

THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

THE LEARNING FORWARD JOURNAL

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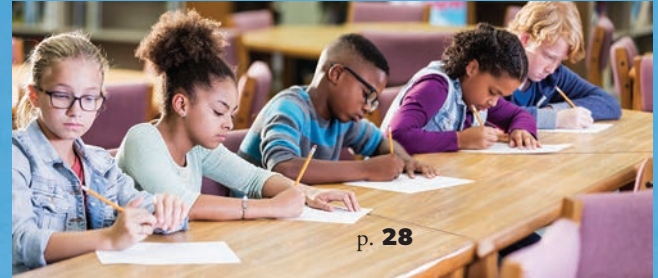
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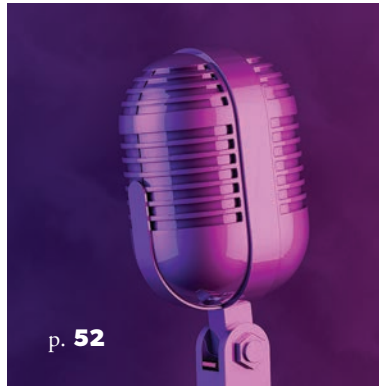
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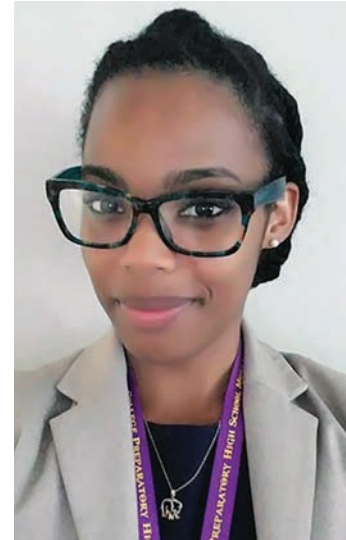
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ISAY

Ashley Kearney

Math teacher at Ron Brown College Preparatory High School in Washington, D.C., and 2020 DCPS Teacher of the Year



"One tool that would help [increase the rate of student success] is quality professional development ... [especially] the idea of differentiated professional development. Just like you know your students and you loop with your students, leaders need to know their teachers. Loop with your teachers. When you [give feedback], go back and look at that feedback. Know what we're doing from year to year and what we're trying to do. ... We need an education system [that is] transparent about what's going on around us."

Spoken at the Faces of Success panel to celebrate Public Schools Week on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 26, 2020

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We want to help you support your new and beginning teachers and provide leadership opportunities in your schools.



HERE WE GO

Suzanne Bouffard

This issue encourages all of us to question our assumptions, check in on the fundamentals, sharpen current practices, and move to the next level.

TO MASTER THE STEPS, REVISIT THE BASICS

Whenever I learn something new — dancing, cooking, statistics — the beginning of the learning curve tends to be quite rewarding. It's the next stage I find most frustrating, the stage I think of as going beyond the basics.

In my early adulthood, I became enthralled with Lindy Hop. In this style of social dancing, the partners know a common vocabulary of steps but determine in the moment which ones to dance and when. Beginning Lindy Hoppers start with the aptly named basic step, gradually adding more complicated moves. Simultaneously, you learn the physical cues of how to lead and follow. With those foundational skills, you're ready to go out dancing.

It's just after you gain confidence that things fall apart. It happens when you start to branch out into improvisation, the real heart of Lindy. You break away from your partner for a minute, add a little flourish, throw in an improvised turn. And at that point, everything you've mastered so far, even the basic step, becomes mangled. Beginning Lindy Hoppers are tentative but conscientious; advanced beginning Lindy Hoppers are, generally speaking, a mess.

But in Lindy and in life, you have to go through that awkward phase to get really good. You have to stretch yourself and take some risks. To deal with the messiness this creates, sometimes you have to go back and review the basics.

And sometimes you just have to plow through the awkwardness, missing a few downbeats and bumping into your partner, until it becomes natural.

As educators know, this awkward phase isn't a one-time experience. If we are always learning new things — as learning professionals should be — we constantly go through cycles of newness, transition, and mastery.

This issue of *The Learning Professional* is dedicated to that important, frustrating, and ultimately rewarding process of going beyond the basics. It encourages all of us to question our assumptions, check in on the fundamentals, sharpen current practices, and move to the next level.

Like learning to improvise on the dance floor, some of the ideas might catch you off guard, like Thomas Guskey's article (p. 18) about how practices change beliefs rather than the reverse. Others, like Amy Burton's article on implementing formative assessment (p. 28), might offer insight into a move you've always wanted to try but never learned. Some, like the article about transfer of learning by Maria Guilott and colleagues (p. 23), remind us that the most essential parts of our craft sometimes get lost unintentionally.

This issue's Ideas section continues the learning about getting to the next level by homing in on leadership. The articles ask us to respond to the changing role of principals (p. 40), realign goals and resources for effectiveness (p. 47), and support leaders with coaching that mirrors and models the support they should offer to teachers (p. 43).

Whatever you're working on right now, whether you are learning the basic steps, adding new material to your polished repertoire, or muddling through your first improvisation, save a spot for Learning Forward on your dance card. We're honored to be your partner. ■



Suzanne Bouffard
(suzanne.bouffard@learningforward.org) is editor of *The Learning Professional*.

THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

THE LEARNING FORWARD JOURNAL

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LEARNING FORWARD'S VISION:

Equity and excellence in teaching and learning.

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VOICES

BRIGHT SPOTS IN THE MIDST OF CRISIS

"The thing that is really inspiring me is that everyone is willing to do the work and everyone is very solution-oriented. This moment shows who we really are and that we're willing to do whatever it takes to get all our students educated. And I've seen more collaboration than I ever have in the past. People are not afraid to say they need help, even people who have been around for a long time and thought they didn't have much to learn."

— *"Facing a crisis: 'We're doing all we can to support all our teachers;'"*

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Learning Forward is developing resources relevant to supporting educators in new teaching and learning environments. See p. 62 for more information. We would love to hear from you about your evolving needs and your creative solutions to maintain a culture of continuous improvement.

Denise Glyn Borders is president and CEO at Learning Forward.

CALL TO ACTION

Denise Glyn Borders

TODAY'S CHALLENGES CALL FOR A COLLECTIVE RESPONSE

As we publish this magazine, our world is in uncertain times with the COVID-19 pandemic. We know you are navigating a new reality, with school systems closed and many questions about what lies ahead. Learning Forward's board of trustees and staff are ready to support all of you navigating this unprecedented situation.

Learning Forward's greatest strength is its community — members, affiliates, and allies. We know that your collective expertise, creativity, determination, and commitment to serving all students and communities will result in amazing solutions to unforeseen challenges such as those we face today. The notion of collective impact is core to Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning, and it has never been more important than it is now.

We recognize that school and system leaders must address urgent, fundamental issues to ensure their students and communities are safe and fed. We know that often those day-to-day questions will overwhelm systems and educators.

Yet supporting leaders, teachers, and staff remains a top priority as well, so they can address their most pressing needs — needs that are evolving on a daily basis. While improvement efforts as defined in the pre-COVID-19 days may take a back seat for now, a mindset for continuous improvement will be more important than ever. Educators are preparing rigorous lessons still, and many are doing it in unfamiliar digital environments.

With so much going on, we offer a few foundational reminders:

Attend to the basics of change. Whether you are supporting teachers to use new technologies, shifting schedules, or confronting other demands, some of the educators you support are leaping into the unknown. Others are pausing to ask loads of questions. Your whole team requires your support. As our Standards for Professional Learning emphasize, recognizing that each educator responds to change differently is essential to offering support and advancing a shared cause. This is particularly true when change is coming from every direction — at home, at work, and in society at large.

Keep teams connected. While many educator networks already operate virtually, some school- and district-based teams are accustomed to face-to-face interactions. Your teams are likely already connected by text. Consider how to leverage those connections with intentional conversations, and look for video platforms to enhance personal connections. Many vendors are offering free or lower cost services for school systems right now. As you leverage these tools, remember that strategic facilitation is just as important online — and not identical to what is effective for in-person meetings.

Prioritize reflection. The enormous stresses of our current reality leave all of us feeling panicky at times. Encourage reflection to assess how your adjusted practices are serving students and your collaborative efforts are serving you. Whether that takes the form of journaling, small-group conversations, or social media posts, reflecting on recent actions and monitoring mindsets can help educators and teams make shifts to refocus or pause for a breath.

Don't ignore your own needs for support. As learning leaders, you already prioritize your own learning, and now is not the time to deny yourself the support of colleagues. Find your team. Ask for help, whether from colleagues, your Learning Forward network, your online communities, or your local communities. As with any critical need in schools, choosing collaboration will lead to better results. ■



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Ave Tatum

FACING A CRISIS: 'WE'RE DOING ALL WE CAN TO SUPPORT ALL OUR TEACHERS'

Learning Forward member Ave Tatum talks about her role as a professional learning coordinator, her work in the Learning Forward Academy, and how she's helping educators in her district navigate school closure due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Current position:

Coordinator of professional learning, Clayton County (Georgia) Public Schools.

Current Learning Forward roles:

Board member, Learning Forward Georgia, and member of Learning Forward Academy Class of 2020.

Fast fact:

She co-presented a session at the 2019 Learning Forward Annual Conference called "Putting you back in YouTube" about screencasting to create a YouTube library of resources for new teachers.

Years in education:

20.

NOMINATE A COLLEAGUE FOR MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

We love to feature the voices and stories of passionate learning professionals. If you'd like to nominate a Learning Forward member, email suzanne.bouffard@learningforward.org and tell us whom you think we should feature and why.

Q: What is the focus of your professional learning work?

I oversee training for new teachers in our district through the district's alternative certification program. I also oversee training for veteran teachers who are becoming certified in teacher support and coaching so they can mentor new teachers.

Through the Learning Forward Academy, I am examining the impact of the mentor training on teacher retention and student achievement, looking at achievement levels for students of the mentor teachers we're training and the new teachers they're mentoring.

Q: What are the biggest professional learning needs you're seeing due to the COVID-19 crisis and the unexpected closure of schools?

We're fortunate that we have digital resources. But not everyone knows how to use them effectively. They have lots of questions, from "How do I do it?" to "How do I know if my students are using it?" to "What about students who don't have access?" Another big focus is making sure credential candidates are completing the classes they need by transitioning from blended to online-only.

Q: How are you connecting with educators in your district during this unusual time?

We're using social media, holding PLCs online, and meeting through technology to make sure everyone has what they need. Everyone has access to Google Classroom, and we're creating extra virtual classrooms for teachers to meet and plan. We're hosting "teacher tech talk" meetings once a week and creating blog posts. It's new to all of us, so no one is an expert yet, but we're doing all we can to support all our teachers.

Q: How is the sudden shift to distance learning affecting new teachers?

Some of them are really embracing the digital tools. The alternative certification candidates just completed a course where they learned how to use Flipgrid and other resources, so they feel prepared. We are tapping into a population of new teachers who are digital natives. For millennials, this is their time to shine in some ways.

Q: What bright spots are you seeing amid this crisis?

The thing that is really inspiring me is that everyone is willing to do the work and everyone is very solution-oriented. This moment shows who we really are and that we're willing to do whatever it takes to get all our students educated. And I've seen more collaboration than I ever have in the past. People are not afraid to say they need help, even people who have been around for a long time and thought they didn't have much to learn.

Q: What's one lesson you are taking away from the current crisis?

Coming out of this, we will all be talking about what kind of programs we can offer teachers so they are ready to teach online. This presents an opportunity to push for professional learning. When we go before legislators, we will be able say, "You can't cut our funding because this is an urgent need." ■



We know that the people who make the greatest difference in the school life of students are teachers, and school principals are not far behind. They need support in order to support students.

Steve Cardwell is president of Learning Forward's board of trustees.

BEING FORWARD

Steve Cardwell

'WE MUST NEVER STOP LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER'

Steve Cardwell is president of Learning Forward's board of trustees and vice president of students at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in British Columbia.

Q: How did you first become involved with Learning Forward?

A: I have been an educator for 40 years and have been associated with Learning Forward for much of that time.

My mum was a teacher and encouraged me to accept that calling. As a young teacher, I joined Learning Forward's predecessor, the National Staff Development Council, because of the excellent journal publications. As I moved into university teaching and then a district staff development role, I benefited from the other resources as well, including learning tools, insights from educational leaders, and network connections, both locally through the British Columbia affiliate and nationally and internationally.

I continued my involvement as I completed my doctorate and took on leadership roles, eventually becoming superintendent in Vancouver. I was then able to use what I had learned from Learning Forward to influence and support the practices and professional learning of others.

Q: Why have you made professional learning a priority in your career?

A: Throughout my career, I have tried to improve my own practice and, at the same time, encourage others to constantly learn and lead. We know that the people who make the greatest difference in the school life of students are teachers, and school principals are not far behind. They need support in order to support students. We must never stop learning from each other, teaching each other, and seeking improvement.

We also need to provide evidence to decision-makers about why professional learning is important so that this work can continue and grow. I have always made this a priority at many levels of the system.

Q: What are some professional learning experiences that have had an impact on you?

A: I have served on three Annual Conference host committees and, in 2016, was program chair. I also served on the board of the British Columbia affiliate for several years and helped plan its conferences. Throughout, I have fostered relationships with many leaders from British Columbia and across the U.S. and Canada, and I continue learning from them.

Perhaps the most influential opportunity for me of recent times is learning from Indigenous educator Denise Augustine and her colleague Rod Allen, previous assistant deputy minister and current superintendent. Denise and Rod are helping us to understand teaching and learning from an Indigenous perspective and transform our education system in British Columbia.

As a superintendent and now vice president of students at a university, my professional learning needs have changed. I find myself needing to know more about the big picture that shapes us as educational leaders. For this reason, I am drawn to content about leadership. The keynote speakers at the 2018 conference had a big impact on me.

Q: What are you looking forward to in your work with Learning Forward over the next year?

A: Education is very different from when I first started many years ago. Schools are more complex — life is more complex. But despite the challenges educators face, I have great hope for the future. As president of Learning Forward, I am honored to be a part of this family that works hard to build the capacity of leaders to establish and sustain highly effective professional learning. ■



EXAMINE. STUDY. UNDERSTAND.

RESEARCH

PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH

Learning Forward is a member of the Knowledge Alliance, a collective group of education research organizations that includes the U.S. Department of Education's Regional Educational Laboratories and Comprehensive Centers. As part of this collaboration, we recently participated in a retreat about research on educational equity as well as advocacy on Capitol Hill to support the use of evidence in federal education policy. This ongoing collaboration will inform all our work, including our efforts to revise the Standards for Professional Learning.



RESEARCH REVIEW

Elizabeth Foster

RESEARCHERS OFFER EVIDENCE OF LESSON STUDY'S BENEFITS

THE STUDY

Vermunt, J.D., Vrikki, M., van Halem, N., Warwick, P., & Mercer, N. (2019). The impact of Lesson Study professional development on the quality of teacher learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies*, 81(1), 61-73. Elsevier Ltd. <https://www.learntechlib.org/p/208204/>

Lesson study is a time-tested approach to professional learning that exemplifies the Standards for Professional Learning: It is ongoing and sustained, embedded in classroom practice, focused on student outcomes, and occurs in professional learning communities. In this approach, teachers collaboratively observe and discuss classroom lessons by analyzing data they collect related to teaching and learning. Developed and initially practiced in Japan, lesson study has been used for decades.

This recent study from researchers in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands adds to a growing research base that suggests a positive impact of lesson study and contributes to an international body of evidence that professional learning improves teacher practice.

A LEARNING PATTERNS PERSPECTIVE

In lesson study, a team of teachers collaboratively decide on a focal lesson. One teacher teaches the lesson while the others observe and take notes about how students are learning — what understanding they demonstrate, what challenges emerge, what misconceptions are surfaced in the classroom discussions and interactions.

In the model followed by teachers in this study, the lesson study took place in teams of three to four teachers and included teachers interviewing selected pupils about their learning experiences, positives and negatives, and suggestions for changes. (This step, according to the researchers, does not occur as frequently in U.S. lesson study.)

The teachers then met to discuss the classroom observations and interviews to understand the impact of the teaching on student outcomes and plan for the next cycle to observe any additional changes.

The researchers aimed to understand the influence of lesson study on teacher learning and identify which components of the teacher discussions foster the most teacher learning. Their hypothesis was that lesson study works because it “improves the quality of teachers’ learning processes and patterns,” which improves their practice and student outcomes.

The study applies what the researchers call “a learning patterns perspective” — that is, it examines the impact of lesson study on the cluster of factors that impact teacher learning, including usual actions, activities, motivations, and beliefs about learning. According to this perspective, although teachers appreciate practical advice, professional learning also needs to address teacher beliefs about teaching and learning factors to impact what can become ritualized classroom practices.

Vermunt and colleagues examined three teacher learning patterns:

- **A meaning-oriented** learning pattern, in which teachers focus on analysis of students’ understanding as well as analysis of one’s own teaching methods and how lessons relate to each other;
- **An application-oriented** learning pattern, in which teachers apply new ideas and methods in their teaching and learn from that application; and
- **A problematic** learning pattern, encompassing negative or less desirable approaches

Elizabeth Foster (elizabeth.foster@learningforward.org) is vice president, research & standards at Learning Forward. In each issue of *The Learning Professional*, Foster explores recent research to help practitioners understand the impact of particular learning practices on student outcomes.

than those above, such as when a teacher relies only on one strategy, struggles with new ways of teaching, or feels discontented with his or her work.

The first two patterns are considered high-quality, while the third is considered low-quality. The researchers hypothesized that teachers' learning patterns would improve in quality when they participated in lesson study and would improve more the longer teachers participated. They also hypothesized that the development of learning patterns would differ among teachers with different levels of teaching experience.

They hypothesized that teachers' perceptions of the value of lesson study would be positively related to an increase in learning pattern quality, but that even controlling for such perceptions, a positive relationship would still exist between participation and learning quality.

STUDY SAMPLE

This research study was part of the Camden lesson study project, a two-year research and development project focused on improving the content and pedagogical knowledge of mathematics teachers implementing a new math curriculum. The Camden project's overall aim was to improve mathematics teaching in 59 primary, secondary, and special schools across London, England, by creating a self-sustaining lesson study community of educators across a network of schools.

The current research study followed two cohorts of mathematics teachers over the second year of the project. The first cohort of teachers had already participated for a year and therefore had a year of lesson study experience under their belts. The second cohort of teachers was beginning lesson study for the first time. Each cohort completed



three iterative lesson study cycles that the research team videotaped for analysis.

The total sample size for the project was 214 teachers (58 in cohort 1 and 156 in cohort 2), with 95% of cohort 2 teachers and 54% of cohort 1 teachers participating in the research study at the start of the second year of the project. Consistent with most longitudinal research studies, participation in the research decreased over time. Sample

sizes for each set of analyses varied, with 161 teachers completing surveys at the start of the study period, 65 teachers completing surveys at the beginning and midway, and 31 completing surveys at the beginning, middle, and end of the study period.

MEASURES OF TEACHER LEARNING

Teachers completed Likert-scale surveys in September, March, and

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Frederick Brown, Kay Psencik, and the 2020 National Principal of the Year, Kerensa Wing
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Stephanie Hirsh and Tracy Crow
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July. In September, they completed an inventory of teacher learning, consisting of 45 statements about teachers' learning that the researchers later categorized into the three learning patterns of interest in this study (meaning-oriented learning, application-oriented learning, and problematic learning), as well as a section that included 20 statements about teachers' perceptions or expectations about lesson study, such as, "Lesson study is an effective model of professional development for me" and "I have reduced feelings of isolation."

FINDINGS

As hypothesized, the study found an association between lesson study participation and quality of teachers' learning patterns.

At the beginning of the study, teachers from schools that already had one year of lesson study experience showed higher-quality learning patterns (more meaning-oriented and application-oriented and less problematic) than those with no experience, with small to medium effect sizes.

In addition, across the school year studied, both cohorts 1 and 2 teachers increased in meaning-oriented learning patterns and decreased in problematic learning patterns over time. (Levels of application-oriented learning patterns did not change significantly, although there was a small upward trend, perhaps because the levels were already high at the beginning of the year.)

These findings about growth over time support previous research and point to the need for adequate and sustained investments of time in this type of professional learning to impact teacher outcomes, as called for by the **Resources standard** of Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning.

Vermunt and colleagues also found interesting patterns related to teacher experience. Less-experienced teachers (those with less than 10 years

As hypothesized, the study found an association between lesson study participation and quality of teachers' learning patterns.

of experience) showed sharp gains in meaning-oriented learning in the first half of the school year, while teachers with more than a decade of experience did not show significant gains during this period. But after the midpoint of the year, the groups were at roughly equal levels, and their meaning-oriented learning grew from there at equal rates.

The findings about the differing approaches and learning outcomes for teachers of differing years of teaching experience is not surprising but have implications for how administrators or directors approach professional learning experiences. This suggests that surveying participants and taking into account the years of experience in teaching as well as the types of experiences (such as with lesson study) are important considerations in designing professional learning.

Teachers' perceptions of the value of lesson study started high, dropped by March, and then rose again in July. When teachers valued lesson study highly, lesson pattern quality was particularly high. However, the positive relationship between lesson study and learning pattern quality held regardless of teachers' perceptions of value.

IMPLICATIONS

While the findings of this single study can be helpful in their detail, it is especially helpful to locate them in a body of evidence that provides additional context and offers a summary of the research to date. See, for instance, a 2017 U.S. study focused on improving teaching and learning as it related to writing achievement in high needs schools. That study, *Lesson Study in a Turnaround School: Local Knowledge as a Pressure-Balanced Valve*

for Improved Instruction (Collet, 2017), is a good complement to the Vermont paper in that it provides case examples and an intentional focus on how lesson study addresses teacher stress and anxiety among teachers in high-needs school settings.

It can also be useful to consider ways that a single study could inform other models and work. For example, there are some similarities between lesson study and improvement science cycles focused on classroom practices.

In one of Learning Forward's What Matters Now Network coalitions, teams of teachers and principals collaboratively discuss a student learning challenge (area of weakness) based on either student test scores or teacher analysis of student artifacts. Teachers then identify a particular instructional step to introduce into subsequent lessons to see if that change has a positive impact on the student outcomes.

The artifacts or scores are then collaboratively analyzed to determine whether that change in instruction had the intended impact. Although teachers don't collaboratively observe a lesson or interview pupils as in the Camden project, in some cases there are opportunities for limited observation of a peer's classroom.

In alignment with the **Learning Designs standard** of the Standards for Professional Learning, lesson study is a well-studied, broadly used, and generalizable professional learning design that encourages the kind of collaborative, classroom-focused teacher learning that aligns with the standards. Research like the study described here suggests it has potential to focus and energize professional learning communities and other collaborations among educators.

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DATA POINTS

4 TIMES MORE UNCERTIFIED TEACHERS

Students of color tend to have less access to certified and experienced teachers than their white counterparts, according to a recent report from the Learning Policy Institute. Analyzing data from the U.S. Department of Education's two most recent years of the Civil Rights Data Collection, researchers compared schools that enrolled the highest percentages of students of color with schools that enrolled the lowest percentages. Schools with high enrollments of students of color were four times more likely to employ uncertified teachers. Furthermore, nearly one in six teachers in these schools were new teachers. The report discusses how these patterns contribute to educational inequity. bit.ly/2TqFN0K

23% OF TEACHERS HAVE 'A LOT' OF INFLUENCE ON LEARNING GOALS

A report from England's National Foundation for Educational Research and the Teacher Development Trust examined the role of teacher autonomy and job retention. According to two national surveys, teachers reported less professional autonomy than other professionals, and teachers with the lowest self-reported levels of autonomy also have lower job satisfaction and job retention.

Troublingly, professional learning is one of the areas in which teachers report the lowest amount of autonomy: 38% of teachers said that they have little or no influence over their professional learning goals, and only 23% said they had a lot of influence over their professional learning goals.

Yet autonomy over professional learning goals is the factor most

associated with higher job satisfaction. Researchers found that a one-step increase in influence (e.g. from some influence to a lot) increases a teacher's intention to stay in teaching by 9 percentage points. They write, "This presents a significant opportunity for school leaders to consider how they design and deliver PD in their schools, harnessing the benefits of increased motivation from teachers having greater involvement in their PD goal-setting."

bit.ly/2Pv1Njx

28 STUDIES OF IMPACT

A meta-analysis of professional learning's impact on reading achievement in grades K-8 produced findings that are statistically significant with a moderate effect size. Researchers at the University of Texas, Austin sampled 28 experimental and quasi-experimental studies.

The significant effect was not dependent on characteristics of the professional learning, the teachers, or the students. (The researchers were not able to examine the quality of the professional learning.) Researchers speculated that this finding might be explained by heterogeneity among the professional learning approaches studied as well as overlap among approaches in each study.

bit.ly/2T86mQH

90% OF ADMINISTRATORS SEE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AS GOOD INVESTMENT

Advancement Courses surveyed 500 U.S. school leaders about their perceptions of and needs for teacher professional learning. Nearly 90% said that professional development is a good investment, but nearly 60% said current professional learning

opportunities aren't sufficient.

They cited time and money as the major challenges, with 83% of school leaders citing cost as a top determining factor in the type of professional learning offered. Overall, 67% of school leaders reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their current offerings. Those at schools with higher-than-average budgets for professional learning were more likely to be satisfied than others.

bit.ly/2wR9Lup

3 PRINCIPLES FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Student Achievement Partners recently released its principles for high-quality, standards-aligned professional learning. Identified from research review and field interviews, the principles represent characteristics that are essential for quality, regardless of the specific form the professional learning takes.

The three principles explain how professional learning must be content-focused, so that teachers have the knowledge and skills required of their discipline; teacher- and student-centered, so that teaching reflects all backgrounds, questions biases and assumptions, and creates a vibrant learning culture for both adults and students; and instructionally relevant and actionable.

bit.ly/32B7Gyu

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BEYOND THE BASICS



FREEDOM TO TAKE RISKS

“**L**ike students, adults need to be in safe learning environments that support risk to remove the affective filter and allow optimal learning to occur. They must feel free to admit when they don’t know something, and they have to feel that their ideas will be listened to and taken seriously.”

— *“Teaching without fear,”* p. **36**



FLIP THE SCRIPT ON CHANGE

EXPERIENCE SHAPES TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

BY THOMAS R. GUSKEY

Teaching is a demanding profession. Teachers dedicate themselves to having *all* their students learn well and take pride in seeing their students' learning success. But what happens when students don't succeed? How do teachers explain students not learning well or not reaching expected levels of achievement?

In a recent research column for *The Learning Professional*, Elizabeth Foster (2019) reviewed a study that considered this issue. Margaret Evans and her colleagues (Evans, Teasdale, Gannon-Slater, La Londe, Crenshaw, Greene, & Schwandt, 2019) investigated teachers' perceptions of student achievement data. Their study focused on the work

of six grade-level teams of teachers (grades 3-5) who met biweekly to discuss various examples of student performance data.

What Foster found surprising was that teachers attributed students' performance to their instruction only 15% of the time. Far more frequently, they connected results to student

MODEL OF TEACHER CHANGE



characteristics, particularly students' behavior, effort, or background.

We've long known that individual student characteristics, family background, and neighborhood experiences contribute to students' performance in school (Stewart, 2008). We also know that many of these student characteristics lie outside teachers' control. Nevertheless, significant research also shows that, among school-related factors affecting achievement, *teachers matter the most*. Studies estimate that teachers have two to three times the impact of any other school factor, including services, facilities, and even leadership (Hattie, 2003; Rand Education, 2012).

The results of the Evans et al. (2019) study prompt two important questions for those who design and lead professional learning. First, how did these teachers come to their beliefs? Specifically, why do they see their instructional practices as having so little influence on student learning? And second, how can we change this? If teachers viewing evidence of student learning see their impact as so modest, the prospects for improvement are pretty dismal. How can we help

This article is based on a chapter from the book *Get Set, Go!* by Thomas R. Guskey (Solution Tree Press, 2020).

teachers recognize that what they do matters and they *can* have an important impact on how well students learn?

WHAT DOESN'T WORK?

Many education leaders, writers, and consultants think the best way to change teachers' beliefs is through logic, reason, and philosophical arguments. They approach change by presenting logical and carefully reasoned points that illustrate discrepancies between current evidence and teachers' perspectives. They believe that when teachers see these logical and philosophical inconsistencies, they will recognize the errors in their thinking and commit to change.

In essence, they are trying to create what psychologists refer to as "cognitive dissonance," a concept originated over a half century ago by psychologist Leon Festinger (1957). Cognitive dissonance occurs when individuals are confronted

with new information or situations that contradict their current beliefs, ideas, or values.

To deal with the psychological discomfort of this dissonance, individuals do one of three things. They can avoid the contradictory information or situations that prompt the dissonance; alter their understanding of the new information or situations to reduce the dissonance; or revise their beliefs, ideas, or values to align with the new information or situation.

In other words, they can ignore the new, change the new to fit their view, or change their view to align with the new. The most difficult of these to accomplish is the third: revising personal beliefs, ideas, or values.

The leaders, writers, and consultants seeking to initiate reforms generally try to create cognitive dissonance in one of three ways: confrontation, mental manipulation, or emotional appeal.

Those who use *confrontation* typically begin by describing the beliefs or practices they want teachers to change as *traditional*. They initially portray the traditional as innocent, innocuous, and generally accepted. But they quickly turn the tables and

label demeaning, student-unfriendly practices as traditional, then present the practices they advocate as the most effective path to reform.

Those who use *mental manipulation* generally construct arguments to show educators the wrongness of their thinking, the illogic of their assumptions, or the inappropriateness of their beliefs. They attempt to persuade through mental entanglement, convincing educators that their beliefs cannot be justified through reason or logic.

Those who use *emotional appeal* try to instill in educators a highly emotional response to their ideas and opinions. They tell heart-wrenching stories of the hardships students suffer and the alleged devastating effects of the policies or practices they want educators to change. They stress that continuing these policies and practices will have dire consequences for students and, as a result, present

change as a moral imperative.

Unfortunately, these techniques rarely produce significant and enduring change. As renowned psychologist Edward de Bono noted, “Logic will never change emotion or perception” (quoted in Balakrishnan, 2007). Emotions, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs are not formed intellectually, and they typically are not defended rationally. Instead, they are driven by what people have previously known and experienced.

WHAT DOES WORK?


Ensuring positive and sustained change requires a different view of the change process, one that challenges the commonly assumed impetus for change.

Educators generally agree that improvement efforts are designed to bring about change in three major areas (Learning Forward, 2011): teachers’ attitudes and beliefs, teachers’ classroom

practices, and student learning outcomes, including achievement, engagement, and attitude. What educators don’t agree on is *the order of these changes*.

As described earlier, many professional learning efforts are based on the assumption that change in teachers’ attitudes and beliefs will lead to changes in their classroom practices, which, in turn, will result in improved student learning. However, modern investigations of teacher change show that this assumption is generally inaccurate, especially for experienced educators (Putnam & Borko, 2000).

Instead, significant changes in teachers’ attitudes and beliefs take place only *after* positive change in student learning is evident. These improvements in student learning result from specific changes teachers make in their classroom practices — e.g. new materials or curriculum, new classroom



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policies and practices (Guskey, 1986).

As the model of teacher change on p. 19 illustrates, the critical point is that professional learning alone rarely yields significant change in teachers' attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, or dispositions. These attributes change only when teachers have clear evidence of improvement in students' learning outcomes (Guskey, 1989, 2002).

Experience shapes teachers' attitudes and beliefs. Teachers retain and repeat practices that work, whether in motivating students, managing student learning, or helping students attain desired learning outcomes. They generally abandon practices that don't work or fail to yield any tangible evidence of improvement. Therefore, the endurance of any change in classroom practices and procedures relies on demonstrable results in student outcomes.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE MODEL

This alternative change model yields several powerful implications for those who design and lead professional learning.

1. Efforts to change attitudes and beliefs directly rarely succeed.

Leaders who set out to change teachers' attitudes and beliefs directly are mostly doomed to fail. Modest change may be possible and definitely should be sought. When presented with new ideas and supporting evidence on new approaches to instruction, for example, teachers' attitudes may be moved from cynical to skeptical and they may consider new points of view. But confidence in a new approach and commitment to it are rare up front. The best that can be hoped for is a tentative, "I'm not sure, but I'll give it a try."

The key to success rests in changing their experience. The film *Remember the Titans* provides an excellent example of how changing experience can lead to changed attitudes. Based on a true story, the film portrays African American coach Herman Boone's efforts to integrate a high

school football team in Alexandria, Virginia, in the early 1970s. Changing the experience of these young athletes transformed their attitudes and beliefs. Similarly, meaningful change in teachers' experience is key to significant change in their attitudes and beliefs.

2. Change is a gradual and difficult process, especially for teachers.

Becoming proficient at something new and finding meaning in a new way of doing things requires time and effort. Any change that holds great promise for increasing teachers' effectiveness and enhancing student outcomes will likely require extra work, especially when beginning. This can significantly add to teachers' workload.

In addition, change can feel threatening and usually brings a certain amount of anxiety. Trying something new means risking failure, which runs counter to most teachers' strong commitment to ensuring every student learns. Therefore, even when presented with evidence from carefully designed experimental studies, teachers do not easily alter or discard the practices they have developed and refined in their classrooms (Hargreaves, 2005).

It is also important to recognize that every school will not implement reforms identically. Reforms based on assumptions of uniformity in the educational system repeatedly fail (Elmore, 1997). Any change must strike an appropriate balance between program fidelity and contextual conditions.

Researchers point to the need for "mutual adaptation" (McLaughlin, 1976): Individuals must adapt to implement the new policies and practices, but the innovation also must be adapted to fit the unique characteristics of the context.

Too much change in either direction can mean disaster. If the innovation requires too much adaptation from individuals, implementation is likely to be mechanical and ineffective. But too much adaptation of the innovation may result in the loss of elements

essential to program impact. Successful implementation requires a critical balance between the workload requirements of teachers and vital dimensions of innovation fidelity.

3. Feedback on results is essential.

For new practices to be sustained and changes to endure, teachers need regular feedback about the effects of these efforts. Success is reinforcing. People tend to repeat the actions that cause it and decrease or halt actions that don't. This is especially true of teachers, whose primary psychological rewards come from feeling certain about their capacity to affect student growth and development (Huberman, 1992). Professional learning initiatives must include procedures that offer teachers frequent and specific feedback on results.

However, that feedback must be based on evidence that teachers trust and find meaningful. Equally important, it must be evidence that comes rather quickly (Guskey, 2007). With instructional reforms, for example, it would be helpful for teachers to see not only improved classroom assessment results, but also students more engaged in class activities, more willing to participate in class, or developing greater confidence in themselves as learners. Teachers won't wait two or three months to see if new strategies or practices work. They want to see evidence of change in their students within a few weeks or a month at most.

4. Change requires continued follow-up, support, and pressure.

If change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs occurred primarily before the implementation of new practices or innovations, the quality of the initial professional learning would be of utmost importance. But because evidence of improved student outcomes is necessary for change, it is the continuous follow-up that teachers receive that is most crucial.

Support should be coupled

with pressure. Support allows those engaged in the difficult process of implementation to tolerate the anxiety of occasional setbacks. Pressure is often necessary to initiate change among those whose self-impetus for change is not great (Corcoran, Fuhman, & Belcher, 2001) and ensure persistence in the challenging tasks intrinsic to all improvement efforts.

Of all aspects of professional learning, follow-up is perhaps the most neglected. Yet to be successful, professional learning must be seen as a *process*, not an event (Learning Forward, 2011). Learning to be proficient at something new or finding meaning in a new way of doing things is difficult and sometimes painful. Teachers need support to ensure that improvement is seen as a continuous and ongoing endeavor.

ALTERING TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE

Those who design and lead professional learning must ensure that teachers implement practices that have strong research support *and* yield evidence of success that teachers can experience firsthand. Examining evidence on students' performance is vital to improving educational outcomes.

But for these examinations to be effective, teachers must believe their actions influence those outcomes. Implementing innovations that lack supporting research evidence and fail to yield positive results causes teachers to believe their actions don't matter (Guskey, 2018). This diminishes teachers' enthusiasm toward professional learning and challenges their belief in their own effectiveness.

Because experience shapes teachers' attitudes and beliefs, change efforts must focus on altering teachers' experience. They must help teachers gather that evidence to verify positive results when they occur and make necessary revisions when they don't.

Change is a complex process, but it's not haphazard. Careful attention to the order of change events described

in the model presented here will not only facilitate change but also ensure its endurance.

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MAKING LEARNING STICK

TEACHING FOR TRANSFER ENSURES STUDENTS CAN APPLY WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED

BY MARIA C. GUILOTT, KAREN WIGBY, LESLIE ANN OWEN, AND GAYLYNN PARKER

A dilemma for teachers at all levels is planning for *transfer* of learning, or students' long-term retention. Most teachers consider their lessons a success if students can acquire information and understand it. But it is not until students can apply what they learn that there is cause for celebration.

Much has been written about how difficult it is to achieve transfer, the third of three learning stages. The previous two are easier to accomplish: *acquisition*, or taking in a body of information, and *meaning-making*, which involves analysis and synthesis

to make sense of the learning at hand (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

Getting students to transfer, or *application*, is difficult to achieve, but essential. Transfer of learning takes time, a precious commodity for teachers bound by a tight schedule. Unfortunately, transfer often gets lost in the day-to-day realities of schools, including testing requirements.

Students who are seeking good grades often ask, "Will this be on the test?" and try to commit information to memory only if the teacher says it will be on the test, quickly forgetting the information after the test because they never truly understood or applied it.

One way for the teacher to make sure that he or she is taking the learning to transfer is to follow the framework of Understanding by Design, developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe.

In their 2011 book, *The Understanding by Design Guide*, Wiggins and McTighe flipped the notion that teachers teach content to be regurgitated (and promptly forgotten) to a learning community with teachers as designers of learning. In this approach, teachers begin with a transfer goal and then backwards plan so that their classroom strategies and instructional practices target the goal.

One of the unique things about the

BREAKING DOWN THE TRANSFER GOAL		
A If I see and hear them do this, they CAN transfer this learning.	B If I see and hear them do this, then they CANNOT (yet) transfer:	C I will commit to doing this differently in my classroom to ensure my results look like Column A and not Column B.
Use vivid adjectives and adverbs to help the reader see what the writer sees.	Descriptions are simple and lack clarity. Details tell rather than show.	Introduce new vocabulary based on senses and actions. Together prepare a class word bank with pictures in the Moodle.
Write a well-organized descriptive paragraph using spatial order.	When describing a picture, the details are in random order.	Show them models and pictures to help with description. Use gradual release of responsibility and models of spatial order paragraphs to help them organize details.
Look at a picture and clearly describe the context and what people are doing.	Student is confused and frustrated. The description of the picture is simple, incomplete, or vague.	Using the communicative approach, model correct writing, and teach them how to write a paragraph. Teach students to use rubrics for self-assessment and reflection on how to improve.

Understanding by Design framework is that it focuses on learning from the student’s point of view. To consider transfer in the design process, teachers must remove themselves from the expert position and consider what it will take for a novice learner to grasp the ideas and concepts.

Two different sites where teaching for transfer is thriving are a university in Guayaquil, Ecuador, and a high school in North Carolina. They show how this process can be useful at two different educational levels and in very different contexts, yielding similarly positive results.

THE TRANSFER GOAL

Teachers begin with establishing a transfer goal — what they want students to be able to do with the content they are learning. Then they complete the following prompt: “I want my students to learn ... so that, in the long run and on their own, they can”

To complete this prompt, the teacher needs to ask himself: Why am I teaching this? What do I want my students to do with this when we are finished with the unit? What about this content do I want my students to remember in the long run?

Here is an example of a transfer goal: *I want my students to learn to use vivid adjectives, appropriate grammar,*

Teachers begin with establishing a transfer goal — what they want students to be able to do with the content they are learning.

and vocabulary so that, in the long run and on their own, they will be able to produce a well-written descriptive paragraph. The transfer goal clearly delineates the expectation for the unit and spells out what needs to be included in the instructional plan.

MAKING THE GOAL VISIBLE

To plan classroom activities and assessments that target the transfer goal, teachers need to deconstruct, or break down, the transfer goal. In this process, teachers ask themselves two questions: What would I see and hear if the students were able to transfer? What would I see and hear if the students were **not yet** able to transfer?

Both questions help the designer think about expectations, outcomes, obstacles, and misunderstandings. The “not yet” idea points to the issue as temporary with a possible solution that the teacher controls.

By posing and answering these questions, the teacher becomes action-oriented, interested in seeing how

and why things work and making adjustments along the way. She is able to see from her own experience where students are on the learning continuum.

TAKING ACTION

In our own work applying the Understanding by Design framework in schools, we found that breaking down the transfer goal was helpful but often was not enough on its own. Teachers tended to stop too soon rather than considering what was next in the design, the classroom activities, and the assessments.

It became clear that we needed to add a third question to help create a commitment to action: What will I, as the teacher, commit to doing? Any process that promises to yield results requires a commitment with an actionable step to follow through, and this question helps teachers make that commitment.

To follow through on the previous example, the table above shows what it would look like to add the third question.

GUAYAQUIL, ECUADOR: Designing for transfer at the college level

Universidad Casa Grande in Guayaquil, Ecuador, offers a master’s degree to prepare teachers of English in

KARINA IZQUIERDO ZAMORRA'S BREAKDOWN OF TRANSFER GOAL		
A If I see and hear them do this, they CAN transfer this learning.	B If I see and hear them do this, then they CANNOT (yet) transfer:	C I will commit to doing this differently in my classroom to ensure my results look like Column A and not Column B.
Use vocabulary they know/ word choice. Use transition words. Communicate simple ideas in a cohesive way. Write a main idea and supporting details. An introduction with a thesis statement. Use subject-verb agreement.	Weak vocabulary/word choice. Sentence structure is poor. No transition words. No organization of ideas. No main idea and no supporting details. Poor introduction and weak thesis statement. Poor conclusion. Weak subject-verb agreement.	Create two-word banks. Develop a bank of transition words. Provide immediate feedback. Collaboration for brainstorming. Provide scaffolding strategies such as brainstorming, a five-paragraph essay structure, peer collaboration, graph. Use Answer Garden and Padlet web tools for peer collaboration. Scaffold for thesis statement and collaboration for brainstorming.

both the public and private schools at the elementary, secondary, and college levels.

Among the program’s requirements is a course in instructional design. It focuses in large part on teaching that results in transfer of learning and culminates with implementing an innovation in the classroom to be tested with an action research model. Students use the process of Understanding by Design, with the three reflection and planning questions described above about getting to transfer.

After taking the course, graduate student Karina Izquierdo Zamorra summarized her transfer goal and breakdown. Her transfer goal was: “I want my students to learn how to communicate simple ideas, new vocabulary and transition words, appropriate word order, subject-verb agreement, writing paragraphs, and a thesis statement, so that, in the long run and on their own, they will produce short, simple essays on current topics.” The following is the breakdown of her transfer goal. See table above.

After the intervention, she used a rubric measuring the content, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions to score students’ pre- and post- essays. Students in her class improved significantly in their writing. Now, two years after

The faculty has an agreed-upon set of learning principles and principles of professionalism that identify what designing for transfer looks like.

taking the course, Zamorra is using what she learned as a facilitator of learning for other teachers.

Since 2017, 127 graduate students have taken the course on instructional design and learned to use the breakdown of the transfer goal successfully. The students choose a final project, either taking an exam or conducting action research, in which they plan an innovation using the Understanding by Design process.

The majority choose the latter — 97% of the 2018 cohort and 77% of the 2017 cohort — and their projects were generally successful, as indicated by either moderate or substantial effect sizes when comparing students’ pre- and post- test results.

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA: A high school’s culture of transfer

At St. Mary’s School, a private high school in Raleigh, North Carolina, designing for learning is taken seriously. From the dean of teaching and learning to the faculty, designing learning for

transfer is embedded in the culture of the school.

The faculty has an agreed-upon set of learning principles and principles of professionalism that identify what designing for transfer looks like. These documents help faculty to be on the same page and understand what is expected of them in and out of the classroom.

Faculty members begin their tenure with a three-day institute about designing for learning, which itself is shaped by transfer goals. They examine why Saint Mary’s places value on getting students to transfer, learn about the concepts in the Understanding by Design framework, and practice getting to transfer by building a unit in their content area curriculum with a transfer goal. They share their units, get feedback from veteran faculty, and refine them.

To provide ongoing support for designing with transfer in mind and linking this process to the school’s curriculum, the school invested in an instructional coach position, committed to working with all faculty to build better designs for learning, addressing questions that may arise during the process, and evaluating the effectiveness at the end of the learning cycle.

The learning coach frequently employs the three-column transfer

GROW COACHING PROCESS		
Goal: I want to _____ so that _____.		
	Objectives	Sample questions
Reality	Invite self-assessment of topic and situation.	How do you know this is accurate? What impact does it have? Are there any other relevant factors? What have you done to this point?
Obstacles	Identify any obstacles, i.e. people, time, resources, money. (Eliminate those over which you have no control.)	What keeps you from achieving your goal? What else is an obstacle? How are you involved? What changes would you have to make?
Options	Cover the full range of possibilities and invite suggestions. Make sure there are choices. (In a group coach, these will come up naturally.)	What are your alternatives? Is there someone who can help you? What are the pros and cons of that option?
Way forward	Get a commitment to act. Plan detailed options.	What will happen first? What is your time frame? What are possible problems? What kind of support will you need?

goal breakdown matrix in coaching sessions to maintain transfer at the forefront. This doesn't replace the curriculum but helps teachers maximize its use so that students achieve transfer of the information.

During faculty meetings, all faculty members have opportunities to continue their growth in lesson design. Using a coaching process called GROW (see table above), faculty are encouraged to pitch an idea they are thinking about and have others coach them through the process to assist them in thinking about a transfer goal, empathize with students where there may be a disconnect in their learning, and design for an appropriate tension between having a grasp of concepts and stretching student learning to their "what's next."

Some helpful probing questions that point at possible pitfalls while engaged in the process are: Where do you think the students may have difficulty? What will it look like, sound like, feel like, if they are transferring their learning?

Through a generative process, faculty visit other classrooms and practice identifying what engaging learning looks like so that they get inspiring ideas to bring back to their own classrooms.

GROW COACHING PROCESS

Learning walks (Guilott & Parker, 2012), also focused on transfer, are embedded in the school's culture and help faculty to understand and identify transfer in their own classrooms as well as others'.

Through a generative process, faculty visit other classrooms and practice identifying what engaging learning looks like so that they get inspiring ideas to bring back to their own classrooms. The learning walk focuses on the students, not the teacher. Faculty practice observing what learning looks like as acquisition, meaning-making, or transfer, and ways

to avoid common problems.

Rather than relying on identifying issues when students are ready to be assessed, learning walks can help faculty understand the power of observation and conversation with students in the formative assessment process. When debriefing a learning walk, there is no judgment, just learning about learning as it happens with peers. See table on p. 27 for details about conducting learning walks.

PUTTING STUDENTS FRONT AND CENTER

These two examples show how Understanding by Design puts the student perspective front and center. If students know what and why they're learning, the possibility for transfer and understanding increases exponentially.

Teaching for transfer is a continuum that requires time, but the time is well-spent because teachers begin to own the process and feel empowered, and students come to understand what and why they're learning, increasing exponentially the

HOW TO CONDUCT A LEARNING WALK		
Absolutes for learning walks	Questions for students	Questions for the people on the walk
<p>We are all learners helping each other improve our skills by going into classrooms for 4-5 minutes, asking 3-4 students some questions, and immediately debriefing the experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No one is there to judge. We record nothing. We are looking for evidence of learning for transfer. No one goes alone on a learning walk. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What are you learning? How will you know when you learned it? What are you being asked to do? How is this like something you have already learned? What will you do with this? Why is it important to know this? 	<p>Ask these questions immediately following the 4-5-minute conversation with students to guide their collective thinking.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What did you observe that you could take away immediately? What was the teacher enabling the students to do? Was the teacher taking the students to transfer? How do you know? If you were the designer of learning, what would you do next to kick it up a notch?

possibility for real and lasting learning.

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HOW DO I KNOW MY STUDENTS ARE LEARNING?

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT
CONNECTS LEARNING TARGETS
TO STUDENT OUTCOMES

BY AMY BURTON

Why is formative assessment — a proven powerful instructional practice — so elusive in classrooms?

As a regional professional learning provider for several years, I regularly observed classroom practice to collect data on how to best support my teachers. I rarely observed the use of formative assessment, even though,

when asked, teachers could define it — a quick check, during instruction, of what all students understand so far about the learning objective.

When I did observe formative assessment, the most common practice was a simple “thumbs up if you understand.” But teachers didn’t check the truth or accuracy of these perceptions.

A few more advanced teachers used white boards on which students could

display responses, such as their answers to math problems. Yet teachers seldom used that information to inform their practices. Regardless of understanding, teachers continued to teach the lesson as planned.

The lack of formative assessment was apparent among both veteran and novice teachers, even though novice teachers’ recent university coursework included assessment for learning. So why wasn’t formative assessment an

established practice, particularly with the newly trained teachers?

To pursue the mystery of why formative assessment was so highly recommended but not practiced, I led an action research cohort as part of my dissertation research. I explored how teachers participating in a reflective learning community shifted their mental models of teaching and learning as a result of using formative assessment to inform implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

I conducted the action research project under the umbrella of a districtwide professional learning initiative funded by a federal Race to the Top grant to the state of Nevada. For that grant, 10 implementation specialists and I sought to shift secondary teachers' instructional practices from a teaching-centered to a learning-centered stance. Guiding me in this research were Bill Thornton and Janet Usinger of the University of Nevada, Reno educational leadership department.

The grant defined a learning-centered teacher as one whose main focus is on continual assessment of students' learning. Student learning was defined as progress toward identified learning targets that are created

collectively by teachers and based on the required state or federal standards. As Blumberg (2016) explained, "Learning-centered teaching shifts the focus of instruction from what the teacher does to how and how well the students learn" (p. 303).

Within the district-directed professional learning requirements funded by the grant, I gained permission to study the relationship between a learning-centered stance and my cohort of middle school science teachers' current teaching practices, including whether and how they used formative assessment.

Four out of 14 middle school science teachers volunteered to explore their beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning for this project. With this group, I led the development of our own action research learning community, which we named the reflective learning team.

I created a plan/observe/debrief protocol to support the data collection and analysis process and analyzed team members' lesson planning, instruction, and student learning data through a lesson study cycle that repeated weekly over a two-year period.

Participants studied their lessons with me in the role of coach, individually through journal reflections, and with their fellow learning team participants.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment is not novel, but neither is it well-established. Formative assessment was not part of my experience as a K-12 public school student growing up in the United States. It was not part of my curriculum when I was a teacher candidate entering the profession in 1980. Nor was it a featured subject when I earned my master's degree in 1991.

However, as the standards movement gained momentum during the 1980s, formative assessment began to creep into my professional development experiences and classroom observation checklists. Black and William published *Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment*, their landmark study of the impact of formative assessment on learning, in 1998.

By 2005, when I applied for National Board Certification, formative assessment was foundational to that process. Nevertheless, I still struggled as a high school teacher to use assessment to inform my instruction because the data the district collected were not easily accessible to classroom teachers. I had to pioneer my own student learning data with little support.

Then, in 2013, formative assessment became part of our state teacher evaluation standards. Teachers were now required to support student metacognition by communicating learning targets, assisting students in analyzing their progress toward those targets based on ongoing formative assessment, and differentiate instruction based on the resulting student learning data. Yet I saw many teachers continuing to struggle with its use, and this drove my interest in conducting this study.

HOW THE LEARNING TEAM APPLIED THE STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Learning Communities: The reflective learning team, a cohort of teachers, conducted the action research project. Throughout, team members shared goals, data, and reflections with one another and me.

Leadership: Through my doctoral program, I assumed and fully committed to the role of primary leader, supported by program mentors and district permission.

Resources: Funds from a Race to the Top grant and the structures and financial and human capital of my doctoral program supported the project.

Data: Together, team members and I reviewed their lesson planning, instruction, and student learning data through a lesson study cycle. I created a plan/observe/debrief protocol to support the data collection and analysis process.

Learning Designs: We built the effort to build teachers’ knowledge about formative assessment on principles of adult development, including research on change management, teacher efficacy and leadership, and modeling the skills teachers are expected to use with students.

Implementation: We conducted the project in an ongoing, continuous manner, with the learning building on itself over time. The team planned for sustaining these practices beyond the period of the project.

Outcomes: Throughout, the focus was on improving student understanding and mastery through building teachers’ capacity to check for understanding and make necessary changes in instruction.

This process was grounded in Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning (see sidebar at left).

BUILD TEACHERS’ PRACTICE

While conducting preassessments with the teachers, I noted a lack of formative assessment practice. Because formative assessment is central to the definition of learning-centered practice, I intentionally aimed to build teachers’ use of this practice.

I designed a learning experience that would model the use of formative assessment and support teachers’ metacognition so that they would be better prepared to use formative assessment with their students.

We began by establishing learning targets. As we continued working together, I checked for evidence of understanding and progress toward the participants’ learning targets by qualitative analysis of their plan/observe/debrief data and coaching sessions, the minutes from their group lesson study sessions, and their individual journal reflections on their learning process. I shared my analysis of individual teachers’ practice during coaching sessions and my analysis of the team’s progress as a whole during lesson study meetings.

We worked together to assess and reflect on student outcomes, based on district curriculum targets for science that had been developed the year before, in alignment with the Next Generation Science Standards.

During our data analysis, we searched for evidence of students’ progress toward understanding the science content and meeting these new learning targets, as well as how teachers’ shifts in instructional practice affected students’ progress. Throughout this process, we discussed the use of formative assessment and engaged in metacognition.

SHIFTING PRACTICE

Participants implemented formative assessment methods to check for students’ understanding, and all

reported that it shifted their teaching, acting as a gate that opened their minds to what learning-centered instruction encompassed.

One way participants began to measure learning was with preassessments. Their former practice was to sort through activities that aligned with the learning target and assume they knew which ones students needed. Instead, participants preassessed their students and planned based on the resulting data.

One participant summarized the learning-centered assessment shift in this way: “Observe first, formatively assess, and then guide learners to their educational goals.” Participants also described repurposing former practices as formative assessments. Those practices included warm-ups, predictions, exit tickets, and science journal reflections.

This process shifted teachers’ understanding of who is responsible for learning and how. For example, one participant described how her new assessment mindset changed her interactions with students from a focus on classroom management to facilitating learning: “I am changing the way I speak. Instead of coming around and saying, ‘Get moving,’ I switched to, ‘Do you understand?’ And if they said no, I asked what they were thinking. I clarified their understanding of the instructions. It surprised me, when you throw it back out to them, and ask, ‘What are you thinking?’ ”

Another participant realized the need to be present with students and reflect with them: “My hardest shift is that I’m very focused on the destination, and this process is not about the destination. ... Now I see that I need to monitor more as my students go on the journey I have set for them. ... If my focus is just the test, the final destination, then I miss a lot. ... I’m having an aha moment: Right now, we measure our students’ actions along the way, not their learning.”

Once participants understood the value of formative assessment, they

realized they now had to respond to the varied student needs the data revealed. Not all students were learning at the same pace or in the same way. Teachers began experimenting with differentiated instruction, an instructional practice that had eluded them in the past. It was at this point in the participants' learning progression that our two-year research project ended.

LEARNING-CENTERED INSTRUCTION

The teacher participants identified formative assessment as key to their understanding and valuing of the many elements of learning-centered instruction. This understanding evolved through a three-step, domino-like process:

1. Understand the importance of **learning targets** in their instructional practice.
2. Recognize the need to develop students' **higher-order thinking skills**.
3. Acknowledge the need to **partner with students** rather than being the expert.

Learning targets. In the past, participants said, their use of learning targets was a compliance-level activity based on observation protocol requirements. They came to realize they would need to change their practices based on the new Next Generation Science Standards-aligned learning targets.

One participant described a major shift in her lesson planning, explaining that "having such a focused learning target has led me to really think about the value of each lesson, or even the value of each activity. I continually ask myself if what I am doing will get the students to where they need to be to master the concept."

Another teacher said that when she began engaging in ongoing formative assessment aligned with the target and the unit common assessment, her students "did equal to or better than the other teachers'. I was blown away by how well my students did on that

[common] assessment." Formative assessment allowed her to not only move students' understanding forward but also collect evidence of her instructional impact on student learning.

Higher-order thinking skills. Once participants committed to planning lessons based on the learning targets and formative assessment of student understanding, they discovered that the Next Generation Science Standards required an increase in student higher-order thinking skills that their previous lessons had not emphasized.

In addition, the common summative assessments they had designed to measure mastery of the learning targets now required students to model, describe, and explain scientific phenomena. Higher-order thinking skills could not be measured by the multiple choice tests they had previously employed, so their formative assessments needed to focus on what students were thinking.

The benefit was immediately identified: "We aren't teaching to a test. We are teaching to a skill." One participant summarized the shift this way: "I'm measuring their ability to think." Another talked about the value of "letting kids run with higher-order thinking questions and inquiry." As a result, one participant noted, "The engagement went up and the [mis]behavior went down."

And when formative assessment showed that students did not progress as expected, participants re-evaluated alignment of their instruction with their targets, noted a need for higher-order thinking skills, and made a change that led to increased student engagement in the learning.

This process helped them identify challenges in supporting higher-order thinking. One explained, "During the teaching part, I need to focus more on helping the students work harder and with purpose in their own learning."

Teacher and student learning partnership. The search for ways to support higher-order thinking skills among students led to the third

domino, the teachers' recognition that they were no longer the experts imparting knowledge to students. To develop students' higher-order thinking skills, participants had to partner with them. This challenged their assumptions about their roles as teachers and their students' capacity as learners.

The participants explored how to facilitate learning rather than deliver content. One participant described her rethinking of roles and relationships: "One of the things I've had to learn to let go of is the need to have control of everything. I need to focus on what's important. ... It frees me up to help students needing help and allows them to take control of their learning."

Another participant said: "I came to gradually realize that my traditional approach wasn't always challenging my students or allowing them to show me just what they understood. ... I thought practicing the information using a variety of techniques created a learning community. I had to confront myself and realize that just because I delivered the curriculum didn't mean that the students were using their own resources and initiative to understand the content."

Participants noted that formative assessment shifted the teacher-student talk ratio. They observed that when they talked less and listened to students more, they gained real-time insights into student progress toward mastery of the learning targets. In addition, they were able to identify students' misconceptions, which better focused their lessons. One participant explained the connection between formative assessment and student metacognition this way: "Me knowing what students know is not new, but me helping the students see what they know is new."

BENEFITS FOR ALL LEARNERS

By modeling learning-centered instruction, formative assessment tied to learning objectives, metacognition, and differentiation, the reflective learning team process gave teachers the chance

Continued on p. 35



READY FOR READING

TENNESSEE NETWORK OF SCHOOLS TACKLES THE LITERACY CRISIS

BY SHARON ROBERTS

Across the U.S., educators face a common challenge: How can we help all students become strong readers and writers?

The 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also called the Nation's Report Card, showed that there is no state where the majority of 4th grade students are proficient in reading, and only eight jurisdictions have at least 40%

of students reaching proficiency (The Nation's Report Card, 2019a).

In my state of Tennessee, many educators believe we have a reading crisis. Two-thirds of 3rd graders do not read and write on grade level as measured by our statewide assessment (Tennessee Department of Education, 2019a). That figure is in line with the NAEP results showing that only 35% of our 4th graders are proficient in reading, a figure that has barely budged since 2013 (The Nation's Report Card, 2019b).

The disappointing data on reading led district leaders in the Leading Innovation for Tennessee Education (LIFT) network to address the persistent literacy challenge. LIFT is a group of committed superintendents from across Tennessee working together to explore innovative approaches and share best practices that will benefit their students, as well as students across the state and nation. The leaders in LIFT represent a wide range of school settings, from large urban schools to small rural ones.

Four years ago, LIFT began focusing collectively on improving literacy outcomes for students through implementation of high-quality instructional materials grounded in the science of reading and designed to build student knowledge. These materials, supported by aligned professional learning, enable quality implementation.

My organization, the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), convenes the LIFT network and coordinates technical assistance and professional learning. This collaborative effort has illuminated the early literacy challenges that nearly all schools face in boosting reading and writing, but it has also shown that working on a common problem of practice with high-quality materials and support works, and it has provided a model for other districts.

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

When LIFT began its work in literacy, SCORE arranged for TNTP, a national nonprofit focused on supporting states and districts to end educational inequities, to provide technical assistance to the districts. Early on, TNTP conducted knowledge-building sessions about early literacy for staff in the LIFT districts and visited more than 200 K-2 English language arts classrooms. A common theme emerged: English language arts instruction did not consistently provide students with opportunities to engage with grade-level texts or master grade-level standards.

Guided by the results of the

TNTP review, the LIFT network set a coherent vision for the work: Use strong instructional materials aligned to Tennessee’s academic standards to drive significant improvements in classroom instruction and student performance. The districts that participated chose curriculum that earned top scores in reviews by EdReports.org — most of which was available open source.

LIFT leaders made a critical decision early in their literacy work. They recognized the need for professional learning and capacity building and determined that there had to be distributed leadership to form a vertical spine of support for implementing rigorous instructional materials throughout the districts. The spine extended from district leadership through strategy leads, often elementary or curriculum supervisors, instructional coaches, and school leaders who engaged in the network to build their own understanding and share implementation strategies.

These educators then passed on their learning to teacher leaders in their districts. The teacher leaders completed the vertical spine by working closely with their peers to share their learning and provide mentorship as needed. The result of this aligned approach was to ensure a consistent focus on using high-quality curriculum as the foundation for improving student outcomes in literacy and consistent messages to all early grades literacy teachers.

LIFT leaders recognized that a “one-and-done” approach to professional learning would be

RESOURCES FROM LIFT

The LIFT Network website (lifteducationtn.com) includes materials to help educators further early literacy work in their schools and districts.

REPORTS

- *The Science of Reading*: This report lays out misconceptions about reading instruction, shares critical research headlines to inform decisions, and offers suggestions to end the reading crisis.
- Annual reports: Three reports summarize the results and lessons learned from the LIFT literacy projects.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- *Instructional Materials Implementation Guidebook*.
- *Instructional Practice Guide: K-5 Literacy*.
- *Text Quality Criteria and Text Complexity Qualitative Measures Rubrics* for fiction and nonfiction texts.

insufficient for supporting teachers to make the shift to building foundational skills in a systematic way and using high-quality instructional materials well. At all levels — from the strategy leads to current teachers to local teacher candidates — an ongoing and comprehensive approach was needed because the science of reading was unfinished learning.

For example, teachers needed more knowledge about using the curriculum because their educator preparation programs had primarily emphasized how to create their own lessons and offered minimal instruction in how to do the deep intellectual preparation needed to deliver a high-quality lesson from an existing curriculum.

To address these situations, the LIFT network ensured that professional learning was embedded and ongoing, both within schools and across the districts. TNTP supported each district's comprehensive literacy strategy by working with the district team, school leaders, and teachers as appropriate for the district's plan.

TNTP also collected ongoing implementation data by district and across the network. Three times a year, the network came together to examine the data, identify areas of focus and refinement, and learn together. Between on-site visits and network meetings, principals and district leaders engaged in systematic instructional reviews that emphasized the academic standards and used the instructional materials to help students meet grade-level expectations.

GAINS FOR STUDENTS

The results from this work have been impressive for students. By the end of the first year of implementation, instructional reviews conducted by TNTP showed evidence that lessons aligned to grade-level expectations had increased quickly and significantly.

Whereas only 10% of literacy classrooms showed some or full alignment to Tennessee's English language arts standards in the diagnostic review, one year later was a different picture: A third of literacy classrooms were showing alignment, eight in 10 teachers were feeling more supported, and nine in 10 teachers thought the LIFT literacy approach was benefiting their students (LIFT Education, 2017). Two years after the initial review, 63% of assignments demonstrated strong or excellent alignment to standards (LIFT Education, 2018).

In 2019, improvements on Tennessee's statewide assessment demonstrated the impact of LIFT's literacy work on students at the critical 3rd grade juncture (LIFT Education, 2019):

- One-third of the original LIFT districts increased the number of 3rd graders who are proficient in English language arts by more than 10 percentage points.
- Seven out of nine original LIFT districts were designated as advancing or exemplary districts — the two highest categories in Tennessee's district accountability model.
- Twenty elementary schools from across the LIFT network were named by the state as reward schools, with four of those schools moving from the state's lowest value-added growth measure in 2017-18 to the state's top level in 2018-19.

We also saw a change in teachers' expectations for students. A TNTP teacher survey found that, at the beginning of the 2018-19 school year, half of teachers expected their students to meet the Tennessee literacy standards. At the end of that school year, almost two-thirds of teachers, 62%, expected their students to meet the literacy standards. Nationally, the figure is 44% (LIFT Education, 2019).

The literacy performance of some historically underserved students may have contributed to teachers raising their expectations. In one LIFT district with a largely rural and economically disadvantaged student population, students met or exceeded growth expectations at each of its 11 elementary schools.

Another district with the state's largest proportion of English learner students saw 3rd grade English learners post a 10-point proficiency gain over three years. Additionally, students of color in LIFT districts made greater gains than students of color in the rest of the state (SCORE, 2020c).

SHARING AND SCALING

With proof that building foundational skills with systematic instruction and building student knowledge with high-quality instructional materials is a winning formula for students, the network's leaders and SCORE are scaling up and spreading what we have learned.

It is an opportune time because Tennessee districts will be adopting new English language arts textbooks in spring 2020. LIFT members have been serving on statewide committees developing the state-approved curriculum list (Tennessee Department of Education, 2019b), and the selections available to school districts include some that are top-rated by EdReports.org.

The LIFT work is elevating the importance of selecting and implementing high-quality instructional materials as crucial to supporting all students to becoming strong readers and writers. Additionally, LIFT has demonstrated the critical role of professional learning in supporting teachers to make needed shifts in instructional practice.

LIFT district leaders, school leaders, and teachers have shared their experiences at statewide conferences and regional meetings, and they have met with state legislators and local policymakers to help build their understanding of the importance of the science of reading and high-quality instructional materials.

As of February 2020, LIFT districts have hosted more than 45 Tennessee districts, one-third of the non-LIFT districts in the state, for visits to view their literacy efforts. Leaders across the network have shared their implementation stories through blogs and articles, and the network was mentioned in the epilogue of Natalie Wexler's book, *The Knowledge Gap*.

They also have used social media to raise educator awareness of the LIFT work and the positive outcomes for their students.

SCORE has supported efforts to

share the learnings from the LIFT network. I visited with more than 50 district leaders from across the state to share what we've learned, such as the importance of high-quality instructional materials and aligned support for teachers and leaders. In those meetings, I shared reports and resources that have been generated through our work with LIFT, including one titled *The Science of Reading* (SCORE, 2020b).

In our annual State of Education report, SCORE prioritized addressing Tennessee's literacy crisis, calling for urgent action to improve early literacy with a focus on the state textbook adoption opportunity, educating future teachers, and supporting current teachers to learn about instructional practices grounded in the science of reading (SCORE, 2020a).

SCORE also is convening a spring Early Literacy Summit for more than 400 educators, advocates, and parents and issuing policy and practice recommendations called *Urgency for Literacy: How Tennessee Can Deliver Student Reading Success* (SCORE, 2020c).

One of the most powerful lessons from the LIFT literacy work has been the recognition that when we know better, we must do better. Our students need us to make changes that will improve their chances of learning to read well by the 3rd grade. In Tennessee, we are beginning to do just that.

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How do I know my students are learning?

Continued from p. 31

to experience what formative assessment looked, felt, and sounded like.

They concluded that it supported their learning. They experimented with it in their classrooms, and their students came to the same conclusion. Participants recognized this connection. As one said, "Learning-centered isn't just about the students learning. It's about us learning, too."

After only one year, this team of accomplished veteran teachers had come to understand what had evaded them for years of traditional, teacher-centered instruction: Teaching and assessing are not separate. They should constantly work as one.

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TEACHING WITHOUT FEAR

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY CAN ALTER THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING LANDSCAPE



BY JAMES G. MARTIN

After teaching for 10 years, Judith is respected by her colleagues and supervisors. She is hard-working and committed to continually learning and growing. But beneath Judith’s calm and confident surface is fear.

She believes that the school is sometimes headed in the wrong direction and she and her colleagues will fail at the important work of educating students. She has lots of ideas about what might help the school

move forward, but she refrains from expressing them during team and faculty meetings because she has seen some of her colleagues get labeled as “difficult” when they have spoken out.

Frustrated by the current direction and intimidated by senior colleagues who tend to agree with it, Judith has considered changing schools or even the profession altogether.

Judith is experiencing a lack of psychological safety — a state in which people feel free to be themselves (Edmondson, 2019). This includes a

willingness to speak freely and engage in productive conflict without fear of retribution. In too many schools, like Judith’s, the absence of schoolwide psychological safety compromises professional learning and the success of teachers and students.

SAFE ENVIRONMENTS ENCOURAGE LEARNING

Research comparing teams that are more and less successful has found psychological safety to be the factor that makes the biggest difference (Duhigg,

Psychological safety does not mean that we are simply nice to one another. Being nice, which is valued heavily in education (for example, we often tell our students to be nice to one another), can obstruct opportunities for important conflict to occur.

2016). Similarly, Stephen Krashen (1982), in his studies of English learners, articulated a theory of the affective filter, arguing that children who are fearful of making mistakes will not learn what is necessary for them to learn.

Like students, adults need to be in safe learning environments that support risk to remove the affective filter and allow optimal learning to occur. They must feel free to admit when they don't know something, and they have to feel that their ideas will be listened to and taken seriously.

Psychological safety does not mean that we are simply nice to one another. Being nice, which is valued heavily in education (for example, we often tell our students to be nice to one another), can obstruct opportunities for important conflict to occur.

Instead of focusing on being nice, we must exhibit radical candor, a concept started in the business community that lies at the intersection of caring personally and challenging directly (Scott, 2019). We must feel cared about at a personal level at work, and our colleagues must feel the same. But along with this is a need for honest and direct feedback. We have to be able

to tell our co-workers, and even our supervisors, when their work is meeting the standard and when it is not.

Radical candor is not easy, as I can say from personal experience. For many of us in education, the caring personally part comes easily, but challenging directly is more difficult. We often let important feedback discussions go because we are afraid of damaging the positive relationships we have built. Yet when this aspect of psychological safety is lacking, little deep learning occurs.

We need to change such environments. We have to be willing to offer ideas and have those ideas challenged and critiqued. We have to be willing to ask questions about our colleagues' data and acknowledge that we all need help. Withholding criticism undermines the Implementation standard of Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning, which cites the importance of giving and receiving constructive feedback. It can even be perceived as an egocentric act because it prioritizes our own comfort over the progress of colleagues or the larger organization (Scott, 2019). Failing to challenge directly inadvertently communicates to

colleagues that we don't care enough about them to be honest when their work is not meeting students' needs.

ACTIONS THAT PROMOTE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

One of the best ways to build psychological safety is for it to be articulated as a value. Leaders, before giving feedback, must ask for feedback themselves. Once leaders establish that it is acceptable to ask for and receive honest feedback, this will be easier to replicate in other areas of the organization (Edmondson, 2019).

Leaders must also be conscious of how they receive feedback. If individuals in the organization sense that the leader bristles at feedback, they may be reluctant to share opinions openly. This is a lost opportunity for the leader to grow. More importantly, this attitude has the potential to filter down into the organization, affecting general psychological safety (Edmondson, 2019).

Teachers can solicit feedback at the team level, such as grade-level teams or content departments. It will be easier for everyone to challenge one another in supportive ways if it is established as

a team norm. In fact, the best place to start with psychological safety is on a team.

Even within organizations where psychological safety is lacking, teams can foster a high degree of psychological safety because there exist various interpersonal dynamics across teams. Psychological safety depends on local leadership, which might be exercised more easily on a team within a larger organization (Edmondson, 2019).

STRUCTURES THAT PROMOTE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

In addition to individual actions, the types of systems and structures we create can have a profound effect on the level of psychological safety in schools.

One of these is a listening tour, about which I learned at the 2017 Learning Forward Annual Conference. A listening tour is a way for leaders to gather information from others about their perceptions of the organization's goals, progress, and performance.

During listening tours, leaders purposefully leave their offices and talk one-on-one or in small groups to stakeholders, actively seeking input and feedback. This is a simple but powerful structure. It shows the leader trusts stakeholders and demonstrates the leader's willingness to actively seek feedback even when it is not offered.

Another structure is assigning someone in meetings to be the devil's advocate. Devil's advocate has long been used as a description of someone who challenges the direction of the group. Assigning someone to this role can lead educators to break out of our unhealthy patterns of always expecting compliance and instead expect some dissension in meetings, especially where important decisions are being made.

This sends the message that we are not expected to always agree and that disagreement actually pushes us to make better decisions. It also models a skill we aim to develop in students — developing arguments — and lays the foundation for building a psychologically safe classroom learning environment.

Teachers should be empowered to bring the things that make them most human to their planning and instruction.

It is also important to normalize failure. Most of us try to avoid failure. But failure is a natural part of our lives, and acknowledging it is a way to accelerate learning. In recent years, many educators have emphasized growth mindset in our schools (Dweck, 2007), asking students to trust their brains' biological ability to grow and stretch. At the same time, many of us educators are not embracing or modeling growth mindset in our own practice.

Perhaps we worry that our students will have low test scores, that we will be criticized and lose our jobs. This is the very definition of a psychologically unsafe environment, and one we must change at the systemic level. The best way we can create an overall school culture of risk-taking, for students and adults, is to let people know that it is OK to fail, especially if that failure is accompanied by innovation and fast learning (Edmondson, 2019).

In addition, we need organizations that encourage educators to bring their whole selves to the work. Teachers can tap into their own interests and the interests of students to create project-based learning experiences that advance creativity (Cooper & Murphy, 2016). I have worked with many teachers with strong interests, for example in theater, whose classrooms show no signs of this passion. When we encourage educators to teach programs with fidelity while overlooking their individuality and creativity, this translates into passionless classrooms and passionless students.

Teachers should be empowered to bring the things that make them most human to their planning and instruction. After all, how successful can teachers be in honoring student backgrounds if their own are disregarded?

BEYOND THE BASICS

Psychological safety is a precursor to effective professional learning, the kind that goes beyond simple sit-and-get workshops. If we want teachers to continue learning and try something new, they have to be able to acknowledge when they don't know something. If we want teachers to reach out to an instructional coach, they have to be comfortable admitting the need for help. Spending the time necessary to build psychological safety is a worthwhile investment. Without that, it will be nearly impossible for teachers and schools to move in significant, sustainable ways.

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REACH. INVESTIGATE. DISCOVER.

IDEAS

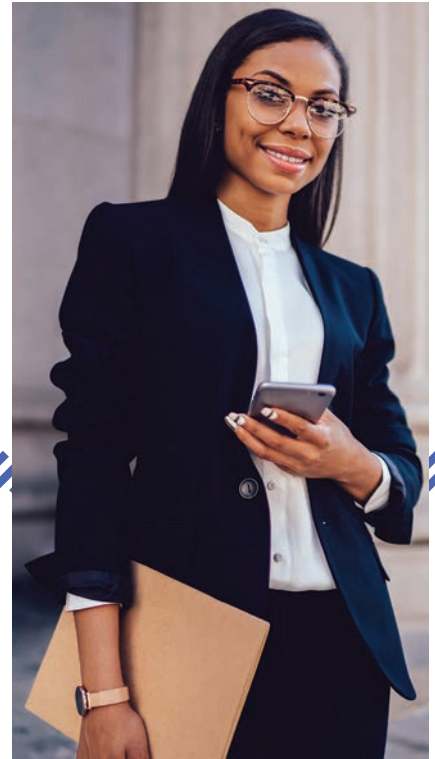


WHAT LEARNING LEADERS NEED

“We must commit to systems of continuous support and growth if principals are to become leaders *of* learning and *for* learning in their schools. We know that the traditional sit-and-get model of learning is not enough for students or teachers; it certainly is not enough for principals.”

— *“The principal’s role has changed. Is professional learning keeping up?”*

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THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE HAS CHANGED.

IS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING KEEPING UP?

BY REBECCA A. THESSIN AND KAREN SEASHORE LOUIS

Does this scenario sound familiar? Principals are called to districtwide professional learning four to eight times a year. Central office administrators give presentations on new district initiatives, curriculum, protocols, and procedures. Administrators listen, sometimes for

hours, to new information that district-level administrators believe they need.

For most principals, this format hasn't changed for several decades. Yet today's principals do not have the same job as they did 20 years ago. Performance-based accountability measures have increasingly impacted the demands placed on school leaders,

as have increased expectations to ramp up direct instructional leadership (Fusarelli & Fusarelli, 2018).

Furthermore, research shows that this passive approach has little impact on practice if not accompanied by job-embedded follow-up learning and support (Curry & Killion, 2009; Zepeda, 2013).

Just as teachers need ongoing learning opportunities and support from their principals to provide high-quality instruction to all learners, principals need ongoing support to build their capacity for instructional leadership.

How do principal learning opportunities need to change, and who should be leading this change effort? The school district central office plays a vital role in principal learning by providing supervision and support for principals. Just as teachers need ongoing learning opportunities and support from their principals to provide high-quality instruction to all learners, principals need ongoing support to build their capacity for instructional leadership.

Based on current research and our experience as scholars and practitioners, we offer three recommendations for central offices — and principal supervisors specifically — to address these needs.

CHANGING ROLES REQUIRE CHANGES IN SUPPORT

First, it's important to understand the evolving role of principals and the broad slate of their responsibilities. We expect today's principals to manage all school building operations successfully, ensure safety, serve as the curriculum expert, be the disciplinarian, and assign and supervise teachers, as just a few examples from their list of responsibilities.

For more than a decade, we have also expected them to serve as instructional leaders, working closely

with classroom teachers to improve teaching and produce improvements in student learning (Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013). Recently there have been calls for an even larger role for principals under the label of leadership for learning, which includes new responsibilities for reshaping all aspects of the school, including teaching and student support services, to focus on student academic and social development (Leithwood, 2018).

But we have paid little attention to how principals are developing the skills to meet these new expectations, and principals have had limited opportunities for their own learning, both in the U.S. and internationally.

Principals know that monitoring and supervising are no longer enough to ensure teachers are designing instruction to meet every child's learning needs in every classroom. Yet, in many school districts, principals continue to be monitored and supervised themselves in the same manner.

Principals, like the teachers they supervise, benefit from ongoing, intensive, school-based, professional learning to assist them in improving their own leadership practices, as detailed in Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning (DiPaola & Hoy, 2013; Honig, 2012;

Learning Forward, 2011; Zepeda, 2013).

To address this gap, many of our nation's largest school systems have responded over the last decade by changing expectations for those who support and supervise principals (Honig, 2012; Thessin & Louis, 2019). In these school systems, principal supervisors are being asked to fill a new role by providing ongoing learning and coaching support to build principals' capacities as instructional leaders.

In other countries, such as Norway and Australia, we see the same: Supervisors are now being asked to support and coach principals in their learning. This is a positive development, but many districts still have questions about how to engage in effective, ongoing learning and instructional leadership support to current and new principals.

Findings from studies published in the September 2019 special issue of the *Journal of Educational Administration*, for which we were the co-editors, highlight the significant work needed to prepare principal supervisors to be effective in their new roles (Thessin & Louis, 2019). The following recommendations draw from these articles to guide central offices as they conceive of this new work.

1. Establish a long-term commitment to principal learning.

Shifting the way districts support principals requires long-term thinking; developing deep capacities to take on new roles will rarely provide an immediate boost to test scores. Whether school districts and other agencies can provide the needed long-term, job-embedded coaching and instructional leadership support to principals depends on federal, state, and district policies and funding decisions.

At the federal level, ESSA (U.S. Department of Education, 2016) prioritizes the role of principal supervisors and suggests Title IIA funds can be used specifically for supporting principal supervisors' professional learning. Yet the changes required of school systems also require consistency in structure and policy, protected from the often-rapid turnover among superintendents that leads to central office reorganizations and reprioritized funding initiatives.

As a result, achieving this goal without the involvement of numerous stakeholders at the local and state levels will be challenging. While some large city school systems in the U.S. allocated additional funding to reduce the ratio of principal supervisors to principals within the last 10 years (Goldring et al., 2018), many of these same districts, like those in the mid-Atlantic region, have subsequently made drastic cuts to their central office staffing.

Cuts that occurred after superintendent turnover resulted in an increased number of principals assigned to each principal supervisor, from 10 to 12 to 18 or more (Thessin & Louis, 2019). Such high ratios serve as a barrier to ongoing engagement in collaborative coaching and partnership in leading improvement between central offices and schools.

Finally, this commitment to developing new capacities at the central office level also requires principal supervisors to be buffered from other responsibilities often added to their plates, such as leading central

office committees, facilitating the budget process, and finding homes for ineffective staff members at other schools, as just a few examples.

2. Dedicate time and intention to selecting and guiding principal supervisors.

Principal supervisors should be thoughtfully selected and prepared. Not every successful principal will be an effective principal supervisor. Facilitating improvement in one's own building requires different competencies than building relationships with current leaders, identifying needs and goals to guide improvement, and coaching principals to implement instructional change across a variety of different contexts and student populations at the district level.

To begin, central office needs to communicate clear expectations about the principal supervisor role. As Manning (2017) states, "Without clearly defined roles, coaches can strive to be all things to all people" (p. 14), resulting in becoming stretched too thin to be effective. Questions to consider include:

- How much time should each principal supervisor spend in each school, and how often should visits occur?
- How does a principal supervisor assess the current needs of the principal and the school to know where to begin in facilitating instructional improvement?
- What leadership knowledge, skills, and content should be the focus of the coaching that the supervisor provides?
- How, and to what degree, should a principal and his or her leadership team work collaboratively with the supervisor to lead improvement?

Answering these, and many other, questions will provide a starting place for recruitment and hiring decisions, as well as a guide for supervisors once hired, to ensure consistency across schools and

alignment with district goals.

In selecting principal supervisors, districts must identify highly capable leaders who have the capacity to motivate other leaders to employ new practices, empower others to distribute leadership, and share responsibility, with the principal, for designing and leading improvement at each school site to benefit student learning (Thessin, 2019).

3. Prioritize engagement in joint work.

Most importantly, changes to support principal learning and development must ground experiences for professional growth in what we know about how adults learn, as the Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011) point out.

Research across fields has demonstrated that these real-time learning experiences must be contextually relevant, and self-reflection on learning leads to better adult learning outcomes (Boyatzis & Kolb, 1999). And the purpose and benefits of the learning must be apparent to the individual engaged in it (Knowles, 1996).

Particularly relevant for the principal supervisor-principal dyad, some recent research specifically highlights the value of engaging in joint work, when participants mutually engage in activities that both sides find meaningful (Honig, 2012; Thessin, 2019). For example, the principal and supervisor can collaborate to design leadership team meeting agendas, lead administrative teams in classroom visits, and plan data analysis conversations with departments and grade-level teams so that they have the time and space to learn and reflect with their teams.

AN INVESTMENT THAT PAYS OFF

Investing in principal supervisors takes money and time, but without this investment, principals will continue to want for the coaching and support they need — and we will all have to temper our expectations about their ability to foster better student outcomes.

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THE PRINCIPAL'S COACH

ALIGNED, COHERENT SUPPORT
BUILDS LEADERSHIP CAPACITY IN LOS ANGELES

BY MARCO A. NAVA, ILEANA M. DÁVALOS, MAURA CROSSIN,
ANA ESCOBEDO, DELIA ESTRADA, HEATHER LOWER LOWE,
APRIL RAMOS-OLONA, JOSE RODRIGUEZ,
AND MARIA SOTOMAYOR

As an administrator of instruction, one of Natividad Rozsa's primary responsibilities is to coach principals in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Rozsa's goal is to shift the focus of coaching conversations from operations and compliance to problem-solving and capacity building, always focusing on student learning.

Her approach scaffolds principals so they can find their own solutions to persistent issues and problems — and also models for principals what effective coaching looks like and how they can provide it for their staff.

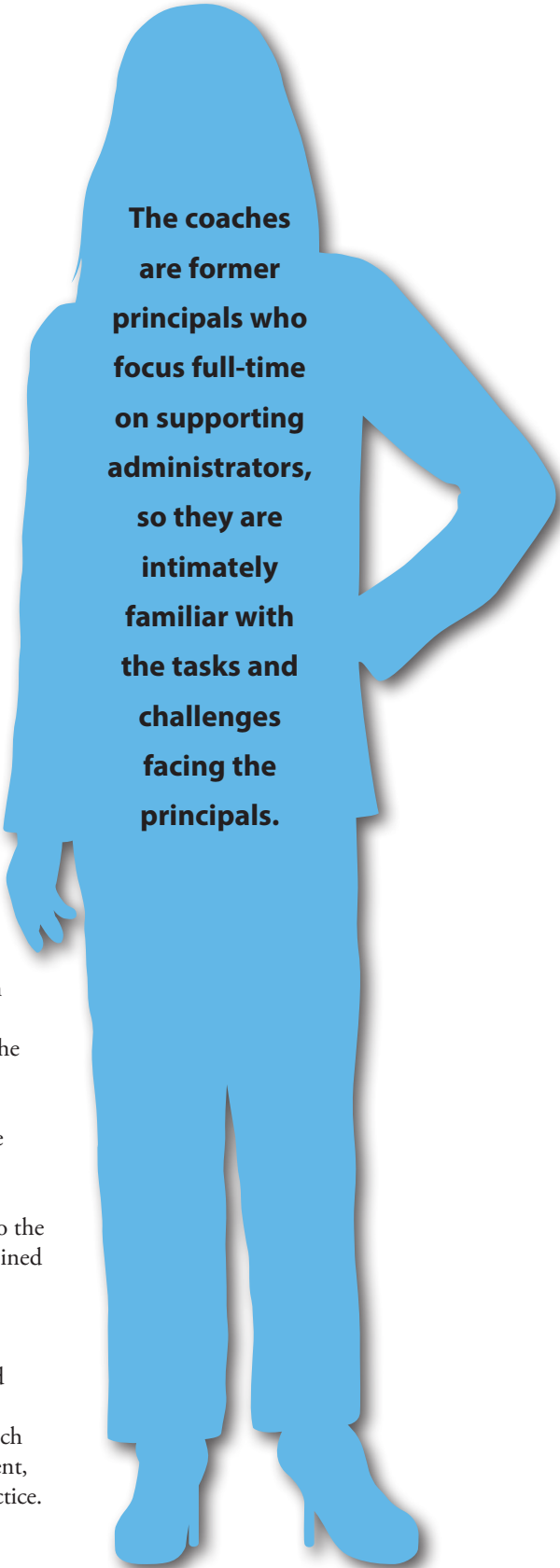
The administrators Rozsa coaches each work on a problem of practice for three years. "I facilitate and ask plenty

of questions to help them reflect on the identified problem of practice," she says. This allows them to own the improvement process, she explains.

She then reviews artifacts that principals submit on how they have addressed their problem of practice over the past year. She looks for evidence that they are connecting to the professional learning standards outlined in the LAUSD School Leadership Framework (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2019).

Next, she prepares clarifying and probing questions to ask during the coaching conversation to promote rich discussions on leadership development, capacity building, and reflective practice.

Rozsa's approach exemplifies a shift occurring across the district.



The coaches are former principals who focus full-time on supporting administrators, so they are intimately familiar with the tasks and challenges facing the principals.

LOS ANGELES ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES CREDENTIAL

LAASC is a two-year induction program focused on job-embedded, real-life learning combined with coach-based professional development (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2018) for principals and new administrators.

The induction experience includes 60 to 90 hours of professional learning centered on coaching, reflection, professional development, and assessment. Induction

is anchored on six professional learning standards that describe critical areas of leadership that support and guide administrators into sustainable, effective practice.

The shift places a heavy emphasis on individualized coaching, 40 of the 60 hours, with the goal of developing leadership competency. The program seeks to spur much-needed systemic change throughout the district's schools by coaching them to think systemically and act strategically to empower

leadership teams to impact instructional quality and student achievement.

Coaches are intentional about data collection for program improvement. Data monitoring is critical to accomplish the program's goal of empowering educators to be courageous and transformational leaders. Since the program's start in 2015, 366 participants have cleared their administrative services credential coursework with support from nine coaches.

Of the 366 participants, 243 have been school site administrators, 123 have

been administrators at central offices and local districts, and 32 participants have successfully been promoted into a school administrative leadership position.

The most current data from the survey candidates complete at the end of their first year in the program reports that 94.6% of participants found their coach had been instrumental to their growth as a leader, and 100% said their coach guided them to find their own solutions.

Administrators at all levels, across different programs and departments, engage in coaching with a set of common goals and principles. The coaching is designed to not only help them grow professionally but also build their capacity to coach those they supervise, including teachers and staff.

FOUR-STEP APPROACH

LAUSD's approach to coaching for leadership development can be summarized in four steps:

1. Help leaders align their own core values with the district's and school's vision.
2. Build coherence in coaching throughout the system.
3. Ground coaching in a districtwide framework.
4. Build coaching capacity through responsive practice.

Align core values

Just as architects begin construction by laying a sturdy foundation to withstand extreme challenges, we begin by encouraging school leaders to establish personal and professional core values that support the work and withstand challenges. Unlike a structural foundation, a school leader's

core values can be difficult to see. Doing so requires a skilled coach to probe for stability and potential cracks.

In our administrator induction program, the Los Angeles Administrative Services Credential (see sidebar above), coaches engage in this probing with candidates.

The coaches are former principals who focus full-time on supporting administrators, so they are intimately familiar with the tasks and challenges facing the principals and with the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2018), to which they are expected to connect their work with the principals.

After discussion and personal reflection, each administrator drafts his or her *whys* (Sinek, 2009), and we highlight them as the drivers of *how* to approach the work. Coaches then guide principals in connecting their personal core values to the mission and vision of the school site.

This alignment helps principals stay motivated and keep the learning needs of students at the forefront. Principals also report that, when they share their leadership stories and core values, parents tend to perceive them as more

approachable, and teachers tend to view them as more trustworthy.

Build coherence

LAUSD leaders recognize the importance of working together as a collective toward common goals. The leadership coaching therefore prioritizes coherence, applying the work of Fullan and Quinn (2015), who outline four components of coherence: focusing direction, cultivating collaborative cultures, deepening learning, and securing accountability.

To help build coherence, district leaders developed a common, intentional language about coaching, teaching, and leadership practices, and they reinforce it throughout the district. District administrators learn this language and common frameworks when they participate in professional learning, where they observe videos of coaching conversations and engage in role-play to build their coaching knowledge and skills.

Principal supervisors also learn to use this language and process. As part of their certification process, they videotape themselves coaching a school leader, and this is monitored for alignment. These professional learning

opportunities build coherence and performance across all levels.

Ground coaching in a consistent framework

To create more consistency in coaching — not just for principals, but at all levels — the district developed the Coaching Competencies Cycle (LAUSD, 2015) framework and an accompanying Coaching Competencies Rubric to examine and reflect on alignment with the framework.

The framework and rubric are used in all administrator professional learning programs and are at the heart of coaching and supervisory practices across levels. Principal supervisors use it when overseeing administrators, and principals use it with teachers.

For example, April Ramos provides coaching support to school principals. To improve her practice, an external observer gives her actionable feedback. “The feedback I received provided me with a blueprint toward refining my practice by highlighting the questions I was asking and the questions I was not asking of principals,” Ramos says. “He noted I was asking good questions but at times didn’t build on the last question. It helped me reflect on my pre-coaching conversation preparation and to start writing a variety of questions that build on themselves by digging deeper.”

Ramos and the other coaches in her department meet on a weekly basis to share best coaching practices. Their conversation includes the coaching feedback they each have received. Colleagues offer advice and suggestions, and the coaches make a plan to implement the new learning.

This has increased the quality of coaching they provide to principals and other school leaders. In a recent survey, 99% of 158 coaching recipients reported that their coach guided them to find their own solutions to issues or concerns they faced.

Building capacity responsively

Drawing from the tenets of adult

learning theory principles (Vella, 2016), district leaders recognize that an important step in building capacity is identifying and responding to specific challenges and needs.

For example, principals requested targeted professional learning on how to support teachers in problem-solving. To address this, 215 school leaders participated in professional learning over the course of five Saturdays on guiding teachers with targeted coaching.

We designed these Saturday sessions to provide coaching fundamentals, strategies for differentiated coaching, and opportunities to role-play and practice. We then offered a follow-up course, attended by 100 leaders.

This kind of responsive professional learning occurs at all levels. For example, principal supervisors also expressed an interest in continuing to develop their coaching abilities. Using online technology, we designed professional learning to enhance their ability to support and guide principals.

Afterward, each principal supervisor conducted a coaching conversation with a principal and captured it using video software. An external partner analyzed the video using the Coaching Competencies Rubric and offered the principal supervisor feedback highlighting areas of strength and areas for growth.

This learning design created a safe environment to explore growing coaching competencies with an outside, nonevaluative partner. Principal supervisors receive confidential feedback, and district personnel do not have access to the video, analyses, or feedback. Principal supervisors were able to be vulnerable, discuss performance, and refine their skills without judgement from their supervisors. As of this writing, 58 out of 64 principal supervisors have engaged in this process, and many have requested additional opportunities with the video exercise.

COACHING RESULTS

With these four principles at

the center, leadership coaching by professionals like Natividad Rozsa can be transformational. The data from LAUSD’s program attest to the power of this work: 98% of survey respondents indicated that their coach provided effective support on their problem of practice research project.

For example, one principal working with Rozsa discovered that English learners were significantly underperforming in comparison to their peers. Guided by the competencies cycle and rubric, he identified with observation and collection of lesson artifacts that teachers were not applying English Language Development Standards in their lesson planning.

With probing and reflection facilitated by Rozsa, he hypothesized that, by engaging teachers in focused professional learning and intentional planning time to align English Language Development Standards with the Common Core and daily practice, English learner students’ performance would improve. After one year of implementing this strategy, it did: English learner students’ Smarter Balanced assessment scores improved by 10%.

Rozsa also extended the inquiry about English learner students to students across the entire school feeder pattern. She created a community of practice for principals on this issue — in the process, building her own knowledge about that practice while building principals’ knowledge.

Coaching and capacity building must permeate the system for their full potential to be realized. After all, organizations are composed of people working in tandem toward a common goal.

The coaching cycle reveals a road map toward these common goals and does so with humanity and respect for professionals and the learning process. As a result, this approach can succeed where compliance, accountability, and condemnation fail. Systemic transformation occurs one coaching conversation at a time.

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The principal's role has changed. Is professional learning keeping up?

Continued from p. 42

We must commit to systems of continuous support and growth if principals are to become leaders of learning and for learning in their schools. We know that the traditional sit-and-get model of learning is not enough for students or teachers; it certainly is not enough for principals.

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TEAMWORK IN TULSA

DISTRICT RESHAPES LEARNING TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF PEOPLE, TIME, AND MONEY

BY DAVID ROSENBERG AND GENEVIEVE QUIST GREEN

As a new principal at Hawthorne Elementary in Tulsa (Oklahoma) Public Schools in 2016, Karesha Solomon got a request from the district office to complete her school's budget. "Why should I change it?" she remembers asking herself. Absent other guidance from the district at the time, she focused on maintaining stability in her school's resource use, even though many of her school's students were not performing at grade level.

Solomon's reluctance to pursue significant changes to how her school used people, time, and money was

not uncommon in Tulsa at the time. In fact, when Deborah Gist returned to her hometown as the new superintendent of Tulsa Public Schools in 2015, she found a district that, in addition to persistent teacher shortages and startlingly low pay, was unsure how to better serve its students.

Educators wanted more clarity about the student and teacher experiences needed to meet today's learning demands, how schools needed to be designed to create those experiences, and how the district office needed to create the conditions to bring new designs to scale.

Over the past five years, Gist and

her team, along with school-based leaders like Solomon, have worked with the district's school leaders to implement a comprehensive strategy to improve instructional quality for all students in Tulsa.

Grounded in a clear vision for instruction and starting with the introduction of new curricula aligned to college- and career-ready standards, the Tulsa strategy recognizes that to move the needle on *student* learning, schools must change the structural conditions that influence *teachers'* professional learning. Specifically, teachers needed significantly more time working in teams as well as the instructional

IDEAS

support made possible by distributed leadership.

Implementing these changes, especially in a state that is so resource-constrained it ranks as one of the lowest in the nation in per-pupil education funding, isn't easy (Education Week, 2019). But the Tulsa district is making it possible by taking a hard look at current structures and rethinking status quo investments and practices at both the system and school levels. Although this challenging work is far from complete, we can see emerging evidence of how large-scale changes can occur over time.

Our team at Education Resource Strategies (ERS), along with our partners from Leading Educators, have worked closely with leaders and educators in Tulsa Public Schools to implement a new job-embedded professional learning approach grounded in high-quality curriculum.

With deliberate and strategic resource shifts, the district is setting up teachers to generate the most impact on student learning.

A NEW VISION FOR INSTRUCTION

Through visiting classrooms and learning directly from the experiences of educators on the front lines of Tulsa's schools, Gist and her team developed with school leaders a new vision for learning.

To achieve and grow, Tulsa students would be asked to "grapple joyfully with complex ideas, texts, and tasks that prepare [them] for the greatest success in college, career and life" (Tulsa Public Schools, n.d.). Realizing this vision required first identifying new high-quality curricula, the district ultimately adopted Core Knowledge Language Arts for English language arts in grades K-5 and Eureka Math in grades K-8.

Teaching with the new curricula, it turned out, "takes a long time," according to Danielle Neves, the district's then-executive director of curriculum and instruction (Avin & Huttner, 2019). In fact, depending on the grade level, Core Knowledge Language Arts required up to three hours daily for literacy instruction, with a strong focus on foundational literacy skills.

District and school leaders also recognized that, to use this time effectively, daily schedules would need to change and teachers would need more support in planning. The stakes were high. As Neves later said, if teachers weren't set up for success, the district would see "lots of other things fall off in K-3," putting the new investment in high-quality curriculum — and most importantly, student learning — at risk (Avin & Huttner, 2019).

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CONTENT-ALIGNED LEARNING

To ensure teachers received the support they deserved, school leaders worked with Leading Educators to design content-aligned professional learning. They created three-week, curriculum-specific content cycles that encourage collaboration, build teachers' understanding of the curriculum and materials, and help teachers improve their practice.

Rather than expand or repurpose traditional out-of-school professional learning time, district leaders asked principals to create 90-minute, uninterrupted, collaborative planning blocks for teams of teachers who teach the same subject or grade level. Ideally, this time would be used for planning lessons and reviewing student work.

During week one, teachers engage in shared learning with colleagues around the next block of curriculum. During week two, teachers plan and practice their lessons. During week three, they analyze student work samples and assessment data to gauge progress before moving on to the next unit.

"We have a period of time that's for planning, and then we have a period of time that they bring student work back," says Jennifer Gripado, a district instructional leadership director involved in developing and rolling out the strategy. "We look at the data based on the implementation of the new instructional strategy, and then we just continue that cycle throughout the year."

The planning blocks are facilitated by teacher leaders, a newly created role. Staff who were interested in new teacher leader roles worked with Leading Educators to deepen their understanding of the curriculum and strengthen their ability to serve as a leader for their peers. In return for taking on these additional responsibilities, teacher leaders receive an annual stipend that was double the amount previously given to traditional team lead roles.

Schools selected teacher leaders

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Read more about Tulsa's improvement work so far and the district's partnership with ERS.

www.erstrategies.org/news/blog_Teacher_PD_Tools

www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/4228-districts-at-work-tulsa-case-study.pdf

- Learn more about how school systems are organizing resources around teacher professional learning and tools that are helping them do so.

www.erstrategies.org/toolkits/toolkit_connected_professional_learning_for_teachers

www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/3560-igniting-the-learning-engine.pdf

www.erstrategies.org/teacher_professional_learning

- Learn more about how Leading Educators approached its partnership with Tulsa to improve teacher professional learning.

www.leadingeducators.org/blog/2019/11/1/making-equity-a-reality-in-the-classroom

from among their most effective teachers because district leaders understood that quality content leadership was necessary to ensure collaborative time translated into higher-quality instruction. Principals reported that this new opportunity also helps with teacher retention because teacher leaders appreciate learning with colleagues and external partners and enjoy the opportunity to learn and develop in their careers.

FINDING TIME

The combination of increased instructional time, increased planning

time, and increased pay for new teacher leaders required adjusting school schedules and staffing assignments. This put pressure on principals, who were already working hard to stretch their limited resources. Even the most creative principals tended to lack access to the knowledge, tools, and experience they needed to rethink some of the fundamentals about how their schools were organized.

Working with ERS, Tulsa leaders identified a cohort of school leaders eager to pilot new approaches for organizing people, time, and money to bring the full professional learning strategy to life. These principals and their leadership teams closely examined their existing staffing assignments and master schedules, with the goal of creating dedicated blocks of time for core instruction and teacher collaboration.

Karesha Solomon, the principal at Hawthorne Elementary, was among the first leaders to sign up for the pilot. At Hawthorne, she and her colleagues organized the new planning blocks to include five teachers, including one teacher leader, which means collaboration teams stretch across two grade levels.

With this structure, Solomon says, "Teachers experience professional learning in a space where they can learn from colleagues that are above their grade level and right below their grade level to create more alignment [across grade levels]."

To enable teachers to participate in long collaborative planning blocks, Solomon and her team had to rethink some common assumptions about scheduling and staff roles. They redistributed existing planning time across the week, combining two shorter planning periods into one longer block. Other pilot schools stacked teachers' planning periods with other blocks of noninstructional time, such as lunch or recess, or flexible time, such as intervention blocks.

The Hawthorne team was also creative with staff roles and

IDEAS

assignments. By assigning the school's librarian and counselor to cover specials one day each week, more teachers could be available at the same time for content meetings.

The team also created a new position for a teacher to become a part-time interventionist and part-time coach, available in individual teachers' classrooms, while she carried new teacher leader responsibilities during collaborative planning time.

"With just a few changes here and a few changes there, we are seeing it is possible to create the blocks of time teachers need to really advance their game," Solomon says. Although she started her career as a principal uncertain, Solomon quickly learned the power of organizing resource use around her strategic priorities, and other school leaders are increasingly following her example.

BUILDING A MODEL THAT LASTS

In many school districts, pilot projects come and go. School budgets inevitably change year to year, and district and school leaders typically don't have the mandate or knowledge needed to sustain change over time. Tulsa's district leaders, however, are committed to ensuring that their new investments in curricula and professional learning are built to last.

They redesigned principal support, particularly around talent management and decision-making, creating new opportunities for collaboration among school leaders, instructional leadership directors, and staff on the district's finance and talent teams.

Partnering with ERS, the district rolled out prototype school models, including scheduling, staffing, and budgeting decisions that are helping inspire creative resource use decisions and accelerate schools' progress in implementing high-quality professional learning structures.

Over the past two years, the district has redesigned its annual planning process, including the significantly earlier release of enrollment projections,

District leaders redesigned principal support, particularly around talent management and decision-making, creating new opportunities for collaboration among school leaders, instructional leadership directors, and staff on the district's finance and talent teams.

staffing allocations, and school budgets. Deputy superintendent Paula Shannon sees school and system-level changes going hand in hand: "If we want schools to prioritize teacher learning and organize resources around it, it's imperative that we redesign how our district teams work together to build the structural conditions that enable schools' strategic decisions. If we aren't doing both together, we won't succeed in the long term."

Superintendent Gist has also seen firsthand how these changes can bring about more authentic opportunities for teacher agency in decision-making. After one planning meeting, she reported: "We were discussing budgets, creating our goals for the next year, and getting annual plans in place. This year, each principal and assistant principal brought their team of teacher leaders. So, our meeting was made up of teams of leaders from our schools coming together for us to work as a district on our plan for next year. It was incredibly powerful — and so productive — to engage in that work with our extended school leadership teams" (Skandera, 2019).

In 2019, three years after Karesha Solomon became a new school principal, Hawthorne's 2019 Academic Growth Composite score is more than 25 percentage points higher than the district's average, and almost half of the school's students scored at a higher proficiency level on state assessments in 2019 than in 2018 (Oklahoma School Report Cards, 2018). There is

still much to do — more than 70% of Hawthorne students are still below state-defined targets for academic achievement in reading and math — but the structures are in place to sustain the school's early progress.

As instructional leadership director Jennifer Gripado says, "I can take you to numerous classrooms where I have seen teachers' capacity grow exponentially. Teachers are more confident in the curriculum they're teaching. They are using stronger strategies in front of children. And I think one of the keys for that work moving forward is that we are being very purposeful with how we use our time and our money and all of our resources. It's not perfect. We're still growing and developing people. But I think we're on the right path."

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DISCUSS. COLLABORATE. FACILITATE.

TOOLS



'ANYWHERE, ANYTIME' PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Podcasts are a fast-growing media platform, and a great way to learn new things. To take advantage of their growing popularity, Long Beach (California) Unified School District developed its myPD Unplugged podcast to create “anywhere, anytime” professional learning for educators. “People learn best from a story,” says assistant superintendent Pamela Seki. “With a podcast, people get to listen to people tell their own stories. So we’ve taken the best of what we do and made it personal and asynchronous.”

— “Powered-up podcasts,” p. **52**



POWERED-UP PODCASTS

FACILITATION GUIDES RAMP UP THE LEARNING

Podcasts are one of the fastest-growing media platforms for sharing content to meet both personal and professional interests. According to a 2019 survey in the U.S., an estimated 62 million Americans had listened to podcasts in the prior week and more than half of survey respondents had ever listened to a podcast. The most frequent reason for listening, the survey found, was to learn new things (Edison Research & Triton Digital, 2019).

myPD Unplugged is a podcast about professional learning that is leveraging this popular platform to create “anywhere, anytime” professional learning for educators. The Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development in the Long Beach (California) Unified School District launched the podcast in 2018. As leaders from that office explain in the article on p. 57, they were driven by the dual goals of expanding the scope and depth of professional learning for their own district staff and sharing

WHERE TO FIND MYPD UNPLUGGED

The myPD Unplugged podcast is hosted by the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development in the Long Beach Unified School District.

To listen, you can find the episodes on major podcast platforms such as Apple Podcasts, podcasts.com, and iHeartRadio. There are currently 25 episodes available.

Facilitation guides are available by following the link on each episode’s webpage.

their learning more widely.

The podcast team partnered with Learning Forward at our 2019 Annual Conference to interview expert conference speakers for an eight-part Thought Leader Series. The eight episodes are available for free download.

But the Long Beach team didn’t want the learning to stop with listeners hearing the experts’ voices and stories. To extend and deepen the learning, they created a facilitation guide for each episode, containing questions for reflection and discussion, learning activities, and additional resources.

The tool we feature here is an adaptation of the guide the team designed to accompany an interview with expert Andy Hargreaves about collaborative professionalism (Episode 3.5). All the guides are available for free download.

To learn more about the podcast series and the role it plays in the Long Beach professional learning strategy, see the article on p. 57.

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myPD UNPLUGGED FACILITATION GUIDE

<p>Listen to the podcast</p>	<p><i>Collaborative Professionalism: When Teaching Together Means Learning for All</i></p> <p>myPD Unplugged episode 3.5</p> <p>Recorded 12/9/19</p> <p>Posted 2/6/20</p>
<p>Contributors</p>	<p>Andy Hargreaves, @hargreavesbc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emeritus professor, Boston College Lynch School of Education • Visiting professor, University of Ottawa • President & co-founder, ARC Education <p>Nader Twal, @LBiPD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program administrator in the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development (Long Beach Unified School District) <p>Amy Pendray, @akpCLB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program specialist in the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development (Long Beach Unified School District) <p>Jennifer Crockett, @jeabaja</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program specialist in the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development (Long Beach Unified School District)
<p>Questions posed during interview</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why should teachers collaborate? 2. How might educators begin to navigate the tension associated with big changes? 3. What is the difference between collaborative professionalism and professional collaboration? Why do you make that distinction? 4. How does collaboration continue to bring value to the work that the teacher is doing in his or her classroom? 5. Some teams are well-established, and some have new members. What happens when a high-functioning team is reconstituted? How does this process support the growth of all types of teams?

myPD UNPLUGGED FACILITATION GUIDE, continued

<p>Reflect on what you heard</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	<p>After listening to the podcast, initiate a conversation using two or three of the following questions as prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What parts of the podcast most resonated with or challenged you? Why?• Hargreaves discusses how teaching was originally designed as an isolated profession. Where do you still see examples of isolation within your system? What ideas within the podcast might spark ways to dismantle this system of “silos”?• Define “culture of collaboration” in your own words. How has your definition changed from what you originally thought about collaboration?• Hargreaves said we are often inclined to either “blame people or wait for people” but instead challenges us to “lead” people. Think of a time when you were inclined to blame or wait. How might you have led, through better collaboration, in that situation?• Think about new team members. How might you deliberately induct new team members? How can you ensure that the hidden curriculum of collaboration is visible and transparent to new members while also remaining open to the ideas new members contribute?
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<p>Consider high-functioning teams</p> <p>20 minutes</p>	<p>Think about a high-functioning team (inside or outside of your education context) to which you belonged where the collaboration was motivating and led to a change in your practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On sticky notes, with one idea per note, list the conditions or circumstances that made it a rich experience of collaborative professionalism.• Take turns sharing and, as each person shares, group similar ideas in an affinity map (see gamestorming.com/affinity-map for information and guidance).• Classify the groupings of sticky notes into categories (conditions that created rich collaboration).• After everyone has had an opportunity to share, discuss:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you notice? What do you wonder?• What patterns emerge from the data of your experience?• Which of the attributes you identified would you describe as nonnegotiables? Why?
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myPD UNPLUGGED FACILITATION GUIDE, continued

<p>Conduct a forced analogy exercise</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Hargreaves uses analogies and metaphors when describing collaboration. These techniques can be helpful for learning. To stretch your thinking, try the forced analogy activity described at gamestorming.com/forced-analogy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to the link above and review the Object of Play and How to Play sections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation: If preferred, the facilitator can provide a list of objects/items from which to draw for this activity. 2. Randomly select from the list of things generated to answer the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is high-quality collaboration like [random object from list]? • How could we improve the quality of our collaboration with [random object from list]? 3. Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What might you add to your list of attributes/categories for high-quality collaboration?
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<p>Engage with additional materials</p> <p>45 minutes</p>	<p>Assign each of the following resources to a different person in your group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch the video: “Where Good Ideas Come From” by Steven Johnson (https://bit.ly/2xvzIWn). • Read and annotate “The collaborative compact” by Robert Garmston and Diane Zimmerman (https://bit.ly/337xS4a). • Read and, if possible, annotate “The keys to collaboration” by Tracy Crow (https://bit.ly/2IBQGPp). • Read and, if possible, annotate “Solidarity with solidarity: The case for collaborative professionalism” by Andy Hargreaves and Michael T. O’Connor (https://bit.ly/3cLHE0i). <p>Individually, take a moment to synthesize your high-level noticings and wonderings. Then discuss your observations from the reading and video content. The following questions may be helpful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What words or phrases describing high-quality collaboration resonate with you? • What does high-quality collaboration look like? • What behaviors would you expect to observe in a collaborative context? <p>As a group, based on your affinity mapping work earlier and using the reading to enhance your thinking, come to consensus on a definition for high-quality collaboration in your setting. Identify three to five key adult behaviors or observable characteristics/attributes of collaborative groups. Challenge one another’s assumptions and thinking as you work through this.</p>
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myPD UNPLUGGED FACILITATION GUIDE, continued

<p>Learn from Long Beach</p> <p>20 minutes</p>	<p>In LBUSD, an interdepartmental group of teacher leaders created a reflection tool to help build a team’s collective efficacy. Based on research, it is organized into three team practices, organized on a continuum, so that teams can identify their current state in relation to a growth area and take next learning steps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take a moment to review the document the group created: (https://bit.ly/33aRILZ). • How do the contents of this document confirm, contest, or extend your thinking about the conditions, cycles, and culture that power team learning and collaborative professionalism? • Using a highlighter, indicate which of the bullets best describe your team’s current practice. Note the level, or step, at which you are currently working. • What might you and your team need to learn to grow to the next level on this continuum?
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The team that created the myPD Unplugged podcast series includes, from left, program administrator Nader Twal, program specialists Jennifer Crockett and Amy Pendray, and assistant superintendent Pamela Seki.

THE LONG BEACH APPROACH: *'The most important person in the room is the teacher'*

BY SUZANNE BOUFFARD

Professional learning has been a cornerstone of Long Beach Unified School District's approach to comprehensive reform since the early 1990s. The myPD Unplugged podcast series (see p. 52) is just one of the ways it is expanding professional learning content and access for educators in the district and beyond.

The Learning Professional's editor, Suzanne Bouffard, talked with members of the team that created the series about why Long Beach is committed to ongoing, embedded professional learning and how it has designed its tools and strategies. Here are highlights of her conversation with assistant superintendent Pamela Seki, program administrator Nader Twal, and program specialists Jennifer Crockett and Amy Pendray.

Q: How did professional learning become a high priority in your district?

Pamela Seki: There has always been an understanding in our district that the most important person in the room is the teacher. We have always recognized that preparing the teachers to do the work is the main responsibility of central office support.

Nader Twal: Professional development has been the hallmark of the district for many years. It is baked into the culture. It played an especially important part in district redesign efforts in the 1990s. At that time, our community was going through some turmoil, with the closure of a Navy base and a surge in poverty and gang violence. We knew we needed to do more for our students, and strengthening our professional learning system became a key lever in that work.

Then in 2013, we received an iPD grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. To accelerate our efforts to think differently about the next iteration of our professional learning systems, we were paired with Learning Forward as a consultant, which helped to build on a relationship we had had for many years, going back to when the organization was NSDC.

Seki: The relationship with our Learning Forward consultant, and later being part of Learning Forward's Redesign PD Community, gave us permission to think differently, to go out on a ledge and try new things with our professional learning.

We were already providing a robust system of professional development to our teachers. That system relied on a face-to-face model with a presenter at the front of the room. It was working well for us — our teachers were

TOOLS

learning and doing well, and we were receiving accolades.

Twal: But there was a pivot around the time the Common Core State Standards were introduced. There was suddenly a need for a larger volume and frequency of professional learning. We knew we needed to be creative about how to meet that need without dismantling the successful system we had built. Our challenge wasn't how do we design professional development, but how do we build on our foundation without cracking that foundation?

We didn't want to replace the face-to-face professional development. We wanted to enhance it and offer more so people could access the learning anytime and anywhere. With ESSA's redefinition of professional learning, that need continues to grow, because if we are to design professional

learning systems that are ongoing and collaborative, then it can't be an event-based approach. An event can seed continuous learning, but the structures and systems have to be adapted to keep the learning going after the event.

Seki: We started to explore what we could do next, and we took the approach of "yes and" To do this, we began to use design thinking to move our work forward. We had a history of dabbling in design thinking through some of our grants, including one from the Bechtel Foundation on improving math teaching and learning aligned to Common Core.

Q: How did design thinking shape your approach to professional learning?

Amy Pendray: I was involved in some of the [PD department's] focus

groups when I was a teacher, and they were using design thinking to build empathy for the revisioning of professional learning in Long Beach. Nader asked us to dream, to imagine, "What would your ideal professional learning experience be?"

It took a while to feel free. But eventually, we started coming up with all kinds of ideas. Some were really out there, but some became the things we're currently doing. For example, one teacher suggested learning from holograms in her classroom. We couldn't do that, of course, but from that idea came the work we are currently doing on using best practice videos to fuel professional learning.

Twal: During the focus groups, participants said, "We want to see our teachers teaching our kids." If they were seeing kids and teachers who were not



Professional Learning Planning

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their population, that was going to be an empathy barrier for them.

Recognizing the importance of this feedback spurred us to train our curriculum staff to create and use video of our teachers in the field, rather than using video exemplars from outside the district. We had to train our whole curriculum staff on the technical ways to capture best practice, record it, package it, and label it so that teachers could find content that met their needs. We wanted teachers to have a personalized experience.

Jennifer Crockett: About 2014, I was one of the teachers Nader and Amy trained in making videos, and I moved over to the PD team about halfway into the design thinking process, where the team was brainstorming ways to bring our teachers' asks to fruition. Design thinking is very messy. [But it gives you]

the permission to learn. We were given the task of trying out ideas we were interested in and then prototyping them. We didn't have to produce the perfect product, but we needed to learn about the process of doing it and think about what further learning we needed to do.

Pendray: It's not always easy to give yourself that permission to learn and make a mistake. But that's what we learned to do.

Q: How did the idea for a podcast come about?

Twal: We were ideating about anywhere, anytime learning, and we all just started spitting out thoughts and putting them on a wall. In the design thinking process, one of the ways to move to action is to put the ideas into four quadrants based on how rational and doable they are and then pick

two to try. The two we picked were: How would we redesign physical space for learning, and how might we use podcasts? We liked the idea of a podcast because if you're on your way to work you can listen to keep the learning going. We began to iterate with a low-resolution prototype on Amy's phone. Since then, we've gone through so many prototypes. We worked on it for almost two years with multiple failed attempts at a small scale. We work with the motto of constantly failing forward to get to success sooner.

Pendray: We have had the opportunity to do a lot of learning together at this table about podcasts. We've learned that sound quality, length, and many other factors matter. We also came to realize the power of working with a thought partner, both internally and on the podcast.



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The Learning Forward Foundation supports the development of educators' capacity to improve student learning through the transformation of professional learning.

For more information, visit foundation.learningforward.org.





Nader Twal, left, interviews Courtlandt Butts for the myPD Unplugged podcast series.

Crockett: We have learned that hearing the experts’ voices makes a huge difference, even for people who have been studying the experts’ work for a long time.

Seki: People learn best from a story. With a podcast, people get to listen to people tell their own stories. So we’ve taken the best of what we do and made it personal and asynchronous. What an evolution from where we started, where people would come to us.

Crockett: And with the podcast, we didn’t want it to be another podcast that people listen to and then move on. We wanted the learning to continue, so we created facilitation guides for those who wanted to share the learning with others. We also recognized that the podcasts could provoke team learning and wanted to spark ideas for how people might extend their conversations around the content of the podcast, helping them to get closer to applying what they heard in their own context.

Twal: We’ve learned that this way of doing things is resonating in and outside of our district. Anecdotally and based on the limited data we have from the podcasts, we’ve got people using it all over the U.S., such as Florida, Georgia, the Northeast. And I’ve had a number of principals call and say, “Thank you for planning my next staff meeting [by providing the facilitation guide].”

Q: Is this part of a movement toward

“We have learned that hearing the experts’ voices makes a huge difference, even for people who have been studying the experts’ work for a long time.”

— Nader Twal

personalization?

Twal: When we redesigned our professional development approach, we created a personalized process rather than an individualized process. The goal was to build internal capacity around common language and pedagogy. So the content of the professional development may shift, but the actual definition of teaching excellence does not shift. It is always anchored in the California Standards for the Teaching Profession.

Seki: Creating this common language and pedagogy is important [across the district and teacher education]. There is a long history of relationship building in this district. Long Beach is a big city with a small city feel, and there is a sense of collaboration here. Because of that, we have been able to leverage a K-16 partnership with a very vibrant California State University in Long Beach. Our staff teach some classes

at the university, for example. This has helped us create some common language and pedagogy. So before teacher candidates even start student teaching, they use similar language.

Twal: For district teachers, we created a four-step process grounded in this common language that allows for step-by-step movement and for teachers to choose how much to do. We can’t compete with Google. So we framed it as, “You are professionals, and you don’t have time to weed through the stuff you find online.” What we provide is curated so they’re not wasting their time. And then if they want to go online after and find more resources, they’ll know what the success criteria are.

Q: What is one of the biggest changes you’ve seen in professional learning over the years?

Twal: In the traditional way [of facilitating professional learning], we expected ourselves to be experts. But we have reframed that to position ourselves as lead learners. Our work is all about ongoing learning and collective efficacy. It’s not about who knows the most, but about who knows how to learn and make the most of the information. ■

CONNECT. BELONG. SUPPORT.

UPDATES

LET'S CHAT

Check out Learning Forward's series of #LearnFwdTLP Twitter chats. Featuring articles and authors from the latest issues of *The Learning Professional*, they are a great way to deepen your learning and connect with other professionals.

To be notified of upcoming chats, subscribe to our email list (see the "subscribe" button at the bottom of www.learningforward.org) and follow us on social media. We are @LearningForward on Twitter and Facebook, and the magazine's hashtag is #LearnFwdTLP.



@LearningForward
#LearnFwdTLP



Learning Forward launches standards revision

In last year's survey of Learning Forward members, 94% of respondents indicated that the Standards for Professional Learning are "very important" or "important" to their work. The standards outline the conditions for and characteristics of professional learning that change educator knowledge, skills, and practices, leading to improved teaching and learning for all students.

With the standards last updated in 2011, the time has come to launch the standards revision process. As Hayes Mizell, Shirley Hord, Joellen Killion, and Stephanie Hirsh wrote in the introduction to the most recent edition, "The standards are never finished, and Learning Forward's quest for efficiency and effectiveness never ends" (Learning Forward, 2011, p. 17).

Learning Forward anticipates a process that spans more than two years and includes an update to associated implementation and assessment tools, including Innovation Configuration maps and the Standards Assessment Inventory. The development of revised Standards for Professional Learning will address the latest evidence from research and practice about high-quality professional learning, both to update what is already covered in the 2011 version and incorporate new learning since its publication.

Learning Forward will also examine how to address several important

topics more explicitly, including how educators implement high-quality curriculum materials in multiple content areas; how schools and systems ensure equity of access to high-quality teaching for all students; how educators leverage technology as learners themselves and with students; and how educators address the range of developments in such areas as personalization, social and emotional learning, and trauma-informed teaching.

Each version of the Standards for Professional Learning has been strengthened by the committed engagement of leaders from a range of education agencies, organizations, and school systems offering unique perspectives throughout the development process. This revision process will convene an advisory council and collaborative working teams to provide expertise and feedback.

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has provided a grant of \$850,000 to launch the project.

Last month, Learning Forward invited all members and subscribers to offer input on the standards. Members will have additional opportunities to provide feedback.

REFERENCE

Learning Forward. (2011).
Standards for Professional Learning.
Learning Forward.

WEBINARS FOR EDUCATORS IN NEW LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

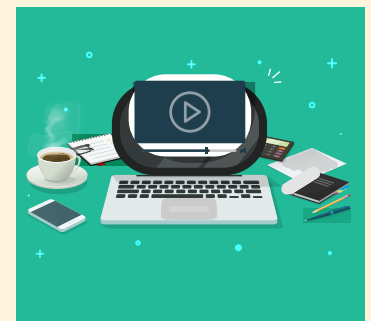
As part of our commitment to supporting educators during this uncertain time of school closures, Learning Forward began hosting a series of webinars with advice and resources. If you weren't able to join us in real time, you can watch our archived webinars, listen to audio recordings, and find supplemental resources at [learningforward.org/webinars-2](https://www.learningforward.org/webinars-2). They include:

- Preparing Educators for School Closings and a New Learning Environment;
- Teaching in an Online Environment; and
- Mindfulness and Well-being (Taking Care of Yourself) During Unprecedented Times.

In the archive, you'll also find other recent webinars such as:

- Coaching With Students at the Center: The What, Why, and How of Coaching for Student Engagement, with Jim Knight;
- Coaching Prevalence and Support: Findings from a National Survey; and
- Collecting Evidence to Share Impact of Professional Learning: Districts Share Their Stories.

To learn about upcoming webinars, visit www.learningforward.org and sign up in the "subscribe" box at the bottom of the page.



LEARNING FORWARD FOUNDATION SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

BY JANICE BRADLEY AND ED TOBIA

The Learning Forward Foundation is looking for new members with diverse backgrounds in fundraising or supporting effective professional learning to expand our team.

The foundation is a group of Learning Forward volunteers who raise funds for grants and scholarships and award them to other Learning Forward members to advance meaningful professional learning — for example, for the Learning Forward Academy. Over the past 35 years, the foundation has designed and implemented scholarships and grants for 75 recipients. Since 2006, the foundation has awarded over \$450,000 in scholarships and grants.

We also support awardees on their professional learning journeys through Touchpoint conversations, one-hour

phone conversations for reflection and support conducted throughout the length of the grant. Awardees engage in structured conversations with Learning Forward Foundation members to reflect on their problem of practice, identify intended outcomes and activities to reach desired changes, celebrate successes, and identify challenges of implementation.

Foundation leaders are intentionally building a strong learning culture, and members often report that they find their work with the foundation to be profound and rewarding. If you have a passion for ensuring that teachers experience meaningful professional learning that improves student learning, we encourage you to join us.

For more information, contact Janice Bradley at janice.bradley@utah.edu.



NEW THEMES FOR THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

We have added two new themes for upcoming issues of *The Learning Professional*. Here are the themes open for submissions:

October 2020: INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

How do we create schools that are welcoming and productive learning environments for all? This issue will explore the role of professional learning in ensuring that every student feels safe, supported, and successful at school. Articles might cover topics such as inclusion of students with special needs in mainstream classrooms, increasing instructional rigor for English learners, addressing implicit bias among teachers and students, and improving social and emotional learning strategies. *Deadline: June 15*

December 2020: INQUIRY FOR ACTION

To improve student learning, educators need structures and cultures that promote ongoing examination of educational practices and change strategies. Inquiry and reflection are essential. This issue will investigate how leaders and change makers leverage inquiry to drive learning and shape purposeful actions. Topics of interest include continuous improvement cycles, action research, improvement science, learning teams, and assessment of professional learning standards. *Deadline: August 31*

For submission guidelines, visit learningforward.org/the-learning-professional/write-for-us.

FEATURED SOCIAL MEDIA POST

Follow us on social media. Share your insights and feedback about *The Learning Professional* by using #LearnFwdTLP.

Learning Forward Retweeted
SMCOE @SMCOETweet - Feb 19
 Few teacher coaches have the time and administrative support to do their jobs effectively, finds a new survey from @LearningForward, @GoogleForEdu, @DigitalPromise

The 74 @The74

Teachers find coaching helpful but most don't get enough of it, survey says buff.ly/2SCD904

Figure 17: Frequency of Teacher Meetings with Coaches, By Valuation of Coaching

Frequency	All teachers	Teachers who found coaching valuable	Teachers who did not find coaching valuable
Daily	32%	43%	20%
Weekly	10%	13%	8%
Biweekly	17%	16%	18%
Monthly	14%	13%	14%
Quarterly	23%	10%	37%
Other	0%	0%	0%

AT A GLANCE

Standards for Professional Learning: Past, Present, and Future

The Standards for Professional Learning are the foundation of our work at Learning Forward. In 2020, we are embarking on the third revision of the standards as part of our ongoing efforts to be responsive to changes in education. (See the Updates section of this issue for more information on the revision process.)

Here's a look at how the standards have shaped professional learning as we prepare for even more impact in the coming years.



35

U.S. states have applied the standards in state education policy.



700,000

people have used the Standards Assessment Inventory (SAI) since 2011.



11,000

Average number of views of standards videos.



187,000/year

hits to standards web pages on learningforward.org in 2019.



97%

of 2018 Learning Forward Academy graduates found the standards a valuable resource.



94%

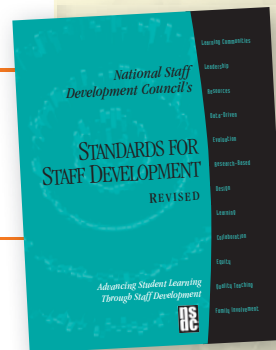
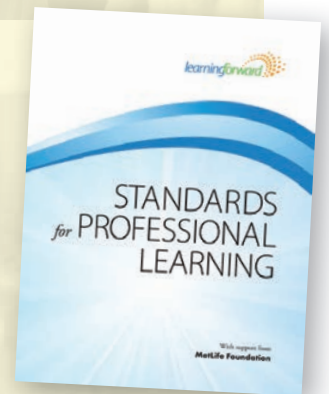
of respondents to the 2019 Learning Leaders Survey believe the standards are important to K-12 education.

25 years of standards

New version coming.

2011

We released the third edition.

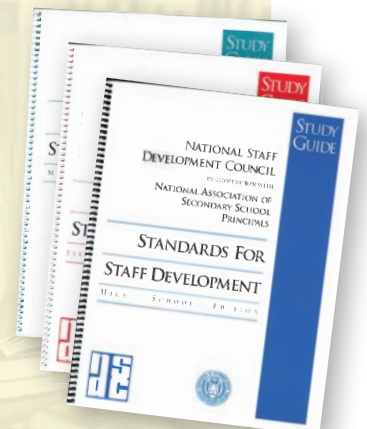


2001

The second edition included 12 standards.

1994-95

The first standards consisted of three volumes.



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 understanding of the standards and strategies for implementing them.

Ways you might use this tool include:

- Discuss the questions in a professional learning community;
- Share one or more articles from the issue with your staff and facilitate a conversation; and
- Do a self-assessment of what you have learned from this issue.

<p>STANDARD: RESOURCES</p> <p>IN ACTION On p. 52, leaders from Long Beach Unified School District describe an evolution of their professional learning approach to “anywhere, anytime” learning. That shift took new resources and learning tools, including videos and podcasts, which they created through a process of design thinking.</p>	<p>TO CONSIDER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What shifts are you currently considering or implementing in your district or organization, and what resources — other than money — could help with that effort? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Beach district staff described a process of iterating and “failing forward” rather than expecting new resources to be perfect products immediately. Does this philosophy resonate with you? Why or why not? How might it help you generate new resources? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>STANDARD: DATA</p> <p>IN ACTION “Why is formative assessment — a proven powerful instructional practice — so elusive in classrooms?” Amy Burton asks in her article on p. 28. By gathering data about student understanding in real time, formative assessment allows teachers to shift their instructional practice in an immediate and personalized way. But it is not used widely and well, a pattern Burton began to change through her work with a reflective learning network.</p>	<p>TO CONSIDER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers in Burton’s study came to better understand essential elements of effective formative assessment, including the importance of learning targets, critical thinking, and authentic partnerships with students. What misconceptions about formative assessment do you see with your staff or colleagues? How could you address them? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burton modeled the use of formative assessment with the teachers to help them understand how to do the same with their students. How do you model formative assessment or other high-leverage teaching practices during professional learning communities or networks? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

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



THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION

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LEARNING FORWARD IS READY TO SUPPORT YOU.

We are a community of professional learning leaders who come together as members, affiliates, and allies. Your collective expertise, creativity, determination, and commitment to serving all students and all communities will get us through the challenges we face today.

Because you and your educators are preparing lessons in unfamiliar digital environments, we have created a growing set of resources to support you during this difficult time. Go here for our latest blogs, webinars, and a collection of resources focused on supporting your work:

learningforward.org/COVID

Our webinar series includes:

- Preparing educators for school closings and a new learning environment
- Teaching in an online environment
- Taking care of yourself during uncertain times: Mindfulness and well-being for educators
- Supporting students in stressful times
- How to lead when the path isn't clear



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