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Leveraging technology in professional learning

Using technology for professional learning offers promises of improved results, often using fewer resources. For example, always-on resources improve access for learners who can engage with their learning 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Remote access to learning increases equity across systems that may not otherwise be able to share resources and provides connections among educators who share needs. Data capture and analysis systems provide a faster and more accurate picture of learning needs, improving the personalization of learning. Technology-enhanced learning designs can improve learning results while aligning professional learning goals at the individual, team, and system levels.

However, to fulfill its promise, technology for professional learning must be implemented:

Within a Comprehensive Professional Learning System For any professional learning tool to be effective, it cannot stand on its own. It must be integrated within a comprehensive system of high-quality professional learning.

In Alignment with the Standards for Professional Learning If technology-enhanced learning is truly going to support a comprehensive effective learning system, it must create professional learning that leads to improved teacher and leader practices and student results, and to do so, it must align with the Standards for Professional Learning.

Within a Cycle of Continuous Improvement Before adopting any technology, educators must first determine student and teacher needs, how the technology can help meet those needs, what type of ongoing support will be available, and the measures for ongoing monitoring of the results.

FOR FURTHER READING AND RELATED TOOLS…

This document is a summary of Learning Forward's new bimonthly action brief, *Transform Professional Learning***.**

Learning Forward members get the full text of each issue, with suggested actions to take, concerns, related articles, and tools for implementation at www.learningforward.org/ transform.

Learning Forward is the only association devoted exclusively to advancing professional learning for student success.

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Practitioner perspectives

TEACHER LEADER
Beth Sanders, a high school teacher in Alabama, discusses the importance of getting teachers comfortable with using technology first, and then helping them feel empowered in how they can use it to improve learning.

PRINCIPAL
Sharon Johnson, a principal in California, shares how an online tracking tool became a game changer by improving the efficiency of professional learning processes and aligning individual, school, and system goals.
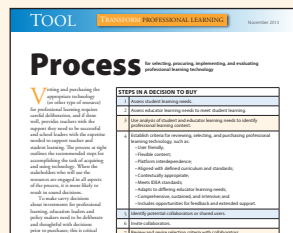
SYSTEM LEADER
Sonja Hollins-Alexander, a former director of professional learning for a large urban school district, explains how she turned budget and staff cuts into an opportunity to do more with less by creating virtual learning communities.

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FEATURED TOOL:
Process for selecting, procuring, implementing, and evaluating professional learning technology

This tool outlines the recommended steps for acquiring and using technology to make savvy decisions about investments for professional learning. Available for members at www.learningforward.org/transform.