

FOCUS WHAT WILL YOU LEARN THIS SUMMER?

The DNA of development:

A new model for school change focuses on adult learning.

*By Eleanor Drago-Severson
and Jessica Blum-DeStefano*

Caring for adults' internal development is one of the most powerful drivers of educational change because when the adults in schools have the personal and organizational support to grow, they can bring their best selves to their students, families, and peers. A new model for developing educator capacity highlights five elements that enhance how we understand, feel about, talk to, and collaborate with one another.

Pivotal moments in teaching:

Zoom in on specific points to create meaningful learning.

By Bradley A. Ermeling

One of the biggest challenges with collaborative planning is balancing the level of detail and scope of content that can be discussed meaningfully in a limited amount of time. A team of high school English teachers in Las Vegas, Nevada, recently began using pivotal teaching segments to focus their collaborative planning meetings and improve student learning. Pivotal segments are those anticipated

moments or specific episodes within a lesson where teachers expect students to experience a key learning opportunity central to the lesson goal.

Learn from (simulated) experience:

Computer simulations are a safe way to practice making tough decisions.

By Ken Spero

Finding a more efficient way to help current and aspiring K-12 leaders is crucial, especially for low-achieving, high-poverty schools that face high turnover rates and a shortage of experienced leaders. School leaders lack the ongoing support and development required to maintain and foster sustained commitment. Computer simulations can provide essential practice at making a wide range of decisions facing education leaders, filling gaps in experience with focused, relevant, virtual on-the-job training.

Motivation in motion:

Learning walks benefit teachers and students in a dual-language primary school.

*By Margery Ginsberg, Olimpia Bahena,
Jessica Kertz, and Iysha Jones*

Given the rise in students who speak a language other than English at home and dwindling resources for professional learning in urban public schools, the need for schools to develop in-house systems for teachers to learn

continuously from one another is great. This is a particular priority for dual-language schools, given the limited number of fully certified dual-language teachers and the importance of teaching language goals along with content knowledge goals. At Talcott Fine Arts and Museum Academy in Chicago, Illinois, teachers engage in learning walks that encourage instructional improvement conversations focused on intrinsic motivation as the foundation for language learning and academic success.

Growing opportunities:

Collaboration nurtures and supports early learning educators.

*By Kaytie Brissenden-Smith, Ana Moreno,
Lisa Peloquin, Judy Radloff, and Jenna Wachtel*

How can teachers move from working in isolation within ineffective systems to building thriving, collaborative teaching environments in which they are supported and inspired to work with their colleagues in communities focused on mutual professional growth? The real-life experiences of three communities of early learning professionals demonstrate how educators can create and sustain a culture of continuous professional growth and collaboration that results in access to high-quality education for every student.

WRITE FOR THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

- Themes are posted at www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/upcoming-themes.
- Please send manuscripts and questions to Christy Colclasure (christy.colclasure@learningforward.org).
- Notes to assist authors in preparing a manuscript are at www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/writers-guidelines.



IDEAS

Learning to lead:

Districts collaborate to strengthen principal practices.

By Kay Psencik and Frederick Brown

Teachers who learn and work collaboratively need school leaders who can model learning, share leadership for learning, and facilitate cycles of continuous improvement to strengthen teaching and learning. More than instructional leaders, they need learning leaders. Across the country, district leaders are convening principals in professional learning communities to help them develop as learning leaders. These diverse communities share common elements of support focused on supporting and sustaining principals. *This article is sponsored by The Wallace Foundation.*

Process of discovery:

Arizona district's principals experience professional and personal growth as a community of learners.

By Allison Garland

Littleton Elementary School District #65 in Avondale, Arizona, participated in Learning Leaders for Learning Schools, a project whose primary goal is to increase the effectiveness of principals to lead high-achieving schools by building communities of learners. The three-year process is grounded in Learning

Forward's Standards for Professional Learning. Through its work with the project, the district's school leadership community developed a deeper understanding of change and the tools necessary for implementation.

VOICES

CALL TO ACTION

Let's embrace what high-quality curriculum can do for all students.

By Stephanie Hirsh

Learning Forward's pivot to high-quality curriculum and team-based professional learning is a direct effort to address teachers' need for guidance.

BEING FORWARD

Louisiana is taking the lead in mentoring new teachers.

By Tom Manning

The Louisiana Department of Education is changing the way it prepares teachers by identifying and supporting mentor teachers in every parish in the state to work with new and aspiring teachers participating in a yearlong residency. Learning Forward is providing that mentor teacher support.

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Trust-based observations fuel teacher growth.

By Craig Randall

The most powerful tool to improve teaching and learning is the observation

process. The trust-based observation is a focused, manageable, and nonevaluative process that emphasizes teacher reflection and growth. At the heart of this approach is building trusting relationships with teachers so they feel safe taking risks in their practice.

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Circles of gratitude create time and space for learning.

By Audrey Hobbs-Johnson

With their collective focus on student and educator outcomes, this year's Learning Forward Foundation awardees provide powerful examples of professional learning practices that reflect a strong research foundation and will take us from research to practice with models that can provide authentic impact stories.

RESEARCH

RESEARCH REVIEW

The importance of understanding student misconceptions.

By Elizabeth Foster

In a new study, researchers focus on two areas of teacher knowledge that have been understudied: how attuned teachers are to students' mastery levels in the subject they teach, and how well they recognize and understand students' misconceptions about the content they are learning.

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/publications/jsd/writers-guidelines.