

High-Quality Professional Development Resources and References

I. Research on Qualities of Effective Professional Development

According to Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon, K. S. (2001), the qualities of effective professional development are based on the following:

- A. Type of activity – study groups and coaching that occur during the school day (in the classroom or as part of teacher planning time) of longer duration and easier to sustain over time, encourage the collective participation of teachers from same school or department
- B. Duration – total number of contact hours AND span or period of time over which the activity was spread to allow for in-depth study, interaction and reflection (all critical components of changing teacher practice)
- C. Collective participation – designed for groups of teachers from the same school, department or grade level – also helps sustain PD over time.
- D. Focus on content – deepening content knowledge as well as deepening teachers' understanding of *how* students learn.
- E. Promote active learning – active engagement in meaningful discussion, planning and practice (observing and being observed with feedback/coaching, planning classroom implementations, reviewing student work, presenting/leading/writing)
- F. Foster coherence – the PD is part of a wider set of opportunities for teacher learning and development (builds on what teachers have already learned, emphasizes content and pedagogy aligned with standards, supports ongoing professional communication among teachers trying to change their teaching in similar ways)

II. Understanding Different Professional Development Strategies

Rhoton and Bowers (2001) suggest that strategies for professional development should be designed by basing them on the **purpose** for which the PD is being initiated:

- A. Developing awareness (beginning phases of a change)
- B. Building knowledge (deepening understanding)
- C. Translating knowledge into practice (planning instruction)
- D. Practicing teaching (using new approaches with students)
- E. Reflecting (assessing impact of changes and thinking about ways to further improve)

III. Impact of Coaching on Teacher and Student Performance

In-classroom coaching and mentoring and use of technology to enable communities of practice hold promise in playing a significant role in helping teachers transform their teaching practices and thus improve student learning (Knight, 2007 and Martin, Strother, Beglau, Bates and Reitzes, 2010 and Resnick, 2010).

- A. Transfer of learning - teachers who received instructional coaching were more likely to use the methods they were taught in professional development workshops than those who only attended the workshop.
- B. Classroom practice - coaching activities help teachers translate professional development concepts into classroom practice and include modeling instruction, lesson planning, technology assistance, reflective practice, and problem-solving.
- C. Technology-enabled communities of practice – convergence of tools and social networks offer real-time support for teachers and serve as a catalyst for professional growth.

IV. Learning Forward: the National Staff Development Council Standards (NSDC)

Learning Forward: NSDC has provided leadership for many years in the improvement of professional development. The Standards that they have created and refined provide a framework for understanding professional learning for educators.

- A. **Learning Communities:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.
- B. **Leadership:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.
- C. **Resources:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.
- D. **Data:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.
- E. **Learning Designs:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.
- F. **Implementation:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.
- G. **Outcomes:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

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