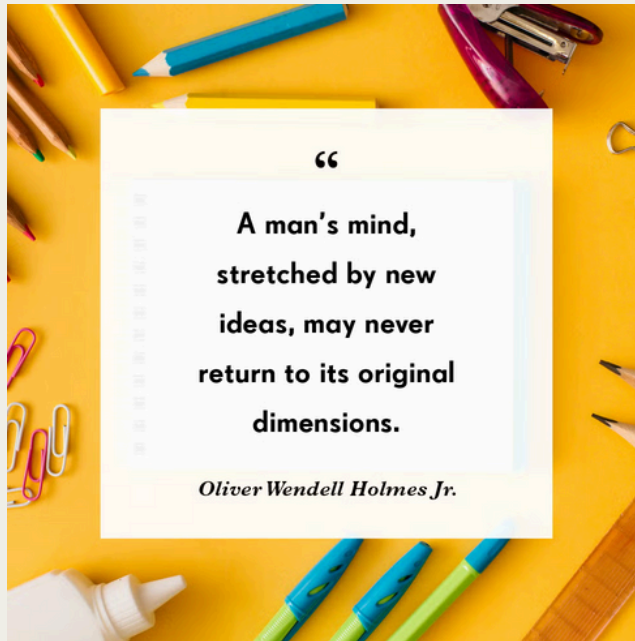


Alternative PL

A CALL TO ACTION

Joseph Perrone
EDLD 5389
Dr. Dwayne Harapnuik
Lamar University
Beaumont, Texas





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**A man's mind,
stretched by new
ideas, may never
return to its original
dimensions.**

Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

https://www.countryliving.com/life/q40684410/inspiring-educational-quotes/?oad_source=1

WHY MUST WE CHANGE OUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES?

- We often ask questions about how students learn, but not often about how teachers learn.



A trio of potent reforms: teacher evaluations that will include student test scores, widespread adoption of higher academic standards, and the development of high-stakes standardized tests aligned with these new standards. Each of these reforms challenges the status quo, demanding that schools systematically and continuously improve student performance, marking and measuring their progress every step along the way.

According to Allison Gulamhussein (2013), ninety (90) percent of educators surveyed reported that professional development is overall ineffective.

The real issue isn't that teachers aren't provided professional development, but that the typical offerings are ineffective at changing teachers' practice or student learning.

This is because most development happens in a workshop-style model which research shows has little to no impact on student learning or teacher practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

THE DISCONNECT

Gulamhussein reports (2013) forty-six (46) states had adopted the Federal Department of Education's Common Core Standards.

The image shows a handwritten report on a grid. The title at the top is "Report CA - Failing Grades/Gards". Below the title, there is a section titled "Failing of the grades 2". The grid contains handwritten numbers and some red markings. The numbers are arranged in a pattern that suggests a data table or a list of results. The grid is divided into columns and rows, with some cells containing numbers and others containing red markings. The report is written on a piece of paper that is slightly crumpled and has a blue border.

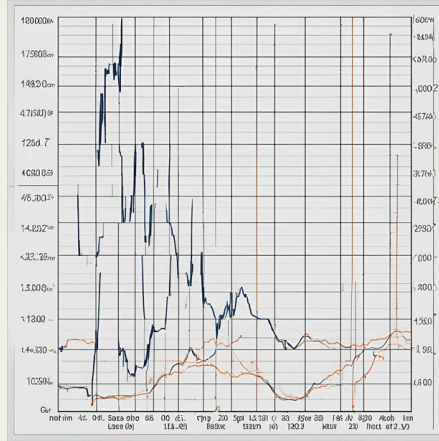
The problem exists not with the teachers' understanding of the standards, but the support the teachers were given to implement the standards. They were given a destination, but not any idea of how to get there.

This resulted in poor implementation, not only from state to state, and school district to school district, but often from individual schools within those adopting districts.

How one school in a district was teaching the standards may have differed from how another school in the same district was engaging in the standards.

The Implementation Dip

How do we make Professional Learning Work? We need to avoid the Dip



The area of greatest struggle is not in learning a new skill but in implementing it, something referred to as the “implementation dip” (Fuller, 2001). This is true with any new skill—learning about writing isn’t as difficult as actually writing, learning about bicycling isn’t as difficult as actually riding about a teaching method isn’t as difficult as actually implementing it.

The implementation stage must be included and supported more explicitly in professional development offerings, as this is the critical stage where teachers begin to commit to an instructional approach.

POOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WASTES MONEY AND TIME



Researchers found is that while districts may think they spend very little on professional development, most districts spend a tremendous amount.

For example, one district reported spending \$460,000 on professional development; however, after a detailed study of the district's spending, the actual figure was \$8.9 million (Odden et al., 2002). Other studies found that, pre-recession, districts were spending on average between two to five percent of their total budget on professional development (Hertert, 1997; Little, 1987; Miller et al., 1994; Elmore & Burney, 1997; Miles et al., 1999; Miles & Hornbeck, 2000; Odden, 2002).

The federal government helps states and districts with professional development funds, mostly through Title II, Part A. In 2012-13, 44.4% of the \$2.33 billion Title II dollars went to support teacher development.

SOLUTIONS TO POOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- 1. Duration of the Learning**
- 2. Teacher Support**
- 3. Active Engagement**
- 4. Effective Modeling**
- 5. Specific Content Application**

SOLUTION #1:- THE DURATION OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



Teachers need as many as 20 exposures to a new skill to successfully implement it.

Some studies have concluded that teachers may need as many as 50 hours of instruction, practice and coaching before a new teaching strategy is mastered and implemented in class.

In nine different experimental research studies of teacher professional development, all found that programs of greater duration were positively associated with teacher change and improvements in student learning

Teachers with 80 hours or more of professional development were significantly more likely to use the teaching practice they learned than teachers who had less than 80 hours of training

SOLUTION #2: TEACHER- LEARNER SUPPORT



Simply increasing the amount of time teachers spend in professional development alone, however, is not enough. The time has to be spent wisely, with a significant portion dedicated to supporting teachers during the implementation stage. Support at this stage helps teachers navigate the frustration that comes from using a new instructional method.

Studies have found that when teachers are supported during this phase, they change their teaching practices. Truesdale (2003) studied differences between teachers attending just a workshop and teachers attending the workshop and then being coached through implementation. The study found that coached teachers transferred the newly learned teaching practices, but teachers who only had the workshop quickly lost interest in the skill and did not continue to use it in their classrooms.

Likewise, Knight and Cornett (2009) found in a study of 50 teachers that those who had coaching along with an introductory workshop were significantly more likely to use the new teaching practice in their classes than those who were only exposed to the workshop.

SOLUTION #3: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT FROM THE BEGINNING



In the same way students must first understand a concept before applying it, teachers need a thorough understanding of research or theory before they can attempt implementation in their classrooms. Therefore, attention also has to be paid to how new practices are introduced.

Traditional workshops are not only largely ineffective at changing teachers' practice, but a poor way to convey theoretical concepts and evidence-based research. This is because many professional development workshops involve teachers as passive listeners only. Again, just like students, teachers learn better when they are able to actively participate and make sense of the information being presented (French, 1997).

Professional development sessions which aim to make teachers aware of a concept have been shown to be more successful when they allow teachers to learn the concept in varied, active ways (Roy, 2005; Richardson, 1998). These activities can include: readings, role playing techniques, open-ended discussion of what is presented, live modeling, and visits to classrooms to observe and discuss the teaching methodology (Roy, 2005; Goldberg, 2002; Rice, 2001; Black, 1998; Licklider, 1997).

SOLUTION #4: EFFECTIVE MODELING



While many forms of active learning help teachers decipher concepts, theories, and research-based practices in teaching, modeling – when an expert demonstrates the new practice – has been shown to be particularly successful in helping teachers understand and apply a concept and remain open to adopting it (Snow-Renner & Lauer, 2005; Carpenter et al., 1989; Cohen & Hill, 2001; Garet et al., 2001; Desimone et al., 2002; Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007; Saxe, Gearhart, & Nasir, 2001; Supovitz, Mauyer, & Kahle, 2000).

For example, instead of hearing about inquiry learning in science, a master teacher might teach a science class using inquiry methodology while being observed by a teacher who is learning this skill. In this way, teachers can see how the method is used successfully in a class of real students.

SOLUTION #5: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CANNOT BE A “ONE SIZE FITS ALL” PROGRAM



Uniformity in teaching does not exist. Our Professional development must address the content-specific skills that teachers will have to learn and apply.

While there may be a few general principles that apply to all teachers, these are

- 1) best understood and mediated with attention to how those general principles manifest within the content a teacher teaches and
- 2) pale in comparison to useful concepts that are discipline-specific.

Few pedagogical principles span all disciplines, but many important areas of analysis and exploration are highly discipline-specific which go unaddressed and unacknowledged in generic professional development.

WHAT ELSE MUST WE DO TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF POOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



Besides the previous five solutions, we need to address the following elements.

TEACHER AS TECHNICIAN



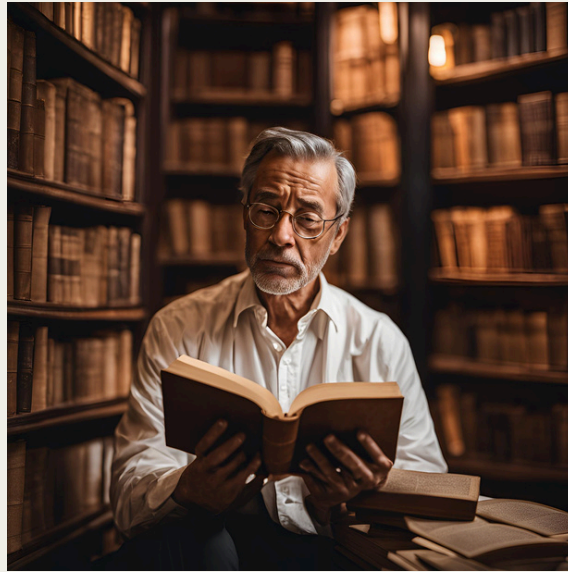
Technical skill training

Teacher's role: To implement particular skills or strategies that are backed by research

Focus: Explaining the skill and strategy and research base behind it with support for the teacher as he/she tries to transfer the skill or strategy to the classroom

Structure: Workshop and Coaching

TEACHERS AS INTELLECTUALS



An inquiry process where teachers innovate

Teacher's role: An intellectual examining broad research on learning and developing innovative classroom strategies to achieve goals

Focus: Exposing teachers to pedagogical research in teacher's content area and provides support for innovation and implementation through a local teacher community

Structure: Professional Learning Communities

TO SUM UP: WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS WE NEED TO CONSIDER

COACHING



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES



COACHING

Teachers' Time

Staff to Plan and Deliver Active Training about Teaching Practices

Staff to Serve as Instructional Coaches

Training Materials

PLCs

Teachers' Time

Staff to Develop Initial Training for All Staff About
PLCs and Protocols for Inquiry Meetings

Cost of Decreasing Responsibility of Department or Grade Level Chair so They Can
Develop Artifacts for
Consideration and Lead PLC

Materials for Artifacts (articles, books, webcasts)

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