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TEACHERS TEACHING TEACHERS™

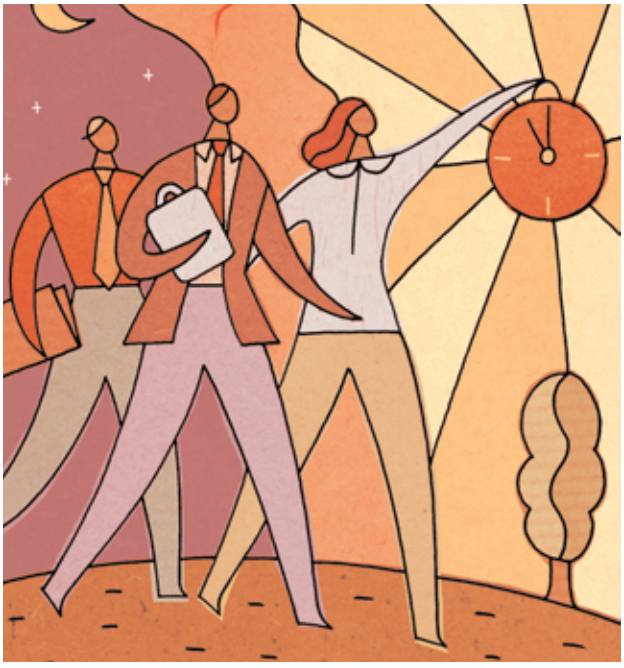
FOR A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY OF TEACHER LEADERS

9 roles of the school-based coach

COMPLEX JOB IS A MIX OF TEACHER, LEADER, CHANGE AGENT, FACILITATOR

BY JOELLEN KILLION AND CYNTHIA HARRISON

In response to the new expectations for public education, some district and school administrators realize that students are not likely to perform at higher levels until teachers begin performing at higher levels. These educators know they cannot wait for institutions of higher education and teacher preparation programs to change. Professional development is the only practical tool at their disposal to increase the instructional effectiveness of current classroom teachers. They also know, however, that traditional professional development is not up to this significant challenge. Most of it is sporadic and of low quality. Traditional professional development usually occurs away from the school site, separate from classroom contexts and challenges in which teachers are expected to apply what they learned, and often without the necessary support to facilitate transfer of learning.



An increasing number of school systems have carved a new professional role to address the weakness of professional development and to improve teacher and student learning. School systems and states call it by many different names and describe its purposes and functions differently. Some of the titles for this position are coach, literacy specialist, math coach,

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instructional specialist, mentor, master teacher, or lead teacher. Whatever the name of this role, the job is complex. People in it are part teacher, part leader, part change agent, and part facilitator. Regardless of their title or job description, school-based coaches have at least two things in common. First, their mission is to assist teachers in learning and applying the new knowledge and skills necessary to improve the academic performance of all students. Second, instructional coaches spend a significant portion of their working day in direct contact with teachers, in their schools and classrooms.

These educators are the new pioneers in public education (Mizell, 2004). Yet they will not be successful unless they receive specialized professional development that builds their capability to serve in their new roles.

Emerging research indicates that school-based coaches contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning in schools. Studies about coaching in the Chicago, Boston, and Sacramento Public Schools in literacy, in South Carolina in math and science, and in numerous other districts demonstrate improved student performance when coaches work directly with teachers in their classrooms. School districts large and small are employing coaches to provide school-based professional development to teachers. Coaches are deployed throughout Florida; Montgomery County, Md.; Philadelphia; New York City; Springfield, Mo.; and many other districts throughout the country. School-based coaches are master teachers who have received specialized training to work with adult learners, design and facilitate professional learning, provide confidential classroom-based support, and assist the administrative team in reaching data-driven student achievement goals.

School-based coaches have complex, multifaceted roles. This is one challenge related to preparing coaches for their roles. In some schools, coaches serve primarily as classroom supporters, teachers who work side by side with other teachers to refine instruction. In other schools, coaches facilitate teacher learning by providing training and organizing other forms of professional learning. Still in other schools, coaches work with data and help teachers analyze data about student learning and plan interventions for students. These are merely a few of the roles coaches fill.

This article explores the various dimensions of coaches' work. What is surprising about the role of coaches is that the specific job expectations differ dramatically from school to school based on the specific job description and performance expectations. Yet, among the differences, there are similarities.

We've identified nine roles of school-based coaches. These roles are at right.

The roles differ in terms of the knowledge and skills coaches employ in each role and the challenges each role presents. Yet, while the roles are distinct, in real life, coaches typically fill multiple roles simultaneously. For example, a coach who meets with the science department to analyze student achievement data may be a data coach, school leader, learning facilitator, and resource provider at the same time.

Considering the distinction among the roles of coaches is important for four reasons:

1. One is in defining the job expectations for coaches. Often coaches are given a direction to support teachers. Yet how coaches provide support may be unclear if not defined. The distinction among the roles helps district personnel and principals clarify expectations for coaches.

2. For those responsible for preparing coaches for their new roles, the distinction among the roles frames the knowledge and skills that become the content of professional development for novice coaches. Coaches might use the descriptions of the various roles to consider how best to serve teachers.

3. The roles will give them specific language to describe the types of services they may offer their teacher colleagues.

4. In addition, the roles provide a way to measure the effectiveness of coaches and hold them accountable for their work. Coaches may keep logs that document what roles they fill

Continued on Page 5

9 roles of the school-based coach

- Catalyst for change
- Classroom supporter
- Curriculum specialist
- Data coach
- Instructional specialist
- Learning facilitator
- Mentor
- Resource provider
- School leader

Studies about coaching in the Chicago, Boston, and Sacramento Public Schools in literacy, in South Carolina in math and science, and in numerous other districts demonstrate improved student performance when coaches work directly with teachers in their classrooms.

ROLE: Learning facilitator

PURPOSE: To design collaborative, job-embedded, standards-based professional learning

From *9 Roles of the School-Based Coach* by Joellen Killion and Cynthia Harrison

BY JOELLEN KILLION AND CYNTHIA HARRISON

Coaches in the role of learning facilitator coordinate a wide range of learning opportunities for teachers to develop teachers' knowledge, attitude, skills, aspirations, and behaviors. Coaches may train teachers in new instructional strategies, facilitate whole school study groups, lead critical friends groups, facilitate action research teams, or organize professional learning teams. Because the types of learning experiences the coach facilitates vary, this role is diverse. Coaches recognize the importance of using a variety of learning processes, honoring the uniqueness of adult learners, and aligning the learning process with the content and the learning preferences of teachers.

In the role of learning facilitator, coaches influence the direction of the school's professional development plan. As experts on professional development, coaches use professional development to leverage improvement in teacher practice and student learning. Coaches assist the principal, school improvement team, and grade-level or department teams to design effective ways to structure their learning and use team and whole school learning time effectively.

Many coaches provide training for teachers in their schools on topics related to curriculum, assessment, and instruction. When training is needed, the coach organizes it in such a way that teachers are active participants in learning that relates directly to their identified needs. Learning facilitators organize professional learning in multiple diverse ways in addition to training. They accept that teachers learn best with and from one another and organize opportunities for teachers to teach teachers. This form of learning often occurs within the school day in collaborative settings where teachers view their work as opportunities to refine their practice.

Frequently, the coach provides just-in-time or "at the elbow" training to teachers in small groups or individually. When a new teacher wants assistance with a behavior management strategy for a student who is often disruptive, the coach may teach the novice teacher a simple and effective behavior management strategy and help her implement consistently. If an experienced teacher has an autistic child in his classroom for the first time, the coach may provide ideas about how to make accommodations in assessment for this student. Sometimes, a teacher may want help with English as a Second Language students and the coach may help the teacher understand the stages of language acquisition. These forms of learning occur daily and are facilitated by coaches in conversations about teaching and learning.

For example, when a new teacher wants assistance with a behavior management strategy for a student who is often disruptive, the coach may teach the novice teacher a simple and effective behavior management strategy and help her implement consistently.

Scenario:
Learning facilitator at work

One of the goals for the Benton Middle School staff is increasing instructional effectiveness. In their school plan, teachers agreed to learn the nine strategies for effective instruction identified by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock in *Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* (ASCD, 2001). Each month of the school year, teachers will learn and practice a new strategy in their classrooms. It is the beginning of the third month of school, and Wageh Saad* is preparing for his 90-minute presentation on the third strategy, summarizing and note-taking. He talks with several teachers and learns that they are struggling with the second strategy, similarities and differences, and not satisfied with the work their students are producing. He decides to ask a few more experienced and confident teachers in several grade levels to bring samples of student work that represents their application of similarities and differences to the afternoon meeting.

At the beginning of the meeting, Saad checks in with the whole staff to verify that what he has heard from a few is true for the majority. He doesn't want to assume that if a few teachers are struggling that all are. He comes to the meeting prepared to differentiate the learning experiences for teachers if that seems appropriate and has already enlisted the support of the principal to take the group of teachers who may want to spend more time on similarities and differences while he moves ahead with others to the new strategy.

Just as he heard, the majority of teachers express their frustration with similarities and differences. Even those who report being confident agree that it will be helpful for them to review the strategy. Saad asks the whole faculty if they want to use their time together to examine some student work and to do some joint problem solving about the similarities and differences strategy. He also asks for their commitment to meet again in two weeks to learn about the third strategy, summarizing and note-taking, which they will forego today. Saad quickly changes plans and organizes teachers into small, mixed grade-level groups to conduct a Collaborative Assessment Conference using the student work several teachers brought. Teachers find it very helpful to look at student work and discover what students know and don't know about similarities and differences.

After a 45-minute Collaborative Assessment Conference, Saad organizes teachers into grade-level Help Groups (Killion & Kaylor, 1991) to talk about their problems with the similarities and differences strategy. Teachers use the information from the Collaborative Assessment Conference groups to focus their questions about the next steps for improving students' work with similarities and differences. Teachers leave the meeting feeling more confident and eager to try their new ideas. Saad realizes that not every strategy will be easy for teachers to apply. He appreciates teachers' openness to asking for more help with a strategy and is confident that this risk-free environment will help them all become more successful implementing these research-based instructional strategies.

** Fictitious name and school*

Occasionally, the coach organizes training by outside consultants because the expertise does not exist within the school or coordinates teachers' participation in training outside the school or district.

Knowledge and skills

Coaches have a deep understanding of the standards for high-quality staff development, research on change, powerful designs for professional learning, adult learning, and resources to support learning within the school, district, and beyond. The skills a coach uses in this role include facilitating dialogue and team work,

Continued on Page 5

SKILLS OF THE LEARNING FACILITATOR:

- Facilitating dialogue and team work
- Assessing needs of teachers
- Designing learning and learning materials
- Differentiating for diverse learners
- Presenting skills
- Following up with learners
- Meeting management skills
- Communicating effectively

References

Killion, J. & Kaylor, B. (1991, Winter). Follow-up: The key to training for transfer. *Journal of Staff Development, 12*(1), pp. 64-67.

Marzano, R., Pickering, D., & Pollock, J. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Coaches often fill multiple roles simultaneously.

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9 roles of the school-based coach

Continued from Page 2

when providing services to individuals or teams of teachers. This allows coaches to reflect on their work and assess the balance of roles and the effectiveness of each role.

It is essential to keep in mind that coaches often fill multiple roles simultaneously. Depending on their job descriptions and their agreements with principals, district supervisors, and teachers whom they serve, coaches may fill some or all of the roles in a typical day. The complexity and challenge of determining what roles to fill, and when and where to fill them, are the most difficult aspects of coaches' work.

We will explore one of these roles in each issue of this newsletter. We begin on p. 3 with the role of the Learning Facilitator.

Role: Learning facilitator

Continued from Page 4

assessing needs of teachers, designing learning and learning materials, differentiating for diverse learners, presenting skills, following up with learners, meeting management skills, and communicating effectively.

Challenges

Coaches face several challenges in this role. One challenge is ensuring that learning opportunities align with both learners' needs and the school's goals. Another challenge is resorting to whole group, one-size-fits-all training because it is easier to organize than other designs for professional learning. While training is efficient and a relatively easy way to deliver information to the whole staff, training may be the least effective if the goal is change in practice. The coach knows that the power of shared learning is a factor that influences change in teacher practice. Another challenge is differentiating learning for teachers who may be at different points in their careers or who may have different levels of understanding or need to know. When coaches work with smaller groups of teachers, this problem is often mitigated.

NSDC PROFILE
TINA SCHOLTES

"I have to develop the trust or I can't do any of the other work."

Math facilitator adds trust and multiplies effectiveness

BY JOAN RICHARDSON

Building trust was the dominant concern for Tina Scholtes' first year as a K-6 math facilitator/coach for the Starkville Public Schools.

Building trust with teachers so they would invite her into their classrooms to observe and demonstrate. Building trust with principals so they would support her recommendations for improvements. Building trust with parents who wonder why money is being spent to create this new job instead of hiring another classroom teacher.

"What I've learned is that I'm having to take this job in little, tiny, teeny steps. I have to develop the trust or I can't do any of the other work," she said.

Building trust, she said, is delicate work. "We're trying to crack the shell of the egg without getting the egg all over us," Scholtes said.

Starkville created two elementary math coaching positions during the 2004-05 school year because of a belief that supporting teachers with coaching would result in higher student learning in mathematics. "We had seen that math scores were declining as students progressed through school," Scholtes said. Only 11% of 2nd graders scored in the lowest categories of Mississippi's statewide math assessment. But by 8th grade, those numbers jumped to 65%.

For Scholtes, making the switch from being a 1st grade math teacher to a K-6 math specialist seemed like a natural move. She had been a classroom teacher in Starkville for 22 years. By anyone's standards, Scholtes is a master teacher: She is a National Board Certified Teacher in the early childhood generalist category, the 1998-99 Mississippi Teacher of the Year, a clinical instructor at Mississippi State University, and one of the creators of her district's highly regarded Teacher Leadership Conference. In addition, Scholtes had been involved in selecting items for the statewide math assessment for elementary students and was intimately familiar with both state and national math standards and teaching strategies.

But, she quickly learned that, no matter what your credentials as a teacher, you begin over again when you switch roles and become a coach. Although she was well known for her

Photo by Gracie Sistrunk a photography student at Starkville High School.

Tina Scholtes, right, meets at Starkville Public Schools Professional Development Center with, from left, Shya Su, Cathy Rodriguez, and Brenda O'Bannon.

teaching expertise among early elementary teachers, she was not so well known by teachers in upper elementary grades. They were, she said, skeptical that she knew enough about teaching math at higher grades to help them.

Developing trust meant finding ways to serve teachers. In the beginning, that meant doing a lot of work to locate resources for teachers. "I've been a classroom teacher. I know how hard it is for them to do the research, to find the materials so they can do the lessons," she said. Each offer of resources helped build a relationship with a teacher and, eventually, led to invitations to do a demonstration lesson or to observe a teacher.

Scholtes and the other math coach decided to survey teachers to determine their familiarity with the statewide math standards. They learned that teachers had not fully implemented the state standards or were not fully comfortable with the state's recommended instructional strategies. So, one of their first self-assigned tasks was to write grade-level guides for elementary teachers that showed the alignment between benchmarks for the state's math curriculum standards, testing expectations, and the state's recommended instructional strategies.

Once the guides were complete, the two math coaches introduced teachers to the new documents during staff meetings at individual schools. Later as they worked closely with teachers to develop units and write lesson plans, the coaches reminded teachers to check their grade-level document to determine which strategies were recommended.

"They were calling and thanking us. They were very excited to have it," she said.

As she shared the new math documents, Scholtes knew she was "starting conversations in buildings that had never before had these conversations." Initiating that discussion could be threatening to some principals who have long played the leading role in ensuring that the curriculum was presented as intended, she said. To transfer some of that responsibility to another person can be intimidating to the principal.

But Scholtes said she must have buy-in from a building principal or her work will not be reinforced when she leaves the building.

TINA SCHOLTES

Position: K-6 math coach/facilitator

School district: Starkville Public Schools, Starkville, Mississippi

Professional history: Taught 1st grade in the Starkville school district for 22 years before becoming a coach.

Education: Earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in elementary education, and a specialist certificate in educational leadership from Mississippi State University. Currently enrolled in a doctoral program at Mississippi State University.

Honors/accomplishments: Selected for NSDC Academy XVII. Received National Board Certified Teacher/early childhood generalist, 1997; Mississippi Teacher of the Year, 1998-99; Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching Elementary Mathematics, 2001.

Professional service: Serves on the Mississippi Mathematics Framework Revision Committee, Mississippi Teacher Center Steering Committee, SERVE Teacher Advisory Council, and Mississippi State University College of Education's Teacher Advisory Board. Previously, SERVE board of directors, 2001-2004; World Class Teaching Project Advisor for National Board Certification. Has supervised about 20 student teachers in the last five years.

To continue this conversation, e-mail Scholtes at tscholtes@starkville.k12.mi.us.

"Sometimes, the answer I am giving teachers is not the same as the answer they are getting from principals. When I'm not there, if there are questions, teachers are going to go to the principal. So the principal and I have to be on the same team. They're the ones who are in the building every day," she said.

Scholtes said the coach's job might be easier if she had an office in a school rather than in the district's main office building. "The location makes sense for when you work with teachers in five buildings. But I can't just walk down the hall

"When I'm not there, if there are questions, teachers are going to go to the principal. So the principal and I have to be on the same team. They're the ones who are in the building every day."

Demonstration lesson observation sheet

LESSON BEING OBSERVED _____

OBSERVER _____

DATE _____

INSTRUCTION:

The assignment/work is on grade level.	Yes	No
The instruction is linked to state/local standards.	Yes	No
The assignment is connected to students' prior knowledge.	Yes	No
The assignment is differentiated.	Yes	No
The teacher uses various resources/materials.	Yes	No
The teacher uses various instructional strategies.	Yes	No
Transitions are smooth. There is little or no disruption to the learning process.	Yes	No
Students work alone, in small groups, and in large groups.	Yes	No
The teacher gives clear, precise directions.	Yes	No
The teacher frequently checks for understanding.	Yes	No
The teacher incorporates guided practices into the lesson.	Yes	No
The teacher includes ongoing assessment with feedback.	Yes	No
The teacher shows flexibility and adapts the lesson to student needs.	Yes	No
The teacher uses essential questions to guide student learning.	Yes	No
The teacher facilitates students to:		
Engage in learning.	Yes	No
Think deeply (how and why).	Yes	No
Construct their own understanding.	Yes	No
Apply new knowledge and concepts.	Yes	No
Show understanding in various ways.	Yes	No
Reflect on their learning.	Yes	No

On the back, describe one strategy that you will use when you teach this unit.

Please include any additional comments about the demonstration lesson.

Thank you for allowing me to present this demonstration lesson!

into someone's classroom," she said.

"We have not been in classrooms as much as we wanted to be. But we know that takes time. We know we have to build the trust first," Scholtes said.

As she works to balance her new workload, Scholtes said she's always conscious that her job is to assist in improving the quality of other people's teaching and not to jump in and do the work herself.

"They want someone to tell them what to do. I can't do that. My role is to be a leader of teachers. I'm so conscious that part of my job is developing them as leaders, making them aware of information so they can take on that leadership role for themselves," she said. ◆

TOOL

ORIGIN OF THE DEMONSTRATION LESSON OBSERVATION SHEET

See tool at left.

After one teacher sat in the back of the classroom and graded papers during a demonstration lesson, Tina Scholtes decided she needed a tool that would help teachers focus on the lesson.

Scholtes gives the form to the teacher before she begins a demo lesson and uses it after the lesson as a way to debrief the lesson with the teacher.

FOCUS ON THE NSDC **STANDARDS**

Design customizes the lesson for the group and the goal

Joellen Killion is director of special projects for National Staff Development Council.

Teacher leaders contribute to the design of professional development in two ways. One is as facilitators of learning. In this role, teacher leaders design, coordinate, and/or facilitate professional learning. The second way is by serving as a member of a school improvement or professional development committee whose task is to design and/or monitor professional development at the school or district level.

In either role, teacher leaders use extensive knowledge about a variety of designs for individual, small group, or large group learning to ensure that the designs they select align with the intended learning outcomes. Frequently, when contributing to decisions about professional development, teacher leaders draw on their own experience and belief system as a reference for their decisions.

For example, when Charles Kitcher,* the instructional coach at Piedmont Elementary School, helps the principal design the first staff development day for the new school year, he relies on his experience with past staff development days on which a consultant came to work with the entire staff for the morning. Since this is what Kitcher and the staff experienced previously, his recommendation to the principal is that they find a dynamic, entertaining, and motivating speaker to work with the staff on the staff development day. Both Kitcher's own experience and his belief that a dynamic, motivating, and entertaining speaker is the key to successful learning for adults contribute to his recommendation.

But a speaker is only one way to design learning. Other designs are also available, however Kitcher is limited by what he knows and believes. As a teacher leader contributing to decisions about designs for professional development, he eventually understands that not all adults learn the same way. In addition, he will discover that giving information is insufficient to transform beliefs and behaviors, often the expected outcomes of professional development.

Before designing learning, Kitcher's first responsibility is to confer with the principal and the staff development committee to identify the expected outcome(s) for the staff development day. Typical outcomes include building awareness, increasing knowledge, developing skill, or changing practice. Once the outcome is clear, Kitcher and team consider a wide variety of learning designs available and select the one that best matches the intended outcome(s) and the participants' learning needs.

DESIGN

Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.

The focus of the first staff development day to help teachers understand how to use the schoolwide writing criteria they adopted to raise the quality of students' written work. Given this outcome, it makes more sense for Kitcher to ask teachers to bring a few samples of student writing and organize teachers into scoring teams to use the new criteria on student writing. This design engages teachers in the actual work that they are expected to do and will more likely produce the intended outcome.

The range of designs for learning is extensive. Those designs that engage teachers in collaborative teams to do authentic work may be best to accomplish goals related to changing practice, while other designs might be more suited to other outcomes.

** Fictitious name and school*

For more information about the NSDC Standards for Staff Development, see www.nsdc.org/standards/index.cfm

To learn more about other designs, see p. 10.

NSDC TOOLS

POWERFUL DESIGNS:

• Who and when
Page 13

• What and why
Pages 14-15

• How
Page 16

RIPE FOR THE PICKING: Collection of 21 strategies satisfies a taste for context and content

BY LOIS BROWN EASTON

Imagine a school that has an environment of staff growth and learning. The climate that makes learning possible for adults in this school can always improve, but the school can legitimately call itself a professional learning community. This school has the context for adult learning.

Imagine that this school has collected and analyzed data from a variety of sources. Staff members know what they need to learn to do better so students can learn better. Teachers know the content they must study.

What they need to know is how: How will they learn what they need? What strategies will help them learn and help them make changes that affect student achievement? What processes will they initiate?

As a school-based staff developer, you are required to make frequent decisions about the right process (or strategy or design) to use for professional learning that will make a difference. Process is so important that the National Staff Development Council made it one of three aspects designers of professional development must consider, along with context and content (NSDC, 2001).

Imagine that our imaginary school has determined that students need to improve their reading skills in the content areas. The staff wants to learn how to help students understand materials they read in social studies and science, for example. You consult a resource that describes powerful strategies for professional development — such as NSDC's book, *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning* (NSDC, 2004) — and select a variety of processes that could be used. Some of these designs work individually. In some, staff work individually and then get together in groups. Six months into their focus on reading in the content areas, teachers come together, bringing a variety of viewpoints after experiencing a variety of professional development activities — though all focused on reading. Their professional development continues with

other processes as they implement the changes they have identified.

Let's be more specific. In the first six months, one teacher decides to **access student voices** by having students talk about reading in focus groups. Other teachers begin **action research** projects, mostly working alone but getting together every other week to share their results. A few individuals keep **journals** about reading in their own classrooms. Some of these individuals create **portfolios** to share with others. Another group conducts **case discussions** on reading, and another looks at curriculum as **curriculum designers**. The principal and associate principals do **classroom walk-throughs** that focus on reading. Another group **analyzes the data** that initiated this professional learning cycle; this group wants to know the details behind the scores that alarmed the staff about reading in the content areas. The last group examines classroom and district **assessments** for levels of questioning about text.

At the end of the first six months, these individuals and groups learn from each through **visual dialogue**, and the staff as a whole creates a plan for action. The action research individuals and groups continue their work, as do the journal writers and portfolio makers. The curriculum designers and the assessment group expand their work, and other groups begin to form. Some staff members begin to meet in **critical friends groups** and do **tuning protocols** around student understanding of text. A small group decides to **shadow students** in another school, known for its focus on critical reading skills.

Later, as implementation continues (and gets tougher), a group forms to do **lesson study** related to reading in science classes. Another group looks at assignments through the **standards in practice** process. Finally, the staff decides to have a **school coach** help them focus on literacy across the curriculum.

This article and the tools on pp. 13-16 will guide you in choosing the designs that will work for your school.

Who?

All of the 21 professional development designs included in *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning* (listed at right) work well with classroom teachers as well as administrators at the building and district levels. The p. 13 tool identifies designs that will benefit by including college or university staff or community members, parents, and policy makers as partners.

Regardless of who is involved in professional development, always ask, "Who else needs to be here?"

1. Who should be involved?
2. Will people work as individuals or in groups?

What and why?

Each of the 21 designs has roots in what happens in classrooms, focuses on learners and learning, and is collaborative in some way. All designs honor professionals. All lead to application. All promote inquiry and reflection.

Beyond these standards for powerful professional development, however, are other more specific purposes that can be promoted through certain designs. These more specific purposes take the form of questions listed below. Designs that are especially oriented to these specialized purposes are listed in the tool on pp. 14-15.

1. Which designs are most useful for gathering and using information from within the school or district about learning?
2. Which designs are most likely to require outside resources to inform the work?
3. Which designs are especially useful in creating a learning community?
4. Which designs focus most on standards, curriculum, and assessment?
5. Which designs focus most on practice or pedagogy?
6. Which designs are most useful for looking at classrooms?
7. Which designs focus on the whole school and/or beyond?
8. Which designs are particularly reflective?
9. Which designs look at student work or involve students in some way?
10. Which designs are best for bringing others (other than teachers or administrators) into the school improvement effort?
11. Which designs can be used to address specific problems and seek solutions?

21 strategies

The strategies included in *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*:

- Accessing student voices
- Action research
- Assessment as professional development
- Case discussions
- Classroom walk-throughs
- Critical friends groups
- Curriculum design
- Data analysis
- Immersing teachers in practice
- Journaling
- Lesson study
- Mentoring
- Peer coaching
- Portfolios for educators
- School coaching
- Shadowing students
- Standards in practice
- Study groups
- Training the trainer
- Tuning protocols
- Visual dialogue

12. Which designs result in a concrete product? Which designs are the most experiential?
13. Which designs may involve modeling?

When?

To be effective, schools should plan to commit to a design for at least a year. No design should be implemented only once a year. They are meant to be continuous over a period of time.

See the tool on p. 13 for guidance in designs that will work well in three to six sessions a year, those that require at least monthly meetings, those that should occur at least weekly, and those that should happen daily.

In addition, the duration of any professional development activity or session can vary enormously. Some strategies that may require less frequent meetings may need three hours or more for each session. Some strategies may require educators to meet together more often but for shorter amounts of time. Individual work that results in later group sharing might require an hour or less.

How?

All 21 designs identified in this article can be used with other designs to explore the same content. In fact, using a variety of adult learning strategies oriented towards the same need can enrich the results considerably.

The tool on p. 16 will help you identify strategies by answering the following questions:

1. Which designs require a facilitator?
2. Which designs require administrators to be involved?
3. Which designs work best when school is in session? Which designs work best when school is not in session?
4. Which designs cost the most?

Students will succeed when educators choose the best possible context for professional development, deliberately focus content on student improvement needs, and choose processes that help teachers learn to best address those needs.

Each of the 21 designs:

- Has roots in what happens in classrooms.
- Focuses on learners and learning.
- Is collaborative.
- Honors professionals.
- Leads to application.
- Promotes inquiry and reflection.

See tools on pp. 13-16

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POWERFUL DESIGNS: WHO AND WHEN

NSDC TOOL

POWERFUL DESIGN	**Who?** In addition to classroom teachers and administrators, who should be involved?					**When?** (Assumes no less than 1-year commitment)						
						Frequency				Duration		
	University or college staff	Community, parents, policy makers	Individuals at first, then groups	Pairs	Large groups/ Concurrent small groups	3 to 6 times year	At least monthly	At least weekly	Daily	Each session is 3 hours or more	Each session is 1 to 2 hours	Each session is an hour or less
Accessing Student Voices			x			x				x		
Action Research	x		x				x*	x**			x*	x**
Assessment as Professional Development					x	x				x		
Case Discussions					x		x				x	
Classroom Walk-Throughs			x						x			x
Critical Friends Groups	x				x		x				x	
Curriculum Designers	x				x	x				x		
Data Analysis	x	x			x	x				x		
Immersing Teachers in Practice					x		x				x	
Journaling			x						x			x
Lesson Study					x	x				x		
Mentoring	x			x				x			x	
Peer Coaching	x			x				x			x	
Portfolios for Educators			x					x				x
School Coaching	x	x			x		x				x	
Shadowing Students		x	x			x				x		
Standards in Practice					x		x				x	
Study Groups	x	x			x	x				x		
Training the Trainer	x						x				x	
Tuning Protocols	x				x		x				x	
Visual Dialogue					x	x				x		

** = group sharing **= individual work*

POWERFUL DESIGNS: WHAT AND WHY

NSDC TOOL

POWERFUL DESIGN	Useful for gathering data in a school	Involves gathering information from external sources	Particularly helpful in creating a learning community	Looks at standards, curriculum, assessment	Focuses on pedagogy and teaching	Involves looking at classrooms	Involves looking at whole school/ behond
Accessing Student Voices	x						x
Action Research	x	x		x	x	x	x
Assessment as Professional Development		x		x			
Case Discussions		x		x	x		
Classroom Walk-Throughs	x					x	
Critical Friends Groups			x		x		
Curriculum Designers		x		x			x
Data Analysis	x						
Immersing Teachers in Practice				x	x		x
Journaling					x		
Lesson Study		x		x	x	x	x
Mentoring		x	x		x	x	
Peer Coaching		x	x		x	x	
Portfolios for Educators	x				x	x	
School Coaching		x					x
Shadowing Students	x	x			x	x	
Standards in Practice				x			
Study Groups		x		x			x
Training the Trainer							x
Tuning Protocols			x		x	x	
Visual Dialogue	x	x	x	x			x

POWERFUL DESIGNS: WHAT AND WHY (continued)

POWERFUL DESIGN	Is particularly reflective	Involves looking at student work or students	Good for involving others	Good for problem solving	Results in a concrete product	Is experiential	Involves modeling
Accessing Student Voices		x	x	x			
Action Research		x		x			
Assessment as Professional Development					x		
Case Discussions							
Classroom Walk-Throughs				x		x	
Critical Friends Groups		x		x			
Curriculum Designers					x		
Data Analysis				x			
Immersing Teachers in Practice						x	x
Journaling	x					x	
Lesson Study				x	x	x	x
Mentoring	x	x	x	x		x	x
Peer Coaching	x	x		x		x	x
Portfolios for Educators	x	x		x	x		
School Coaching			x	x			
Shadowing Students		x	x			x	
Standards in Practice		x		x	x	x	x
Study Groups				x			
Training the Trainer	x		x		x	x	
Tuning Protocols		x					
Visual Dialogue			x	x		x	

SOURCE: *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning,* by Lois Brown Easton, Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council, 2004.

POWERFUL DESIGNS: HOW

NSDC TOOL

	FACILITATOR NEEDED			ADMINISTRATOR INVOLVEMENT			SCHOOL IN/OUT		COST
POWERFUL DESIGN	No	At first	Yes	Support	Participation essential	Participation helpful	In	Out	
Accessing Student Voices			x	x		x	x		$
Action Research	x			x		x	x		$$
Assessment as Professional Development			x	x	x		x	x	$$$
Case Discussions			x	x		x		x	$$
Classroom Walk-Throughs	x			x	x		x		$
Critical Friends Groups		x		x		x	x		$$
Curriculum Designers			x	x	x			x	$$$
Data Analysis			x	x	x			x	$$$
Immersing Teachers in Practice			x	x		x	x	x	$$$
Journaling	x			x	x		x		$
Lesson Study			x	x		x	x	x	$$
Mentoring	x			x	x		x		$$
Peer Coaching	x			x	x		x		$$
Portfolios for Educators	x			x	x		x		$
School Coaching			x	x	x		x		$$$
Shadowing Students			x	x	x		x		$$
Standards in Practice			x	x		x	x		$$
Study Groups		x		x	x		x		$$
Training the Trainer			x	x		x	x	x	$$$
Tuning Protocols		x	x	x		x	x		$$
Visual Dialogue			x	x	x		x		$$$

SOURCE: *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning,* by Lois Brown Easton, Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council, 2004.