

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students **integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.**

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

LEADERSHIP

RESOURCES

DATA

Integrating theories, research, and models of human learning into the planning and design of professional learning contributes to its effectiveness. Several factors influence decisions about learning designs, including the goals of the learning, characteristics of the learners, their comfort with the learning process and one another, their familiarity with the content, the magnitude of the expected change, educators' work environment, and resources available to support learning. The design of professional learning affects its quality and effectiveness.

APPLY LEARNING THEORIES, RESEARCH, AND MODELS

Cognitive psychologists, neuroscientists, and educators have studied how learning occurs for nearly a century. The resulting theories, research, and models of human learning shape the underly-

ing framework and assumptions educators use to plan and design professional learning. While multiple designs exist, many have common features, such as active engagement, modeling, reflection, metacognition, application, feedback, ongoing support, and formative and summative assessment, that support change in knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practice.

Professional learning occurs in face-to-face, online, and hybrid settings. Some professional learning focuses on individual learning, while other forms focus on team-based or whole-school learning. Most professional learning occurs as a part of the workday, while other forms occur outside the school day. Both formal and informal designs facilitate and organize educator learning. Some learning designs use structured processes such as courses or workshops. Others are more fluid to allow for adjustments in the learning process. Some learning designs require

LEARNING DESIGNS

IMPLEMENTATION

OUTCOMES

team members or external experts as facilitators, while others are individually organized. Learning designs use synchronous or asynchronous interactions, live or simulated models and experiences, and print and nonprint resources to present information, model skills and procedures, provide low-risk practice, and support transfer to the workplace.

Job-embedded learning designs engage individuals, pairs, or teams of educators in professional learning during the workday. Designs for job-embedded learning include analyzing student data, case studies, peer observation or visitations, simulations, co-teaching with peers or specialists, action research, peer and expert coaching, observing and analyzing demonstrations of practice, problem-based learning, inquiry into practice, student observation, study groups, data analysis, constructing and scoring assessments, examining student or educator work, lesson study, video clubs, professional reading, or book studies. Learners and facilitators of learning may weave together multiple designs within on-site, online, or hybrid learning to achieve identified goals and to differentiate learning designs to meet the unique needs of individual learners. Learning designs that occur during the workday and engage peers in learning facilitate ongoing communication about learning, develop a collaborative culture with peer accountability, foster professionalism, and support transfer of the learning to practice.

Technology is rapidly enhancing and extending opportunities for professional learning. It particularly facilitates access to, sharing, construction,

and analysis of information to enhance practice. Technology exponentially increases possibilities for personalizing, differentiating, and deepening learning, especially for educators who have limited access to on-site professional learning or who are eager to reach beyond the boundaries of their own work setting to join local or global networks to enrich their learning.

SELECT LEARNING DESIGNS

When choosing designs for professional learning, educators consider multiple factors. The first is the intended outcome, drawn from analysis of student and educator learning needs. Learning



designs that engage adult learners in applying the processes they are expected to use facilitate the learning of those behaviors by making them more explicit. Effective designs for professional learning assist educators in moving beyond comprehension

of the surface features of a new idea or practice to developing a more complete understanding of its purposes, critical attributes, meaning, and connection to other approaches. To increase student learning, educator learning provides many opportunities for educators to practice new learning with ongoing assessment, feedback, and coaching so the learning becomes fully integrated into routine behaviors.

Educators are responsible for taking an active role in selecting and constructing learning designs that facilitate their own and others' learning. They choose appropriate learning designs to achieve their individual, team, or school goals. Educators' learning characteristics and preferences also inform decisions about learning designs. Learners' backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, motivation, interests, cognitive processes, professional identity, and commitment to school and school system goals affect how educators approach professional learning and the effectiveness of various learning designs. Decisions about learning designs consider all phases of the learning process, from knowledge and skill acquisition to application, reflection, refinement, assessment, and evaluation. Learning designers consider how to build knowledge, develop skills, transform practice, challenge attitudes and beliefs, and inspire action.

PROMOTE ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Active engagement in professional learning promotes change in educator practice and student learning. Active engagement occurs when learners interact during the learning process with the content and with one another. Educator collaborative learning consistently produces strong, positive effects on achievement of learning outcomes. Active engagement respects adults as professionals and gives them significant voice and choice in shaping their own learning. Through active engagement, ed-

ucators construct personal meaning of their learning, are more committed to its success, and identify authentic applications for their learning. Active learning processes promote deep understanding of new learning and increase motivation to implement it. Active learning processes include discussion and dialogue, writing, demonstrations, inquiry, reflection, metacognition, co-construction of knowledge, practice with feedback, coaching, modeling, and problem solving. Through exploration of individual and collective experiences, learners actively construct, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize knowledge and practices.

RELATED RESEARCH

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