

These program elements will be familiar to Learning Forward members and readers. Learning Policy Institute's research supports Learning Forward's theory of action that collaborative, job-embedded professional learning changes teaching practice and results for students for the better. The findings align well with the research behind Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011). This alignment is important because the more we can add to the momentum around looking at evidence of impact and create demand for effective professional learning that leads to changes for teachers and students, the better.

In this alignment lies the real opportunity. The ESSA conversations have opened the door for increased dialogue and feedback among policymakers and administrators about what effective professional learning is and can do — what are effective strategies and elements, how do we support educators' continuous improvement, what are we doing that we know we should stop doing.

Leveraging new reports like this one with the well-established research-based



EFFECTIVE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Learning Policy Institute, June 2017

What constitutes effective professional development? This report reviews 35 rigorous studies that have demonstrated a positive link between teacher professional development, teaching practices, and student outcomes. The authors identify key features of effective efforts and offer rich descriptions of these models to inform education leaders and policymakers seeking to leverage professional development to improve student learning.

Available at https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf.

Standards for Professional Learning can provide a strong foundation for advocacy. We may not know everything about what works in professional learning, but we know enough to ask informed questions and put forth strong examples of effective strategies.

Learning Policy Institute's report provides a good jumping off point for this work. Among its recommendations are to evaluate time and schedules, ask about opportunities for professional learning and collaboration, collect data about what educators want and need, and integrate professional learning into school improvement initiatives. All of these recommendations provide

good guidance about what questions educators and advocates can raise and pursue.

To that end, Learning Forward has created several tools to inform and support your advocacy efforts. We have a new tool kit about ESSA and a new rubric for analyzing state plans with an eye toward expanding and enhancing their strategies about professional learning (vetted by Learning Forward state affiliate leaders).

And because we know the quality of the implementation of any strategies is absolutely critical to success, Learning Forward is also committed to providing more evidence about what works in the

states and districts we work with day to day.

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Elizabeth Foster (elizabeth.foster@learningforward.org) is associate director of standards, research, and strategy at Learning Forward. ■



ASK

Tom Manning

How do we clarify coaches' roles and responsibilities?

Q Last year, we transitioned 20 teachers and central office staff into the role of instructional coaches. All of these coaches are subject-oriented, and they struggled with establishing rapport with principals and the teachers they worked with. Principal-coach relationships were a particular issue. How do we ensure that the roles and responsibilities of coaches and their working relationships with principals are clear to everyone districtwide?

Learning Forward receives more inquiries about support for instructional coaches than any other consulting service we provide. School-based instructional coaching has the power to influence teacher practice, student learning, and school culture, and coaches play an essential role in ensuring the continuous learning of everyone in a school.

In many systems, coaches are master teachers with substantial instructional and content expertise. These coaches, however, often lack deep expertise in professional learning.

We work with instructional coaches to develop their skills in building relationships, leading professional learning, and providing individual and team coaching.

Before we get to those skills, however, it's important to understand the unique roles that instructional coaches play in what we call "learning systems."

In their book, *Taking the Lead: New Roles for Teachers and School-Based Coaches* (NSDC, 2006), Joellen Killion and Cindy Harrison outline the complex, multifaceted roles coaches play in a system. "When designing coaching programs, hiring coaches, developing and supporting coaches, and evaluating coaches and coaching

Each issue, we ask a learning professional to answer your professional learning questions. This month's response comes from Tom Manning (tom.manning@learningforward.org), Learning Forward associate director of consulting and networks.

programs, defining what coaches do each day is crucial," they write. In systems with effective coaching, teacher instructional practice is more focused, and student achievement increases. Without clearly defined roles, coaches can strive to be all things to all people, leading to a lack of direction and a far greater likelihood that coaching will not result in the support teachers need.

Killion and Harrison describe 10 roles for school-based coaches and the essential purpose of each of those roles.

Resource provider: Coaches help teachers expand their use of a variety of resources to improve instruction.

Data coach: Coaches help teachers or teams of teachers examine data, understand student needs based on data, and identify instructional strategies to address those needs.

Curriculum specialist: In this role, coaches ensure implementation of an adopted curriculum. They deepen teachers' content knowledge; support curriculum alignment; and identify curriculum standards, the knowledge and skills students need to achieve standards, and benchmarks to measure progress toward standards.

Instructional specialist: In this role, the coach ensures that teachers implement effective, research-based instructional strategies.

Classroom supporter: This can include modeling/demonstrating, co-teaching, or observing and giving feedback on instruction or management.

Mentor: In this role, coaches increase instructional skills of new teachers and support schoolwide induction activities.

Learning facilitator: Coaches design collaborative, job-embedded, standards-based professional learning.

School leader: Coaches may serve in formal or informal leadership roles, working with the school's leadership to design, implement, and assess school



change initiatives and ensure a focus on intended results.

Catalyst for change: In this role, a coach seeks to influence change by introducing new ideas, making observations, and challenging current practice when needed.

Learner: Coaches are leaders of learning in their schools, modeling continuous improvement.

Our work with instructional coaches focuses on building specific skills so they can serve their schools and systems in each of these 10 roles. Through our partnerships with schools, systems, regional service centers, and state departments of education, we help develop effective coaches that build capacity, influence individual teachers and teacher teams, and create cultures of inquiry in schools and systems. ■

Resources

Coaching Matters (Learning Forward, 2012): Each chapter in this book describes an element of what research and the authors' firsthand experiences know it takes to make coaching effective.

Taking the Lead: New Roles for Teachers and School-Based Coaches (NSDC, 2006) *Second edition coming later this year:* Explore the complex, multifaceted roles played by teacher leaders and school-based coaches.

Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011): The standards define the essential elements of and conditions for professional learning if improvements in educator effectiveness and student learning are to be realized.

Available at the Learning Forward Bookstore, www.learningforward.org/bookstore or 1-800-727-7288.

LEARNING PROFESSIONALS: WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The "Ask" column is a way to open a dialogue with learning leaders about the issues you face daily. No topic is too broad or narrow. Whether you are struggling to establish a principal pipeline in a rural county or wondering how to find a literacy coach for your school, we'd like to discuss your concerns.

Send your questions to ask@learningforward.org. Take as many words as you need to explain your question(s) — understanding that we may edit them for length or clarity.

We look forward to hearing from you.



WHAT I'VE LEARNED

David I. Steinberg

Support for educators leads to learning gains for students

What gets measured gets done: Everyone with leadership training knows this management maxim. Intuitively, it seems to make sense. After all, employees will focus on whatever the leader is paying attention to. If the leader is a data-driven decision-making manager who relentlessly rivets everyone's gaze onto certain key data points, then the message travels with lightning speed that your school or department's success (as well as your career trajectory) depends on whether the graph is trending in the right direction.

I was trained in this paradigm, too. In my leadership experiences as an elementary, middle, and high school principal, and later as a central office administrator, I realized that something was missing from this famous slice of leadership advice.

The saying isn't wrong — merely incomplete. Clearly, focusing on goals and measuring progress toward meeting them is necessary. It's just not sufficient. What's needed is one additional, but absolutely essential, ingredient: support. The saying ought to be: What gets measured *and supported* gets done.

I've been lucky to work for a school system that has put this philosophy into action. For the past 16 years, Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland has implemented three professional growth systems: for teachers, principals and other administrators, and support



professionals. Each system outlines standards, criteria, and examples for effective practice and a process for evaluating performance.

Like most school systems, businesses, or nonprofits, there is a requirement that a supervisor collect evidence to draw a conclusion about an employee's competency within each standard. In other words, the "what gets measured" part is firmly in place.

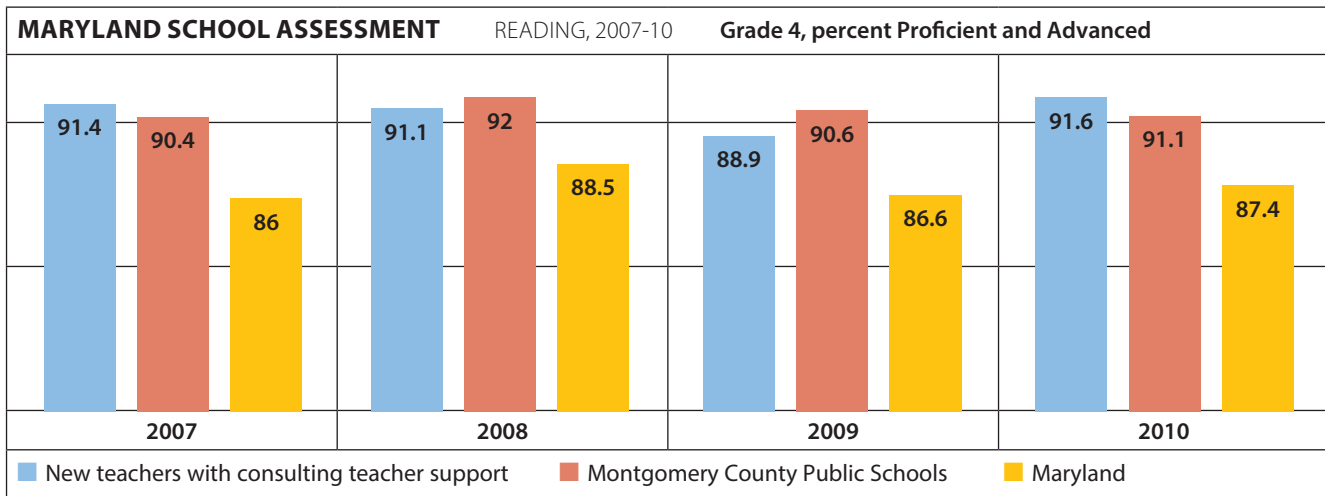
What sets our professional growth systems apart is job-embedded support. For example, every new teacher receives coaching by a consulting teacher — an expert in effective teaching — who visits the teacher's classroom each week to observe, model, guide, and provide feedback and resources.

Teachers who are new to the district, but have previous experience,

receive the support of a mentor. Similarly, new principals receive regular coaching from a consulting principal — a highly successful principal — a consulting teacher, is spending three years in a special assignment devoted to helping peers succeed in their challenging new roles.

Support professionals who are underperforming receive coaching by an experienced and highly skilled professional growth consultant to help them improve their performance and meet the competencies for their positions.

That's a lot of individualized coaching, and it doesn't even include the supports provided by others (supervisors, teacher leaders, peers) and through other means (inservice, courses, and workshops). Because it's job-embedded



(tailored to the individual and at the employee’s work site), it requires a lot of staff to provide it in a large school district. Therefore, it’s expensive.

The most important question is: Does it get results? To put it another way: Our revised maxim says that if a goal is measured and supported, it gets done — but done how well? With what effects? With what quality?

A few years ago, I was asked to research this question as a type of cost-benefit analysis. How would we know if this support was really paying off?

SUPPORTING PRINCIPALS

First, we looked at the effect on principals and, more importantly, the effect of the principal’s work on student achievement. Because we are committed to making progress closing achievement gaps, we focused on principals in high-needs schools (schools with high poverty, mobility, and new English language learners). When the new principals received coaching support, did their students benefit? The data we collected told a remarkable story.

The elementary students in these

schools made greater gains than the students in the school system as a whole and far greater gains than the students in the entire state — the type of progress needed to close achievement gaps. Even more impressive: The progress continued even after the coaching by consulting principals ended.

The new principals had received intensive coaching support from consulting principals during their first year, but most of them had benefited from far more support than that. Because of thoughtful succession planning, 90% of them had come up through the system.

They had been excellent teachers and strong teacher leaders. Then they had become effective assistant principals and principal interns, receiving mentoring and further professional development. Their students’ gains can rightly be seen as the culmination of all of this developmental support.

SUPPORTING TEACHERS

We were so encouraged by these results that we decided to also examine the effect of support on teachers. Here,

most importantly, we were interested in how the support influenced the ultimate effect of teachers’ work on student learning.

Since all of our teachers who are new to teaching receive the support of a consulting teacher, we asked this question: Do new teachers who receive the support of consulting teachers produce approximately the same level of student achievement as more experienced teachers?

If you ask most people to predict whether novice or veteran teachers, in general, produce higher student achievement, they would say that teachers with at least a few years of experience under their belts are more likely to have developed their craft and, as a result, their students would learn more. Certainly this is what parents think. Almost without fail, when parents write to a principal to request a teacher, they ask for someone with a proven track record.

To our surprise, we couldn’t find a lot of research comparing the student achievement gains of new and experienced teachers, but the studies

we did find pointed to what we know instinctively: Experienced teachers' students tend to outperform the students of new teachers. Here are two typical findings:

"The estimated relation of teacher experience with student achievement gains is substantial, but is statistically significant only for 2nd-grade reading and 3rd-grade mathematics achievement. We also find much larger teacher effect variance in low socioeconomic status (SES) schools than in high SES schools" (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004).

"... more experienced teachers appear more effective in teaching elementary math and reading and middle school math" (Harris & Sass, 2008).

I asked the leaders of our team of consulting teachers to randomly choose an elementary grade level before telling them the purpose of our small study. They selected 4th grade. We then identified the new 4th-grade teachers hired in our district during a three-year period. We looked at how these 72 teachers' students performed on end-of-year state reading assessments. How many of them were achieving on grade level (proficient) or above grade level (advanced)?

Based on the research literature as well as our own experiences, we expected to find that the students of all the district's 4th-grade teachers (most of whom were experienced) did better than the students of our new teachers. But that isn't what we found.

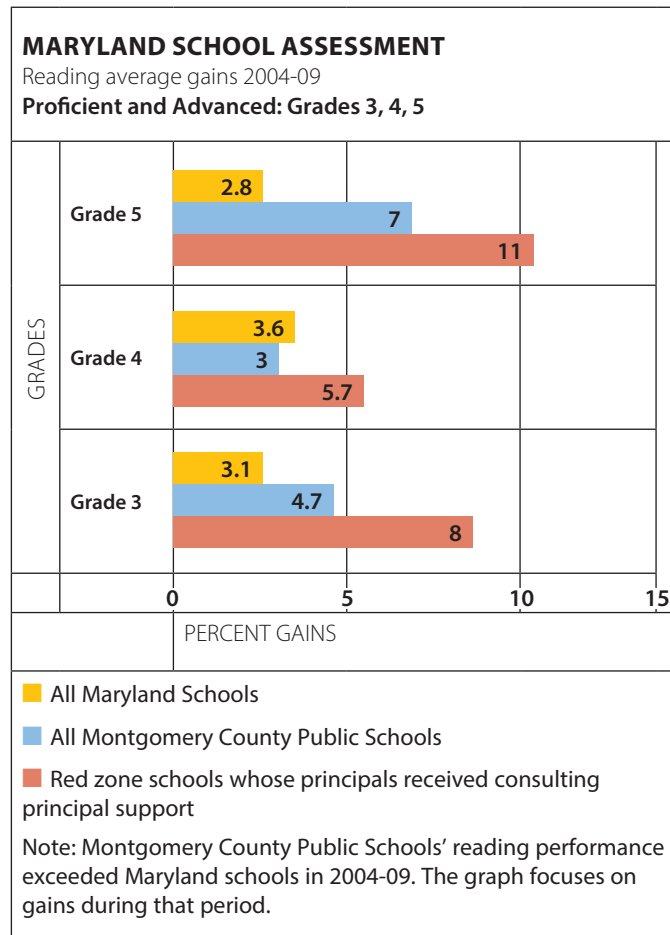
Surprisingly, the students of the new teachers did about as well as

the students throughout the district, sometimes scoring one or two points lower, sometimes one or two points higher, but always achieving in the same neighborhood.

Both groups surpassed the students throughout the state.

What could account for so many new teachers producing such impressive student learning? We believe the support they received made the difference. We know, however, that the extensive coaching, modeling, and guidance the consulting teachers provided wasn't the only factor.

New teachers also have their colleagues, teacher leaders, and administrators to turn to for assistance. Their success is probably attributable to all of these supports, especially when the supports work harmoniously.



QUALITY SUPPORT MATTERS

Although these studies were carried out a few years ago, we believe that what we learned from them remains important: Quality support matters. It's essential for all employees, such as supporting services and central office staff, to feel they are supported as they set goals for progress.

Sometimes it's difficult to draw a straight line from the work of these employees to student achievement, but we know it matters that children start off their day with a safe and friendly bus driver, that they go to a clean school where the supplies are plentiful, the technology is current, and they are provided a healthy lunch.

The work of all of these employees can be measured

in terms of productivity and customer service, but here, too, we found that support is needed for the highest levels of performance.

We usually think about support in terms of professional development. Employees in a school system, or in any organization, frequently complain that the training they receive isn't helpful. In fact, they tend to report that being away from their classroom, school, or workplace distracts them from accomplishing their assigned tasks.

Occasionally they walk away with a new insight or a practical strategy to try, but often they lose their inspiration after leaving the motivational session or forget the new skill because they didn't have time to practice using it in a real-life context.

Researcher Thomas Guskey

maintains that we should judge the value of professional development by looking at five progressive levels: 1) participants' reactions, 2) participants' learning, 3) organization support and change, 4) participants' use of new knowledge and skills, and 5) student learning outcomes (Guskey, 2002).

The ultimate proof of whether professional development works is whether it produces greater student learning. Whether the learning has value depends on whether it is perceived as real support: authentic and job-embedded — that the teacher, principal, or any participant, can see how the support improves practice and that the changed practice produces improved results.

Follow-up surveys and interviews with new teachers and principals consistently show that they felt that

The ultimate proof of whether professional development works is whether it produces greater student learning.

the coaching support was meaningful and helpful, with many describing it as indispensable. They could cite specific examples of how a consulting teacher or consulting principal helped them deepen their current skill set and broaden their repertoire of strategies so that they could reach more students. Most significantly, they could proudly display their higher student achievement as a badge of real success.

In short, what our experiences have taught us is that the power to produce

results takes two key actions: What gets measured *and supported* gets done.

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BEING FORWARD

Scott Laurence

Highlights from the past year show strategic priorities in action

As the Learning Forward board president, I see a lot of the work that the organization does and am proud to be a part of it. I'm especially proud of Learning Forward's Strategic Plan, which outlines the organization's strategic priorities that set its direction. These strategic priorities demonstrate how the organization is responding to the needs of its members and stakeholders, while also addressing issues in the field of education and professional learning. I believe there is a lot of fidelity in the organization to follow our Strategic Plan and make it a living, working document.

There are three areas of strategic focus in this plan, each with its own stated priority. I would like to give you an outline of what we thought were the highlights from this past year. I hope this helps you see just how Learning Forward is working on behalf of teachers and students to improve outcomes.

AREA 1: Standards and impact.

Priority: Learning Forward establishes standards and examines evidence to strengthen and document the impact of professional learning.

I believe that we see this as an overall positive collective effort of the organization. You can see the effort in the Annual Conference in Vancouver last December as well as in academies, institutes, our study on *The State of Educators' Professional Learning in Canada*, and other publications. The study in Canada was perhaps most

significant. It was the first such study of its kind of professional learning in Canada, and it expanded the industry's knowledge of professional learning internationally. We need to continue such efforts in this category.

AREA 2: Leadership and practice.

Priority: Learning Forward builds the capacity of its members, clients, partners, and staff to establish and sustain effective professional learning.

Learning Forward used every tool available to show positive effects in leadership and practice. Supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the organization continued its work leading the Redesign PD Community of Practice: a program in which 22 of the nation's leading school districts and charter management organizations address systemwide educator and student learning priorities. As well, Learning Forward executives Stephanie Hirsh and Tracy Crow published *Becoming a Learning Team*, which offers teachers step-by-step guidance in using collaborative learning time to solve specific student learning challenges.

The organization also continued building the learning leaders of tomorrow with the Learning Forward Academy. The Academy is a 2½-year program in which its members work collaboratively to gain knowledge to solve significant student learning problems in their schools, districts, or organizations. It's just one more dynamic way Learning Forward

worked to build capacity to sustain effective professional learning.

AREA 3: Advocacy and policy.

Priority: Learning Forward advocates policies and practices that strengthen the field of professional learning.

This might be the most important part of the Strategic Plan. The advocacy that Hirsh, the board, and the organization began on behalf of Title II — funds that can be used for professional learning — is critical to our mission. Regardless of the final budget outcome, we are creating a lot of pressure on policymakers to recognize the importance of high-quality professional learning that improves student outcomes.

By elevating the voice of teachers and showing politicians how those funds directly benefit public education, we became a very powerful voice in support of Title II. This was made possible in part because of another crucial decision made this past year: the merger between Learning Forward and the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future. This increased our voice in Washington and beyond.

You can see from this partial list that Learning Forward has had a major impact in professional learning this past year. And you can see that following the Strategic Plan was a big reason why that is so.

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Scott Laurence is president of Learning Forward's board of trustees. ■

Examine. Study. Understand.

RESEARCH

SPOTLIGHT ON TEACHER LEADERSHIP

"Practitioners who want to elevate the significance and visibility of their teacher leadership efforts have a responsibility for:

- Clearly defining teacher leadership;
- Establishing its purpose and theoretical framework;
- Creating the conditions and structures that support it;
- Preparing and supporting teacher leaders; and
- Evaluating the effects of teacher leadership on teacher leaders, their colleagues, their school, school system, and communities, and their students."

JOELLEN
KILLION'S
RESEARCH
REVIEW
p. **22**



RESEARCH REVIEW

Joellen Killion

Critical questions remain unanswered in research on teacher leadership

► AT A GLANCE

Research on teacher leadership shows promise but insufficient empirical evidence of its benefits and supports.

► THE STUDY

Wenner, J. & Campbell, T. (2017).

The theoretical and empirical basis of teacher leadership: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Literature*, 87(1), 134-171.

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Joellen Killion (joellen.killion@learningforward.org) is senior advisor to Learning Forward. In each issue of *The Learning Professional*, Killion explores a recent research study to help practitioners understand the impact of particular professional learning practices on student outcomes.

► WHAT THE STUDY SAYS

More than a decade after the last comprehensive literature review on teacher leadership, researchers conclude similar findings and challenges exist in the more recent studies analyzed.

STUDY DESCRIPTION

In 2004, Jennifer York-Barr and Karen Duke published a seminal and comprehensive review of the literature on teacher leadership between 1980 and 2004. This study examines literature published between that study and 2013.

As the interest and implementation of teacher leadership grows and accountability measures within schools expand and morph, this new review sought to expand the understanding of the field both within the framework established by York-Barr and Duke and beyond it.

For the purpose of this review, Wenner and Campbell define teacher leaders as “teachers who maintain K-12 classroom-based teaching responsibilities, while also taking on leadership responsibilities outside of the classroom” (p. 140).

QUESTIONS

Wenner and Campbell based the research questions on those used by York-Barr’s and Duke’s 2004 comprehensive literature review and added to the list.

1. How is teacher leadership


defined in the research, and what are the constructs/elements of teacher leadership within these conceptualizations?

2. To what extent and in what ways is teacher leadership being investigated within the different disciplinary contexts? What theories are used to frame research surrounding teacher leadership?
3. How are teacher leaders prepared, and what strategies or programs appear to be most fruitful for developing teacher leaders?
4. What are the effects of teacher leadership?
5. What factors facilitate or inhibit teacher leadership?
6. To what extent and in what ways does the research surrounding teacher leadership investigate issues of equity and diversity?

METHODOLOGY

Wenner and Campbell established search and inclusion criteria to frame their review of the literature. Those criteria included their definition of teacher leaders, high-quality empirical research focused only on teacher leaders, peer reviewed, and with teacher leadership as central to the research, and occurring between January 2004 and December 2013.

These criteria led to establishing criteria for exclusion that included



This study calls for thoughtful consideration of the preparation and continuous professional learning of teacher leaders as well as for engaging underrepresented teachers in leadership roles.

studies that were purely descriptive studies, had five or fewer subjects, subjects not working in K-12 education, or subjects who no longer had classroom teaching responsibilities; on implementation of programs using teacher leaders; in which teacher leaders participated as a part of a larger leadership group; and in which teacher leadership was peripheral to the study.

Wenner and Campbell identified 704 studies on teacher leadership that occurred during their time frame. After applying the criteria and more in-depth analysis, the researchers determined that 54 studies met the criteria for inclusion in the review.

The most common reasons for eliminating studies included descriptive studies, non-peer-reviewed, teacher leaders as a part of a larger leadership

group, teacher leadership as peripheral to the research, and no triangulation of data.

ANALYSIS

The researchers reviewed and annotated each study independently and collaborated on their analysis of each study to determine its contribution to the review.

When questions or disagreements occurred, Wenner and Campbell used the original studies and discussion to resolve them.

They noted the following description of the 54 included studies:

- 74% used qualitative methods and/or used multiple methods;
- 80% depended on interviewing for data collection;
- 6% were book chapters;

- 15% were dissertations;
- 79% were published in peer-reviewed journals;
- 30% focused on the conditions affecting teacher leaders;
- 24% focused on teacher leaders' activities;
- 17% focused on evaluating teacher leader preparation programs; and
- 24% were studies occurring outside the United States.

RESULTS

Wenner and Campbell concluded that the findings from research on teacher leadership in this most recent decade parallel those of the previous two decades. A synthesis of the findings related to each research question follows.

► WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PRACTITIONERS

This review of research on teacher leadership may seem disappointing, yet rather than emphasize what the research fails to support, it identifies the areas that require careful attention from practitioners and researchers.

Practitioners who want to elevate the significance and visibility of their teacher leadership efforts have a responsibility for clearly defining teacher leadership, establishing its purpose and theoretical framework, creating the conditions and structures that support it (see *A Systemic Approach to Elevating Teacher Leadership*, Killion et al., 2016), preparing and supporting teacher leaders, and evaluating the effects of teacher leadership on teacher leaders, their colleagues, their school, school system, and communities, and their students.

In addition, since the most common role of teacher leaders is supporting the professional learning of their colleagues, it is imperative that teacher leaders understand and apply the Standards for Professional Learning (Learning

Forward, 2011) within their practice and for designing, implementing, and evaluating the professional learning that occurs within school.

This study also calls for thoughtful consideration of the preparation and continuous professional learning of teacher leaders as well as for engaging underrepresented teachers in leadership roles. All efforts to engage, prepare, and support teacher leaders and those who are responsible for supporting and supervising them are other opportunities for applying the Standards for Professional Learning.

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Definition of teacher leadership

Wenner and Campbell conclude that most research studies fail to adequately define the construct of teacher leadership and the theoretical frameworks upon which the studies are based. As a result, it is difficult to form consensus about what teacher leadership is.

Five themes emerged from the research related to the definition of teacher leadership.

They are: Teacher leadership goes beyond the classroom walls; teacher leaders should support the professional learning in their schools; teacher leaders should be involved in policy- and/or decision-making at some level; the ultimate goal of teacher leadership is improving student learning and success; and teacher leaders work toward improvement and change for the whole organization.

The lack of a common definition of teacher leadership and a common theoretical framework contribute to

confusion within both the research and practice. Wenner and Campbell note, “[T]his muddiness could lead to inconsistencies between the research literature on teacher leadership and local enactments of teacher leadership” (pp. 157-158).

Teacher leadership in different disciplinary contexts

More than a quarter of the studies focused on teacher leadership in the content areas, with the most studies in literacy/English, followed by math and then science. The number of studies in any one discipline makes it difficult, according to Wenner and Campbell, to form any conclusions about teacher leadership in different disciplines.

Further research, they note, on how the disciplinary idiosyncrasies especially related to ways of knowing influence the selection and work of teacher leaders, and how that work influences student learning in various disciplines.

Theoretical frameworks for research in teacher leadership

Thirty-three studies referred to at least one theoretical framework. The most common framework was distributed leadership, mentioned in 10 studies with democratic/constructivist leadership, structure, and agency, parallel leadership, transactional leadership, and communities of practice being other common theories identified. A total of 26 theoretical frameworks were identified in the 54 studies.

York-Barr and Duke noted the lack of a common theoretical framework guiding research on teacher leadership and proposed one for use. Only one study applied their framework. Wenner and Campbell conclude that the field of teacher leadership is *partially theoretical* and call on researchers to address this limitation. The lack of a common theoretical framework further confounds findings from the research on teacher leadership.

Effects of teacher leadership

Referring to their 2004 review, York-Barr and Duke said, “The literature is relatively rich with claims of the potential and desired effects of teacher leadership and relatively sparse with evidence of such effects, especially at the levels of classroom practice and student learning” (p. 282).

Wenner and Campbell concur. They find two primary areas of effects in the research. The first is on teacher leaders themselves, with four themes emerging: stress/difficulties as a teacher leader (9% of the studies), changing relationships with peers and administrators (15% of the studies), increased positive feelings (percent of studies not noted), and professional growth (percent of studies not noted).

The second area of effects of teacher leadership is on colleagues. The effects noted include a sense of empowerment and professionalism for all colleagues, contributions to professional growth and learning for colleagues, school improvement, and change in school culture.

No research in the body of literature reviewed examined the effects of teacher leadership on student learning, an evident omission especially given a common purpose for teacher leadership. Wenner and Campbell call on researchers, particularly in the current climate of increased accountability, to close this gap and acknowledge that the gap may affect policies related to teacher leadership.

Factors inhibiting and facilitating teacher leadership

Four themes emerged as inhibitors of teacher leadership: insufficient time, poor relationships with peers and administrators, climate and structural factors, and personal characteristics.

Many teacher leaders feel overwhelmed and struggle to find time with their teaching responsibilities.

Insufficient principal and peer support impede teacher leaders from fulfilling their responsibilities.

Insufficient trust, authority, autonomy, lack of appreciation, and resentful or resistant colleagues also complicate the work of teacher leaders. Climate and structural issues such as communication, vision, and resistance to change interfere with teacher leaders’ success. Lastly, teacher leaders who lack confidence, resist change, or are novice leaders often were not credible to their colleagues.

Facilitators of teacher leadership parallel the inhibitors. Facilitating factors include professional development in content, pedagogy, and leadership skills; participation in networks of other teacher leaders; sufficient resources; clear administrative support and encouragement; appropriate autonomy to make decisions; productive working environment including scheduling time, clear norms of trust, share leadership, risk-taking, and continuous learning; defined responsibilities and job descriptions; and compensation or recognition. In many cases, principals are responsible for establishing the facilitators of teacher leadership.

Teacher leadership’s relationship to issues of diversity and equity

Wenner and Campbell included this new question to respond to the changing demographics in schools and because they recognize how it influences who becomes teacher leaders and how those who assume leadership support the diverse populations of both teachers and students they serve.

Only five studies explored this question. They examined areas such as encouraging and studying teachers of color in leadership roles and raising teacher leaders’ critical consciousness to address social justice, equity, and equity through professional development.

Wenner and Campbell note, “[G]iven the current educational, social, and political contexts, it was surprising these were the *only* issues surrounding equity and diversity found in this collection of literature” (p. 156). They add, “Given the rapidly changing world of education as well as the populations found in schools, this manifests as an unacceptable oversight” (p. 159). In addition, it is surprising that there are so few studies focused on these crucial issues.

Many of the same challenges York-Barr and Duke noted in their review of the literature on teacher leadership persist more than a decade later. Many of the research recommendations they offered, note Wenner and Campbell, remain important gaps to close, especially with the increased focus on teacher leadership in school reform and teacher performance arenas.

They call for more focused research on a variety of areas, including effective models of teacher leadership, effects on student learning, clearer definitions, streamlined theoretical frameworks, and more attention to the role of teacher leaders in issues of diversity and equity.

LIMITATIONS

The limitations in this study result primarily from the literature available rather than the research methodology. While altering the search and review criteria may change the results, the consistency of criteria across the earlier and this current review add value to field in identifying what is known and what remains unconfirmed by empirical research.

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ESSENTIALS

■ PRINCIPAL SUPPORT

From Frenzied to Focused: How School Staffing Models Can Support Principals as Instructional Leaders

New America, June 2017

How can school systems make principals' roles more manageable while also ensuring that teachers are receiving the support they need to continue improving classroom instruction for their students?



This new paper from New America's PreK-12 Education Policy program explores approaches to solving this dilemma by examining three public school districts that employ promising, yet varied, "new school leadership" models with a goal of bolstering principals' ability to focus on instructional leadership, including supporting teachers' classroom practice.

The report offers key considerations for states and districts interested in rethinking their school staffing models to better support the needs of staff and students, including recommendations for how to fund and encourage effective work in this area.

www.newamerica.org/education-policy/policy-papers/frenzied-focused

■ BEST PRACTICES IN STATES

CheckStatePlans.org

Collaborative for Student Success & Bellwether Education Partners



The Collaborative for Student Success, in partnership with Bellwether Education Partners, released an analysis,

identifying best practices in the 17 state accountability plans that were submitted in April and May 2017 to the U.S. Department of Education.

The findings can be found on the website, CheckStatePlans.org, which provides in-depth information on how these plans advance educational opportunities for all students, and where some fall short.

CheckStatePlans.org highlights best practices in eight of nine categories, as well as an analysis of each state's plan, detailing the strengths and weaknesses of what each state submitted for formal approval under the Every Student Succeeds Act.

The site serves as a resource for states and stakeholders as they continue to improve their already-submitted plans as well as for states submitting plans during the September window.

<https://checkstateplans.org>

■ TEACHER COACHING

The Effect of Teacher Coaching on Instruction and Achievement: A Meta-Analysis of the Causal Evidence

Brown University, June 2017

The authors review the empirical literature on teacher coaching and conduct meta-analyses to estimate the mean effect of coaching on teachers' instructional practice and students' academic achievement.

Combining results across 44 studies that employ causal research designs, they find pooled effect sizes of .58 standard deviations (SD) on instruction and .15 SD on achievement. Much of this evidence comes from literacy coaching programs for prekindergarten and elementary school teachers.



Further analyses illustrate the challenges of taking coaching programs to scale.

They conclude by discussing ways to address scale-up implementation challenges and providing guidance for future causal studies.

<https://scholar.harvard.edu/mkraft/publications/effect-teacher-coaching-instruction-anhgdd-achievement-meta-analysis-causal>

■ EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Starting Strong 2017: Key OECD Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care

OECD Publishing, 2017

Having timely, reliable, and comparable international information is essential to help countries improve their early childhood education and care services and systems.



This report addresses the needs and interests of national and local policymakers and researchers interested in better understanding what is happening in early childhood education and care as well as national statisticians who collect and report education data to international organizations. The publication is a comprehensive and catalogued data source.

Among the challenges noted in the report is improving the working conditions and professional education of early childhood education and care staff and ensuring equitable access for all children to attend quality early childhood education and care, with a focus on children under the age of 3.

www.oecd.org/education/starting-strong-2017-9789264276116-en.htm

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FOCUS

RETHINKING EARLY EDUCATION

CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

"Professional learning is key to providing a quality early child education program. It is common for instructional leaders to be challenged with the responsibilities of providing job-embedded professional learning to their teaching staff. Early childhood educators are charged with the first steps of introducing academics to a young child and held accountable for the decisions made on children's behalf. This task is not an easy one."

A
FOUNDATION
OF LEARNING
p. **36**



BUILDING A BETTER PRESCHOOL

SPECIALIZED PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING IS KEY TO HIGH-QUALITY
EARLY EDUCATION

BY ERIC CELESTE

This quote from a report aimed at early education teachers seems ripped from today's headlines. "Early childhood education ...

is as dynamic and rapidly changing as any other field in human studies. It is increasingly difficult to stay abreast of new information because technological and ideological change is happening so rapidly. Recent attention has been given to early childhood education as a result of new investigations into the importance of preschool experiences, child welfare, and educational structures to support growth and learning."

It could have been written yesterday — but it wasn't. It's taken from a 2001 resource manual from U.S. Department of State titled *Early Childhood Assessment and Teacher Training* (Cobb, 2001). This shows that we've been talking about the unique aspects of professional learning for early education teachers for a long time, but many of the challenges are still largely the same.

First, even the highest-quality professional learning for 2nd grade

through 12th grade educators can differ in fundamental ways from high-quality professional learning for early education — especially if we expand the old pre-K through 2nd grade definition of early education to include ages 0 to 3 development.

And we should consider early education that broadly. That's why almost all early education experts now classify early education years as encompassing the ages of 0 to 8. This has only increased the need to differentiate professional learning between early education and traditional secondary schools.

"Traditional professional learning is grounded in the reality of working with children with more developed self-regulation skills, like the ability to sit in a seat and pay attention, as well as more developed brains," says Sadie Funk, executive director of First 3 Years, a Texas nonprofit that, over the past 35 years, has trained and mentored thousands of professionals in social-emotional care of infants and toddlers.

"Knowing that 80% of core brain development happens by age 3, and 90% by age 5, it's really important that

SNAPSHOT OF EARLY EDUCATION PROGRESS

According to the National Institute for Early Education Research out of Rutgers University, in 2002 only two states enrolled 50% of their 4-year-olds and just three served more than 30%. In 2015-16, three states and the District of Columbia served more than 70% of 4-year-olds, a figure not reached by any state in 2002, and 18 states and the District of Columbia served more than 30%.

"This remarkable progress," the institute concludes in *The State of Preschool 2016*, "largely reflects change in states that committed to offer every child a high-quality early education." For example: Iowa went from serving 4% of 4-year-olds to 64%. The disparity state by state still varies widely. As of 2015-16, seven states still offered no public pre-K program at all.

That a state wouldn't offer public pre-K is increasingly surprising, given the overwhelming research suggesting tremendous benefits to children, communities, and the states' economic fortunes. The Harvard Center on the Developing Child estimates that about 80% of brain development happens in the first three years of life, when 700 to 1,000 neural connections form every second. As well, gaps in this progress emerge between children from different backgrounds. Researchers from Stanford University found that, by age 2, children from low-income families can be six months behind their peers from high-income families in language processing skills and vocabulary (Clark, Lautzenheiser, McBride, & Puckett, 2017).

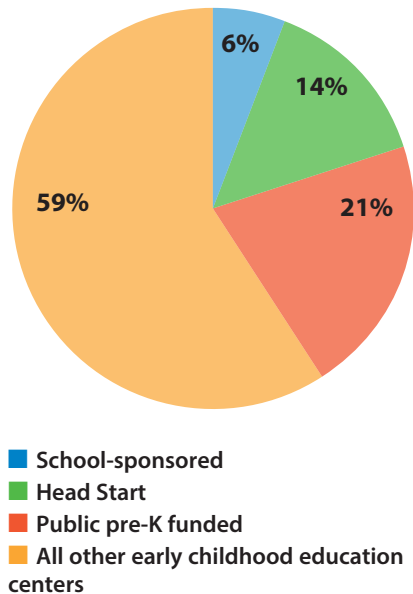
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FACTS ABOUT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

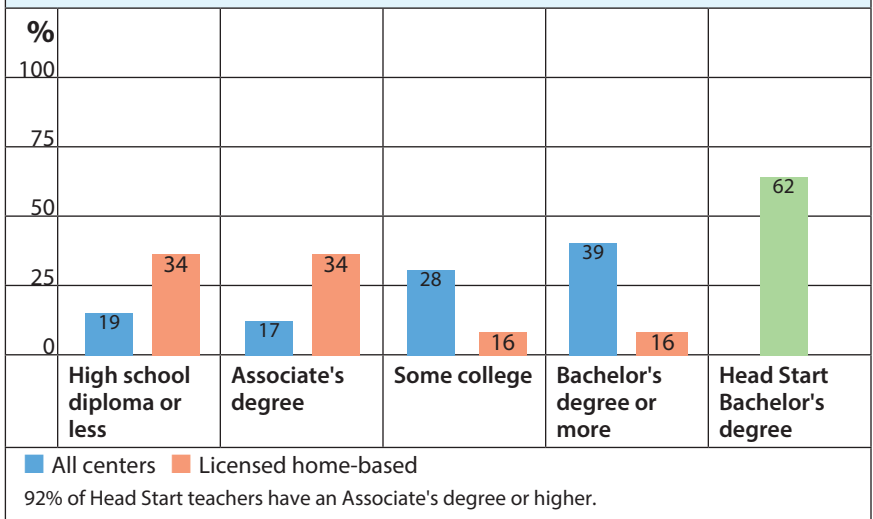
Early learning workforce by setting



Size of the workforce

An estimated 1 million teachers and caregivers working in center-based programs and an additional 3.8 million home-based teachers and caregivers with children from birth to kindergarten.

Degree attainment



early childhood education and ongoing professional learning focus on how the brain develops,” Funk says. “And knowing this, we must help teachers to support very young children — 0 to 5 years old — in developing a strong base for cognitive and literacy skills as well as emotional control. All of these things are necessary for children to do well in school.”

There’s a lot to unpack there, but doing so gives us an important window into two crucial challenges of professional learning for early education: teacher preparation and ongoing professional learning (especially keeping up with brain science and social-emotional research).

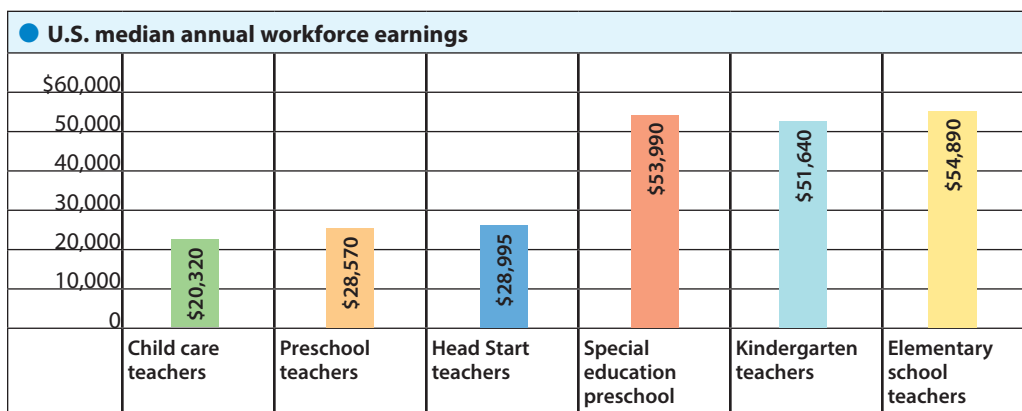
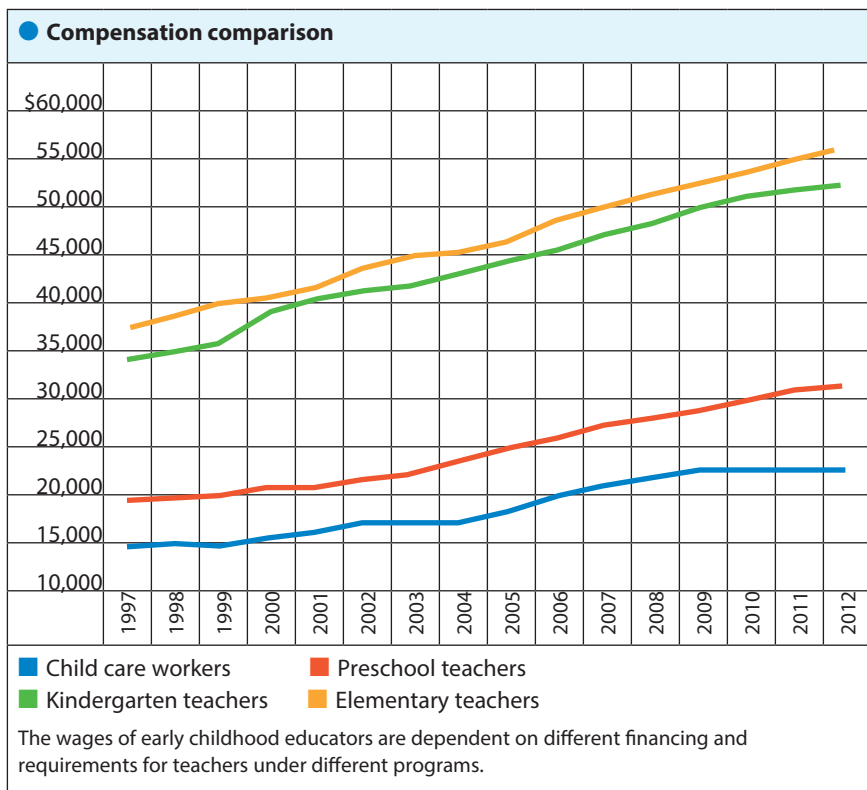
In fact, the premier early education advocacy organization in the country, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), says in its current policy paper that, for high-quality early education to exist outside of tiny islands

across the country, we must address these two problems and one more: disparity in early education teacher pay. To achieve widespread high-quality early education opportunities for all students, NAEYC says, “Early childhood professionals must have excellent preparation, ongoing professional development, and compensation commensurate with their qualifications and experience” (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2015).

What do we mean by high-quality early education? A simple but compelling case is made by Robert Lynch and Kavya Vaghul at the Washington Center for Equitable Growth in their report *The Benefits and Costs of Investing in Early Childhood Education* (Lynch & Vaghul, 2015). They, too, put professional learning and resources devoted to it as integral to a high-quality early education system. Lynch and Vaghul define a high-quality

pre-K program as having the following qualities:

- The program boasts low child-to-teacher ratios (10 to 1 or better), small class sizes (20 or fewer), and highly paid, well-qualified teachers and staff.
- Teachers are typically required to have at least a bachelor’s degree with a specialization in early childhood education, and classroom assistants usually have at least a child development associate’s degree or equivalent.
- Both teachers and assistants are encouraged and given opportunities to continue their professional development, and parental involvement in the education process is cultivated.
- The nature of teacher-child interactions tends to be warm, positive, supportive, and stimulating.
- The activities in the classroom



Source for all: Barnett, W.S., Friedman-Krauss, A. H., Weisenfeld, G.G., Horowitz, M., Kasmin, R., & Squires, J.H. (2017). *The state of preschool 2016: State preschool yearbook*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.

and the instructional materials vary with emphasis placed on quality instruction in a wide range of subjects, among them art, music, science, math, problem-solving, language development, and reasoning.

- From a programmatic side, high-quality preschools provide meals and offer health services (such as hearing, vision, and

psychological health screenings) for their students.

- All of these aspects of high-quality programs are upheld and improved through rigorous monitoring to ensure that quality standards are being met or exceeded (Lynch & Vaghul, 2015, pp. 22-23).

A year later, the Learning Policy Institute added support to these

suggestions in its policy brief *The Building Blocks of High-Quality Early Childhood Education Programs* (Wechsler, Melnick, Maier, & Bishop, 2016). Learning Policy Institute added to this list familiar school improvement criteria such as early learning standards and curricula that address the whole child; assessments that consider children’s academic, social-emotional, and physical progress; and a well-



How principals can create professional development opportunities specific to teaching young children

Excerpted with permission from *Taking Action: What Principals and Administrators Can Do To Ready Their Schools To Support Kindergarten Transitions* (Helsel & Gandhi, 2017).

1. Provide teachers and other appropriate staff with the opportunity to attend national, state, or local conferences focused on teaching young children.

The annual National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) conference provides multiple practitioner-friendly sessions regarding developmentally appropriate practice: www.naeyc.org/events.

NAEYC affiliates offer conferences as well. Check out this searchable directory: www.naeyc.org/affiliates/conferences.

2. Offer teachers and other staff the opportunity to participate in professional development that focuses on developmentally appropriate practice and the importance of play and movement.

It is important to provide professional development to ensure quality teaching of young children. Principals, other administrators, and teachers need to build their knowledge about what is age- and developmentally appropriate across the continuum, along with whole-child learning and how young children learn. NAEYC provides information about upcoming professional development opportunities, including opportunities for principals specifically, at www.naeyc.org/ecp.

Also consider job-embedded professional learning opportunities for teachers by engaging teachers in activities

that include development and review of case studies and observation of fellow teachers. Encourage teachers to participate in professional learning communities (PLCs). Ideas for creating a PLC are at www.edutopia.org/professional-learning-communities-collaboration-how-to. One particularly helpful approach is to provide professional development opportunities for preschool and kindergarten staff together, which fosters a shared understanding.

3. Use books and videos focused on developmentally appropriate practice as lower cost options for providing learning about teaching young children.

Sue Bredekamp discusses developmentally appropriate practice at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ny1u9a7-EJc.

NAEYC offers the DVD *Developmentally Appropriate Practice: A Focus on Intentionality and on Play*: www.naeyc.org/store/node/17110.

NAEYC also provides handouts on developmentally appropriate practice: www.imaginationplayground.com/images/content/2/9/2964/Developmentally-Appropriate-Practice-Play.pdf or www.naeyc.org/dap/10-effective-dap-teaching-strategies.

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Helsel, F.K.I. & Gandhi, E.V. (2017). *Taking action: What principals and administrators can do to ready their schools to support kindergarten transitions*. Portland, OR: Education Northwest.

TOOLS TO DOWNLOAD

Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches (Kauerz & Coffman, 2013) is a self-assessment tool designed to measure the depth of implementation and teacher teams as they align instruction across grade levels.

According to its authors, “this framework helps to address key questions facing those who are developing pre-K to 3rd-grade approaches in their school, districts, and communities.” It helps administrators, principals, and teachers answer questions such as:

- What does a comprehensive pre-K to 3rd grade approach include?
- The word “alignment” is used often, but what needs to be aligned?
- What kinds of changes need to take hold in adults’ behaviors before we can expect to see improvements in child outcomes?
- What kinds of responsibilities need to be shared among age 0 to 5 programs, grades K-3, families, and communities?



You can download the framework at http://depts.washington.edu/pthru3/PreK-3rd_Framework_Legal%20paper.pdf.

REFERENCE

Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. (2013). *Framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating preK-3rd grade approaches*. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington.

implemented state quality rating and improvement system.

The benefit of researchers and policy advocates campaigning for similar sets of high-quality criteria is beginning to resonate with policymakers and administrators, and the results are showing in the field, says Regen Fearon, executive director of Early Matters Dallas, an early education advocacy coalition of business, civic, and nonprofit organizations across Texas.

“Many organizations are partnering with other early education partners to share professional development resources because they’re able to agree on the outcomes desired,” Fearon says. “For example, Head Start is working with ISDs to host training sessions together. Same with Early Childhood Intervention [of Texas’ Health and Human Services department] with ECI

training districts on developmental delays. Four-year universities are bringing their research and science to bear in support of ISDs’ professional development.”

Fearon says colleagues from across the country are impressing her with the way in which they’re using teacher training and professional learning to meet high-quality early education standards. “Florida has a really strong online program focused on early childhood education,” she says. “They are heavily focused on communities of practice and coaching and believe in the reciprocity of the relationships they have with those in their program — for example, program developers are learning just as much from those using the teaching content and adjusting based on feedback, both positive and negative.

“They started by focusing on



THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF HIGH-QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION

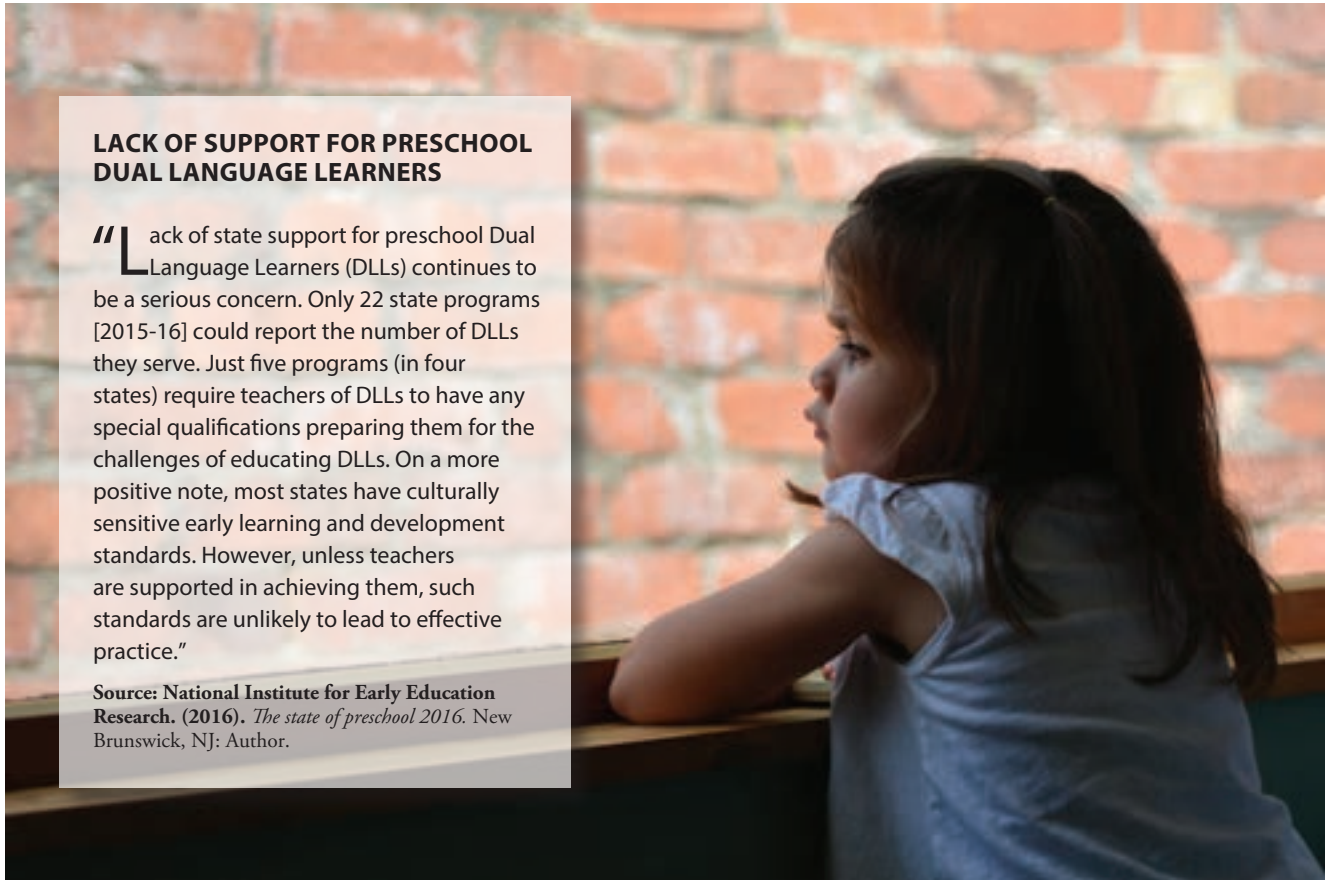
The list of high-quality early childhood education programs that have shown positive economic effects for children, communities, and states is considerable. These include (but aren’t limited to) the Abecedarian Project in North Carolina, the Perry Preschool Project in Michigan, and the Chicago Child-Parent Centers — each a long-term research project that has shown long-lasting positive outcomes for kids.

Researchers from the University of North Carolina have estimated that every \$1 spent on Abecedarian delivered \$2.50 worth of total benefits for society, as a result of higher incomes, reduced health care costs, and less need for public assistance (Lynch & Vaghul, 2015).

University of Chicago economist and Nobel laureate James Heckman has calculated that, for every \$1 spent on Perry Preschool, total benefits to society ranged from \$7 to \$10 in the form of increased lifetime earnings and reduced remedial education and welfare payments — what Heckman calls an “extremely high rate of return” (Lynch & Vaghul, 2015).

REFERENCE

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LACK OF SUPPORT FOR PRESCHOOL DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

“Lack of state support for preschool Dual Language Learners (DLLs) continues to be a serious concern. Only 22 state programs [2015-16] could report the number of DLLs they serve. Just five programs (in four states) require teachers of DLLs to have any special qualifications preparing them for the challenges of educating DLLs. On a more positive note, most states have culturally sensitive early learning and development standards. However, unless teachers are supported in achieving them, such standards are unlikely to lead to effective practice.”

Source: National Institute for Early Education Research. (2016). *The state of preschool 2016*. New Brunswick, NJ: Author.

developing the coaches and community of practice facilitators, so they could then handle the need among teachers,” Fearon says. “And it’s working. They’ve been able to show 52% improvement in teacher-child interactions and 43% improvement in teacher content knowledge.”

Professional learning programs are indeed showing results across the country. For example: Oregon’s Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation grant program, created in 2013, has disbursed millions of dollars for professional development through 16 early learning hubs across the state. According to *Connecting the Steps: State Strategies to Ease the Transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten* (Loewenberg, 2017), the grant program helps pay full-time pre-K to 3rd-grade coordinators in high-need urban areas and funds summer

programs that acclimate kindergartners to their new schools.

As we can see from the sidebars, charts, and quotes on these pages, though, there are still tremendous strides that must be made across the board — especially in fair compensation for early education professionals. It helps remind us that the pockets of progress being made across the country are indeed just the first steps toward a system of professional training, learning, and monitoring that can lead to improved outcomes for all students in early education.

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Standards Assessment Inventory

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Photo by CHRISTINA MILLER

Teachers Kendra Scarbough, foreground, and Jolie Carr work on early math and literacy concepts with prekindergarten students at AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School's Southwest campus in Washington, D.C.

A FOUNDATION OF LEARNING

D.C. PROGRAM ADDRESSES ACHIEVEMENT GAP FOR 3- AND 4-YEAR OLDS

BY NATASHA PARRILLA AND KELLY TRYGSTAD

Every teacher has experienced the achievement gap in his or her classroom at some point and not known what to do.

Instructional leaders face the challenge of supporting teachers to

close this gap, and a variety of research-based philosophies and strategies in the field address this challenge. AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation, a nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C., is working to close the achievement gap before children

enter kindergarten by providing 3- and 4-year-olds with the social, emotional, and academic foundations that enable them to thrive in school — and increasing educator effectiveness is a critical component of that.

There is a substantial academic

performance gap between children in economically disadvantaged communities and their more economically advantaged peers (Yoshikawa et al., 2013). Since the passage of the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Amendment Act of 2008, the District of Columbia has invested in early childhood, making the capital a national leader in access for early childhood education. A 2016 report from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education notes that 70% of 3-year-olds attend preschool and 84% of 4-year-olds attend prekindergarten. According to the report, 83% of these children are considered economically disadvantaged (District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education, 2017).

The district recognizes the majority of achievement gaps are in the urban areas of the national's capital, which is home to one of the widest and most persistent achievement gaps in America (Aud et al., 2010). To close this gap, children require access to a high-quality early education program that will provide a foundation of learning in order to be successful throughout their lives.

THE EVERY CHILD READY MODEL

Since 1996, AppleTree has focused on providing high-quality early education to children in underserved communities in the nation's capital. The goal is to strengthen student academic and social emotional skills, maximize teacher performance, provide



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Natasha Parrilla and Lauren Chisholm will present "Shifting Practices in Professional Learning" at Learning Forward's Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, Dec. 2-6, 2017. For more information: <https://conference.learningforward.org>.

collaboration opportunities, and cultivate teachers' and instructional leaders' pedagogical skills through a comprehensive instructional model called Every Child Ready, which AppleTree developed through an Investing in Innovation grant beginning in 2010.

Every Child Ready includes a three-pronged approach: what to teach (curriculum), how to teach (professional development), and how to know it's working (assessment and evaluation). Every Child Ready is implemented across nine local education agencies, 23 campuses, and 97 classrooms for nearly 2,300 3- and 4-year-olds in the Washington, D.C., area. Every Child Ready is also implemented in a New York City school in Harlem.

THE PROGRAM

Professional learning is key to providing a quality early child education program. It is common for instructional leaders to be challenged with the responsibilities of providing job-embedded professional learning to their teaching staff. Early childhood educators are charged with the first steps of introducing academics to a young child and held accountable for the decisions made on children's behalf.

This task is not an easy one.

Instructional leaders often lack necessary resources, have several classrooms to support, and are many times pulled away from coaching to attend to operational and logistical needs. This doesn't always leave time for high-quality coaching, and, when there is time to coach, instructional leaders aren't as prepared as they could be. The Every Child Ready professional development program seeks to solve this problem through the development of tools and resources for instructional leaders.

The Every Child Ready professional development program uses professional learning to strengthen instructional leadership, classroom quality, and student achievement for early childhood educators to provide a high-quality education to young children. These goals are aligned to the Leadership standard of Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning.

The Leadership standard calls for professional learning to increase educator effectiveness and results for all students and requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems (Learning Forward, 2011). Every Child Ready's professional development program



Photo by CHRISTINA MILLER

Prekindergarten students at AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School's Columbia Heights campus in Washington, D.C., pretend to be astronauts at a space station as part of a theme-based unit of the Every Child Ready curriculum.

consists of a comprehensive train-the-trainer gradual release model that includes instructional leader workshops, leadership meetings, and differentiated coaching supports.

- **Instructional leader workshops:** These workshops include a four-day institute where leaders are introduced to the Every Child Ready model, best practices in coaching, and support for data analysis and goal setting. The goal of these sessions is to empower instructional leaders as Every Child Ready experts so they are equipped to support teachers in implementing Every Child Ready at their schools. AppleTree's train-the-trainer approach allows instructional leaders to take the lead on professional learning

for their teachers to support sustainability in their own network.

- **Every Child Ready leadership meetings:** All instructional leaders are invited to attend these quarterly meetings. They are scheduled around student achievement progress monitoring windows to foster conversations about data and children's progress toward benchmarks. Leaders analyze data and identify trends, attend sessions that focus on target areas of need, and contribute to a community of practice by sharing best practices and strategies for teachers.
Niesha Cumberbatch, an instructional leader for AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School, says, "Reviewing

the data and the discussion on identifying specific student needs are helpful. I will apply the information about data to help teachers identify specific student needs and develop a plan for each student." These meetings highlight Learning Forward's Learning Communities standard, which focuses on learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment (Learning Forward, 2011).

- **Differentiated leader coaching:** Every Child Ready curriculum specialists work with instructional leaders to provide differentiated coaching to meet their identified needs. These supports include co-scoring observations, planning coaching

conversations, goal setting, analyzing data, and creating professional development workshops for their school based on student achievement and classroom quality data.

COACHING PROGRESSION

Every Child Ready instructional leaders use AppleTree’s coaching progression and dashboard to guide their coaching using a variety of observation tools and track their progress toward meeting their goals.

The coaching progression is a tool that instructional leaders use throughout the school year to provide job-embedded coaching to teachers and continuous development. It cultivates a culture of collaboration and data conversations between instructional leaders and teachers. The coaching progression supports Learning Forward’s Data standard to increase educator effectiveness and results for all students using a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning (Learning Forward, 2011).

The coaching progression is built on classroom tracks that outline how many hours of coaching classrooms receive and the coaching activities that should occur. (See table above.) Before the school year begins, classrooms are placed on one of four tracks based on the lead teachers’ years of experience teaching early childhood, classroom quality, and student achievement data from the previous year.

Classroom quality data are based on the Every Child Ready Quality Indicators, which is a tool used to measure classroom and instructional quality. The quality indicator is a valid and reliable tool that has shown a strong correlation with student achievement, especially in the area of literacy.

According to an independent data

EVERY CHILD READY COACHING PROGRESSION TRACK INFORMATION			
Classroom track	Coaching per year	Classroom coaching per week	Classroom coaching meeting
1	40 to 50 hours	One hour	One hour biweekly or 30 minutes weekly
2	30 to 40 hours	30 minutes	One hour biweekly or 30 minutes weekly
3	20 to 30 hours	30 minutes	30 minutes biweekly
4+	15 to 25 hours	15- to 25-minute targeted walk-through with immediate feedback	30 minutes biweekly or one hour monthly

SAMPLE EVERY CHILD READY ATTRIBUTE CHECKLIST: READ ALOUD	
Attribute	Observed?
Activate prior knowledge	
Advanced organizer	
Attention to print	
Informal or formal assessment	
Knowledge or recall questions	
Language support strategies	
Materials	
Multiple modalities	
Open-ended questions and prompts	
Repeated use of songs & activities	
Student expression	
Theme-related purpose/ activities	
Vocabulary	

analysis, the amount of coaching hours in the coaching progression was highly correlated with improving scores of students in the bottom quartile for language, literacy, and math. Coaching progression hours have also shown a positive correlation to key quality indicators in the quality indicator tool, including support for diverse learners, independent and guided practice opportunities, and direct instruction opportunities. This highlights Learning Forward’s Outcomes standard by showing an increase in educator

effectiveness and results for students (Learning Forward, 2011).

Using the coaching progression, instructional leaders plan differentiated coaching for teachers’ professional learning. Based on the teacher track, teachers are given an amount of coaching hours with their instructional leadership per year and per week. For instance, in track one classrooms, the first eight weeks of coaching target behavior management and baseline checklists focused on best practices that should be present in any high-quality preschool and pre-K program.

CHECKLISTS

Behavior checklists provide instructional leaders with the opportunity to support teachers in establishing rules, routines, and procedures in their classrooms from the beginning of the school year. These checklists are customizable for schools depending on the classroom management system they use. Every Child Ready curriculum specialists work with leaders to create one that aligns with Every Child Ready and the school’s needs.

The Every Child Ready attribute checklist above allows instructional leaders to determine if teachers understand the foundational best practices in early childhood education before digging into quality. As Erin Hinds, an Every Child Ready instructional leader, says, “These

checklists and supports allow me to target specific areas of growth, as well as highlight areas of strengths, for classrooms.”

The complete attribute checklist contains 28 attributes that are defined in detail for leaders to support classroom observations. Sherrell Lewis, a prekindergarten teacher from AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School, says that, during an Every Child Ready professional learning session, “I will be using the attribute checklist on what is developmentally appropriate to better assist my students in reaching social emotional goals dependent upon their individual needs.” There are also attribute checklists to support leaders in observing transitions and informal learning opportunities such as recess and meal times.

After the first eight weeks, the coaching progression allows instructional leaders to analyze the data collected and differentiate based on the needs of the teachers and children in the classroom.

Shontice McKenzie, an instructional leader for AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School, says, “The coaching dashboard is a great way to track progress and the new updates allow reports to be generated where observation tools are clustered.” Other tools in the coaching progression support classroom management and teacher-child relationships. The coach uses these to monitor progress and help the teacher set goals.

The coaching progression also supports implementation of the coaching cycle (preobservation, reflection and goal setting, and post-observation). The tools and resources in the coaching progression help support professional learning, as noted in Learning Forward’s Resources standard, to increase educator effectiveness and results for all students

SAMPLE COACHING DASHBOARD												
Month		Reflection activity										
		Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	Average	
Amount in progression Track 1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Amount in progression Track 2		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Amount in progression Track 3		1			1			1		1		
Amount in progression Track 4		1			1			1		1		
Class	Track											
1	1	9/30	10/27	11/18	12/16	1/31	2/10	3/9	4/12	5/2	100%	
2	2	9/30	10/29	11/18	12/16	1/19	2/10	10/27		5/20	88%	
3	1	9/29	10/5	11/16	12/14		2/8	10/27	4/25		78%	
4	3	10/5			10/27			10/27		5/16	100%	
Total											92%	

including prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning (Learning Forward, 2011).

COACHING DASHBOARD

Instructional leaders document all of the coaching activities in a customizable coaching dashboard. The dashboard holds all of the information they collect in one place, including data collected from observations, coaching meeting notes, and a tracker that allows them to easily see what coaching activities have been complete and what still needs to be done for the month.

The dashboard is created based on the classroom tracks and the coaching hours classrooms should receive. “I appreciate the coaching dashboard for a lot of reasons,” says Jessica Brewster, assistant principal at E.L. Haynes Public Charter School and an Every Child Ready instructional leader. “First and foremost, it helps me provide equitable support to teachers of similar need. It shows me where I’ve spent more time and helps me reflect on how

that may be impacting teacher success and therefore student achievement.”

The coaching dashboard is automated so that, once a task is completed for that month, it is marked as complete. This way, leaders can easily see what they have completed for each classroom and also see changes in data and improvement over time.

“Another reason I appreciate the dashboard,” Brewster says, “is that it houses all types of observations I might do within my early childhood classrooms so that I can keep information in one place instead of having multiple documents and tracking systems.”

The coaching dashboard keeps a running record of all observational data collected, reflection activities that occur to support teacher learning and what leaders and teachers discuss in their meetings, goals they have set, and next steps.

The table above is an example of what leaders see when they enter the coaching data into the dashboard.

Leaders are also able to see notes and pull up previous data they have entered to review with teachers and keep a running record of what they have coached on. The data in this table show the dates the reflection activities took place as well as the average occurrence of reflection activities overall for each classroom and for all classrooms. The cells will turn red if the data is not entered after the due date.

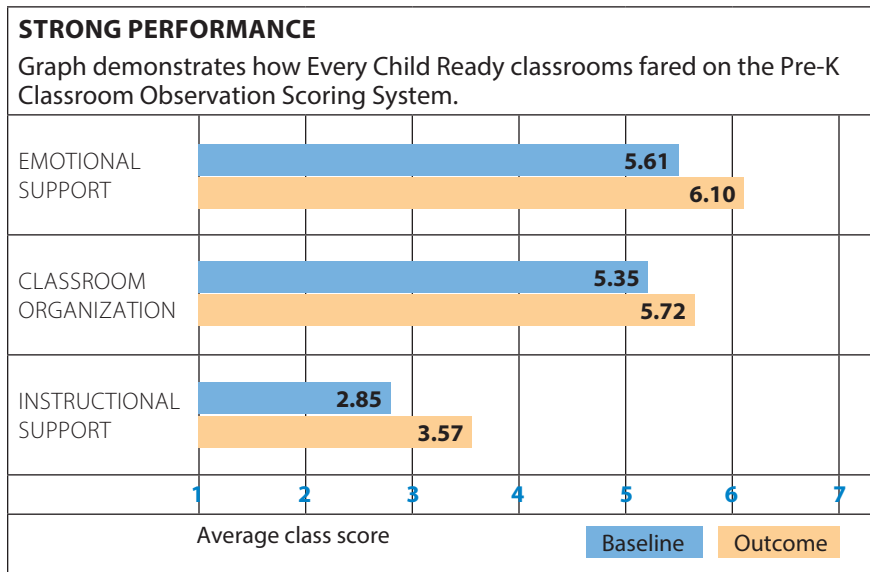
The Every Child Ready coaching progression and dashboard provide guidance to instructional leaders and accountability to support sustainable change within schools. AppleTree’s train-the-trainer approach to instructional leadership aligns with Learning Forward’s Implementation standard, which highlights the importance of increasing educator effectiveness and results for all students to have sustainable, long-term change (Learning Forward, 2011). The Every Child Ready professional development program aligns with Learning Forward’s approach to professional learning and supports the mission of helping early learners with the highest need.

OUTCOMES

The graph above demonstrates that, on average, classrooms implementing the full Every Child Ready instructional model demonstrated strong performance in all domains of the Pre-K Classroom Observation Scoring System (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008).

Further, Every Child Ready classrooms significantly outperformed other classrooms in the instructional support domain. Significant differences were present in each dimension of instructional support, including concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling.

Previous research in this area has found that differences of this size are associated with higher child outcomes (Burchinal, Vandergrift,



Pianta, & Mashburn, 2010). These positive outcomes suggest that a comprehensive instructional model can support teachers in quality instruction, an important step to closing the achievement gap.

Coaching teachers and leaders plays a big role in the success of the Every Child Ready model. “Having a team to reach out to makes this so much easier,” says Erin Hindes, instructional coach at AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School. “Sometimes an extra set of eyes or a specialist’s observation can either confirm your initial concerns or help quell them.”

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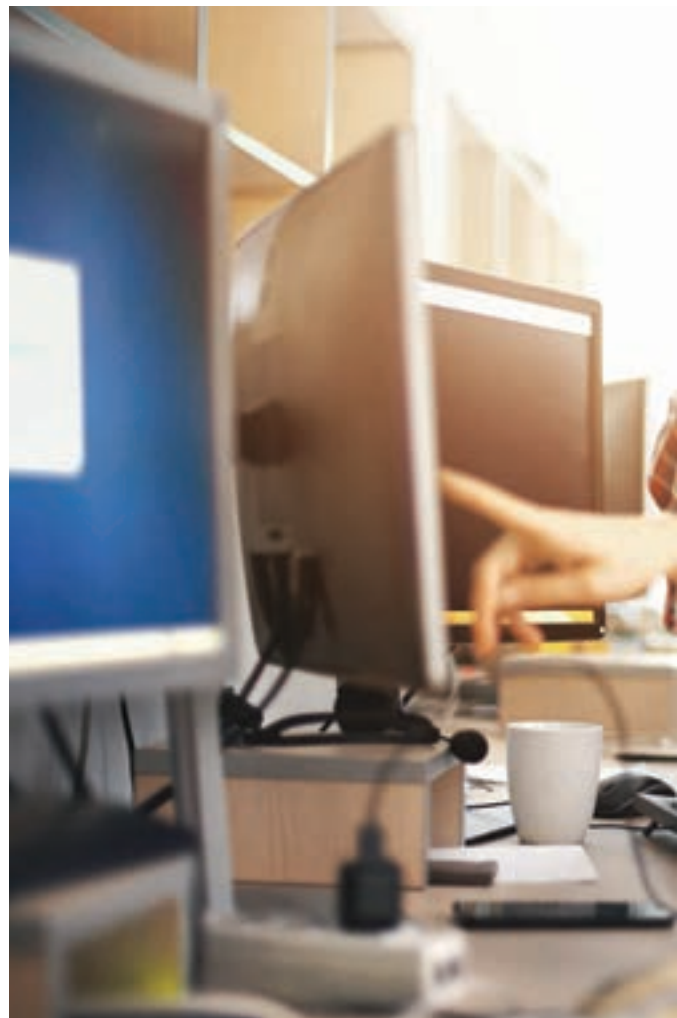
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TEACH, WATCH, LEARN

EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM
PAIRS COLLEGE COURSES
WITH VIDEO COACHING

BY ALAN COHEN



Pam is watching herself on video. It's something that is difficult for all of us, particularly so for Pam today. She is watching a recording of herself teaching a preschool class for the first time.

Pam is taking notes, and, in her initial reflections, she is tough on herself.

"I really need to ask more open-ended questions and wait for children's answers," Pam says. "I find that I will ask a question and then answer it for them. I feel I also need to use more words. I tend to use a lot of one-word comments, instead of explaining what is

happening or asking the children what is happening. I have a lot to learn. I really need to work on encouraging the children to think."

Her self-analysis continues. "I did not see much comparing or categorizing or making predictions. I did bring up that we saw butterflies in two different books and looked at them. I could have asked, 'How are they the same?' and 'How are they different?' But I didn't think to do that."

Seeing this critique leads Pam to a stark, important bit of self-discovery. "To be completely honest, I don't think I personally think critically enough myself. I don't think I was brought up

that way, so I have to work hard now to think to ask the children to think. I do see how wonderful it is to get them thinking. It opens up the world. It helps them learn and grow. I want to get better at it. I know I won't become perfect at it overnight, but I will be trying each day to improve."

Pam and her professor learned three important things from these reflections:

- Pam knows what quality interactions with young children should look like;
- Pam understands some intentional teaching strategies that can help her improve the quality of her instruction; and



- Pam has the growth mindset and passion for kids that promise to result in continuous improvement.

As she works on her bachelor's degree in early childhood education, Pam will record and reflect on her teaching many more times. Each video will be watched and critiqued by herself, her classmates, and her coach to ensure she's using best practices and maximizing every moment possible with children in a crucial phase of their development.

Pam is receiving college-credentialed training through the EarlyEdU Alliance, a collection of

courses and online tools led by the University of Washington and used by more than 50 colleges and universities. EarlyEdU aims to increase the quality of early childhood teacher preparation programs and make them more accessible and affordable for a workforce that needs more people and requires more of them.

"Higher education plays a critical role in improving the quality of pre-K for our nation's most vulnerable children," says Gail Joseph, associate professor of education and co-director of the University of Washington College of Education's National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning,

CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Through video coaching, EarlyEdU students not only get feedback on their own teaching but also grow in their ability to give constructive feedback to others.

TINA'S PEER-COMMENTING GROWTH OVER THREE MONTHS

Jan. 25, 2014

"I liked how the other boy was offering help and quietly started to help his friend sort. I also noticed him doing a lot of self-talking. Good work!"

April 25, 2014

"This is a good example of an engaging interaction. I like the way you asked her, 'How are we going to take care of our ponies?' She had some good ideas, and I liked how she got up and got the barn, too. You might want to show more matched affect when she gets happy or excited. Also it looks like the little boy in the video was trying to get involved. You might want to acknowledge the other things that are going around as well. I know it gets tricky when we are trying to film but try to make it as real as possible, even if you have to stop your conversation with the little girl to acknowledge the other children. Good job, thanks for sharing."

which developed EarlyEdU. “This means we must increase the quality of our college degree programs for early childhood education. To be the best possible child care providers and preschool teachers, our students need the latest science on how to optimize young children’s development and learning coupled with practice-based coaching.”

THE CURRENT EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE

Research shows that a child’s healthy growth and development hinges on high-quality and consistent caregivers and teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000). This demands a stable, highly skilled, and qualified workforce.

In response to the science, the federal Head Start program and a growing number of states now require early learning professionals, especially lead teachers, to have a college degree.

In the most recent National Survey of Early Care and Education (National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team, 2013), only 19% of center-based teachers and caregivers working with infants and toddlers and 45% of preschool teachers had a bachelor’s degree. More than 60% of providers working with infants and toddlers had “some college” or a “high school diploma or less.”

In 2015, the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council published the findings of the Committee on the Science of Children Birth to Age 8: Deepening and Broadening the Foundation for Success. The committee used the science of child development, including biology, environment, and the interactions between them, to frame the knowledge and competencies required by the early care and education workforce.

The report offers recommendations to policymakers and stakeholders



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- www.earlyedualliance.org
- The Coaching Companion on the Office of Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge website is a free version that is used by Head Start, Early Head Start, and Child Care specifically for professional development with coaches and teachers at all levels. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/professional-development/article/earlyedu-alliance>
- The University of Virginia also offers MyTeachingPartner, a similar professional development tool for teachers at all levels. <http://curry.virginia.edu/research/centers/castl/mtp>

charged with helping the early care and education workforce meet the needs of children and families. The report includes 13 recommendations related to qualification requirements, higher education and ongoing professional learning, evaluation and assessment

of professional practice, leadership, interprofessional practice, support for implementation, and improvement of knowledge base.

Based on the findings in this report, it is clearer than ever that, even among the small percentage of early childhood teachers who have degrees, many attended programs with a wide range of content, field experiences, faculty expertise, and institutional contexts. In short, not all degrees are alike, and too often they are not regarded as high quality (Whitebook et al., 2012).

So with such a critical need for increased scale and effectiveness of early learning training programs, many colleges and universities are beginning to turn to online courses and coaching that can deliver the essential elements of workforce effectiveness outlined by the National Research Council’s report.

CREATING A LEARNING COMMUNITY

EarlyEdU offers a series of courses that combine theory and the latest research with students’ field-based learning. Integrated into each course is

a video sharing and coaching feedback app called Coaching Companion.

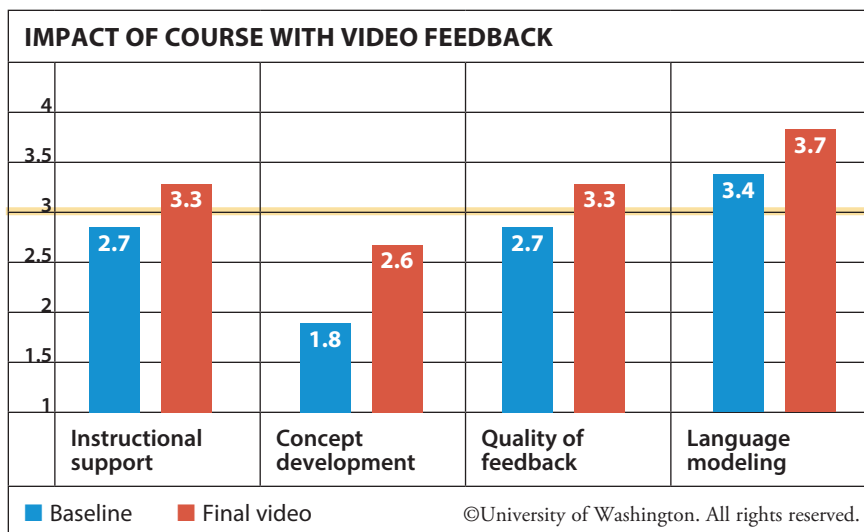
Here’s how it works:

- Students set up a camera in their classroom, then take what they learn in their college courses and apply it to their interactions with children.
- Students upload and share videos through Coaching Companion.
- Students reflect on what they learned, and their peers and professor provide insights and suggestions.

The tool gives students a chance to observe and evaluate their own teaching in the moment and over time. Professors can gain insights into an individual student’s — and the class’s — learning and practice as they provide feedback. The entire process builds not only camaraderie among a small group of teachers that don’t even have to live in the same state but also competence in evidence-based teaching practices and coaching skills for early learning professionals.

Sandy, a veteran child care provider who was enrolled in an EarlyEdU course, offered this reflection: “My group videos and comments have helped greatly in my learning to teach more effectively. As an in-home provider who, up until a few weeks ago, worked completely alone, the videos of seeing others teach has been a great tool for me. ... I appreciate that I can see outside of my own day care and preschool. I look forward to pushing myself further with each lesson. In a sense, it is not only me who has gone back to school. It is also my children that I teach and their families with whom I share every day.”

Most important, the improved reflections are translating into improved results. Teachers participating in EarlyEdU coursework and video-based coaching are seeing significant gains in



instructional effectiveness, including increased proficiency in concept development, quality of feedback given to children, and language modeling. The chart above illustrates the average improvement of classroom quality scores among teachers participating in EarlyEdU as measured by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), which is the primary quality measurement tool used by Head Start and widely cited in research used to gauge the quality of early learning programs.

As the early learning field grows, resources like EarlyEdU that combine classes and coaching will help colleges produce high-quality graduates who will provide the high-quality care and teaching children need to be ready for school.

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White House Photo by LAWRENCE JACKSON

PRESCHOOL *is* SCHOOL

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS NEED RELEVANT, COLLABORATIVE, AND ALIGNED LEARNING

BY ZEKE ALEJANDRO,
SARAH GARLAND,
SUZANNE KENNEDY,
AND
THOMAS VAN SOELEN

Early childhood centers and classrooms perpetually dance between being a *center* or a *school*. Perhaps it doesn't seem different in your mind, but it does to us. To many educators, the word *school* usually

presumes K-12 students. It often means the school is part of a larger entity, like a district or a school board. To parents, school might connote importance or deference to a teacher or principal. To students, the word school might yield a host of intriguing responses.

At left, President Barack Obama visits with head teacher Laura Park and children in a prekindergarten classroom at the College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center in Decatur, Georgia, Feb. 14, 2013.

Early childhood educators have learned to navigate between and among all of these assumptions, embracing the assumptions that advance their cause and distancing themselves from those that do not. For instance, using “infant teacher” instead of “day care worker” can produce an entirely new context from which to operate.

In terms of professional learning, early childhood educators are either lumped in with other elementary school teachers or left in their center. It is in those poignant moments when the inequity is clear between early learning and K-12 educators. Not only are early learning educators not considered first, they are often not considered at all, the result of a lack of knowledge surrounding early learning.

We have worked in and for the College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center in Decatur, Georgia, which opened in 2005. Serving 340 learners, 450 remain on a waitlist. When President Barack Obama announced universal early childhood learning, he came to Georgia, which has offered two decades of lottery-funded prekindergarten. Georgia Bright from the Start, the agency that oversees early learning, chose College Heights as the model early learning center for

President Obama to visit.

Although that attention was certainly exciting and inspiring, it also gave us a unique vantage point on our own work. As politicians, reporters, interested community members, and even our own parents joined us in celebrating this honor, we realized assumptions are rampant when it comes to early learning. In this article, we identify four assumptions with connections to professional learning. We contend early childhood educators in high-quality centers deserve the same high-quality professional learning as their K-12 counterparts.

ASSUMPTION 1 **Early childhood educators really have what they need in terms of knowledge and strategy.**

Early learning has been plagued by its own context: primarily a female-dominated, low-paying, seemingly relaxed environment. This context plays a role when limited time and resources are expended on education: K-12 usually receives the preference.

For instance, when states began to identify curriculum and learning outcomes for each grade level and subject area, early learning watched from the sidelines. Often, years later, the same

COLLEGE HEIGHTS EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING CENTER

Decatur, Georgia
<http://eclc.csdecatur.net>

340 learners, ages 6 weeks to prekindergarten

72 employees, 78% classified, 22% certified

Opened in **2005**

FUNDING SOURCES:

- **Prekindergarten:** state lottery
- **Preschool special education:** federal funds
- **Birth-to-preschool classes:** tuition paid by parents
- Some tuition slots paid via the Decatur Education Foundation
- Early Head Start for age 2
- Head Start for ages 3 and 4

For more history of the center, see Van Soelen (2012a).

process is replicated for young learners. Georgia experienced this phenomenon in creating the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards.

In K-12 settings, it is becoming more commonplace for groups of educators to examine their standards, unpacking, deconstructing, or some other similar verb meaning to take apart. However, early learning educators don't always take the time to deeply unpack standards. Because their resources are

often not of similar quality to K-12 educators, early childhood educators are often left to their own devices to define what this standard means and what kind of sample student tasks would meet the rigor of the standard.

The College Heights center did not want to leave this to chance. Groups of teachers, along with Zeke Alejandro, the instructional coach, analyzed the standards and created developmental instructional calendars for the infant, toddler, preschool, and prekindergarten classrooms.

In weekly collaborative planning teams, teachers looked at sample performance tasks Alejandro gathered, practicing them with appropriate materials to better understand what was being expected of the learners. On any given Thursday afternoon, teachers of 2-year-olds gather in Alejandro's office to experiment with materials, learning targets, and concept integration.

Even this clear modeling is not always enough. As leaders, we still see what we call "pitching problems": adults presenting the content either too high or too low. The collaborative planning teams become the vehicle for increasing teachers' pitching prowess. We discovered the gap is less about content and pedagogy; instead, it was more about their pedagogical content knowledge.

To ameliorate the gap between desired and current pitching levels, two lenses are always applied in all collaborative learning experiences: inquiry and oral language development. As part of their professional learning, adults at the College Heights center orally rehearse together, practicing the exact language needed to layer language in young learners. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System observation tool, used as program evaluation, calls this teacher sensitivity: how the adults respond to what students are saying and doing.



ASSUMPTION 2 **Early childhood educators don't need to collaborate with others.**

The best prekindergarten teacher is often the only one, too. The lone prekindergarten class is often a singleton in a public elementary school. At private early learning centers, singletons often exist as well: one infant teacher, one toddler, one preschool, perhaps one prekindergarten. At publicly funded institutions, there may be one Early Head Start room or one Head Start room.

At the College Heights center, historical markers helped increase collaboration. For the first five years of its existence, the Decatur-DeKalb YMCA administered the birth-to-age-3 programs. In 2010, the City Schools of Decatur and the YMCA amicably ended their partnership, and the school

district assumed responsibility of the birth-to-age-3 programs. Free of any artificial or real barriers, the building now became one center with one vision.

Around the same time, the center was developing a stronger relationship with the Head Start provider in the area. After months of negotiating, the center began blending Head Start-funded students. Instead of one single classroom of 17 students funded by Head Start, these 17 students would be dispersed across the four preschool classrooms.

The professional learning impact of this integration was profound. Before 2010, the center constantly danced between four sets of requirements and standards: Head Start, YMCA, Georgia, and the school district. Now one document provided consistent expectations: a crosswalk among Head Start, Georgia, and the district.



White House Photo by PETE SOUZA
Principal Suzanne Kennedy explains the curriculum at College Heights to President Barack Obama. Zeke Alejandro, instructional coach, and Sarah Garland, early childhood specialist, co-facilitated the school tour.

Seeing the College Heights center in this light was certainly a culture shift. Some staff members had been using the different divisions as excuses not to collaborate with others. Similar to hierarchies that can emerge in other elementary, middle, or high schools, the College Heights center was not immune. One common professional learning plan was a significant intervention toward changing that mindset.

One example of this transition is a seasoned prekindergarten teacher who had taught in the school district for many years.

When the College Heights center opened and six prekindergarten

classrooms came together as one, conflict was bound to occur. This teacher was bombarded with new learning: being on a curriculum planning team for the first time, receiving feedback from observers who really knew early learning, and experiencing professional learning that questioned some of her deeply held assumptions.

However, the context played a vital role, too. It is hard to be a lone wolf when a school functions as the kind of professional community Kruse, Louis, and Bryk first documented in 1994 (Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1994). Additionally, the City Schools of Decatur implemented a new teacher evaluation system. To achieve the highest rating, we needed to document impact outside the classroom. This teacher took this challenge to heart, and, at times, we engaged in some tough conversations.

Ten years later, she still teaches young learners but now is a teacher leader. She co-facilitates professional learning with Alejandro. In fact, all professional learning is now co-planned with teacher input. She also serves as a peer coach, welcomed by others into their classrooms.

ASSUMPTION 3 **Early learning educators only need mandatory trainings (e.g. CPR, first aid, EpiPen).**

It must have been foreshadowing, although none of us knew it: Thomas Van Soelen, then associate superintendent of City Schools of Decatur, asked Suzanne Kennedy at her principal interview in 2005, “If you were hired, what would professional development look like in this building? Same for everyone or not?” Kennedy’s answer came to fruition: “Every adult who interacts with kids needs to be developed.”

After several years of traditional, whole-group professional learning, the

College Heights center has evolved into a comprehensive model that offers a variety of differentiated professional learning opportunities. In addition to the collaborative team meetings, where teacher-designed professional learning occurs, three other learning designs exist: peer observation, live peer coaching, and instructional coaching.

The center began using peer observation in 2009. At that time, with a new Georgia teacher observation tool, the teachers and Alejandro began observing in each other’s classroom. Although the new evaluation tool was in their hands, it was on pink paper, which signified that the adults were in classrooms for their own learning, not to evaluate the teacher.

After being in the classroom for less than 10 minutes, the teacher and Alejandro would quietly excuse themselves and debrief in the hall, focused on what the observers learned. Quickly dubbed “pinking,” the practice continues to this day. However, now a teacher may “pink” by herself and then a debrief occurs between the observed and the observer. By removing the administration, “pinking” has continued to build capacity among the teachers, particularly the classified staff.

Live peer coaching came to the center through a partnership with the Marcus Autism Center in Atlanta. A not-for-profit subsidiary of Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, the Marcus Center treats children with autism and related disorders. More recently, the Marcus Center has expanded its outreach program, providing professional development to schools. With a growing number of students with disabilities, particularly autism, College Heights began to work with the Marcus Center in 2014. A learner engagement observation tool called Social Emotional Engagement-Knowledge and Skills is used in early childhood rooms.

In this model, a Marcus Center coach comes to an early learning center, providing direct coaching services to teachers. At the end of the first year, the coach begins to gradually release responsibility, beginning to train some teachers to be live peer coaches. At the end of the second year, the external coach becomes a consultant of the process.

One teacher of 2-year-olds is an example of someone who benefited from this professional learning design. Having earned an associate's degree in an unrelated field, this teacher desired to grow in her ability to use these strategies and increase the engagement of the young learners in her room. After requesting to participate in live peer coaching, two of her colleagues came to her room to observe her interactions with children.

After a 20-minute observation, the observers and the teacher left the classroom to debrief. The team began with successes — what's going well. Through reflection and collaboration, the team formulated agreements to design next steps to increase the children's emotional investment. This peer coaching cycle occurs three times over the course of the year. When this teacher was later observed using the two observation tools, all areas increased.

The final model of support involves a formative coaching cycle with a teacher and Alejandro. This may include modeling, co-planning, co-teaching, and other learning designs.

ASSUMPTION 4
It's a waste of energy to align the work of early childhood classrooms to K-12 systems. It is best to leave them alone.

The very act of creating an early childhood center, devoid of any K-12 grade levels, seems to lend credence to this assumption. However, the physical presence of an early learning building does not need to indicate a separation;

instead, it could denote an area of focus.

Preparing for an accreditation visit from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools gave us an opportunity for district alignment. In the first six years of its history, the College Heights center did not have a school improvement plan. In 2009, the center developed its first school improvement plan and has since been accredited by the state of Georgia, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and AdvancED.

One accolade the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation team identified was the cross-school teacher evaluation process called Standards-Seeking Visits (Van Soelen, 2012b). In a district with just eight principals, Kennedy's voice at the table was vital.

She insisted the College Heights center would be part of the Teacher Quality Initiative, which included a cross-school teacher evaluation process. For the first time, leaders from across the district came to our center. District leaders partnered with each other to craft written feedback to classroom teachers (Van Soelen, 2016) — an important step toward realizing a birth-grade 12 district.

Each of the district's K-12 schools had an instructional coach, and the coaches met monthly as a team to align their efforts. When Alejandro was hired as the College Heights center's instructional coach, it was a significant win for the school and for early learning. For the first time, an early learning educator had a voice at the table. Now there was no question that the center would participate in districtwide initiatives.

When the district sought to improve school practices surrounding Response to Intervention, the College Heights center led the way and has been recognized at the state level for its exemplary Response to Intervention

process and success in serving students at each tier.

MORE THAN DAY CARE

Assumptions abound when it comes to early learning. The unknowns of early childhood classrooms and centers cause inferences that are often incorrect. When it comes to professional learning, adults who work in early childhood settings need just what other educators need: relevant, collaborative, and aligned experiences.

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Reach. Investigate. Discover.

IDEAS

CREATING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Traditionally, the back-to-school planning meeting in Clear Creek Independent School District in Texas ended with 44 principals working independently and possibly in 44 directions. After joining the Galveston County Learning Leaders initiative and creating learning communities for principals, it ended with 12 communities of practice tightly bound by a shared problem of practice.

Principal communities of practice inspire learning in Texas district

p. **58**



UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF AGENCY

NEW TEACHER
INDUCTION
PROGRAM
EMPOWERS
EDUCATOR-
CENTERED
GROWTH

BY JULIET CORRELL

Kayla Long, a first-year teacher, greets every student at the door with a smile and a handshake. Students enter the room reading the clear expectations on the board to get started — and they do. In the rare case that a student does not, peers take a leadership role and respectfully remind.

After the bell rings, Long enters the room and acknowledges students who are doing what they are supposed to do. “Savannah, I like that you have your device out and are logging into the quiz tool for the warm-up. Kyle, I notice that you and your team are talking about your next steps for the project. Isabella, I appreciate that you are working with your group to solve that problem. Jennifer, thank you for taking ownership for your team’s learning and getting out a device for everyone. Richard, great job of moving to the next step without being asked.”

Later, students demonstrate their understanding on sticky notes, check their perceptions with others, and provide peer assistance to support each other in this safe learning environment.

Individual and collective student agency permeate the room: the ability to make choices about and take an active role in setting their own learning course and adjusting, as needed, to reflect individual identities,

competencies, knowledge and skills, mindsets, and values. Together, the class demonstrates collective agency.

Like the agency that she has cultivated with her students, Long also has developed teacher agency. Long teaches 7th-grade English language arts at Young Junior High in the Arlington Independent School District in Texas. She participates in ongoing learning in a variety of ways. She collaborates formally and informally with other beginning teachers through professional learning communities (PLCs) and is a member of the district’s teacher academy, New Teacher Induction Program, a comprehensive approach to professional learning for beginning educators.



Kayla Long

The New Teacher Induction Program began last September and included a fall orientation session where new educators envisioned the ideal student learning environment and, using a graphic organizer to capture their thinking, backmapped specific steps required to achieve the ideal. This was the initial opportunity for Long and other new teachers to exercise agency through personal vision.

After exploring elements of the ideal classroom through collaborative conversations and identifying observed

NEW TERMINOLOGY

Silothargy

[si-LO-thar-gy] noun

- The undesired state where there is individual agency within silos.
- The opposite of EDUgency or interdependent system agency.

EDUgency

[ED-u-gency] noun

- The desired state of interdependent system agency, collective efficacy.

Source: Shannon Terry, Arlington Independent School District

gaps between current reality and the ideal state, teachers crafted a personalized professional learning plan to bridge the gap. From this exercise, preliminary problems of practice emerged from the group.

They identified eight professional learning strands that would guide their work over the course of the induction year. From September to April, the new teachers attended to their problems of practice during the new teacher professional learning sessions.

With 24 professional learning sessions comprising the New Teacher

IDEAS

Induction Program for the 2016-17 school year, individual agency around each educator's problem of practice would fuel their participation and direct their paths. A culture of inquiry, intentionality, and responsiveness to priority needs developed, serving as the catalyst for accelerating progress toward creating the ideal learning environment.

The focus of the New Teacher Induction Program is on individual teacher choice, not about what the professional learning department determines as teacher needs. This approach models the expectations for how teachers will facilitate learning for students. They have experienced that firsthand and then transferred that agency into their instructional practice.

"It was very welcoming to have a voice so early on," Long said. "I expect this trend to continue and grow, and I'm eager for it."

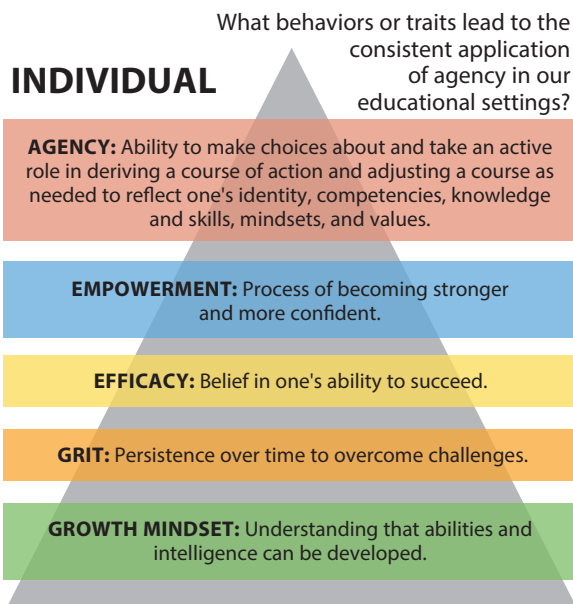
The Arlington district promotes several behaviors with intention across the system to foster a culture of agency. These traits include a growth mindset, grit, efficacy, and empowerment. (See diagram above.) Kelly Hastings,



Kelly Hastings

principal at Young Junior High, and her colleagues believe that individual agency is essential for creating collective efficacy within the school and larger organizational climate.

Long says that, to advocate for students, it is imperative that she has a voice as a teacher. "I have learned that when I am allowed to speak up, I am heard, and it really helps me with my students as a PBL (problem-based learning) teacher. I want my students to take control of their own learning. That



is a tool that they will keep through adulthood." It starts with the teacher.

Long says that her students seem to care more about their learning because they have voice and choice, and she can better meet their needs by providing them with a setting where they can advocate for themselves. It only makes sense for administrators to do the same for teachers, working backward.

SEEKING COHERENCE

With 75 schools located between Fort Worth and Dallas, Arlington ISD is a district with the ambitious goal that 100% of students will graduate prepared for college, career, and citizenship. For the district, the New Teacher Induction Program is a vehicle to foster individual agency for each teacher and empower educator-centered growth, intentionally modeling the same kind of learning designs that teachers apply with students in their classrooms.

The district seeks enhanced coherence around professional learning across the system, from teacher and principal leadership and learning to the central office and the larger community, to achieve collective efficacy and improve

outcomes for students. The concept of agency has gained significant interest in recent years. For the Arlington district, it's about taking ownership in numerous ways and encouraging autonomy balanced with a responsibility to facilitate peer learning, a process that fosters one's own growth as well.

Agency also involves responsiveness in interactions that span the district, as Shannon Terry, the district's director for professional learning, describes. "Teacher agency is multifaceted," Terry says. "When the teacher is exercising agency, the educator is attending to the priority needs

presented in the learning environment — whether it is student-focused, peer-related, or involves interactions with different constituencies, such as support staff, administrators, central office, parents, or community members. Teacher agency is taking ownership of the learning based on the needs being presented. Teacher agency invites growing yourself and growing others with priority assigned to students."



Shannon Terry

Teacher agency promotes student agency. The transformation happens when teachers exercise agency and they "reach to teach and teach to reach." Terry describes that reaching as the act of exercising agency and teaching to reach is modeling for students what agency looks like, so that students begin to reach, too.

BUILDING AGENCY

Before their work with the Learning Forward Academy, Hastings and Terry knew intuitively — and it was reflected in their early research — that working

with novice teachers, encouraging peer support, and immersing all learners (teachers, leaders, and students) in developing individual and system agency would positively impact teacher practice and student learning. The question was how to do that effectively and equitably.

In her building, Hastings says that instructional leaders visited classrooms and observed instruction, and faculty meetings focused on formal professional learning, but she sensed that there were additional needs for informal goal-driven learning, facilitated by peer support, and that this widespread change had to be led by the teachers exercising agency, not through principal direction.

Terry says she observed pockets of success around the district from individuals exercising agency at different levels and across different roles, but it was happening in silos. She and Hastings coined the term “silothargy” to describe this culture.

Hastings and Terry applied separately for Learning Forward Academy scholarships from the Learning Forward Foundation to support their professional learning, but as they looked more deeply at each other’s interests and topics, it was clear that their problems of practice complemented and supported one another. The common thread was a focus on moving beyond individual efficacy to generating collective efficacy through system agency or, as Terry calls it, “EDUgency.”

CONNECTING THE SILOS

Striving for coherence across professional learning efforts at the district and campus has been a core element of the New Teacher Induction Program and professional learning in general. Hastings and Terry have constructed a shared understanding of how to move from silothargy to EDUgency, and they work at each level

THE LEARNING FORWARD ACADEMY EXPERIENCE

The learning design of the Learning Forward Academy, including a structured learning process and clear accountability measures, has encouraged Kelly Hastings and Shannon Terry to meet and work on creating EDUgency together. The Academy has also offered tools and supported skill development to advance these efforts. In particular, the IC maps and cross-district collaboration have been applicable for the work at Arlington ISD.

“The Learning Forward Academy has connected dots for people like Kelly and me,” Terry says.

Hastings agrees. “The brilliance in the room is pretty cool when we get together.”

The Learning Forward Academy is an extended and profound learning experience that immerses members in a model of inquiry- and problem-based learning. Academy members work collaboratively to gain knowledge to solve significant student learning problems in their schools, districts, or organizations.

To learn more about the Academy or to apply: www.learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/academy.

to break down barriers between silos.

The Learning Forward Academy experience has furthered collaboration between the building and system to help connect the silos. Regular reflection and feedback loops that are embedded in the Academy process have sparked timely enhancements to the New Teacher Induction Program in ways that were much more responsive than in the past.

Terry refers to the constant stream of

information and learning back and forth between the implementers (principals and staff) and the designers (central office team) as “agency wavelengths” that calibrate and enhance the work.

During this process, Hastings realized a desire and need to broaden her sphere of influence beyond Young Junior High, and she has done that in several ways that have deepened her leadership capabilities and the connection between her building and the central office, including serving as a member of the district’s Professional Learning Advisory Council as a principal representative and being one of only seven campuses selected to implement the new AISD Active Learning Cycle.

To move more deeply into systemwide EDUgency, Hastings and a colleague sponsored a viewing of the 2015 documentary film *Most Likely to Succeed*, inviting central office administrators and representatives from the university to participate and jointly consider with building principals the implications for fostering agency and effective practice.

DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL AGENCY

As an active learner in the New Teacher Induction Program, Long participated in a systematic learning design that included:

- Setting goals to ground the work;
- Identifying problems of practice;
- Selecting high-priority areas of need;
- Deepening knowledge through targeted, goal-aligned professional learning;
- Applying new learning to enhance practice; and
- Collaboratively reflecting on outcomes.

The process emphasized developing

individual agency, empowering educators through ownership, choice, and flexibility, and enabling them to make course corrections in their learning and instructional practice based on personal context.

The individual agency Long and other first-year teachers exercised was reciprocated by district leaders, who exercised agency in response to the teachers' problems of practice. This complementary process allowed new teachers to engage in and apply timely and relevant professional learning aligned to their most pressing student-focused needs. With that model in mind, Long felt empowered to champion agency with her students.

FOSTERING COLLECTIVE EDUGENCY

The New Teacher Induction Program has amassed widespread leadership commitment across the system and has been empowering and transformational, especially given the size and complexity of the district. Leadership support was evidenced by principals' engagement in talking about the concept of collective teacher efficacy and then problem solving on how to generate deeper buy-in from teachers and implementing the changes that the principal team generated.

The Young Junior High leadership team actively participated in its own professional learning, focused on enhancing the effectiveness of PLCs and providing teachers with a larger leadership role within their teams.

Hastings assures teachers in her building that they have the answers and that together they can reveal or generate them through focused, team-based conversations. Over the last year, as an outgrowth of her own professional learning through the Learning Forward Academy, Hastings has emphasized transparency and being explicit about what her staff is doing as adult learners

THE LEARNING FORWARD FOUNDATION AT WORK

Principal Kelly Hastings is participating in the Learning Forward Academy, funded through the 2016 Principal as Leader of Professional Learning Scholarship provided by the Learning Forward Foundation.

Shannon Terry, director of professional learning, is the recipient of the 2016 Patsy Hochman Scholarship recipient for the Learning Forward Academy. Her problem of practice describes the theory of change that underlies her joint work with Hastings:

"Creating a strong culture of collaboration and collective responsibility for the provision of sustained, job-embedded professional learning that supports teacher agency and the attainment of student, teacher, campus and district performance goals through the design, development, articulation,

implementation, and stewardship of a dedicated community of practice comprised of partner departments responsible for leading professional learning impacting first-year teachers in 2016-17, experienced teachers in 2017-18, and instructional leaders in 2018-19."

The Learning Forward Foundation supports the development of educators' capacity to improve student learning through innovation and improvement that transforms professional learning, framed by Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning and implemented with a coherent design through grants, scholarships, and professional support. The foundation's vision is to educate, innovate, and transform educator professional learning.

To learn more about the foundation or apply for a scholarship or grant: www.learningforward.org/foundation.

and why. This includes teachers in the New Teacher Induction Program and the team as a whole.

Enhanced teacher agency is mitigating inequities and fostering educator and student-centered learning by ensuring that reciprocal teaching and learning occur between educator and student. Both teacher and student are elevating outcomes by becoming interconnected in the learning through tightly aligned, calibrated, and self-directed agency. Equity results as barriers are removed because of teacher agency aligning to (or being responsive to) student agency. Teachers need to be empowered before students can be, and this shared agency and collective efficacy is visible across the Young campus.

Teachers at Young strive to meet the school mission: "Teach, guide, and support all students to achieve academic and social success, as well as develop and

demonstrate respect for self and others." Students learned and applied future-ready skills (autonomy, collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, growth mindset, and professional ethics). Students began taking more ownership of their learning by reflecting using student tracking tools. Teachers realized they needed more tools to support the academic success of all students and started talking about learning more about differentiation. As a result, that is the focus for professional learning in 2017-18.

From Terry's view at the system level, she has incorporated the building blocks of individual agency throughout the implementation of the New Teacher Induction Program, including fostering a growth mindset, offering concrete opportunities for teachers to develop and measure grit, using a quantifiable scale, and developing

efficacy, ultimately empowering educators and resulting in agency.

MONITORING PROGRESS

Like any mission worth undertaking, this journey has changed and evolved. Hastings and Terry view this as a work in progress — an ongoing learning opportunity for them as individuals and as a team. They monitor the effectiveness of the learning designs for the New Teacher Induction Program and assess efforts to align campus-based and district structures to support agency and leadership. They recognize that teacher education and teacher leadership are a complex set of interconnected systems.

To determine if this approach is successful, educators on the Young Leadership team are using Innovation Configuration (IC) maps to self-assess their level of proficiency on the Learning Communities and Leadership standards of Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011).

They determined their areas for growth, shared with the other teachers in their PLCs, and they’re using the IC maps to gauge and document progress. Teachers say they feel a positive and strong sense of agency, fostered by the central office. By observing PLCs, Hastings can see that teachers are talking about how they can offer more agency to their students, scaffolding their agency, and are releasing some control.

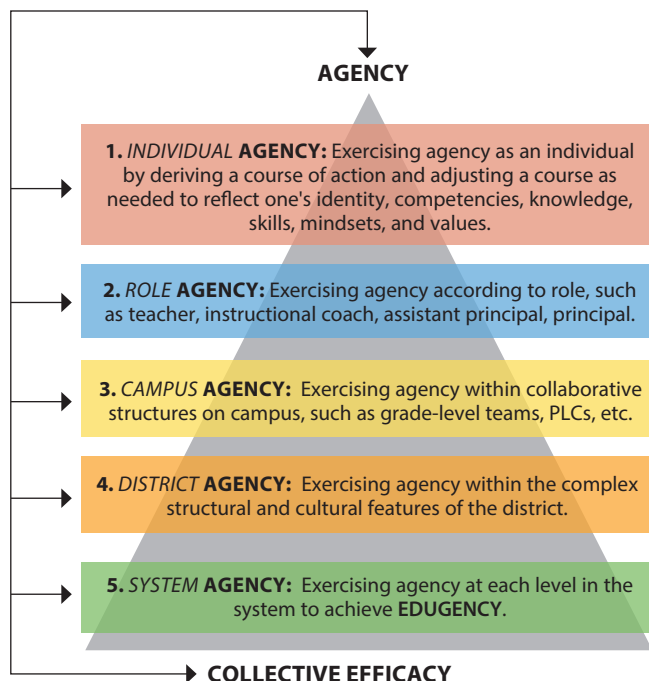
Students are using tracking tools to set goals and monitor their progress and using protocols to guide their collaborative work with other students.

Next year, the leadership team will concentrate on the IC maps for the Resources, Data, Learning Designs, and Implementation standards.

Hastings and Terry describe these lessons learned that will drive district enhancements for new teacher professional learning.

SYSTEMS

Educational systems have an opportunity to advance agency among educators through the design, development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of an infrastructure supporting agency and leading to collective efficacy, thereby improving student outcomes.



- Resist the tendency to oversimplify the concept of agency with simple voice and choice.
- Consider how to systematically incorporate adult learning theory in a way that allows agency and then collective efficacy to have the greatest effect.
- Recognize that discovering and articulating a hierarchy and design for how teacher agency contributes to system agency and EDUgency requires a growth mindset within the settings of role, identity, and context

Renee Pope, a professional learning



Renee Pope

coordinator in the district, has been instrumental in collaborating with the team to promote formative reflection among all stakeholders to enhance the New Teacher Induction Program, based on what they learned about agency along the way.

“The greatest support for empowering teachers to exercise agency is the autonomy to do so,” Pope says. “However, the ability to exercise agency is directly related to an individual’s willingness to reflect on his or her practice. At the very beginning, new teachers experienced frustration exercising agency because they feel they must know and do everything. Coaching conversations with campus and team leaders is helping new teachers continuously reflect with a growth mindset. I am hopeful that these conversations will help them exercise their agency in ways that yield student success.”

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**PRINCIPAL
COMMUNITIES
OF PRACTICE**
INSPIRE LEARNING IN TEXAS DISTRICT

BY STEVEN EBELL, HOLLY HUGHES,
SCOTT BOCKART, SUSAN SILVA,
AND STEPHANIE McBRIDE

In Texas — specifically in the greater Houston area — Clear Creek Independent School District is a destination district. Families with young children seek to move into the Clear Creek ISD district boundaries when looking for housing in the area. Realtors tout the area as a place where housing prices are a bit higher, but homes are in demand and sell quickly as prospective homeowners scurry to gain access to this successful school system. A history of student success and innovative programs has put Clear Creek ISD on the map. While this is positive, this also poses challenges for the school district.

State accountability requirements, coupled with slow changes in student demographics, have caused Clear Creek ISD administrators to look for new ways to help school leaders stay at the top. No longer can administrators and teachers rest on the laurels of past successes and continue to see high levels of student learning and achievement.

In 2015, district leaders began the

strategic shift in culture and thinking from one of competition to one of collaboration. And this is where the learning began. While the power of teacher communities of practice is well-documented in research, principals in Clear Creek ISD had never experienced being a part of a community of practice with their peers. Communities of practice engaged principals in authentic learning around a common problem of practice leading to greater equity for students and successful implementation of the district's vision and goals.

RATIONALE

For years, Clear Creek ISD administrators have understood the importance of teachers collaborating and working together to better meet student needs.

In 2013, The Wallace Foundation conducted research on the school principal as leader and found that “principals play a major role in developing a ‘professional community’ of teachers who guide one another in

ABOUT GALVESTON COUNTY LEARNING LEADERS

Galveston County Learning Leaders is a three-year initiative funded by a grant from Houston Endowment to Learning Forward. The goal of the project is to improve professional learning and leadership across the county by supporting Galveston County superintendents, their leadership teams, and selected principals in a community of practice and professional learning seminars. Learning Forward is working with eight Galveston County, Texas, superintendents and their leadership teams to improve teaching and learning across the county. This is a report from one of those districts: Clear Creek ISD.

improving instruction” (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). A University of Washington study also found that teachers who work with each other to align curriculum, instructional practices, and assessments are effective as educators (Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach, 2003).

In Clear Creek ISD, common

IDEAS

planning is frequently built into school master schedules, even on the largest of campuses, and routine time set aside for planning and collaborating is a priority on the campuses. As research has found, teachers in Clear Creek benefit from working together to analyze the state curriculum standards and plan instruction and

assessments that are in deeply aligned.

The Wallace Foundation research also found a direct link between effective principals and frequent encouragement of professional learning. The most effective principals “emphasize researched-based strategies to improve teaching and learning and initiate discussions about instructional approaches, both in teams and with individual teachers” (The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Clear Creek district leaders began to make a similar connection. If teachers are more successful when collaborating, wouldn’t school leaders also be? Aren’t many school principals struggling with the same challenges? The difficulty lies in scheduling, and facilitating these collaborative sessions is much more challenging with the typical schedule of school leaders.

The convenience of teachers collaborating on campus during a common planning time is easy and obvious. Conversely, principals often work in isolation and struggle to learn and improve on their own. In 2005, Lori Johnson interviewed former principals and found that feeling a sense of isolation when dealing with challenges was one of the top reasons for deciding to leave the profession (Johnson, 2005).

District leaders in Clear Creek felt



Photo by STEVEN EBELL

North Pointe Elementary School teachers Sonjia Solomon, left, and Tracy Florez help to develop a KASAB to determine action steps to support their campus strategic plan.

communities, the key concepts of change theory, Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011), and the importance of a continuous cycle of improvement.

This initial learning

occurred in large group administrator meetings, monthly, and always included individual and small-group learning time. Traditionally, these meetings were in a sit-and-get format, so immediately administrators recognized this work as different — and they were afforded a time to collaborate and learn from each other.

Although many items could easily creep onto the agenda of an administrator meeting in any given month, the Clear Creek district leadership team made a commitment to “keep the main thing the main thing,” and learning took precedence over tasks and updates that could be shared electronically. While the beginning of each meeting took on a new, shortened, flipped approach, the majority of the time spent together was no longer sit-and-get, but instead learn together, question each other’s thinking, and collaborate to find solutions.

Lonnie Leal, principal of Space Center Intermediate School, said, “There was a shift in our meetings from a mere reception of information to engaging in dialogue to help us refine our craft as leaders.”

The leadership team worked to develop in each school and department leader a deep understanding of the Standards for Professional Learning, ways to build a learning system, and

the need to address these concerns of isolation, lack of support, and a lack of capacity building and professional learning within the principal ranks. In 2010, the American Institutes for Research found that school-level leadership is most productive when surrounded by a supportive and consistent district-level leadership that sets the vision and expectations (American Institutes for Research, 2010). Research also shows that in high-performing districts, central office leaders believe in their capacity to develop more effective principals (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010).

Clear Creek district leaders began to think in a more capacity-building way — how might campus leaders be developed, who should be viewed as the lead learner — in a way that encourages identification of challenges, development of a road map of professional learning with collaboration with peers, seeing the plan to fruition, and evaluating for growth.

PREPARATION

With the entire Clear Creek ISD administrative team — everyone from principals to the director of transportation — the district leaders began a slow, methodical learning time focused on building collaborative

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AGENDA				
Community of practice	Problem of practice	Short-term learning designs	Mid-term learning designs	Long-term learning designs
1	Teachers use evidence to inform the next steps for instruction.	Analyzing student work to determine next steps.		
2	Teachers respond to individual student needs effectively and efficiently.	Learning walks.	Team data discussions around student needs.	Principals observe other principals leading professional learning.
3	Students develop agency.	Inquiry and research.		
4	Students are internally motivated.	State of student motivation and engagement.		
5	All students have access to quality first-time instruction.	Teachers create common assessments. Teachers identify high-yield teaching strategies. Creating effective planning protocols.	Design effective lessons.	Analyze student work. Measure success and progress.
6	Assessment for learning: Teachers use multiple forms of formative assessments for immediate decision-making.	Formative assessment look-fors.		
7	Staff feels a sense of urgency for change.	Identifying teacher leaders.	Teachers visit teachers.	So what, now what?
8	All students have opportunities for personalizing their learning.	Learning walks.	Assessing where we are and planning next steps.	
9	Teachers use student data and work evidence to guide their professional learning.	Using student work to chart the course.		
10	Teachers engage in personalized professional learning that generates student success.	Cross-campus professional learning.	Personalized professional learning cycle.	

how to build learning agendas (above) to support the work. As they delved into each topic, administrators began to understand deeply what was missing in the past. With this new learning, school leaders realized they had the keys all along to improve and refine their practices.

Leaders began to understand, internalize, and be able to clearly articulate the district vision, their aligned campus vision, and the strategic ways to remain in a cycle of continuous improvement. Just as teachers do, school leaders quickly saw the benefits of professional learning, vulnerability, and collaborative conversations.

FORMING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

In July 2016, with a foundational understanding of a learning system, Clear Creek district leaders launched communities of practice for principals at the beginning of the year planning meeting.

Principals, working collaboratively with their assistant principals and deans of instruction, completed a self-assessment to determine strengths and challenges for their schools around the Standards for Professional Learning — a collective focus on student learning; shared mission, goals, vision and values; a shared focus on professional

learning; a culture of collaboration, persistence, and celebration; a culture of collective inquiry and strategic school planning; and a disposition toward transformational leadership and reflective dialogue.

The teams worked together over two days to evaluate their school on a number of descriptors under each of the Standards for Professional Learning and chose an overall rating for each standard as either exemplary, proficient, emerging, or unsatisfactory. The self-assessment results revealed areas for principals where a problem of practice existed in their schools. Once all teams completed the self-assessment for their

schools, schools were grouped together according to a standard they had scored as emerging. Doing this created new communities of practice for principals.

Traditionally, the back-to-school planning meeting ended with 44 principals working independently and possibly in 44 directions. But this year, it ended with 12 communities of practice tightly bound by a shared problem of practice.

CREATING PROBLEMS OF PRACTICE

The first task of the principal communities of practice was to identify and attempt to articulate the problem of practice — what they would study, research, learn about, and define solutions for — essentially, where they would live in professional learning.

This was not an easy task. While there were only six standards in the self-assessment, each standard had many varying descriptors. The principals revisited the descriptors as a community of practice to determine a common problem of practice that was a current challenge for all of them.

Once they agreed on a specific need for their campuses, the newly formed communities of practice spent several hours working to write their problem of practice. District leadership provided examples of written problems of practice to assist the principals. Each community of practice then shared its written problem of practice with the entire group.

Once this was done, individual campus leaders nested their campus goal within the community of practice goal, creating one focus for professional learning. These communities of practice brought campus leaders together who had never worked together before — a mix of elementary, intermediate, and high school leaders — as well as district curriculum, special education, and technology leaders.

“The opportunity for deep collaboration with other district principals toward a common goal has been exciting and invigorating,” said Jane Kelling, principal of Parr Elementary School and a member of a community of practice. “We have never had an opportunity to do this kind of work before.”

LESSONS LEARNED

The professional learning for Clear Creek has been fueled by new possibilities as well as a few bumps along the way. Changing a culture of leadership is not easy or quick, but worthy of the time invested in thinking differently about how we engage in professional learning.

District leaders realized that, in order to shift district practices in leading instructional leaders, they needed a strong commitment to the Standards for Professional Learning. As a district focused on continuously improving student outcomes through strategic planning, leaders realized that a cohesive system of professional learning for school and district leaders did not exist.

Change tools guided us through a cycle of continuous improvement with principal communities of practice. Working with leaders within their communities of practice, new learning emerged from collaboration and focus. Teams of principals began to support each other and share ideas automatically.

The change processes of developing a clear vision, establishing a KASAB, and defining a theory of change and logic model contributed to these communities staying focused and working together to achieve their common goals.

A KASAB delineates the changes one would expect as a result of learning experiences (knowledge, attitudes, skills, aspirations, and behaviors) and

sets intended outcomes for professional learning. A theory of change describes how and why a desired change is expected to happen, and a logic model represents outcomes along a timeline.

Learning designs are powerful tools for guiding teams into deep, thoughtful learning and changes in practice. The district leadership team created a learning design for the communities of practice and a learning design for communities to visit each other’s school and use the observations to tune their practice.

Empowering leaders with the tools, time, and a defined process that clarified steps toward reaching their goals fueled collaboration. While the first few months seemed uncomfortably new and different, administrators quickly began to see the power in working with others to solve problems. Newfound respect for each other was evident.

Monica Giuffre, principal of Falcon Pass Elementary School, said, “It has been really powerful to use the strengths of each administrator to tackle a common problem. As a campus principal, rarely are you afforded opportunities to work with your peers and learn from each other.”

CHALLENGES

One of the challenges was to shift principals’ perspectives on what effective, standards-driven professional learning looks like. By creating a cohesive learning agenda for instructional leaders, campus principals developed an understanding that student outcomes are directly related to adult practices and that adult behaviors shift more systematically through focused professional learning that engages teams in a cycle of continuous improvement.

Leaders became more comfortable with shifting from controlling the delivery of professional learning to building learning agendas to build

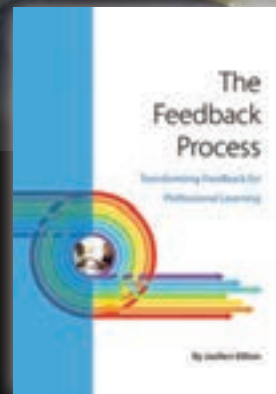
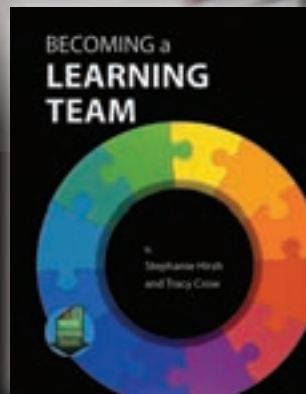
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capacity for professional learning.

At first, writing a problem of practice was foreign. Yet, when provided clear examples, teams were able to articulate clear needs within their community of practice. From there, collaborative support fostered supportive communities of practice in plotting outcomes along a timeline (logic model) for intermediate and long-term outcomes. Principals felt empowered and supported from district leaders as well as peers.

One of the greatest barriers was the perception from all leaders on the lack of time. To create a system of continuous improvement, this work became the priority for everyone from the superintendent to the campus level, despite the calendar conflicts and managerial tasks. The group made a commitment to stick with the process long enough to see benefits.

NEXT STEPS

While principals found great value in both their problems of practice and the collaboration within a focused community, district leaders remained committed to working with each group. As district leaders defined key steps for this work within a logic model, they were careful to provide specific outcomes, support, and opportunities to celebrate new learning.

Research in all areas, including education, indicates that celebrating success is an overlooked step in the change process. John Kotter (2008) refers to celebrations as creating short-term wins. Kotter emphasizes that celebrations are essential for keeping change efforts moving forward and leaders actively engaged in the change process.

District leaders built time within each agenda to highlight the new learning of principals and the incremental successes along the way. “The regular sharing of progress

and success was inspirational and encouraged me to remain deeply committed to my problem of practice,” said Karen Engle, principal of Clear Lake High School.

The success experienced by school and department leaders has deepened the belief among district leadership that this is the right path for all improvement efforts. District leaders are collaborating with campus and department leaders to align all planning efforts around this approach. As the school year comes to a close, campus leaders will share their experiences with an eye toward future work.

To support this focus on the future, district leaders are at the same time shifting traditional site-based decision-making practices to more closely align with the community of practice.

In 2015, each school completed a three-year campus strategic plan aligned with the district strategic plan. From these campus strategic plans, each campus site-based team reviewed student performance data to identify short-term student needs and made connections with these needs to the campus strategic plan.

The principal will lead the site-based team through a review of the campus strategic plan, identification of the most high-yield action plan, and the application of tools for change — cycle of continuous improvement, KASAB, and logic model — to develop a deeper level of understanding and commitment around that one focus for the year.

According to Greg Smith, superintendent of Clear Creek ISD, “Leading campus principals to make substantive improvement requires a system of support. That system of support is predicated on a cycle of continuous improvement and invigorating ongoing learning. When principals are engaged in learning within a deeply committed community, they are reinvigorated by the hopes and

aspirations for their teachers and their students.”

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- Steven Ebell (sebell@ccisd.net) is deputy superintendent of curriculum and instruction, Holly Hughes (hhughes@ccisd.net) is assistant superintendent of elementary education, Scott Bockart (sbockart@ccisd.net) is assistant superintendent of secondary education, Susan Silva (susilva@ccisd.net) is executive director of curriculum and instruction, and Stephanie McBride (ssmcbrid@ccisd.net) is executive director of professional learning for the Clear Creek Independent School District in Texas. ■**

Discuss. Collaborate. Facilitate.

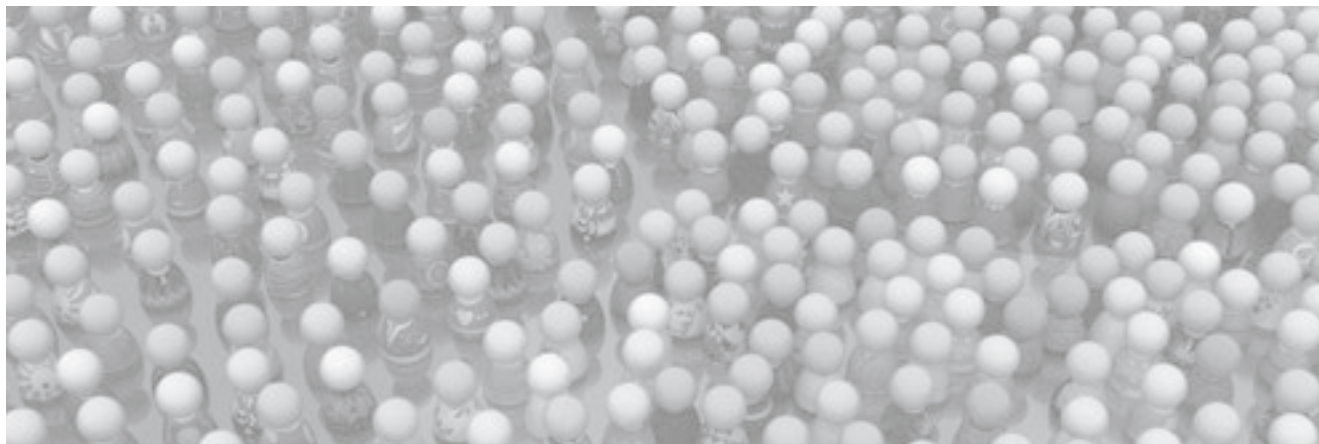
TOOLS

TEACHER LEADERS CHAMPION CHANGE

“We have had an experience in the past few years at Research for Better Teaching with an improvement in teaching practice that is both complicated and requires changing long-established habits. While not exactly rapid, we stumbled upon the Collaboration Teacher approach that, nevertheless, accomplished in two years what we would not have thought possible before — the adoption with skill and enthusiasm of a complex constellation of skills called Making Student Thinking Visible by a majority of the staff of an urban high school in Revere, Massachusetts, a highly diverse, high-poverty, blue-collar district. And the key was teacher leadership.”

**MADE FOR
TRANSFER:**
THE
COLLABORATION
TEACHER MODEL

p. **66**



MADE FOR TRANSFER: THE COLLABORATION TEACHER MODEL

BY JONATHON SAPHIER

“How can I spread this rapidly at scale?” We hear that question often these days. The question is understandable, but the “rapidly” part can be naive. Most worthwhile improvements in teaching practice are not simple, and the change process is complicated. It can also take a long time if it involves breaking long-established habits and modifying belief systems.

Not only is adoption at scale difficult, but transfer into practice *at all* is often tricky, even with the best professional development. Transfer can be obstructed because other projects take priority and because we lack the mechanisms to keep a new practice on people’s plates, maintain focus, and provide adequate coaching and feedback. The Collaboration Teacher Model addresses these issues.

We have had an experience in the past few years at Research for Better Teaching with an improvement

in teaching practice that is both complicated and requires changing long-established habits. While not exactly rapid, we stumbled upon the Collaboration Teacher approach that, nevertheless, accomplished in two years what we would not have thought possible before — the adoption with skill and enthusiasm of a complex constellation of skills called Making Student Thinking Visible by a majority of the staff of an urban high school in Revere, Massachusetts, a highly diverse, high-poverty, blue-collar district. And the key was teacher leadership.

Making Student Thinking Visible is not a single skill; it is a constellation of skills that produce robust student dialogue at high levels of thinking with engagement of all the students in a class. When practiced skillfully, one sees and hears at one time or another all 24 of the behaviors in the tool on p. 68. Streamlined versions of this skill set have been called “accountable talk” in the past (Resnick, Asterhan, & Clark, 2015; West & Staub, 2001).

Making Student Thinking Visible

happens to be the content we used, but any addition to one’s teaching repertoire, whether it is a generic pedagogical skill or a content-specific pedagogical practice, could be the content. The point is to generate teacher champions for the new practice and get lots of peer observations going across the faculty along with productive peer analysis and conversations. The steps have to be understood, the administration has to clear the path, and the champions have to be teacher leaders.

Here’s how we do it.

A cohort of about 30 to 40 teachers takes a course either online or face-to-face where a case is convincingly made for the new practice. Ideally, an entire faculty would be studying something in common. The practice is demonstrated through modeling or video analysis, and participants practice interactively. A good initial professional development experience is needed as the foundation of the Collaboration Teacher Model.

This year, year three of the work at Revere High School, over 80% of

Continued on p. 68

TOOL 1: COLLABORATION TEACHER MODEL

Use the following tool to guide your use and critique of the Collaboration Teacher Model. It helps a great deal if the administrator takes the course and practices the skills as a learner. This empowers any professional development a faculty takes on.

1. Administrators, with participation by the course instructor, select 10 people who took the course, show proficiency with the skills, have credibility with their peers, and are willing to open their classrooms to colleagues who want to see what these skills look like in action.
2. These 10 teachers are called collaboration teachers. They are willing to share their ongoing process of learning. They are not claiming to be experts in the practice, although they are probably pretty good.
3. Give collaboration teachers an extra full day of professional development face-to-face to increase their expertise. They practice the skills in small groups, facilitated by the original instructor of the professional development course.
4. In addition, the collaboration teachers receive a half-day of coaching in their own classroom by the instructor or other qualified expert. This coaching includes the expert coach videoing the teacher and analyzing the video that day with the teacher for presence, absence, or missed opportunities for the 24 Making Student Thinking Visible elements on p. 68. This is nonjudgmental, objective feedback based on evidence. Some sort of objective instrument needs to be created for whatever the content of the professional development was that can be used in this way as a checklist.
5. The collaboration teachers (or a few of them) present their learning about the new skills at a faculty meeting and give testimony to the positive effects on their students.
6. The administrator endorses their work and describes the visits to the collaboration teachers that will be made available to all staff members.
7. The administrator sets up a visitation and coverage routine so any teacher who wishes can visit a collaboration teacher when the skills can be viewed.
8. During visits, the visiting teacher uses the list of 24 behaviors as a checklist to record evidence of which behaviors occurred during the visit. Such a visit would include shadowing the collaboration teacher when she is in motion interacting with individuals or small groups.
9. The visiting teacher and the collaboration teacher have lunch together (or meet at some other chosen time) to review the evidence collected.
10. Administrators spread the word and ask if other teachers who took the course would like to visit the collaboration teachers. Administrators facilitate the scheduling and coverage, sometimes providing the coverage themselves.

Source: Making Student Thinking Visible, Research for Better Teaching online course, RBTeach.com.

TOOL 2: MAKING STUDENT THINKING VISIBLE ELEMENTS

1. Engage student thinking with planned questions.

Teacher-student interaction:

2. Call on all.
3. Pause ... use wait time.
4. Avoid judgment.
5. Validate confusion.

Reflection question: Are students doing the majority of the talking?

Have students:

6. Explain.
7. Restate.
8. Turn and talk.

Reflection question: Are students elaborating their answers with explanations?

Source: Making Student Thinking Visible, Research for Better Teaching online course, RBTeach.com.

Teacher, be sure to:

9. Establish norms, teach prompts.
10. Actively listen.
11. Revoice.
12. Scaffold.
13. Persevere and return.

Reflection questions: Are students showing they they are listening to one another? Are they willing to admit confusion or not knowing? Are they challenging each other's thinking nonjudgmentally?

During lessons:

14. Slow down.
15. Allow struggle.
16. Don't answer yourself.
17. Leave with clues to puzzle over.

Reflection question: Where can I as the instructor improve?

In class discussions, don't give or confirm answers. Ask students to:

18. Agree/disagree.
19. Add on.
20. Compare thinking.
21. Surface discrepancies.
22. Revisit previous thinking.

Reflection question: Are the students taking initiative to explain another student's thinking, including how they might have made an error?

Look for opportunities to:

23. Infuse academic vocabulary.
24. Record academic vocabulary.

Reflection question: How will I measure outcomes so I can continuously improve this model and its content?

Continued from p. 66

the staff have taken the course and are using the skills with gusto. Increases in student achievement will validate the effectiveness of the new practices in future years, but already adoption at scale has happened. The model has spread to the middle and elementary schools for pilot implementation — pilot because a \$2 million district budget cut slowed down the work for the current year.

We urge readers to modify this approach and share their adaptations with

us. Whatever the permutations that are created, getting teacher champions of a practice to open their doors for something that is new and ongoing learning for them and for which they are energetic advocates can transform adult professional culture dramatically. Next we look forward to getting data on its positive effect on student achievement.

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Jonathon Saphier (saphier@rbteach.com) is founder and president of Research for Better Teaching, a professional development organization dedicated to improving classroom teaching and school leadership. ■

Connect. Belong. Support.

UPDATES

ADVOCATE FOR TITLE IIA

Learning Forward has joined education advocates around the country to advocate for ESSA Title IIA funds to remain in next federal budget. Join the movement and share your Title II story at www.learningforward.org/get-involved/advocacy/title-ii-advocacy.

WHAT DO TITLE IIA FUNDS SUPPORT?

- Increased content knowledge
- Support for principal leadership
- Coaching and mentoring
- Educator recruitment
- Strategies for increasing graduation rates
- Implementing effective and innovative instruction and technology
- Personalized learning

A call to action on Title II funding, p. **70**

Critical support for teaching and leading

CALL TO ACTION

We call on Congress to fully fund Title IIA to ensure high-quality professional learning and support for educators and school leaders to improve student achievement.

As a nation, we share a vision that all children deserve the opportunity to graduate high school ready for success in college, career, and life, regardless of their ZIP code. Cutting support for the educators who teach our children each day drastically undermines our ability to realize this vision. Title IIA, the most significant source of federal funding to ensure this support, must be fully funded so that states, districts, and local schools may provide the professional learning and leadership skills that educators need.

Title IIA is a linchpin for achieving the goals of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a bipartisan agreement, that there be excellence and equity for all students.

Full funding will allow these states and districts to realize these goals through stronger professional learning and leadership opportunities which will, in turn, increase student achievement.

Title IIA matters to educators
345 respondents in 43 states use Title IIA for support:
65% for coaches
48% for mentors
38% for stipends for teachers assuming leadership responsibilities

Title IIA is critical to effective teaching and leadership

ESSA's Title II provides funds to states and districts to improve teaching and leadership through professional learning. ESSA strengthened Title II by establishing new evidence requirements and a more rigorous definition of professional development. This opportunity to re-evaluate and revise Title II activities, including Title IIA, has been embraced by states and districts looking to enact the promise.

These funds are essential to school and district support of the following:

Increased content knowledge and improved classroom practice for teachers	Support for principals to become outstanding leaders	Improve instruction with coaching and mentoring	Specialized training for teachers and principals to meet student needs
Educator recruitment	Strategies for increasing graduation rates	Implementation support for effective instructional materials and innovative technologies	Implementation support for personalized learning for each student

A growing body of research and practice tells us that effective professional development, as defined in ESSA, improves both the content knowledge of teachers in core academic areas and the classroom practices of all teachers. It also strengthens the learning that supports principals in becoming outstanding educational leaders.

We know:

- The qualities of teaching and leadership in schools are the two most significant in-school factors tied to student achievement.
- Effective professional development is intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice; focused on student learning and teaching specific curriculum content; and aligned with school improvement priorities and goals.
- There is a great need for professional development for principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders tailored for their specific roles and responsibilities.

Title IIA supports increased student academic achievement by promoting strategies that will positively affect teacher and principal effectiveness.

House funding bill eliminates essential support for educators

Stephanie Hirsh, executive director of Learning Forward, issued the following statement about the recent bill outlining education funding from the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives.

I am outraged that our elected representatives would fail to listen to their constituents, who have shared for months how important Title II investments are for students. The loss of these funds will have a devastating impact in schools.



Hirsh

Title II is critical to ensuring we have high-quality teachers and leaders prepared to help our most vulnerable students meet high expectations. Congress passed ESSA with a vision for public education that ensures equity and excellence for all students.

Educators need sustained, classroom-focused professional development as redefined in ESSA to achieve that vision. Without Title II funds, the achievement gaps will increase and the teacher shortage will become more pronounced.

Our stakeholders believed Congress shared a commitment to all students experiencing great teaching every day. This bill calls into question that commitment to children, their families, and our communities.

Learning Forward will continue to work hand in hand with educators in schools to demonstrate the necessity of ongoing support for the sake of the children they teach. We ask all stakeholders committed to meaningful teaching and learning to contact their members of Congress to share input on the budget and stress the vital importance of full funding of the Title II program to achieve excellence and equity in our public schools.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF CANADA STUDY AVAILABLE IN FRENCH

A French-language version of the executive summary to Learning Forward's landmark study of professional learning in Canada is now available. *The State of Educators' Professional Learning in Canada: Executive Summary* showcases the research questions addressed in the study, summarizes findings and conditions for professional learning in Canada, and concludes with implications for next steps. It also contains examples of professional learning practices from various provinces that highlight learning in action across the nation. It can be found at www.learningforward.org/publications/canada-study.

BOOK CLUB

Leading Schools in Disruptive Times: How to Survive Hyper-Change
By *Dwight L. Carter and Mark White*

Today's school leaders are faced with job responsibilities that are increasingly complex and changes that never stop. This book helps readers see the history of disruption in schools and recognize how changes are reshaping schools today. The book addresses:

- The scope of change in schools past and present;
- Practical ideas to examine what affects readers' schools today;
- Stories from leading educators with their tips and lessons;
- A decision-making framework to cope with disruptions; and
- A new leadership model for today's schools.

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

Use this Call to Action to talk with members of Congress about the importance of funding Title IIA.

Learning Forward... your partner for school improvement

Are your
improvement
efforts getting
the results you
want?

Learning Forward supports leaders at all levels in transforming their systems into *learning systems*, where all educators engage in a measurable and scalable cycle of continuous improvement.

Our high-impact consulting services provide you with the tools to transform professional learning, increase educator capacity, and improve student achievement.

As your partner for student achievement, we offer:

- Standards Alignment
- Coaches Academy
- Professional Learning Communities
- Principal Leadership
- School Improvement
- System Improvement
- Comprehensive Planning
- Support for States
- Customized Services

Our customized services ensure your educators engage in professional learning grounded in standards and focused on improved instruction and student results.

For more information, contact Associate Director of Consulting and Networks Tom Manning at tom.manning@learningforward.org or 972-421-0900, or visit www.learningforward.org/consulting.

Are your PLCs truly learning-focused?

Learning Forward supports schools and districts to develop cultures of learning. We work with system, school, and teacher leaders to set a vision for professional learning communities and ensure educators engage in collaborative professional learning that strengthens their practice and increases student results.

Our work emphasizes the “L” in PLCs. With a focus on learning, we guide educators to employ a five-step cycle of continuous improvement where change, improved instructional practices, and increased student learning are the outcomes.

For more information, go to
consulting.learningforward.org

Our support for PLCs includes:

- Exploring what it means for teams to work collaboratively in a cycle of continuous improvement;
- Detailing each stage of the learning team cycle;
- Providing practical tools and strategies for sustaining continuous learning;
- Creating a learning-focused culture that supports teachers’ continuous learning.

Make learning the driving force behind your PLCs.

Contact Tom Manning, Associate Director of Consulting and Networks, at tom.manning@learningforward.org.

Consultant-led conference sessions at Learning Forward’s Annual Conference in Orlando.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1222 Making it Stick: Tackling Responsibilities for Ensuring Innovation Lasts | 2307 State-Level Professional Learning Leaders Community of Practice |
| 1301 A Systematic Approach to Elevating Teacher Leadership | 2329 An Express Route to EQUITABLE Student Outcomes |
| 1306 Coaching Tool and Resource Exchange: Sharing Effective Practices | 2401 Evaluating Professional Learning in a Culture of Continuous Improvement |
| 1316 Learning3: Achieving Exponential Results for Schools | 2403 From Policy to Practice: Realizing the Promise of Professional Learning in ESSA |
| 2204 Smart Demand: Educators Access and Evaluate Effective Professional Learning | 3232 Professional Learning in a Human Capital Management System |
| 2207 Ensuring Successful Implementation of Change | PC101 Taking The Lead |
| 2216 Focus on Outcomes First for Effective Implementation | PC104 Unpacking the Standards for Professional Learning |
| 2227 Pressure and Support: The Principal and Coach Dynamic | PC106 Becoming A Learning Principal |
| 2305 Trust | PC107 Collaborative Learning: Supporting a District Partnership From Design to Implementation |
| 2306 When Coaches Learn, Teachers Learn | PC210 Facilitation and Presentation Strategies That Improve Adult Learning |

FOCUS

RETHINKING EARLY EDUCATION

Building a better preschool:

Specialized professional learning is key to high-quality early education.

By Eric Celeste

We've been talking about the unique aspects of professional learning for early education teachers for a long time, but many of the challenges are still largely the same. Two crucial challenges of professional learning for early education are teacher preparation and ongoing professional learning, especially keeping up with brain science and social-emotional research. The progress being made in pockets across the country is just the first step toward a system of professional training, learning, and monitoring that can lead to improved outcomes for all students in early education.

A foundation of learning:

D.C. program addresses achievement gap for 3- and 4-year-olds.

By Natasha Parrilla and Kelly Trygstad

Every teacher has experienced the achievement gap in his or her classroom at some point and not known what to do. Instructional leaders face the challenge of supporting teachers to close this gap, and a variety of research-based philosophies and strategies in the field address this challenge. AppleTree Institute for Education



Innovation, a nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C., is working to close the achievement gap before children enter kindergarten by providing 3- and 4-year-olds with the social, emotional, and academic foundations that enable them to thrive in school — and increasing educator effectiveness is a critical component of that.

Teach, watch, learn:

Early education program pairs college courses with video coaching.

By Alan Cohen

EarlyEdU Alliance, a collection of courses and online tools led by the University of Washington and used by more than 50 colleges and universities, aims to increase the quality of early childhood teacher preparation programs and make them more accessible and affordable for a workforce that needs more people and requires more of

them. EarlyEdU offers a series of courses that combine theory and the latest research with students' field-based learning. Integrated into each course is a video sharing and coaching feedback app called Coaching Companion.

Preschool is school:

Early childhood educators need relevant, collaborative, and aligned learning.

By Zeke Alejandro, Sarah Garland, Suzanne Kennedy, and Thomas Van Soelen

In terms of professional learning, early childhood educators are either lumped in with other elementary school teachers or left in their center. It is in those poignant moments when the inequity is clear between early learning and K-12 educators. At the College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center in Decatur, Georgia, educators get the same high-quality professional learning as their K-12 counterparts.

WRITE FOR THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

- Themes are posted at www.learningforward.org/learningprofessional.
- 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/learningprofessional.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Learning Forward is eager to read manuscripts from educators at every level in every position. If your work includes a focus on effective professional learning, we want to hear your story.

The Learning Professional publishes a range of types of articles, including:

- First-person accounts of change efforts;
- Practitioner-focused articles about

school- and district-level initiatives;

- Program descriptions and results from schools, districts, or external partners;
- How-tos from practitioners and thought leaders; and
- Protocols and tools with guidance on use and application.

To learn more about key topics and what reviewers look for in article submissions, visit www.learningforward.org/learningprofessional.

IDEAS

Unlocking the secrets of agency:

New Teacher Induction Program empowers educator-centered growth.

By Juliet Correll

Arlington ISD in Texas is a district with the ambitious goal that 100% of students will graduate prepared for college, career, and citizenship. The New Teacher Induction Program is a vehicle to foster individual agency for each teacher and empower educator-centered growth, intentionally modeling the same kind of learning designs that teachers apply with students in their classrooms. The district seeks enhanced coherence around professional learning across the system, from teacher and principal leadership and learning to the central office and the larger community, to achieve collective efficacy and improve outcomes for students.

Principal communities of practice inspire learning in Texas district.

By Steven Ebell, Holly Hughes, Scott Bockart, Susan Silva, and Stephanie McBride

In 2015, leaders in Clear Creek Independent School District in Texas began the strategic shift in culture and thinking from one of competition to one of collaboration. And this is where the learning began. In July 2016, with a foundational understanding of a learning system, Clear Creek district leaders launched 12 communities of practice for principals tightly bound by a shared problem of practice. The success experienced by school and department leaders has deepened the belief among district leadership that this is the right path for all improvement efforts.

VOICES

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Shannon Bogle, supervisor, teacher training, Hillsborough County Public Schools, Florida.



CALL TO ACTION

Make the connection between Learning Forward's standards and ESSA.

By Stephanie Hirsh

A crosswalk demonstrating how they align will assist states and districts to see the similarities and accelerate the application of both.

OUR TAKE

New report and tool kit build momentum for effective professional learning.

By Elizabeth Foster

A new report from Learning Policy Institute supports Learning Forward's theory of action that collaborative, job-embedded professional learning changes teaching practice and results for students for the better.

ASK

How do we clarify coaches' roles and responsibilities?

By Tom Manning

Review the 10 roles for school-based coaches and the essential purpose of each role.

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Support for educators leads to learning gains for students.

By David I. Steinberg

While focusing on goals and measuring progress toward meeting them is necessary, what's needed is one additional ingredient: support.

BEING FORWARD

Highlights from the past year show strategic priorities in action.

By Scott Laurence

These strategic priorities demonstrate how Learning Forward is responding to the needs of its members and stakeholders while also addressing issues in the field of education and professional learning.

RESEARCH

RESEARCH REVIEW

Critical questions remain unanswered in research on teacher leadership.

By Joellen Killian

Research on teacher leadership shows promise but insufficient empirical evidence of its benefits and supports.

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AT A GLANCE

Teacher perceptions of professional learning

Corwin, Learning Forward, and the National Education Association recently released a report from their *State of Professional Learning Survey*. The report, based on responses from more than 6,300 educators, illuminates teachers' perceptions of their professional

learning experiences and how they align with Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning. The survey featured Learning Forward's Standards Assessment Inventory. Here are highlights of the top findings.



1 Teachers report that leaders in their schools and systems are committed to professional learning.

2 Teachers report that their schools use student achievement data to plan professional learning, but they don't use a variety of data to assess its effectiveness.

3 Teachers are not deeply involved in decisions about their own professional learning.

4 Teachers report that they are not provided adequate time during the school day to follow up on their professional learning by practicing and applying new skills in the classroom.

TO READ THE FULL REPORT, VISIT

https://us.corwin.com/sites/default/files/professional_learning_teacher_survey_2017.pdf

THROUGH THE LENS

OF LEARNING FORWARD'S STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

LEARNING FORWARD'S STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students ...

Learning Communities

... occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.

Leadership

... requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.

Resources

... requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.

Data

... uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.

Learning Designs

... integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.

Implementation

... applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

Outcomes

... aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

Many of the articles in this issue of *The Learning Professional* demonstrate Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning in action. Use this tool to deepen your own understanding of what standards implementation might look like and to explore implementation in various contexts. In this issue, we highlight three examples.

STANDARD

IN ACTION

TO CONSIDER

RESOURCES

In "A foundation of learning," the authors explore a Washington, D.C., program that is working to close the achievement gap before children enter kindergarten by providing high-quality early education to 3- and 4-year-olds through increasing educator effectiveness (p. 36).



1. In what ways did D.C. school leaders prioritize, monitor, and coordinate resources for teachers to get the most out of Every Child Ready programs?
2. How did the coaching portion of the program use the resource of time and tie it to results?

DATA

In "What I've learned," the author says that providing support for educators leads to gains by students, especially when it comes to data — pointing out that "what gets measured and evaluated gets done" (p.16).



1. What is the connection made between building capacity for teachers and using data to direct them?
2. What did the data show in terms of the effect of quality professional learning support provided by the administration?

LEARNING DESIGNS

In "Preschool is school," the authors suggest that early childhood educators need relevant, collaborative, and aligned learning designs to succeed (p. 46).



1. Why is it important for learning designers to help early education teachers better "unpack" their pre-K standards?
2. Besides mandatory health training, what sorts of early education-specific learning should a well-rounded program include?

FIND YOUR OWN!

There are many other examples of the standards in action throughout *The Learning Professional*. Find a story that you think exemplifies this and create your own questions.

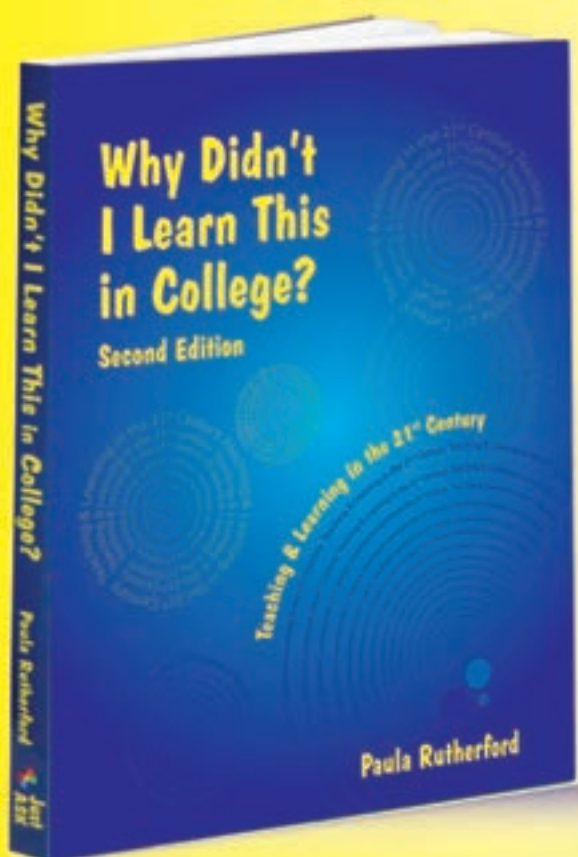


Bonus question:

Can you find other standards within your story that are relevant? Many data stories, for example, also deal with implementation. Good luck!

Learn more about Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning at www.learningforward.org/standards-for-professional-learning.

Why Didn't I Learn This in College?



Support your new teachers by providing them with a resource that prepares them for 21st century classrooms. ***Why Didn't I Learn This in College?*** includes dozens of teacher-tested procedures, routines, and suggestions for organizing classrooms for learning, and online tools and templates. If you believe that the best management program is a strong instructional program based on rigorous state standards and your district curriculum, this book is the one you want for your new teachers.

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While new teachers may say they need classroom management skills, what they really need to know is how to design rigorous and appropriately scaffolded lessons and how to create learning-centered classrooms where high-level engagement and learning can occur. We must help new teachers learn that the end they should have in mind for their students is not that they are well-managed, but that they are well-educated.

- Paula Rutherford



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