

KEY ELEMENTS IN READING DEVELOPMENT: TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Outline



- Premise
- Professional development practices

Premise

- Teachers do the best job they can do with the knowledge, resources, and experiences they have at their disposal.

Professional Development

- The role of teacher professional development is to introduce teachers to new, and presumably, better practices.

Teacher beliefs

- Teacher beliefs are reflected in the decisions they make as they plan for, implement, and evaluate instruction, their practice.

Teacher practice

- Represents the integration of their beliefs with external factors that are beyond their control such as:
 - Class size
 - Availability of suitable material
 - Expectations of supervisors
 - Curriculum and district requirements
 - Time

Thus, professional development must:

- be coherent with expectations
- be provided in a focused and systematic manner,
- be of sufficient length to give teachers time to acquire new practices, and
- provide support.

Variables in PD models

- Coherence
 - Focus
 - Duration
 - Collective participation
 - Active learning
 - Activity type
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- The following section based on work by Garet, M. S., Porter, A. C., Desimone, L., Birman, B. F., & Yoon, K. S. (2001). What makes professional development effective? Results from a national sample of teachers. *American Education Research Journal*, 38, 915-945.

Coherence

The degree to which PD activities are part of a coherent program of teacher learning **and** connections are evident among the practices and the teachers' goals and activities.

- Making these connections is the job of the persons providing professional development.

Why is it important?



When the content of professional development is aligned with the educational standards that teachers are expected to implement, then teachers are more likely to implement and sustain new practices.

Coherence

- Is there coherence between standards and the curriculum?
- Is there coherence between the curriculum and end-of-year or cumulative assessments?
- Is there coherence between the curriculum and teacher preparation programs?
- Is there coherence among teacher practices, the curriculum, and standards?

Is your curriculum adequate?

□ Content

- Does it teach children how to read?
- Does it include the 5 areas of reading instruction?
- Does it break down reading to its component parts and then integrate them?
- Do skills progress from easier to more difficult?
- Are skills taught explicitly and systematically?
- Are tasks modeled?
- Are frequent and cumulative reviews included?

Is your curriculum adequate?

□ Instructional Design

- A manageable amount of information is introduced.
- Objectives are clearly stated.
- Examples are included
- Opportunities for student practice are included.
- Specific guidance for corrective feedback is included.

Focus

The objective of professional development.

- ▣ Emphasis on subject matter
- ▣ Change in teaching practices
- ▣ Goals for students
- ▣ Ways students learn

Subject matter

- Knowledge
- General pedagogy
 - ▣ Classroom management, planning, grouping
- Pedagogical content knowledge
 - ▣ Practices in specific content domains for example PA or phonics

A combination of

- Subject matter content and how children learn is the most effective.
- For example:
 - ▣ How children learn to read
 - To understand the importance of specific practices
 - ▣ How to teach reading
 - To increase subject matter knowledge
 - ▣ Uses of evaluation methods
 - To determine what students know and do not know
 - ▣ Use of materials and curricular design
 - To plan and modify instruction

Duration



The total number of contact hours spent in an activity and the time span over which the activity takes place.

Why is it important?

Distributed introduction of practices followed by classrooms visits to observe or model over a school year facilitates the integration of new knowledge and practices.

Collective participation:

The degree to which the professional development activity emphasizes collaboration among groups of teachers from the same school, department, or grade level, as opposed to participation of individuals from many schools.

Why is it important?



To increase implementation, all teachers in a grade level in a school should be included. In addition, teachers across grades should be encouraged to share lessons learned to facilitate implementation and to develop school-based plans to organize aspects of the new practices.

Promotion of active learning:



The degree to which professional development offers teachers opportunities to become actively engaged in meaningful analysis of teaching and learning.

It may include opportunities to observe and be observed, to receive feedback, and to plan implementation with peers.

Activity type

The degree to which the activity (e.g., study group, teacher network, professional development structure) is organized to facilitate change.

- Examples:
 - ▣ Workshops
 - ▣ In-class coaching/mentoring
 - ▣ Small group sessions
 - ▣ Virtual workshops

Why is it important?



Teacher professional development that includes multiple delivery formats such as large group workshops, individual coaching or mentoring, and small group teacher collaborative groups allow teachers to integrate new practices as they build new knowledge and skills.

A PD model

- Monthly or bi-monthly workshops
 - ▣ Models of what and how to teach
 - ▣ Focus on a critical area
 - ▣ Materials include: readings, teacher guides, student materials
- Focused small group sessions
 - ▣ 1-3 times a month
- Coaching/mentoring
 - ▣ “to consolidate learning” 1-4 time a month

Process

1. Use student data to identify areas of need.
2. Examine standards and curriculum.
3. Determine how you will address student needs:
 1. To improve student learning you have to change:
 - the amount of instruction;
 - the focus of instruction; or
 - the quality of instruction (Shanahan, 2009).

Process

4. Identify and develop materials.
5. Develop a plan for teacher professional development.
 - ▣ Identify the focus and activity type.
6. Implement professional development.
7. Monitor teacher progress.
8. Monitor student progress.

Conclusion

- Improving instruction is a cyclical endeavor because before you change teacher practice you have to change teacher beliefs and knowledge.
- Teachers must have adequate preparation and materials to impact student learning.
- Change takes time.

Questions for discussion

1. Think about how professional development topics are currently chosen. What would it take to change this process so that it takes into account student and teacher needs?
2. Think about how professional development is currently implemented. What would it take to change it so that it incorporates active learning, collective participation and is of sufficient duration?

Questions for discussion

1. Think about your curriculum. How well does it meet the general criteria presented today?
2. Thinks about your standards. How well are they aligned with your curriculum?