

Stratenotes

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EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR ADULTS Part 2: Structural Elements

This article, focused on fundamentals of professional learning, was submitted to a journal focused on professional development. You can download the original white paper from our [website](#); this version contains updated references including the June 2017 Learning Policy Institute meta-analysis, Effective Teacher Professional Development.

*Graner, P.S., Ault, M.M., Mellard, D., Gingerich, R.A., & Woods, K.
University of Kansas, Center for Research on Learning*

[Professional learning is defined as on-going engagement through a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improve participants' effectiveness by advancing their skills or expertise (Hirsch, 2009). Research tells us teachers can effectively master new knowledge and skills and transfer what they learn to their classrooms through a combination of effective practices (Joyce & Showers, 1995 & 2002). Thus, we present the second part of a professional learning (PL) framework that rests on research of (a) *principles of adult learning*, (b) *effective practices*, and (c) *structural elements*.] For this issue, we address the structural elements.

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Decisions about the structure of professional learning opportunities also influence the effect size of the intended outcome. In this section, information about collective participation, the duration of the PD, the size of the group, settings, and the instructional integration of technology to support learning are presented.

STRUCTURE #1: COLLECTIVE PARTICIPATION

When is adult professional learning most effective? Adult professional learning is most successful when it occurs in authentic settings, within a social, collaborative environment, when educators routinely collaborate with trusted colleagues to solve the problems. Those conducting PD must plan for and facilitate the means and opportunities to ensure collective participation, communities of learners,



communities of practice, and collegial support networks. All of these arrangements describe how the participation of instructors from the same site, from the same career technical area, with common content to teach are brought together physically or virtually to interact and engage in discourse about what they are learning. Dozens of researchers describe the powerful nature of bringing groups together to learn; however, such collegiality requires a safe environment in which trust and critique are present (Fullan, 2007).

Dialogue is effective in supporting PD when used in organized professional learning groups, such as learning communities (Bogler & Somech, 2004; Craig, 2004 & 2007; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007 & 2017; Deglau et al., 2006; DuFour et al., 2006; Fullan, 2007; Hinden et al., 2007; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Servage, 2008). Craig (2007) described how important the use of narratives and dialogue are for knowledge communities because this type of conversation allows professionals to share stories with like-minded colleagues. She asserted that without

narrative and the ability to share stories, they are “unable to hold, express, or grow their knowledge as professionals individually or collectively” (p. 633). Little found that in learning communities participants have a willingness to problem-solve, share struggles, and elicit peer advice. In addition, Little’s teachers suggested that it was their role, as educators, to help students succeed. They did this by supporting innovative practices through collaboration and dialogue with their colleagues. In summary, she proposes that individuals learn from the “collective capacity” of a collective learning group through the process of dialogue. This distinction between types of “teacher talk” helps establish that simple interactions between learners are not sufficient substitutes for high quality learning conversations (Little, 2003).

More recently, Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2017) pointed out that PD that supports collaboration is one of their seven features of effective PD. They recommend that in PD, we should create space for teachers to share ideas, particularly in job-embedded contexts. They further suggest that creating communities in this way, positive change to the culture and instruction at entire grade, department, school, or district levels can follow.

STRUCTURE #2: DURATION

Arriving at the goals of any PD takes time. No shortcut exists. Duration is defined by Desimone (2009) as the span of time over which the PD activity is spread. PD requires sustained and intensive contact across a period of time in order for teachers and other adult learners to absorb, acquire, practice, implement and reflect on newly acquired knowledge and skills to change their practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007

& 2017; Guskey, 2000; Smith et al., 2003). Larger effect sizes were reported when participants were engaged for longer periods of time: 1-10 hours (ES = 0.21), 11-40 hours (ES = .55), and more than 40 hours (ES = .60) (Dunst & Trivette, 2013; Dunst, Trivette & Hamby, 2010). In fact, 20 hours of PD, in which four to five of the practices (shared in Part 1 of this article) were integrated, yielded the highest effect sizes (Dunst & Trivette, 2013; Dunst, Trivette & Hamby, 2010). Wei and colleagues (2009) suggest that intensive and continuously sustained professional development equates to an average of at least 50 hours to change and sustain practice particularly when the change requires deep understanding and mastery.

STRUCTURE #3: GROUP SIZE

A feature of effective PD is incorporation of active learning so that teachers can engage in the same style of learning that they are designing for their students (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2017). So, when planning for PD, attending to the size of the group that will be learning, practicing and engaged in activities together is imperative. The size of the group engaged in the professional development activity has a significant impact on the success of the effort. Small groups (9 - 34 participants), had higher effect sizes than medium sized (35-75 participants) or large (76-300+ participants) groups. Small groups resulted in an average ES of .91, nearly twice that of medium sized groups (ES = .48), and nearly three times that of large groups, with an average ES of .33 (Dunst & Trivette, 2013; Dunst, et al., 2010). Clearly, to actively engage participants in the level of analysis, reflection, and practice necessary, the ratio of professional developers to learners must allow for such interaction. Research suggests that online PD should be

limited to group or cohort sizes of 20 or fewer in order to provide optimum facilitation.

STRUCTURE #4: SETTING

Setting is an important factor in supporting job-embedded, local PD as effect sizes were, on average, twice as large when the PD was conducted at the participant’s work setting (Dunst & Trivette, 2013; Dunst, et al., 2010). As mentioned above, adult professional learning is most successful when the PD occurs in authentic settings, within a social, collaborative environment, in which educators routinely collaborate with trusted colleagues to solve the problems. Effective professional learning is intensive, ongoing, focused on the classroom or instructional setting, and occurs during the participant’s workday (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Ensuring collaboration that will make the practice a welcome and expected part of the culture happens best when peer teachers can observe each other and expert support and coaching can focus directly on the individual needs of the implementer. Recognizing that delivery through a virtual environment will be unavoidable and in fact welcomed should not be discounted when considering setting. Participants can experience virtual PD together in their worksite, therefore keeping them in their setting, and can also engage in blended PD that allows them to engage in learning just in time and on their own time.

STRUCTURE #5: INSTRUCTIONAL INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY (ON-LINE DELIVERY)

Finding the optimal balance of face-to-face and online PD activities can be difficult. The research suggests that PD delivery be a blended and multi-modal, dynamic, and responsive process supported by online resources and technologies as well as face-to face interactions. The intent is to provide ongoing,

embedded professional learning opportunities and resources that will be open, accessible, and accommodate flexible delivery options. Such an approach offers numerous, salient advantages. The online component provides access to resources available in multiple media formats as well as takes advantage of existing and emerging technologies that support the communication and collaboration necessary for adult learning. Many collaborative technologies, facilitated or independent, allow participants to engage in teamwork and utilize online resources, such as videoconferencing, online learning, social networking, and instant messaging. The thoughtful use of collaborative technologies can engage and extend the learning experience, providing access to support at a time and place convenient for the learner.

Online facilitation of PD can be supported by webinars, conference calls, or use of online resources that integrate web2.0 technologies such as wikis, blogs, real-time chat, or blogs. Learners need access to these professional learning opportunities both on- and off-site and through multiple mobile devices such as cell phones, tablets, or lightweight laptops or netbooks. A critical component affecting the success of this access is the availability of standard interactive and communication resources including ample bandwidth (100 kbps per person, or 150-200 kbps per active educational instructor and student computer), current hardware and software, and access to web-based collaborative environments and educationally relevant resources.

IMPLEMENTING COMBINED PRACTICES
While individual PD structures or practices can show promising results or may be preferable to

participants, Dunst and Trivette (2013) found through their meta-analysis that the more practices and the use of a combination of practices were 'associated with optimal positive learner outcomes' (p. 145). Joyce and Showers shared the same results in 1995. Professional developers then must incorporate all of the practices and structures described if the intent is to ensure mastery for teachers and positive outcomes for students. A combination of including more hours and more characteristics/practices yielded a higher effect size, as did fewer numbers of participants combined with more characteristics/practices.

SUMMARY

This document describes the PD framework through which all PD could be designed and implemented for all adult learners in educational settings when the professional developer is focused on achieving results. The content focuses on mastery as the primary goal of high quality PD, but also how PD is important to maintaining high levels of implementation fidelity and ensuring participants collective participation so they become professional learners who can adapt to the ongoing challenges accompanying their roles. To achieve these goals, this document provides the guiding principles of PD and delineates the PD practices and structures that can be implemented in all PD. The framework is directed by the most current and compelling research in teacher PD and adult learning.

Without losing sight of all of the people and moving parts impacted by our professional development, the evidence bears out that the teachers are essential to helping students be college and career ready, to become employable, independent citizens. Teachers

are called upon to be experts in their content area or professional knowledge, to know appropriate instructional methodologies and techniques to instruct in their content, and to meet diverse needs of the students in their classes or programs (Bulgren, 2004). In other words, teachers are expected to be mediators who know the challenges of their content area and are able to guide students in negotiating through that content, translating knowledge into practice (Jones, Palincsar, Ogle, & Carr, 1987). As mediators, they clarify for students teaching techniques, rationales, expectations, and the students' role as a partner in the learning. It is, therefore, incumbent upon professional developers to instruct their participants so that they learn how to include explicit and purposeful instruction, discussion, and practice in the application of instructional techniques and practices that, in the end, most benefit students.

SIM ONLINE RESOURCES

SIM Website
sim.ku.edu

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sim.ku.edu

SIMville
sim.kucrl.org/simville

Publication List
kucrl.ku.edu/research_publications

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2018 LEARNING CONFERENCE

*What Research & Practice say about
Leading, Learning, & Teaching*

KEYNOTE PANEL

Social Emotional Learning & Instructional Technology to Support Academic Achievement For All Students



Dr. James Basham Dr. Jose Blackorby Dr. Karrie Shogren Dr. Kelli Thomas Dr. Sue Vernon

This year's conference addresses your most requested topics: Social Emotional Learning, Teaching Content to Diverse Learners, Tech to Improve Instruction, Adolescent Literacy and more!

Highlighted Conference Sessions

Introducing CORGI: New Instructional Technology Supports for Content Enhancement Routines, Presenters: Jose Blackorby & Janis Bulgren

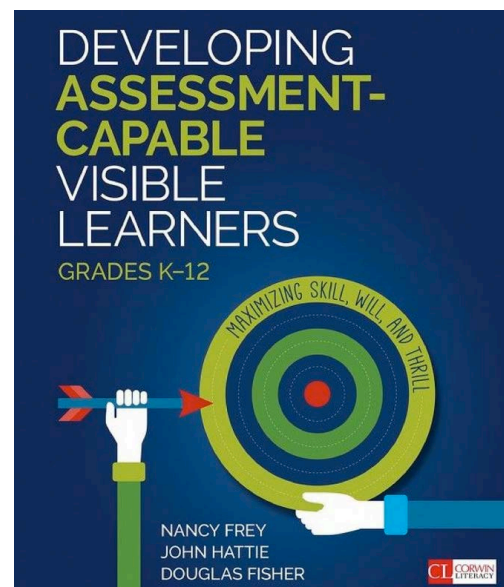
Learn About a New Strategic Math Series Manual: Teaching Multiplication Using Partial Products, Presenters: Margaret Flores, Jessica Milton, Bradley Kaffar

Introducing the Decision-Making Routine (A New Higher Order Reasoning Content Enhancement Routine), Presenter: Janis Bulgren

Activities for Narrative Theme Writing Workshops, Presenter: Jean Schumaker

Bullying and the Special Learner: Using Community Building Strategies and Self Advocacy Strategies to Empower the Special Learner, Presenter: Belinda B. Mitchell

We hope to see you there!



Wednesday's Keynote speaker, Dr. Douglas Fisher's new book, *Developing Assessment-Capable Learners*, is an excellent resource for anyone attending the conference. You can follow the link to purchase a copy of his book prior to the conference by clicking on the book above.

Schedule -at-a-Glance

Tuesday, July 17, 2018

7:30 AM - 8:00 AM | Registration
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM | Welcome & Awards
9:00 AM - 10:45 AM | Keynote Panel
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM | Keynote Panel
Follow-up Sessions
12:00 PM - 1:15 PM | Lunch on your own
1:15 PM - 2:30 PM | Concurrent & Panel Sessions
2:45 PM - 4:00 PM | Concurrent & Panel Sessions
4:15 PM - 5 PM | SIM Certificate Ceremony & Social

Wednesday, July 18, 2018

8:00 AM - 9:30 AM | Keynote: Doug Fisher
9:45 AM - 10:45 AM | Concurrent Sessions
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM | Concurrent Sessions
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM | Lunch on your own
1:15 PM - 2:15 PM | Concurrent Sessions
2:30 PM - 3:45 PM | Concurrent Sessions
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM | Poster Session

Thursday, July 19, 2018

8:15 AM - 9:30 AM | Kaleidoscope Sessions
9:45 AM - 11:00 AM | Concurrent Sessions
11:15 AM - 12:30 PM | Concurrent Sessions

Full Conference Schedule and Topics:
<https://kucrl.ku.edu/kucrl-learning-conference>

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July 17-19, 2018

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Comments: _____

Strateworks membership includes:

- *Stratenotes* - electronic newsletter
- *Stratedirectory Online* - a searchable, web-based listing of SIM Professional Developers
- SIMTRAINER-L - an optional e-mail discussion list for SIM Professional Developers
- *SIMville* - a collection of resources and assets on our website available to active SIM Professional Developers
- *Professional Developer Micro-credentials* - <http://sim.kucrl.org/micro-credentials>

Please visit the SIM Website for more information - <http://sim.kucrl.org/sim>

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SIM CALENDAR

July 17-19, 2018

[KUCRL Learning Conference](#) – Lawrence, KS

February 5-7, 2019

[Florida Update Conference](#)

August 1-2, 2018

[Xtreme Reading Institute for educators](#) - Austin, TX

November 13-14, 2018

[Northeast Update](#) - Harrisonburg, VA

August 7-9, 2018 (follow up days in November TBA)

[Learning Strategies Potential Professional Developers Institute](#) - Asheville, NC

For a complete list of SIM events, including those not coordinated by KUCRL, visit SIM.KUCRL.ORG/CLASSES LIST YOUR OPEN SESSIONS ON THE SIM CALENDAR: We are contacted by hundreds of educators each year who have heard about SIM or CLC and are looking for opportunities to learn more. Email information about your open sessions to monatipton@ku.edu to be included in the online SIM Events Calendar.



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July 17-19, 2018
DoubleTree by Hilton
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Fax: 785.864.5728
E-mail: simpd@ku.edu

Contributors:
Peony Allen
Patricia Graner
Nhan Nguyen
Mona Tipton

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