The Midwest CPC Expansion Project Professional Development Guide

Pre-K to Third Grade

The Midwest CPC Expansion Project's Professional Development Guide

The Structure of this Guide

The Midwest CPC Expansion Project's Professional Development system has been designed with the intent of enriching and advancing school-based efforts to promote teacher growth and effectiveness. This guide provides instructional leaders with:

- An Introduction to the Midwest CPC (MCPC) Professional Development System
- The Integration of CPC Core Elements Across the MCPC Professional Development (PD) System
- The MCPC PD Goals, Values and Research Guidelines
- The Content and Key Attributes of the MCPC PD
- The Blended Online and In-Person Model of PD Delivery
- The MCPC Cycle of PD Planning, Implementation and Follow-Up Coaching
- The Added Value the MCPC Professional Development System
- Links to the MCPC Professional Development Modules
- Appendix

"This (PD) has helped our K-3 teachers to work closely in lesson planning and in discussing student progress, strengths and needs."

– CPC Curriculum and Alignment Liaison

"The CPC PD modules have provided us with much needed support/resources to help meet the goals of our school and fulfill what is outlined in our school improvement plan."

– CPC Assistant Principal

"The PD system has been an amazing resource!"

– Second Grade Teacher

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An Introduction to the MCPC Professional Development System

On-going, high quality professional development for teachers is one of the six Core Elements of the MCPC model of pre-kindergarten through third grade school reform. The Human Capital Research Collaborative (HCRC) partnered with Erikson Institute to develop a system of professional development for use by all Midwest MCPC Expansion sites. Between 2012 and 2016, the Erikson MCPC PD facilitator team and the Erikson technology team collaborated to create and produce a total of eight (8) online MCPC PD Modules; covering over a dozen relevant instructional topics specifically designed for early childhood educators serving children pre-K through 3rd grade.

The MCPC Professional Development content is aligned in a sequence of modules for pre-kindergarten through second grade teachers; however, the PD is designed with broad grade level application so that all elementary level teachers may benefit from exploring the content and structure of the MCPC PD modules. The PD is most impactful when Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Head Teachers, Parent Resource Coordinators, Principals, and other MCPC staff participate in the PD sessions.

The Integration of the CPC Core Elements across the CPC PD System

The six core elements of effective Pre-K to 3rd Grade reform outlined in the Midwest CPC Expansion include:
*   Collaborative Leadership team
*   Effective Learning Experiences
*   Aligned Curriculum
*   Parent/Family Involvement and Engagement
*   Professional Development
*   Continuity and Stability

These six elements often complement one another where faithful implementation of one element directly supports the implementation of another. By design, the element of MCPC Professional Development directly facilitates <u>Effective Learning Experiences</u> where strengthening teaching practices impacts the overall quality of young children's learning.

The element of <u>Aligned Curriculum</u> is also supported as the MCPC PD system is intentionally delivered within and across grades to promote curricular continuity, communication and planning.

<u>Parent/Family Involvement</u> is another MCPC core element that aligns closely with in the PD as resources and strategies are provided to facilitate connections between teachers and parents.

Finally, the Midwest CPC Expansion Project recognizes that all teachers, leaders and administrators need ongoing support in the work they do in effectively implementing the MCPC PD module. The <u>Collaborative Leadership Team</u> includes Head Teachers, Instructional Coaches, Principals, and Parent Resource Teachers among its integral partners.

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At-a-Glance: The MCPC PD Modules[*] and their Corresponding Learning Labs[**]

Module Topics for Pre-Kindergarten	Module Topics for Kindergarten	Module Topics for First Grade	Module Topics for Second Grade
Module 1: Children's Thinking in Action • Introduction • Making Read Alouds Matter • Making conversations Matter **Module 2: Fostering Young Children's Thinking: The Power of Representation** • Introduction • Acting Out Ideas: Representing Thinking Through Drama • Preschool Children as Authors: Representing Ideas through Drawing, Writing and Dictation **Module 3: Fostering Young Children's Thinking: The Power of Representation, Part 2** • Introduction • Building Blocks for Learning: Representing Thinking Through Construction • Movement Matters: Using Brains and Bodies as Tools for Thinking **Module 4: Continuity and Transitions from Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten**	**Module 1: Learning in Action: The Road Map** • Introduction • The Language of Writing • The Language of Math and Science **Module 2: Learning in Action: the Power of Inquiry** • Introduction: • Inquiry Around the Room and Throughout the Day • Linking Inquiry, Literacy, and STEM through Read Alouds	**Module 1: Learning in Action** • The Power of Purposeful Talk • Active and Authentic Learning Centers • Differentiated Small Group Instruction: Using Knowledge of Children to Guide Our Work • Environments that Scaffold Learning **Module 2: Learning in Action, Extensions** • The Power of Purposeful Talk • Active and Authentic Learning Centers • Differentiated Small Group Instruction • Environments that Scaffold Learning: The Brain and Body Connection	**Module 1: Engaging All Learners** • Active and Authentic Learning • Comprehension and Collaboration: Talking and Writing About our Ideas • Differentiation: Moving Beyond the Kidney Table *(Each learning lab includes 5-6 Strategies that Work options to help teachers or teacher teams to process content and plan for new instructional practices)*
<td colspan="4">The CPC PD Modules provide a total of 10-12 hours of content /year. We recommend that schools implement at least 6 total hours of PD from the CPC PD System</td>

*The term *Module* refers to an overall theme. Each module is made up of **Learning Labs** or specific topical content areas. Links to all MCPC PD modules can be found in the appendix

Evolution of the MCPC Professional Development Modules

Input from teachers and teacher leaders led to an evolution in the design of the MCPC Professional Development Modules as they were developed from year to year. Longer introductions evident in the pre-K and kindergarten modules are replaced in the first and second grade years with a brief overview at the start of each content based Learning Lab. A variety of strategy options for processing the PD content are also built into later learning labs. These shifts allow for content to be chunked into smaller pieces for delivery to teachers over time as well as provide greater opportunities for choice and customization in how instructional leaders and teachers will explore PD information and ideas. The number of online links necessary for accessing the content of each year's modules is reduced down from 4 module links in the pre-k year to just one link for the MCPC second grade PD module.

MCPC Professional Development Goals
The goals of the MCPC Professional Development System are to:

- Advance the quality and alignment of Pre-K – 3rd grade teaching practices within each MCPC site
- Build the capacity of each site's MCPC leadership team to implement the MCPC PD model and content
- Facilitate the creation a PreK-3rd MCPC professional learning community within and across sites in order to increase teachers' professional capital, foster collaboration and support uptake of high impact teaching practices to advance child outcomes

MCPC Professional Development Values

Three key values serve to connect the content of the modules both within and across each grade level:

1. The Importance of Interactions that Build Positive Relationships	2. Balanced Approaches to Teaching and Learning (Child Initiated & Teacher Guided)	3. Gradual Release of Responsibility to build Learner Independence

A Parallel Process of Learning

The key values that support young learners in early childhood classrooms also serve to guide teachers in their own growth and development as professionals. Relationships built through positive and collaborative interactions with colleagues and coaches, balanced approaches of teacher initiated and coach guided improvement goals and responsive coaching that utilizes a model of gradual release of responsibility highlight how the key values of the MCPC PD system parallel high impact instructional practices for both young children and adult learners.

MCPC Professional Development Research Guidelines

The structure and content of the MCPC PD system has been informed by evidence-based research on teacher effectiveness and development. The MCPC PD system:

- Aligns with goals, standards, and other PD
- Is focused and relevant to practice
- Features active learning and modeling
- Utilizes teacher collaboration about improving practice
- Provides follow-up and support
- Uses technology **wisely**

(DeMonte, 2013).

The Content of the MCPC PD

The MCPC Professional Development Modules are designed to offer choices in content and multiple opportunities for teachers to actively collaborate, reflect, process, and plan together to improve instructional practices. Each module contains distinct learning labs that focus in on areas of content relevant to the practices of all early childhood and elementary teachers. The content of the PD is vertically aligned in that certain topics are revisited (rather than repeated) in a new way at each grade level.

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The Whole Child Approach

The MCPC PD uses evidence-based teaching practices for PreK-3 grade classrooms that utilize a whole child approach. A whole child approach responds to the comprehensive needs of the child through the shared responsibility of students, families, schools and communities. The whole child perspective also views the family, community, culture, and home language of all students as assets to be utilized and reflected in classroom teaching and learning.

Rather than using a narrowly defined focus on academic achievement, this approach promotes long-term development and success for all children. Oral Language, literacy, and mathematics are essential elements of the content of the MCPC PD, and are integrated with comprehensive support for all domains of learning and development, including physical movement, the arts, and science.

MCPC PD content is developmentally informed and focused on teaching strategies that address:

- Building positive relationships and engaging learning environments
- Routines and structures that advance children's oral language and literacy development
- Instructional strategies that support mathematical thinking and STEM
- Teaching practices that build self-regulation and social skills (SEL)
- Active and authentic inquiry to deepen children's learning across content areas

The Blended Online and In-Person Model of PD Delivery

Erikson's MCPC Professional Development system provides online content designed to be delivered by school-based instructional leaders (head teachers, literacy coaches, assistant principals, etc.) to grade level or clustered teaching teams and other student support staff who may benefit from the PD. The MCPC PD modules offer multiple opportunities for teacher reflection, collaboration and planning. Teachers and instructional leaders are encouraged to work together to set goals toward improved teaching practices leading to successful learning outcomes for children. The MCPC blended model of PD actively supports school-based instructional leaders in implementing an effective cycle of coaching.

Attributes of the MCPC Blended Model of Professional Development

Online Content and Resources	In-Person Facilitation
• Accessibility: Content can be accessed at any time through an online link. • Flexibility: Start, stop, skip over or return to specific parts of the module as needed (this allows for PD to be presented in smaller chunks if needed). • A Multi-Media Approach: Photos, video vignettes, graphics, etc. are used to bring conceptual ideas to life. • Embedded Resources: PD planning and processing tools, tip sheets, articles and other resources can be viewed and or printed from the module for use during the PD or to support PLCs. • Aligned Design: The online PD provides a consistent structure and common attributes for ease of use and alignment.	• Customization: School-based instructional leaders can adapt content in response to teacher needs, curricula, teaching and learning frameworks, or other school/district initiatives. • Active Learning: Opportunities to *Pause and Reflect* and *Process and Apply* within each learning lab provide a structure for active engagement and collaboration around the content. • Built in Scaffolds: PD planning tools, leader's guides and other resources help instructional leaders to successfully prepare and present the PD to teachers, TAs, etc. • Coaching Foundations: The MCPC PD content supports instructional leaders in guiding teachers to identify, set and implement goals for high impact instruction that lead to improved child outcomes.

Key Learning Structures in each MCPC PD Learning Lab

The content of all MCPC PD Learning Labs includes each of these learning tools or structures to support teachers in thinking intentionally about their students and their teaching practices.

The Knowing the Child Study

The Knowing the Child Study focuses on the critical importance of teachers building strong and responsive relationships with students. Used at the start of each year, the Knowing the Child Study becomes a companion resource for teachers to reflect upon with each learning lab. It entails the collection of data about just one child in the classroom and is a touch point for lab content by explicitly connecting teaching practices with outcomes for an individual child.

Pause and Reflect & Process and Apply

Each learning lab incorporates opportunities for teachers to pause and reflect on the content as it relates to their own practices and knowledge of the children they teach. Time to process and apply information both independently and with colleagues is also a hallmark of the MCPC PD modules. Building these strategic routines into the PD encourages participants to be more actively engaged with the content and allows them to identify and plan for ways to integrate new ideas to their teaching practices.

The Where Am I Now? Reflection and Goal Setting Tool

The Where am I Now? Tool (WAIN) is designed to help teachers engage with the PD content on a personal level by using self-reflection that then leads to goal setting regarding a specific practice. This tool becomes a valuable resource for both teachers and instructional leaders to revisit as they track the progress of individualized professional development goals.

The Professional Development Cycle

The graphic below shows how the MCPC PD system fits into an ongoing cycle of assessment, professional development and coaching for teachers that revolves around the learning and developmental needs of the child/children.

The CPC Professional Development Cycle
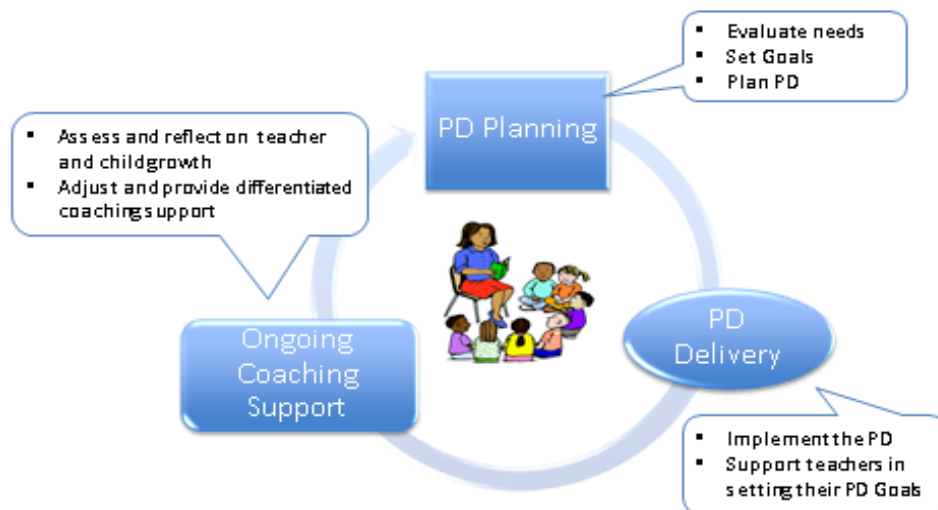
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PD Planning

The MCPC modules are most effective as a source of job embedded PD when school-based instructional leaders plan intentionally for what, who, why, how and when they will be delivered. A plan must also be in place for how teachers will receive ongoing follow-up support to insure the uptake of new/improved teaching practices that lead to positive learning outcomes for children.

School-based instructional leaders begin the planning process by:

- Assessing school needs based on the analysis of child data and district/network goals
- Establishing learning goals for teachers and students
- Creating a comprehensive plan for PD and ongoing coaching support for the school year
- Deciding how the MCPC PD will be used as part of the PD plan
- Customizing the MCPC PD using the PD Planning Tool (see appendix)

PD Module Implementation

School-based instructional leaders facilitate the presentation of the selected learning lab(s) to the Pre-K- 3rd grade teachers (or other grades level teachers who may benefit). Leaders support teachers in working collaboratively throughout the PD as they reflect upon and process the content of the lab. Teachers then develop action plans to increase their use of intentional and effective teaching practices.

Ongoing Coaching and PD Support

School-based instructional leaders are responsible for providing responsive and ongoing follow-up coaching support to teachers around the PD goals or action plans developed during participation in the MCPC PD. Additional resources to support teachers and coaches may be found within the modules themselves, in the appendix of this MCPC PD guide.

The Added Value of the MCPC PD System

Feedback collected from teachers and instructional leaders through a system of ongoing evaluation following each module presentation over the last 4 years indicate that the MCPC Modules have offered:

- Opportunities for teachers to collaborate and share ideas about their teaching practices
- Content that supports efforts to align instructional practices both within and across grade level teams (horizontal and vertical alignment)
- Shared understanding of developmentally informed and child-centered teaching practices
- Strategies, structures and routines that can be implemented immediately- without special materials or specific curriculum

"The CPC PD system has enhanced and reinforced the topics and big ideas our school was already engaged in. This PD never felt like 'something else'…it confirmed for teachers that what we are doing is validated and research-based and in the best interest of kids."

– CPC Head Teacher

MCPC Professional Development Guide Appendix

Access to the Modules

The MCPC Professional Development Modules can be accessed through online links found on the HCRC website at https://www.humancapitalrc.org/midwest-cpc/cpc-resources as well as here in the Professional Development Module Overviews.

MCPC Professional Development Module Overviews:
- Overview of Pre-K MCPC Modules (4 Modules and 4 links)
- Overview of Kindergarten MCPC Modules (2 Modules, 2 Links)
- Overview of First Grade MCPC Modules (2 Modules, 1 Link)
- Overview of Second Grade MCPC Module (1 Module Link)

Key Learning Lab Resources
- The Knowing the Child Study
- Sample *Where Am I Now* Reflection Tool and Goal Setting Document from the second grade learning lab on Comprehension and Collaboration

PD Planning Resources
- The MCPC PD Planning Tool
- Sample PD Feedback Form

PLC/Coaching Resources
- Three Steps to Great Coaching, Jim Knight, www.Learningforward.org
- What is a Professional Learning Community, Richard DuFours, ASCD EL Article
- Every Child, Every Day, Richard Allington and Rachael Gabriel, ASCD EL Article
- The Two-Minute Relationship Builder, ASCD.org

A Virtual Network of MCPC PD Support on Edmodo

Edmodo (www.edmodo.com) is the platform used to tap into the support of the MCPC Professional Learning Community. Use the MCPC Professional Learning Community to ask or answer questions posed by other MCPC site instructional leaders, provide support to colleagues, share ideas and get feedback around professional development facilitation, coaching practices and much more*.*

The code to access the MCPC Professional Development Learning Community may change from time to time for security reasons, please contact an HCRC representative at (phone# or email?) to obtain the code to join the group.
CPS teachers will also need a special district access code to enter Edmodo: 5e9dly

Overview of Erikson CPC PD Module Content: Pre-Kindergarten Modules Published in 2012-2013

Module 1 Introduction: Children's Thinking in Action
Time: 1 hour
Link to Module 1: http://coursemedia.erikson.edu:81/eriksononline/CPC/Module_1_Fostering_Childrens_Thinking/story.html

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Key Ideas:
The focus is on strengthening the language and thinking capabilities of preschoolers through intentional teacher child interactions and conversations; including focus on teacher's attention to children's thinking and introducing Bloom's Taxonomy describing Levels of Thinking. Teachers reflect on their daily schedules and how to incorporate the balance of teacher guided and child initiated activities. They reflect on creating a rich classroom environment to scaffold children's learning and thinking. The emphasis is on the intentional consideration of the social-emotional, language, and physical environments of the classroom.

Resources:
Mollie Story Excerpt
Blooms Taxonomy
A Classroom Continuum
"What If" Prompt Sheet
Examples for Daily PreK Schedules
"Where Am I Now?" Tool
Goal Sheet

M 1 Learning Lab: Making Read Alouds Matter
Time: 1 hour

Key Ideas:
Teachers are the key to children's learning a love for reading, a wish to know more and the desire to talk about their new ideas.
Read alouds are one of the most influential experiences young children have and so, a foundation for learning opportunities.
 4 critical language ideas that children are learning during read alouds:
- Concepts of books
- Book language
- Language that is beyond here and now
- Vocabulary and concepts

Resources:
Harvard Literacy memo
Blooms Taxonomy with Billy Goat Gruff Questions
General Guidelines for Read Alouds
Repeated Read Aloud

M 1 Learning Lab: Making Conversations Matter
Time: 1 hour

Key Ideas:
 That active and intentional participation in conversations with children positively impacts literacy development and higher order thinking skills
Teachers must attend to children's actions beyond their words. They must plan and think about what they will say to children to engage them in meaningful conversation.
Participants are asked to review ways of extending the thinking of children at play in various areas of the classroom
Teachers are encouraged to use time wisely, to make "I wonder" statements, to be intentional, and to allow time for children to share what is on their minds.

M 1 Learning Lab: Making Conversations Matter Continued

Teachers are encouraged to intentionality make a difference in children's understanding of new ideas and words.

The use of 3 *High Impact Strategies* is discussed:

- Seleceted high quality books
- Repeated readings
- Book discussions as conversations

The teacher's role as a model questioner and conversation leader is all-important.

The emphasis on eliciting deeper understandings of read alouds through the art of intentional questions and conversations.

Resources:

Script for Air and Tires Conversation

Blooms Chart With Play Center Questions

M 1Doing What Works

PLC Resources:

PLC Intro

PLC Activities

Field Trip Connections

Extending Preschool Children's Thinking by Engaging Families

Classroom Connections: Skill Building Through Games and Playful Activities to Maximize the Use of Routines and Transitions

Module 1 Feedback Sheet

CPC Online Module FAQ

Module 2 Introduction: Fostering Young Children's Thinking: The Power of Representation
Time: 30 minutes
Link to Module 2: http://coursemedia.erikson.edu:81/eriksononline/CPC/Module2/CPC_Module_2_Final_output/story.html

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Key Ideas:

In order to construct meaning, engage in higher-level thinking, and remember information, children must have supported opportunities to represent and express their thoughts through diverse modalities including talking, drawing, writing, play, drama, and movement.

These representational experiences in preschool spur the development of symbolic thought and self-regulation, both of which are essential foundations for children's school success.

Resources:

"Where Am I Now?" Tool

Goal Sheet

Module 2 Feedback Form

PLC Resources:

Executive Function: Skills for Life and Learning Handout

Using Developmental Science

M 2 Learning Lab: Acting Out Ideas: Representing Thinking Through Drama
Time: 1 hour

Key Ideas:

Support of dramatic play in the classroom is crucial in providing a meaningful and appropriate arena for the development of symbolic thinking as well as self-regulation skills. Both are fundamental to kindergarten readiness. Processes required to understand and to use symbolic systems such as number and letter-sound concepts are applied and developed through pretend play.

M 2 Learning Lab: Acting Out Ideas: Representing Thinking Through Drama Continued

The teacher's role is to understand the stages of such play development, to provide ample opportunities and resources for optimal engagement of dramatic play by children, and to intentionally scaffold play toward more complex levels of symbolic thinking. Strategies to support both child initiated pretend play and teacher guided story dramatizations are the focus of this hour-long lab.

Resources:
Review of Play Theories
YC Article: *Assessing and Scaffolding make Believe Play*
Blooms Taxonomy Dramatic Play
6 Dimensions of Pretend Play: Reflections and Assessment

 PLC Resources:
Blooms Taxonomy Centers
Tip Sheet for Acting Out a Story

M2 Learning Lab: Preschool Children as Authors: Representing Ideas through Drawing, Writing, and Dictation
Time: 1 hour

Key Ideas:
The oral language foundations for thinking and learning in the preschool classroom, emphasizing the importance of intentional conversations to foster higher levels of thinking and learning. Module 2 explores how young children represent, communicate, and deepen their ideas, thinking, and skills through drawing, writing, and dictation.
Teachers will utilize a range of child-initiated and teacher-guided strategies to intentionally foster preschool children's development as authors.
Teachers will emphasize drawing, pretend writing, and other mark-making as "tools" that advance children's ability to think about, represent, and communicate ideas.
Teachers will respond to young children's drawing and writing from a developmental perspective, and will provide differentiated support for children at various developmental stages.

Resources:
Progression of Drawing and Writing Stages
Chart of Ways to Bring Drawing and Writing into Centers
Dictation in a PreK Classroom
Dictation Performance Rubric for Narrative
Revisit, Revise and Deepen Thinking About Drawing and Writing

PLC Resources:
Bookmaking With young Children
Continuum of Practice for Preschool Children as Authors
New: Blooms Taxonomy Centers

Module 3 Introduction: Fostering Young Children's Thinking: The Power of Representation, Part 2
Time: 30 minutes
Link to Module 3: http://coursemedia.erikson.edu:81/eriksononline/CPC/Module3/cpc_module_3/story.html

Key Ideas:
In order to construct meaning, engage in higher-level thinking, and remember information, children must have supported opportunities to represent and express what they are thinking about and learning through diverse modalities including talking, drawing, writing, play, drama, three-dimensional construction (i.e., block building) and movement.
These representational experiences in preschool spur the development of symbolic thought and self-regulation, both of which are essential foundations for children's school success. They also provide important teaching-learning settings for building children's background knowledge, language, vocabulary, literacy concepts and skills, and math concepts and skills.

Module 3 Introduction: Fostering Young Children's Thinking: The Power of Representation, Part 2 Continued

Resources:
"Where Am I Now?" Tool
Goal Sheet
Module 3 Feedback Form

M3 Learning Lab: Building Blocks for Learning: Representing Thinking through Construction
Time: 1 hour

Key Ideas:
Module 3 explores how young children represent, communicate, and deepen their ideas, thinking, and skills through both constructing and moving.
Teachers will recognize and utilize blocks and other construction materials as important learning tools that, along with intentional guidance, can support critical thinking and learning across all domains and content areas.
Teachers will foster constructive activities as a springboard for inquiry based learning, where children are investigating, solving problems, representing ideas and making meaning through their building schemes.

Resources:
Learning Across the Curriculum
Constructive Play Connections

PLC Resources:
Blocks as a Source of Inquiry-Participants
Blocks as a Source of Inquiry-Answer Key
Blooms Taxonomy
Assessing Block Play
Stages of Block Play
Tips for Enhancing Your Block Area
Extending Construction Play Beyond the Classroom

M3 Learning Lab: Movement Matters: Using Brains *and* Bodies as Tools for Thinking
Time: 1 hour

Key Ideas:
Teachers will explore how young children represent, communicate, and deepen their ideas, thinking, and skills through movement, and not just movement for movement's sake, but "powerful movement" that communicates ideas and deepens thought. This learning lab contains strategies for utilizing movement to foster children's motivation, thinking and learning organized around these two big ideas:
- Movement, along with dance and music, are all cognitive strategies that are foundations to brain development that is essential for learning
- When multiple senses are used in the learning experience, more neural networks are created in the brain
- Teachers will incorporate planned movement into the daily routine as a tool for children to represent ideas, thinking and emotions.
- Teachers will share and develop additional ways of deepening their student's learning and self-regulation through the use of movement.

Resources:
Movement Within the PreK Daily Routine

PLC Resources:
Research: Movement and Academic Achievement
Tip Sheet for Meaningful Movement Activities

M4 Continuity and Transition From Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten
Time: 2 hours
Link to Module 4: http://coursemedia.erikson.edu:81/eriksononline/CPC/Module4/Module4_output/story.html

Key Ideas:
PreK and K teachers will reflect upon and share best practices in order to identify and advance the continuity and alignment of learning expectations and experiences for children.
- 21st Century expectations for early educators
- What do we teach, what matters most?
- Excellence and effectiveness in PreK-3rd grade

During Educator Show and Tell, teachers bring an artifact (a student work sample, a photo, or other evidence) to share a successful teaching-learning experience from this past year. This experience should have demonstrated high levels of learning, active student engagement, collaborative peer interactions or other meaningful child outcomes.
The PreK teachers compared their expectations for students completing PreK with K teacher's expectations for students entering kindergarten.

Resources:
Where Am I Now? Tool
Educator Show and Tell Instructions
Continuum Bubble
Multidimensional PreK to K Checklist and Planning Tool
Professional Development for the 2013-2014 School Year Survey
Articles:
Developing Self-Regulation in Kindergarten, Can We Keep All
the Crickets in the Basket
Self-Regulation, A Foundation for Early Learning

PLC Resources:
Article: *Enhancing the Transition to*
Kindergarten

Overview of Erikson CPC PD Module Content: Kindergarten Modules Published in 2013-2014

Module 1 Introduction: Learning in Action: The Road Map
Time: 45 minutes
Link to Module 1: http://coursemedia.erikson.edu:81/eriksononline/CPC/2013-2014/Module1_Final/story.html

Key Ideas & Goals:
In the introduction to Module 1, teachers gain an overview of the big ideas and guiding tools that will be integrated across both kindergarten professional development modules. Teachers also explore the ways in which they are coming to develop relationships with children, families and colleagues, reflecting upon the ways in which they are gaining knowledge of children's individual strengths and learning characteristics and building effective instructional teams as a means to foster continuity in learning experiences for all children.

Goals for Teachers in Module 1 Introduction:
- To provide an understanding of the framework and guiding principles of CPC Professional development (Relationships Matter, Balance in Teaching and Learning Matters, and Shared Responsibility for Learning Matters)
- To revisit and utilize the *Knowing the Child* assignment (introduced during 2013 Summer institute) as a jumping off point for planning interactive and well-balanced learning experiences across the curriculum and throughout the day and to support student readiness for greater independence in learning

Resources:
Leader's Guide to Introduction
The Road Map PowerPoint Slides PDF
Pause and Reflect Questions for Knowing the Child
Balance in Teaching and Learning Continuum
Gradual Release of Responsibility
Process and Apply Questions for Knowing the Child

Module 1 Learning Lab: The Language of Writing
Time: 1 hour

Key Ideas:
This learning lab emphasizes the importance of intentional and differentiated support of young children's writing using a developmental framework for beginning writers. Teachers reflect upon their practices, share ideas with colleagues, and set personal goals for extending student opportunities for authentic and developmentally informed writing experiences throughout the Kindergarten day.

Goals for Teachers in The Language of Writing Learning Lab:
- To use balanced instructional approaches and strategies in facilitating children's writing development
- To consider the developmental progression of writing to provide differentiated guidance and scaffolding to advance each child's progress as a writer

Resources:
Leader's guide to the Language of Writing
Language of Writing PowerPoint Slides PDF
Developmental Progression of Writing Ages 2-5 & 5-8
Pause and Reflect Analysis of Writing
Ideas for Scaffolding of Children's Writing
Where am I Now? Tool

PLC Resources:
Tip Sheet: Supporting Student Writing in Kindergarten Through Small Groups and One on One Conferencing
Journal Article: Let me tell you a secret: Kindergartners can write!
Journal Article: How do I write? Scaffolding early writing skills
Journal Article for Parents: Ready, Set, Write!

Module 1 Learning Lab: The Language of Math and Science
Time: 1 hour

Key Ideas:
This learning lab emphasizes the importance of conversing with children with the intention of creating connections to the math and science all around them. The use of interactive read alouds with high quality books and extension activities to deepen such conversations and connections is highlighted.

Goals for Teachers in The Language of Math and Science Learning Lab:
- To converse with and connect children to the math and science all around them
- To use interactive read alouds with high quality books to deepen conversations and extend learning around STEM content

Resources:
Leader's Guide to Language of Math and Science
Language of Math and Science PowerPoint Slides PDF
Where's the STEM in Shoes?
Process and Apply Strategies that Work
Where Am I Now? Tool

PLC Resources:
Bibliography and Links to Resources
Erikson Math Project Research Lesson
Big Ideas of Sets
Big Ideas of Data Analysis

Module 2 Introduction: Learning in Action: The Power of Inquiry
Time: 40 minutes
Link to Module 2: http://coursemedia.erikson.edu:81/eriksononline/CPC/2013-2014/Module2/Module2/story.html

Key Ideas & Goals:
In this introduction to Module 2, teachers examine the complementary roles that language, literacy, STEM, and related inquiry experiences in the kindergarten classroom assume in fostering powerful learning, thinking, and long-term school success.

Goal for Teachers in Module 2 Introduction:
- To draw connections between inquiry approaches to teaching and learning and purposeful conversations as a means to advance children's learning and support them in meeting Common Core and NGS Standards

Resources:
Leader's Guide to the Introduction
The Power of Inquiry PowerPoint Slides PDF
"Strive for Five" Practice Conversation
Important Shifts Toward an Inquiry Approach
Inquiry as a Link Across New Kindergarten Learning Standards

PLC Resources:
Balance in Teaching and Learning Continuum
Journal Article: Science in the Air
Journal Article: Integrating Science Inquiry with Reading and Writing in Kindergarten
Journal Article: Developing Vocabulary Through Purposeful, Strategic Conversations
Journal Article: In Support of Scientific Inquiry: Building Literacy Development in Kindergarten

Module 2 Learning Lab: Inquiry Around the Room and Throughout the Day
1 hour (Or can be viewed in two 30-35 minute segments)

Key Ideas:
Inquiry is defined, not as a set of skills, but as a habit of mind, a tendency to wonder why and how, whatever the situation. In this lab, teachers are introduced to strategies that can help them model this habit of mind and to plan for ways in which their environment, routines and interactions with children can foster the habit of inquiry within their learning community.

Goals for Teachers in Inquiry Around the Room and Throughout the Day Learning Lab:
- To evaluate and adapt classroom environments and routines to inspire and support inquiry in their students
- To extend conversations to get to the "why" and support children in developing the habit of inquiry within a community of learners

Resources:
Leader's Guide to Inquiry Around the Room and Throughout the Day
Inquiry Around the Room and Throughout the Day PowerPoint Slides PDF
Planning for Inquiry Throughout the Classroom
Inquiry Questions, Words and Phrases that Foster Curiosity and Thinking in Children
Where Am I Now? Tool

PLC Resources:
Inquiry Throughout the Classroom Head Teacher Resource
Science Practice Chart

Module 2 Learning Lab: Linking Inquiry, Literacy and STEM through Read Alouds
1 hour (or can be viewed in two 30 minute segments)

Key Ideas:
As an extension of Module 1, Learning Lab: The Language of Math and Science, this learning lab builds upon STEM content by placing a greater emphasis on intentionality when selecting curriculum standards, text, and targeted vocabulary when planning an inquiry approach to math/science read aloud lessons. Intentional planning is emphasized as a critical element for teachers to consider as they design experiences to build students' vocabulary and extend language interactions and use of text evidence in literacy based inquiry.

Goals for Teachers in Linking Inquiry, Literacy and STEM through Read Alouds
- To extend and deepen language interactions in the classroom as a means of fostering children's understanding and application of STEM concepts and vocabulary.
- To demonstrate how an inquiry approach addresses important shifts in practices called for across the CCSS/ELA, CCSS/Math, and Next Generation Science Standards

Resources:
Leader's Guide to Linking Inquiry, Literacy and STEM through Read Alouds
Linking Inquiry, Literacy and STEM through Read Alouds PowerPoint Slides PDF
Video Observation Guide and STEM Read Aloud Planning Guide
Beck's 3 Tiered System of Vocabulary
Facilitating Literacy Discussions: Strategies that Build Comprehension and Community
Where Am I Now? Tool

PLC Resources:
Planning Guide to Mousetronaut Goes to Mars

Overview of Erikson CPC PD Module Content: First Grade Modules
Published in 2014-2015

Link to both Modules: http://coursemedia.erikson.edu:81/eriksononline/CPC/2014_2015/CPC_2014_2015/story.html

Module 1: Learning in Action

Module 1 of the CPC Professional Development for 2014-15 offers 4 Learning Labs created to address a range of best practice ideas and strategies that can be applied across content areas, curricula, and spaces utilized for first grade instruction. Each lab provides an introduction to the topic and 4 distinct strategy options that invite teachers to further explore learning experiences intended to support greater engagement in and deeper understanding of the content being taught. The CPC Professional Development model relies upon the active guidance of a site based coach/head teacher familiar with the needs and interests of their teachers to enhance the facilitation of the PD. The provision of time for teachers to share, plan, process and/or reflect upon their teaching practices together is also a key element of the success of this blended on-line/in-person professional development system.

Module 1 Learning Lab: The Power of Purposeful Talk
Time: Up to 2 hours of content, but can be broken down into smaller sections

Key Ideas: Teachers will consider how the use of intentional conversations serves as a critical strategy for extending children's language, vocabulary, content knowledge, and thinking across the curriculum. Teachers will explore routines, settings and instructional practices where purposeful conversations with and between children can support learning and language development

4 Strategies That Work:
- A "Strive for Five" Conversation Experience
- Exploring Oral Language Disparities: An Oral Language Challenge
- Purposeful Literature Discussions (Pt. 1)
- Purposeful Literature discussions (Pt. 2)

Resources:
Learning Lab PowerPoint Slides
Leader's Guide to Lab Content
Ladder of Inquiry
Where Am I Now? Reflection and Goal Setting Document
Leader's Guide to the Strategies for The Power of Purposeful Talk
Strategies PowerPoint Slides
Strategy 1 Handout: Strive for Five Overview
Strategy 2 Handouts: Oral Language Challenge Overview
                               Increasing Vocabulary Through Oral Language
Strategy 3 Handouts: Literature Discussions in Action-Video Reflection Guide
                               Procedures and Routines to Support Literature Discussions
                               Discussion Prompts
Strategy 4 Handout: Ladder of Inquiry Literature Discussion Planning Form
Article: *Realizing the Promise of Open-Ended Questions*
Article: *Vocabulary Visits: Virtual field trips for content vocabulary development*

Module 1 Learning Lab: Active and Authentic Learning Centers
Time: Up to 2 hours of content, but can be broken down into smaller sections

Key Ideas: Teachers will explore how active and authentic Learning Centers build independence and cooperation within a classroom community. They will consider how their Learning Centers can give children purposeful choices that enhance their learning, allow for differentiation and compliment teacher led small group instruction. Learning Centers are also explored as a classroom structure for building children's independence in learning.

4 Strategies That Work:
- Allowing for Discovery and Investigation
- Teaching with Active Learning Centers in Mind
- Making Centers Stronger
- Writing, Writing, Writing!

Resources:
Learning Lab PowerPoint Slides
Leaders Guide to Lab Content
Pause & Reflect Handout
Where Am I Now? Reflection and Goals Setting Document
Leader's Guide to the Strategies for Active and Authentic Learning Centers
Strategies PowerPoint Slides
Strategy 1 Handout: Plan an Investigation Learning Center
Strategy 2 Handout: Plan an Active Learning Center
Strategy 3 Handout: Making Centers Stronger
Strategy 4 Handout: Thinking About Writing Centers

Module 1 Learning Lab: Differentiated Small Group Instruction: Using Knowledge of Children to Guide our Work
Time: Up to 2 hours of content, but can be broken down into smaller sections

Key ideas: Teachers will explore strategies for initiating and sustaining effective small group teaching and learning routines. Teachers will evaluate the pros and cons of various types/models of instructional small groups and how they currently use them with their children. The role of ongoing assessment in the planning and implementation of individualized small group lessons is also addressed in this learning lab.

4 Strategies That Work:
- Best Practices in Guided Reading
- Keeping Your Small Groups Organized
- Applying the Pros and Cons of Small Groups
- Using Assessment to Guide Small Group Instruction

Resources:
Learning Lab Power Point Slides
Leader's Guide to the Lab Content
Types of Small Groups- Pros and Cons
Where Am I Now? Reflection and Goal Setting Document
Leader's Guide to the Strategies for Differentiated Small Group Instruction
Strategies PowerPoint Slides
Strategy 1 Handout: Best Practices in Guided Reading: Video Observation and Reflection Guide
Strategy 2 Handout: Tips for Staying Organized with Guided Reading: Try This!
Strategy 3 Handout: Pros and Cons of Small Groups: Where Do Your Groups Fit In?
Strategy 4 Handout: Using Assessment to Guide Differentiated Instruction
Article: *Flexible Grouping During Literacy Centers: A Model for Differentiating Instruction*
Article: *First Grade Study Groups Deepen Math Learning*

Module 1 Learning Lab: Environments that Scaffold Learning
Time: Up to 2 hours of content, but can be broken down into smaller sections

Key Ideas: Teachers will explore how honoring children's family, culture and language in the classroom increases a sense of belonging, engagement and motivation toward learning. This learning lab invites teachers to look at their room arrangement, materials and wall space as they assess how such environmental elements can serve to support a positive social and learning atmosphere while also increasing children's independence and autonomy as learners.

4 Strategies That Work:
- Using the Classroom Checklist to Maximize the Impact of your Environment
- Using the Walls to Speak and Teach

- Four Procedures to Promote Respect and Responsibility
- Using Multiple Perspectives to Reflect on Your Classroom Environment

Resources:
Learning Lab PowerPoint Slides
Leader's Guide to Lab Content
Where Am I Now? Reflection and Goal Setting Document
Leader's Guide to the Strategies for Environments that Scaffold Learning
Strategies PowerPoint Slides
Strategy 1 Handouts: The Classroom Environment Checklist
                                      Your Classroom Environment Floor Plan Template
Strategy 2 Handouts: The Wall Space Work Sheet
                                      Journal Article: *Consider the Walls*
Strategy 3 Handout: Tips for Procedures to Promote Respect and Responsibility in Your Classroom
Strategy 4 Handout: Article: *Linking the Primary Classroom Environment to Learning*
Article: *The Classroom Environment: First Last and Always*

Module 2: Learning in Action: Extensions

Module 2 offers teachers and their CPC Coaches/Curriculum Liaisons the opportunity extend upon the ideas and strategies explored in Module 1. Each learning lab provides teachers with 2 additional strategies as well as added resources intended to strengthen their understanding of the topic while allowing for processing and/or planning time so that they might apply such strategies to their work in the classroom.

Module 2 Learning Lab: The Power of Purposeful Talk
Time: Up to 1 hour of content, but can be broken down into smaller sections

Key Ideas: Teachers will continue to consider ways to increase the use of intentional conversation in their classrooms as a teaching practice for extending children's language, vocabulary, content knowledge and thinking across the curriculum. Teachers will also take into consideration strategies that support dual language learners in purposeful talk routines and contribute to the progress of all language learners.

2 Strategies that Work:

- Think, Pair, Share
- Exploring Number Talks

Resources:
Learning Lab PowerPoint Slides
Leader's Guide to Lab Content and Strategies
Dual Language Learners and Purposeful Talk: Seven Important Things to Consider
English-Spanish Cognates with Math Cognate List
Strategy 1 Handout: Strategies to Scaffold Conversations with Dual Language Learners
Strategy 2 Handouts: Six Tips for Discussing Math with Language Learners
                                    Number Talk Hand Signals
                                    Planning for Effective Number Talks
                                    Article: *Number Talks Build Numerical Reasoning*

Module 2 Learning Lab: Active and Authentic Learning Centers
Time: Up to 1 hour of content, but can be broken down into smaller sections

Key Ideas: Teachers will continue to explore how active and authentic Learning Centers build independence and cooperation within a classroom community. Teachers are asked to consider how they are providing opportunities or invitations for children to interact with others, to create representations of their learning and to explore new ideas during Learning Centers.

2 Strategies that Work:

- Investigation Centers
- Creation Centers

Resources:
Learning Lab PowerPoint Slides
Leader's Guide to Lab Content and Strategies
Pause and Reflect Handout
Where Am I Now? Updated Reflection and Goals Document
Strategy 1 Handouts: Plan an Investigation Center
         Article: Curiosity: *It Helps Us Learn, But Why?*
Strategy 2 Handout: Plan a Creation Center
Article: *Boosting Language Skills of English Language Learners Through Dramatization and Movement*

Module 2 Learning Lab: Differentiated Small Group Instruction

Time: Up to 1 hour of content, but can be broken down into smaller sections

Key Ideas: Teachers will continue to explore strategies for initiating and sustaining effective small group teaching and learning. This lab gives teachers an opportunity to examine the benefits of using heterogeneous groupings to facilitate social and academic learning as well as to explore differentiated small groups for math instruction.

2 Strategies that Work:

- Cooperative Learning Structures for Heterogeneous Small Groups
- Getting Started with Guided Math

Resources:
Learning Lab PowerPoint Slides
Leader's Guide to Lab Content and Strategies
Strategy 1 Handouts: Cooperative Learning Structures for Heterogeneous Groups Jigsaw
         Tips to Support Implementation and Assessment of Cooperative Learning Experiences
Strategy 2 Handout: From Traditional to Guided Math Groups Self-Assessment
Article: *The Structural Approach to Cooperative Learning*

Module 2 Learning Lab: Environments that Scaffold Learning: Using the Brain and Body Connection

Time: Up to 1 hour of content, but can be broken down into smaller sections

Key Ideas: Teachers will continue to explore how their room arrangement, materials, wall space, etc., can serve to support a positive and productive social and learning atmosphere. The concept of the *Fabulous Four* is introduced as four ideas that use brain research to optimize the impact of the learning environment.

1. The brain and body are interconnected
2. Environments are experienced through our senses
3. Learning is enhanced by a challenge, but inhibited by a threat
4. Intentionally designed environments foster student exploration.

2 Strategies that Work

- The Choreography of Your Classroom
- Maximize Your Classroom Environment Using Brain Based Research

Resources:
Learning Lab PowerPoint Slides
Leader's Guide to Lab Content and Strategies
Fact Sheet for Classroom Makeover
Article: Understanding a Brain-Based Approach to Learning
Six Tips for Brain-Based Learning
Strategy 1 Handout: Classroom Choreography Worksheet
Strategy 2 Handout: Brain and Body Connection Worksheet

Overview of Erikson CPC PD Module Content for Second Grade
Published in 2015-2016

Link to Module: http://coursemedia.erikson.edu:81/eriksononline/CPC/2015_2016/SecondGradeModules/story.html

Second Grade Module: Engaging All Learners

The CPC Professional Development for 2015-16 offers three Learning Labs created to address a range of best practice ideas and strategies that can be applied across all content areas and curricula in order to support a variety of school based PD initiatives serving to advance teaching practices that result in better learning outcomes for children. Each lab provides an introduction to the topic and five to six distinct strategy options that invite teachers to further explore learning experiences that support greater student engagement in and deeper understanding of the content being taught. One specific strategy in each lab is dedicated to helping teachers and families come together to exchange ideas, learn from one another, and experience the content of the PD as it relates to practices in both the classroom and home settings.

The CPC Professional Development model relies upon the active guidance of a site based Coach/Curriculum Liaison or Head Teacher familiar with the needs and interests of their teachers and able to take into consideration the goals and initiatives of the school, so that the content can be selected and enhanced through their leadership and facilitation of the PD. The provision of time for teachers to share, plan, process and reflect upon their teaching practices together is also a key element of the success of this blended on-line and in-person professional development system.

Learning Lab: Active and Authentic Learning
Time: Up to 3 hours of content that can be broken down into smaller sections

Key Ideas: Teachers will explore how active and authentic learning experiences help to build a culture where student ownership of learning is encouraged, where inquiry and curiosity are valued, and where students' interests and diverse approaches to learning are respected and utilized to advance curricular goals. Teachers will consider how learning experiences that integrate elements of choice and embed a range of options for representing knowledge, such as units of study that incorporate STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math), are motivating factors that engage children in quality intellectual work. Strategy options for integrating technology resources in support of active and engaged learning as well building stronger connections with families around this topic are also included in this lab.

6 Strategies That Work:
- Curiosity and Investigation
- Inquiring Minds Want to Know
- Choice in Representing Learning
- Technology Choices to Represent Learning
- Making Active Learning Stronger
- Family Connections for Active and Authentic Learning

Lab and Strategy Resources:
Learning Lab PowerPoint Slides
Leader's Guide to Lab Content
Pause and Reflect Questions to Consider
Process and Discuss
Where Am I Now? Reflections and Action Plan

Strategy 1 Handouts: Article: *Curiosity: It Helps Us Learn, But Why?* by Maanvi Singh
                        Plan Curiosity or Investigation Work

Strategy 2 Handouts:	Ideas for Building a Disposition Toward Inquiry
	Building a Disposition Toward Inquiry with Standards
	Integrate Literacy and STEAM
Strategy 3 Handouts:	Reflecting on Independent Work
	Plan for Choice in Representing Learning
Strategy 4 Handout:	Best Practice Tips and Resources for Using Technology for Active and Authentic Learning
Strategy 5 Handout:	Making Active Learning Stronger
Strategy 6 Handout:	Family Connections for Active and Authentic Learning

Learning Lab: Differentiation: Moving Beyond the Kidney Table
Time: Up to 3 hours of content that can be broken down into smaller sections

Key Ideas: Teachers will consider the foundational ideas that support differentiated instruction; teachers having a growth mindset and understanding of how formal and informal assessment inform differentiation and students having the needed Social Emotional Learning skills to ask for and receive help. Classroom routines, structures and strategies that support differentiation will be explored as teachers consider the Social, Emotional and Academic Systems of Support that they provide in their classrooms as part of the cycle of planning, implementing and assessing instruction. Teachers will consider how they can provide differentiated instruction by using students' interests, readiness and learning profile to modify the learning content, process and product. Suggestions for technology resources to support differentiation are provided by the Erikson TEC Center and a strategy option is included that provides tips for strengthening family connections to support differentiation.

5 Strategies That Work:
- Technology for Differentiated Math
- Interest-Based Differentiated Groups
- Assessment #1 What's in Your Data?
- Assessment #2 Using Data to Differentiate
- Family Connections That Support Differentiation

Lab and Strategy Resources:
Learning Lab PowerPoint Slides
Leaders Guide to Lab Content
What Does Differentiation Look Like? Completed Chart
Best Practices Tips and Resources for Using Technology to Support Differentiation
Where Am I Now? Reflections and Action Plan

Strategy 1 Handouts:	Technology for Differentiated Math Video Viewing Guide
	Differentiated Lesson Plan Template
Strategy 2 Handouts:	Guide to Using the Resources for Interest-Based Differentiated Groups
	Differentiated Lesson Plan Template
	Student Interest Survey for Differentiated Small Group Instruction
	Tips to Support Implementation and Assessment of Cooperative Learning Experiences
	Cooperative Learning Structures for Heterogeneous Groups
Strategy 3 Handout:	Using Assessment to Guide Differentiated Instruction
Strategy 4 Handouts:	What Does Differentiation Look Like? Completed Chart
	Planning for Differentiation
Strategy 5 Handout:	Family Connections That Support Differentiation
PLC Resource:	Journal Article: *Learning to Love Assessment* by Carol Ann Tomlinson

Learning Lab: Comprehension and Collaboration: Talking and Writing About Our Ideas
Time: Up to 3 hours of content, but can be broken down into smaller sections

Key ideas: Teachers will explore how what they know about the children they teach (their interests, experiences, background knowledge, behavioral dispositions, etc.) and what they understand about the multiple cognitive processes and strategic actions critical to the development of comprehension, can serve to guide instructional decisions that nurture the growing competence of young readers. Teachers will consider learning structures, teaching resources, and other practical strategies to engage students in conversations, collaborative experiences, and writing activities that serve to strengthen word knowledge and deepen understanding of text used across the curriculum. Resources and best practices for integrating technology to support student comprehension is explored in this lab as well as an option for planning a family exchange focused on the building of comprehension skills both in school and at home.

5 Strategies That Work:
- The Systems of Strategic Actions Continued
- Using the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning Structure
- The Power and Purpose of Graphic Organizers
- Engaging Developing Writers
- Comprehension and Collaboration Family Exchange

Lab and Strategy Resources:
Learning Lab Power Point Slides
Leader's Guide to the Lab Content
Every Child, Every Day Reflection Resource
Establishing a Buzz About Books
Best Practice Tips and Resources for Using Technology to Support Vocabulary Development
Five Recommendations for Improving Reading comprehension in K-3rd Grade
Fountas and Pinnell Systems of Strategic Actions Graphic
Salvador Late or Early Reading Comprehension Exercise
Salvador Late or Early, Reader Notes Leader's Example
Reading Reflections for Salvador Late or Early
Where Am I Now? Reflections and Action Plan

Strategy 1 Handout: Applying the Systems of Strategic Actions Video and Observation Guide, Part 1 & 2
Strategy 2 Handout: Implementing Jigsaw in Your Class Tips and Planning Form
Strategy 3 Handouts: Graphic Organizers: Tips for use in Building Comprehension
                        Evaluating Graphic Organizers for Summarizing Text
Strategy 4 Handouts: Engaging Developing Writers Planning Form
Strategy 5 Handout: Family Comprehension and Collaboration Exchange Planning and Tips Form

PLC Resources: Talking Stem Cards for Math
                        Journal Article: *What Every Teacher Should Know About Reading Comprehension* by Laura Prado

Knowing the Child: Building Relationships with Children and Families
Through Intentional Observations and Interactions

"Every day teachers make hundreds of decisions – big and small – about what to say and do as they build relationships with children and promote their learning. These decisions matter. Teachers matter."

-Amy Laura Dombro

Directions

Over the next 6 weeks or so, we ask that you take a closer look at the ways in which you are coming to know a particular student in your class this year. Perhaps there is a student/family new to your school that you are wondering about or a child who seems to be in need of some extra support. Consider the following suggestions to guide you in this process.

- Be intentional in your observations of this child. Make an effort to connect with him or her in a personal way on a daily basis.

- Document insights that have come as a result of your observations, your engagement in conversations, listening to and watching a child's interactions with peers and his/her response to the classroom environment.

- Consider assessment data as well as how the child responds to the curriculum and the structures of your classroom (such as peer to peer interactions, independent work, choice time, etc.)

- Children's families are a valuable source of information. Gather information that you have gained about this student's family or home life through conversations with the child's family members and regular communications with other CPC staff.

Your focused observations and sources of knowledge about this child, and all the children you teach, will be revisited in the CPC Professional Development Module this year.

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Knowing the Child: Building Relationships with Children and Families
Through Intentional Observations and Interactions

Reflections

How has coming to know this child and his/her family allowed you to make more meaningful connections to their instructional needs? How has it informed the decisions you make about your learning environment, routines, and structures?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What did you learn about this child's characteristics and development by observing him/her closely? (e.g. physical, social-emotional, intellectual or dispositional)

_____
_____
_____
_____

What does it feel like to be a child in your classroom day after day? In what ways has your knowledge of this child (and all children) helped you to create a community of learners where school is a safe and positive place?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Comprehension and Collaboration: Talking and Writing About Our Ideas
Where Am I Now?

Name _____   **Date** _____

In this learning lab, we considered the strategic actions that readers use to build meaning and how teachers can integrate reading, writing and conversation to effectively promote comprehension. Take a few minutes to consider where you are currently in regard to these practices then respond to the reflection questions below.

Reflection Questions
In what ways do you explicitly teach comprehension skills to build student awareness of the processes they are using as they read?
How/when do you tap into children's interests and background knowledge to motivate and engage them in effective reading and comprehension experiences?
What aspects of comprehension and collaboration through talking and writing about ideas require further clarification for you?

Take Action

Now consider the ways in which you might adjust or extend what you are already doing to use conversations, collaboration and writing experiences in support of building children's comprehension.

- One thing that I thought about in a different way because of this PD**:**

- An action I can realistically work on over the next 3-4 weeks because of it:

- What I will need in order to take this action:

- The evidence I plan to bring to the next CPC PD to share and talk over with my colleagues:

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Erikson MCPC Professional Development Planning Tool

*Use this planning tool with your Instructional Leadership Team

School	Name	Position	Date

Determining Your Needs
What are your network, district and school-based initiatives for teacher development this coming year, which will impact the PD topics you select to present?
How will you collaborate with your Leadership Team to determine the PD needs?
How will the CPC PD be used as part of the greater PD plan?

Goals	Action Steps

What goals for students and teachers have you identified for the year ahead? (consider child data, teaching practices, parent/family/community needs)

Goals	Action Steps

How can you use the CPC PD to help you align curricular and instructional practices across the early grades?

Goals	Action Steps

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Erikson MCPC Professional Development Planning Tool

Selecting Your CPC PD Content	
Refer to your: At-A-Glance: The MCPC PD Modules and their corresponding Learning Labs	
Goals	Action Steps
Identifying Structures for PD	
When do teachers come together for grade level or clustered PD opportunities or PLCs?	
Goals	Action Steps
Identifying Structures for PD Continued	
How will these meetings be used to explore the CPC PD modules and build collaborative teaching teams?	
Goals	Action Steps
Logistics of the PD	
List some potential dates for presenting the CPC PD (The CPC PD is adaptable and can be delivered in several smaller or larger time frames)	
Potential Dates and Times	Action Steps

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Erikson MCPC Professional Development Planning Tool

Establishing a Cycle of Coaching Support for PD Implementation Is there a protocol for regular observations of classroom instruction?	
How will I do this?	Action Steps
How will I support teachers in reflecting on their PD goals and how their use of high impact teaching strategies leads to increased child outcomes?	
How will I do this?	Action Steps
What additional support and resources do teachers need to meet their PD goals?	
How will I support them?	Action Steps

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Erikson MCPC Professional Development Planning Tool

PD Preview Reminders

- Review the CPC PD Module Overviews to identify which areas of content and resources meet your identified needs.

- View the Learning Lab you have selected and use your Leader's Guide to the lab to note areas for customization.

- Check that the technology you will be using during PD presentation is operational.

PD Implementation Reminders

- Prior to PD presentation, teachers receive the Knowing the Child Study, a linking activity for the CPC PD content.

- Present the content of their selected Learning Lab to teaching teams (these could be clustered grade levels or one grade level at a time).

- Support teachers in working collaboratively throughout the PD as they reflect upon and process the content of the lab.

- Guide teachers in writing specific and relevant goals for improving their teaching practices using the Where Am I Now reflection and goals setting document.
- Encourage teachers to:

    o Utilize their knowledge of children to plan effective instruction and increase child engagement.

    o Explore balanced approaches of instruction in daily schedules, learning structures and choice.

    o Implement a gradual release of responsibility to foster children's development of self-regulation.

Ongoing Coaching Support Related to the PD

- Consider how you will provide ongoing observations and support of teachers.

- Consider how will you use child assessment data to reflect on improved teaching practices and increased child outcomes?

- Evaluate what additional support/resources are needed to help teachers meet their goals?

Transition and Alignment Reminders

- Teachers across grade levels are encouraged to come together each spring to:
    o Share and reflect upon their professional growth
    o Communicate information concerning the students they have come to know
    o Assess the alignment between teacher expectations for student achievement at each grade level, i.e., outgoing and incoming students

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1. What was the best or most useful part of this professional development session?

2. What did you learn or think about differently today because of this PD?

3. What will you try in your own classroom/teaching practices in the next week because of this PD?

4. What suggestions do you have for making improvements to this or future PD sessions?

5. What other professional development topics do you want to explore along with your colleagues?

IDENTIFY

THE INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING CYCLE

IMPROVE

LEARN

3 STEPS
to GREAT
COACHING

A SIMPLE BUT POWERFUL INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING CYCLE NETS RESULTS

By Jim Knight, Marti Elford, Michael Hock, Devona Dunekack, Barbara Bradley,
Donald D. Deshler, and David Knight

"Coaching done well may be the most effective intervention designed for human performance."

— *Atul Gawande (2011)*

Atul Gawande's comment is often used to justify coaching. What people overlook in his comment, however, are the words "done well." Coaching "done well" can and should dramatically improve human performance. However, coaching done poorly can be, and often is, ineffective, wasteful, and sometimes even destructive.

What, then, is coaching done well? For the past five years, researchers at the Kansas Coaching Project at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning and at the Instructional Coaching Group in Lawrence, Kansas, have been trying to answer that question by studying what coaches do. The result of that research is an instructional coaching cycle that fosters the kind of improvement Gawande describes.

One coach who uses the instructional coaching cycle is Jackie Jewell from Othello School District in Washington. A participant in one of our research projects, Jewell used the coaching cycle when collaborating with Melanie Foster, a new elementary teacher in her district. Foster had sought out Jewell for coaching because she felt she needed to improve the way she gave positive attention to students. While Jewell would happily have focused on increasing Foster's positivity ratio, instead she suggested that it might be worth confirming that encouragement was the right goal.

To start, Jewell recorded one of Foster's lessons using her iPad and shared the video with her.

After watching the video separately, both agreed that Foster was effective at encouraging students. But Foster saw something else she wanted to work on: student engagement. Her students were not staying focused during small-group activities. Armed with this new insight, she set a goal that students would be on task at least 90% of the time during small-group activities.

Jewell recorded another lesson, which revealed that students were on task about 65% of the time. It also showed that students didn't fully understand the expectations for their activities. In other words, students were off task because they didn't know what to do.

Agreeing that Foster needed to set more explicit expectations for small groups, Jewell and Foster created a checklist describing the expectations, and Jewell modeled how to teach them. Foster also decided that she and her learning

assistant would talk to each small group at the start of activities to make sure groups were clear about what they were to do.

Once students understood their tasks, they hit the goal quickly after only a few modifications. Eventually, students were consistently on task 90% or higher, and this showed up in their test scores as well. Before coaching, students received scores on quizzes that were on average about 20%. After coaching, their scores averaged above 70%. Coaching helped Foster teach more effectively, and her improved instruction led to better student learning.

HOW WE STUDY WHAT COACHES DO

Kansas Coaching Project and Instructional Coaching Group researchers have studied instructional coaching since 1996, focusing in the past five years on the steps coaches move through to help teachers set and hit goals.

In the process, we experimented with a research methodology that we used to identify a process to be studied, assess what works and doesn't work when the practice is implemented, and refine the process based on what is learned during implementation.

To study instructional coaching, Kansas Coaching Project researchers worked with coaches from Beaverton, Oregon, and Othello, Washington. In addition, Instructional Coaching Group researchers conducted more than 50 interviews with coaches around the country. In large part, the instructional coaching cycle is the result of what was learned from these studies and interviews.

Researchers followed these steps:
1. Instructional coaches implement the coaching process.
2. They video record their coaching interactions and their teachers' implementation of the teaching practices.
3. They monitor progress toward their goals.
4. Researchers interview coaches and teachers to monitor progress as they move through the coaching cycle.
5. Researchers meet with coaches two or three times a year (at the end of each coaching cycle) to discuss how the coaching process can be refined or improved.
6. Refinements are made, and the revised coaching model and research process is repeated.

Researchers have moved through this cycle eight times in Beaverton and Othello. Over time, moving through increasingly effective coaching cycles, we have come up with a simple but powerful way to conduct instructional coaching.

THE INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING CYCLE

The coaching cycle that Jewell used involved many steps embedded in three components.

1. Identify: Jewell and Foster got a clear picture of reality (by video recording the class), identified a goal (90% time on task), and identified a teaching strategy that would help them hit the goal (teaching expectations).

2. Learn: Jewell used a checklist and modeling to make sure

Foster understood how to use the identified strategy.

3. Improve: Jewell and Foster monitored progress toward the goal and made modifications to the way the strategy was used until the goal was hit. Here is how the cycle works. (See diagram on p. 10.)

IDENTIFY

The coach and teacher collaborate to set a goal and select a teaching strategy to try to meet the goal.

This involves several steps.

First, the coach helps the teacher get a clear picture of reality, often by video recording the teacher's class. Then the coach and teacher identify a change the teacher would like to see in student behavior, achievement, or attitude.

Next, they identify a measurable student goal that will show that the hoped-for change has occurred. For example, a coach and teacher in Othello set the goal of reducing transition time from a four-minute average to a 20-second average. Since there were four transitions per period, hitting the goal added 15 minutes of instructional time to each 50-minute period — giving students 40 more hours of learning over the course of the year.

Other data besides video that might be gathered include student work, observation, and formal and informal evaluation results. Video, however, is quick, cheap, and powerful, and, if teachers only look at student work, they may miss some important aspect of their teaching.

Teachers frequently have an imprecise understanding of what their teaching looks like until they see a video recording of their class. When video is used within coaching, it is best if teacher and coach watch the video separately (Knight, 2014).

After data have been gathered, the coach and teacher meet to identify next steps. Coaches can use these questions to guide teachers to set powerful goals:
1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how close was the lesson to your ideal?
2. What would have to change to make the class closer to a 10?
3. What would your students be doing?
4. What would that look like?
5. How would we measure that?
6. Do you want that to be your goal?
7. Would it really matter to you if you hit that goal?
8. What teaching strategy will you try to hit that goal?

Once a measurable goal has been established, the instructional coach and teacher choose a teaching strategy that the teacher would like to implement in an attempt to hit the goal. To support teachers during this step, coaches need to have a deep knowledge of a small number of high-yield teaching strategies that address many of the concerns teachers identify. Coaches in Beaverton and Othello learned the teaching strate-

gies in *High-Impact Instruction: A Framework for Great Teaching* (Knight, 2013).

Goals that make the biggest difference for students are powerful, easy, emotionally compelling, reachable, and student-focused.

Powerful. The most effective goals address important aspects of student learning. Also, powerful goals address ongoing issues in the classroom rather than single events.

Easy. Not every goal is easy to reach, and goals are not improved if they are watered down or made less than powerful. However, given the choice between two equally powerful goals, take the one that is easier to reach. An easy-to-achieve goal leads more quickly to meaningful change for students, reinforces teachers' and students' efforts sooner, and frees up time for other tasks, such as setting other improvement goals.

Emotionally compelling. If teachers are going to invest a lot of time in changing their teaching to reach important goals, they have to choose goals that matter to them.

Reachable. Reachable goals have two characteristics: They are measurable, and they are ones teachers can reach because they have strategies to do so.

Student-focused. Usually these are goals that address student achievement, behavior, or attitude. The power of a student-focused goal is that it is objective and, therefore, holds coach and teacher accountable until meaningful improvements are made in students' lives.
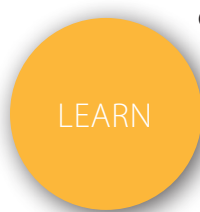
LEARN

Once teacher and coach set a goal and choose a teaching strategy, the teacher must learn how to implement the strategy. For the coach, this means explaining and modeling teaching strategies.

When instructional coaches explain teaching strategies, they need to give precise and clear explanations. Coaches are clearer when they use checklists. This doesn't mean coaches prompt teachers to mindlessly implement every step on a checklist. However, before teachers make adaptations, coaches need to be certain teachers know what they are modifying.

Coaches need to be precise and provisional when they explain teaching practices. They should clearly explain the items on a checklist while also asking teachers how they might want to modify the checklist to best meet students' needs or take advantage of their own strengths as teachers.

One benefit of establishing objective goals as a part of instructional coaching is that goals provide a way to assess whether teachers' modifications improve or damage the teaching strategies they use. If teachers modify strategies and hit their goals, their modifications didn't decrease effectiveness and may have helped students hit their goal. However, if the goal is not met, the coach and teacher can revisit the checklist to see if the strategy needs to be taught differently.

Coaches who explain strategies in precise and provisional ways foster high-quality implementation yet give teachers the freedom to use their professional discretion to modify teaching strategies to better meet students' needs.

The next step is modeling. To understand how to implement teaching strategies, teachers need to see them being implemented by someone else. The coaches from Beaverton, Oregon, found that modeling can occur in at least five ways.

In the classroom. Teachers report that they prefer that coaches only model the targeted practice, rather than the whole lesson. While coaches model, collaborating teachers complete checklists as they watch the demonstration. Coaches may ask someone to video record the model so that coach and teacher can review it later.

In the classroom with no students. Some teachers prefer that coaches model teaching strategies without students present.

Co-teaching. In some cases, such as when a lesson involves content unfamiliar to the coach, coach and teacher co-teach.

Visiting other teachers' classrooms. When teachers are learning new procedures or management techniques, they may

IMPROVEMENT QUESTIONS

DID YOU HIT THE GOAL	
YES	NO
Do you want to:	Do you want to:
A. Continue to refine your use of the practice?	A. Revisit how you teach the new practice?
B. Choose a new goal?	B. Choose a new practice?
C. Take a break?	C. Stick with the practice as it is?

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING CHECKLIST

COACHING BEHAVIOR	OBSERVATION
IDENTIFY	
Teacher gets a clear picture of current reality by watching a video of their lesson or by reviewing observation data. (Video is best.)	
Coach asks the identify questions with the teacher to identify a goal.	
Teacher identifies a student-focused goal.	
Teacher identifies a teaching strategy to use to hit the goal.	
LEARN	
Coach shares a checklist for the chosen teaching strategy.	
Coach prompts the teacher to modify the practice if he or she wishes.	
Teacher chooses an approach to modeling that he or she would like to observe and identifies a time to watch modeling.	
Coach provides modeling in one or more formats.	
Teacher sets a time to implement the practice.	
IMPROVE	
Teacher implements the practice.	
Data is gathered (by teacher or coach, in class or while viewing video) on student progress toward to the goal.	
Data is gathered (by teacher or coach, in class or while viewing video) on teacher's implementation of the practice (usually on the previously viewed checklist).	
Coach and teacher meet to discuss implementation and progress toward the goal.	
Teacher makes modifications until the goal is met.	

choose to visit other teachers' classrooms to see how they implement them.

Watching video. Teachers can also see a model of a teaching strategy by watching a video, either from a video sharing website or provided by the coach.

IMPROVE

Instructional coaches monitor how teachers implement the chosen teaching strategy and whether students meet the goal.

Coaches can accomplish this by video recording classes and sharing the video with collaborating teachers so they can assess for themselves how they implemented the new teaching strategies and whether students have hit the identified goals.

Many goals cannot be seen by looking at video, so coaches may have to gather observation data, or teachers and coaches may have to review assessment data or student work.

Next, coach and teacher get together to talk about how the strategy was implemented, and especially whether students hit the goal. This conversation usually involves these questions:

1. What are you pleased about?

2. Did you hit the goal?

3. If you hit the goal, do you want to identify another goal, take a break, or keep refining the current new practice?

4. If you did not hit the goal, do you want to stick with the chosen practice or try a new one?

5. If you stick with the chosen practice, how will you modify it to increase its impact? (Revisit the checklist.)

6. If you choose another practice, what will it be?

7. What are your next actions?

(See table on p. 14.)

When teacher and coach meet, they should use these questions to focus their conversation. Many coaches begin by asking teachers what they think went well. Following that, they discuss whether they met the goal.

When teachers reach their goals, coaches ask whether they want to set and pursue other goals or take a break from coaching. When teachers don't reach their goals, they identify changes that need to be made.

Teachers and coaches keep moving forward by modifying the way they use the identified teaching strategies, trying another strategy, or sticking with an identified teaching strategy until they reach the goal. (See table on p. 16.)

MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS

The instructional coaching cycle is only one element of effective coaching programs. Effective coaches also need professional learning that ensures they understand how to navigate the complexities of helping adults, have a deep understanding of a comprehensive, focused set of teaching practices, communicate effectively, lead effectively, and work in systems that foster meaningful professional learning (Knight, 2007, 2011, 2013).

However, as important as those factors are, it may be most important that coaches understand how to move through the components of an effective coaching cycle that leads to improvements in student learning.

Instructional coaches who use a proven coaching cycle can partner with teachers to set and reach improvement goals that have an unmistakable, positive impact on students' lives. And that should be the measure of the effectiveness of any coaching program.

> Instructional coaches who use a proven coaching cycle can partner with teachers to set and reach improvement goals that have an unmistakable, positive impact on students' lives.

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What Is a Professional Learning Community?

Richard DuFour

The idea of improving schools by developing *professional learning communities* is currently in vogue. People use this term to describe every imaginable combination of individuals with an interest in education—a grade-level teaching team, a school committee, a high school department, an entire school district, a state department of education, a national professional organization, and so on. In fact, the term has been used so ubiquitously that it is in danger of losing all meaning.

The professional learning community model has now reached a critical juncture, one well known to those who have witnessed the fate of other well-intentioned school reform efforts. In this all-too-familiar cycle, initial enthusiasm gives way to confusion about the fundamental concepts driving the initiative, followed by inevitable implementation problems, the conclusion that the reform has failed to bring about the desired results, abandonment of the reform, and the launch of a new search for the next promising initiative. Another reform movement has come and gone, reinforcing the conventional education wisdom that promises, "This too shall pass."

The movement to develop professional learning communities can avoid this cycle, but only if educators reflect critically on the concept's merits. What are the "big ideas" that represent the core principles of professional learning communities? How do these principles guide schools' efforts to sustain the professional learning community model until it becomes deeply embedded in the culture of the school?

Big Idea #1: Ensuring That Students Learn

The professional learning community model flows from the assumption that the core mission of formal education is not simply to ensure that students are taught but to ensure that they learn. This simple shift—from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning—has profound implications for schools.

School mission statements that promise "learning for all" have become a cliché. But when a school staff takes that statement literally—when teachers view it as a pledge to ensure the success of each student rather than as politically correct hyperbole—profound changes begin to take place. The school staff finds itself asking, What school characteristics and practices have been most successful in helping all students achieve at high levels? How could we adopt those characteristics and practices in our own school? What commitments would we have to make to one another to create such a school? What indicators could we monitor to assess our progress? When the staff has built shared knowledge and found common ground on these questions, the school has a solid foundation for moving forward with its improvement initiative.

As the school moves forward, every professional in the building must engage with colleagues in the ongoing exploration of three crucial questions that drive the work of those within a professional learning community:

- What do we want each student to learn?
- How will we know when each student has learned it?
- How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?

The answer to the third question separates learning communities from traditional schools.

Here is a scenario that plays out daily in traditional schools. A teacher teaches a unit to the best of his or her ability, but at the conclusion of the unit some students have not mastered the essential outcomes. On the one hand, the teacher would like to take the time to help those students. On the other hand, the teacher feels compelled to move forward to "cover" the course

content. If the teacher uses instructional time to assist students who have not learned, the progress of students who have mastered the content will suffer; if the teacher pushes on with new concepts, the struggling students will fall farther behind.

What typically happens in this situation? Almost invariably, the school leaves the solution to the discretion of individual teachers, who vary widely in the ways they respond. Some teachers conclude that the struggling students should transfer to a less rigorous course or should be considered for special education. Some lower their expectations by adopting less challenging standards for subgroups of students within their classrooms. Some look for ways to assist the students before and after school. Some allow struggling students to fail.

When a school begins to function as a professional learning community, however, teachers become aware of the incongruity between their commitment to ensure learning for all students and their lack of a coordinated strategy to respond when some students do not learn. The staff addresses this discrepancy by designing strategies to ensure that struggling students receive additional time and support, no matter who their teacher is. In addition to being systematic and schoolwide, the professional learning community's response to students who experience difficulty is

- *Timely*. The school quickly identifies students who need additional time and support.
- *Based on intervention rather than remediation*. The plan provides students with help as soon as they experience difficulty rather than relying on summer school, retention, and remedial courses.
- *Directive*. Instead of *inviting* students to seek additional help, the systematic plan *requires* students to devote extra time and receive additional assistance until they have mastered the necessary concepts.

The systematic, timely, and directive intervention program operating at Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois, provides an excellent example. Every three weeks, every student receives a progress report. Within the first month of school, new students discover that if they are not doing well in a class, they will receive a wide array of immediate interventions. First, the teacher, counselor, and faculty advisor each talk with the student individually to help resolve the problem. The school also notifies the student's parents about the concern. In addition, the school offers the struggling student a pass from study hall to a school tutoring center to get additional help in the course. An older student mentor, in conjunction with the struggling student's advisor, helps the student with homework during the student's daily advisory period.

Any student who continues to fall short of expectations at the end of six weeks despite these interventions is required, rather than invited, to attend tutoring sessions during the study hall period. Counselors begin to make weekly checks on the struggling student's progress. If tutoring fails to bring about improvement within the next six weeks, the student is assigned to a daily guided study hall with 10 or fewer students. The guided study hall supervisor communicates with classroom teachers to learn exactly what homework each student needs to complete and monitors the completion of that homework. Parents attend a meeting at the school at which the student, parents, counselor, and classroom teacher must sign a contract clarifying what each party will do to help the student meet the standards for the course.

Stevenson High School serves more than 4,000 students. Yet this school has found a way to monitor each student's learning on a timely basis and to ensure that every student who experiences academic difficulty will receive extra time and support for learning.
Like Stevenson, schools that are truly committed to the concept of learning for each student will stop subjecting struggling students to a haphazard education lottery. These schools will guarantee that each student receives whatever additional support he or she needs.

Big Idea #2: A Culture of Collaboration

Educators who are building a professional learning community recognize that they must work together to achieve their collective purpose of learning for all. Therefore, they create structures to promote a collaborative culture.

Despite compelling evidence indicating that working collaboratively represents best practice, teachers in many schools continue to work in isolation. Even in schools that endorse the idea of collaboration, the staff's willingness to collaborate often stops at the classroom door. Some school staffs equate the term "collaboration" with congeniality and focus on building group camaraderie. Other staffs join forces to develop consensus on operational procedures, such as how they will respond to tardiness or supervise recess. Still others organize themselves into committees to oversee different facets of the school's operation, such as discipline, technology, and social climate. Although each of these activities can serve a useful purpose, none represents the kind of professional dialogue that can transform a school into a professional learning community.

The powerful collaboration that characterizes professional learning communities is a systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice. Teachers work in teams, engaging in an ongoing cycle of questions that promote deep team learning. This process, in turn, leads to higher levels of student achievement.

Collaborating for School Improvement

At Boones Mill Elementary School, a K-5 school serving 400 students in rural Franklin County, Virginia, the powerful collaboration of grade-level teams drives the school improvement process. The following scenario describes what Boones Mill staff members refer to as their *teaching-learning process*.

The school's five 3rd grade teachers study state and national standards, the district curriculum guide, and student achievement data to identify the essential knowledge and skills that all students should learn in an upcoming language arts unit. They also ask the 4th grade teachers what they hope students will have mastered by the time they leave 3rd grade. On the basis of the shared knowledge generated by this joint study, the 3rd grade team agrees on the critical outcomes that they will make sure each student achieves during the unit.

Next, the team turns its attention to developing common formative assessments to monitor each student's mastery of the essential outcomes. Team members discuss the most authentic and valid ways to assess student mastery. They set the standard for each skill or concept that each student must achieve to be deemed proficient. They agree on the criteria by which they will judge the quality of student work, and they practice applying those criteria until they can do so consistently. Finally, they decide when they will administer the assessments.

After each teacher has examined the results of the common formative assessment for his or her students, the team analyzes how all 3rd graders performed. Team members identify strengths and weaknesses in student learning and begin to discuss how they can build on the strengths and address the weaknesses. The entire team gains new insights into what is working and what is not, and members discuss new strategies that they can implement in their classrooms to raise student achievement.

At Boones Mill, collaborative conversations happen routinely throughout the year. Teachers use frequent formative assessments to investigate the questions "Are students learning what they need to learn?" and "Who needs additional time and support to learn?" rather than relying solely on summative assessments that ask "Which students learned what was intended and which students did not?"

Collaborative conversations call on team members to make public what has traditionally been private—goals, strategies, materials, pacing, questions, concerns, and results. These discussions give every teacher someone to turn to and talk to, and they are explicitly structured to improve the classroom practice of teachers—individually and collectively.

For teachers to participate in such a powerful process, the school must ensure that everyone belongs to a team that focuses on student learning. Each team must have time to meet during the workday and throughout the school year. Teams must focus their efforts on crucial questions related to learning and generate products that reflect that focus, such as lists of essential outcomes, different kinds of assessment, analyses of student achievement, and strategies for improving results.

Teams must develop norms or protocols to clarify expectations regarding roles, responsibilities, and relationships among team members. Teams must adopt student achievement goals linked with school and district goals.

Removing Barriers to Success

For meaningful collaboration to occur, a number of things must also *stop* happening. Schools must stop pretending that merely presenting teachers with state standards or district curriculum guides will guarantee that all students have access to a common curriculum. Even school districts that devote tremendous time and energy to designing the *intended* curriculum often pay little attention to the *implemented* curriculum (what teachers actually teach) and even less to the *attained* curriculum (what students learn) (Marzano, 2003). Schools must also give teachers time to analyze and discuss state and district curriculum documents. More important, teacher conversations must quickly move beyond "What are we expected to teach?" to "How will we know when each student has learned?"

In addition, faculties must stop making excuses for failing to collaborate. Few educators publicly assert that working in isolation is the best strategy for improving schools. Instead, they give reasons why it is impossible for them to work together: "We just can't find the time." "Not everyone on the staff has endorsed the idea." "We need more training in collaboration." But the number of schools that have created truly collaborative cultures proves that such barriers are not insurmountable. As Roland Barth (1991) wrote, Are teachers and administrators willing to accept the fact that they are part of the problem? . . . God didn't create self-contained classrooms, 50-minute periods, and subjects taught in isolation. We did—because we find working alone safer than and preferable to working together. (pp. 126–127)
In the final analysis, building the collaborative culture of a professional learning community is a question of will. A group of staff members who are determined to work together will find a way.

Big Idea #3: A Focus on Results

Professional learning communities judge their effectiveness on the basis of results. Working together to improve student achievement becomes the routine work of everyone in the school. Every teacher team participates in an ongoing process of identifying the current level of student achievement, establishing a goal to improve the current level, working together to achieve that goal, and providing periodic evidence of progress. The focus of team goals shifts. Such goals as "We will adopt the Junior Great Books program" or "We will create three new labs for our science course" give way to "We will increase the percentage of students who meet the state standard in language arts from 83 percent to 90 percent" or "We will reduce the failure rate in our course by 50 percent."

Schools and teachers typically suffer from the DRIP syndrome—Data Rich/Information Poor. The results-oriented professional learning community not only welcomes data but also turns data into useful and relevant information for staff. Teachers have never suffered from a lack of data. Even a teacher who works in isolation can easily establish the mean, mode, median, standard deviation, and percentage of students who demonstrated proficiency every time he or she administers a test. However, data will become a catalyst for improved teacher practice only if the teacher has a basis of comparison.

When teacher teams develop common formative assessments throughout the school year, each teacher can identify how his or her students performed on each skill compared with other students. Individual teachers can call on their team colleagues to help them reflect on areas of concern. Each teacher has access to the ideas, materials, strategies, and talents of the entire team.

Freeport Intermediate School, located 50 miles south of Houston, Texas, attributes its success to an unrelenting focus on results. Teachers work in collaborative teams for 90 minutes daily to clarify the essential outcomes of their grade levels and courses and to align those outcomes with state standards. They develop consistent instructional calendars and administer the same brief assessment to all students at the same grade level at the conclusion of each instructional unit, roughly once a week.

Each quarter, the teams administer a common cumulative exam. Each spring, the teams develop and administer practice tests for the state exam. Each year, the teams pore over the results of the state test, which are broken down to show every teacher how his or her students performed on every skill and on every test item. The teachers share their results from all of these assessments with their colleagues, and they quickly learn when a teammate has been particularly effective in teaching a certain skill. Team members consciously look for successful practice and attempt to replicate it in their own practice; they also identify areas of the curriculum that need more attention.

Freeport Intermediate has been transformed from one of the lowest-performing schools in the state to a national model for academic achievement. Principal Clara Sale-Davis believes that the crucial first step in that transformation came when the staff began to honestly confront data on student achievement and to work together to improve results rather than make excuses for them.

Of course, this focus on continual improvement and results requires educators to change traditional practices and revise prevalent assumptions. Educators must begin to embrace data as a useful indicator of progress. They must stop disregarding or excusing unfavorable data and honestly confront the sometimes-brutal facts. They must stop using averages to analyze student performance and begin to focus on the success of each student.

Educators who focus on results must also stop limiting improvement goals to factors outside the classroom, such as student discipline and staff morale, and shift their attention to goals that focus on student learning. They must stop assessing their own effectiveness on the basis of how busy they are or how many new initiatives they have launched and begin instead to ask, "Have we made progress on the goals that are most important to us?" Educators must stop working in isolation and hoarding their ideas, materials, and strategies and begin to work together to meet the needs of all students.

Hard Work and Commitment

Even the grandest design eventually translates into hard work. The professional learning community model is a grand design—a powerful new way of working together that profoundly affects the practices of schooling. But initiating and sustaining the concept requires hard work. It requires the school staff to focus on learning rather than teaching, work collaboratively on matters related to learning, and hold itself accountable for the kind of results that fuel continual improvement.

When educators do the hard work necessary to implement these principles, their collective ability to help all students learn will rise. If they fail to demonstrate the discipline to initiate and sustain this work, then their school is unlikely to become more effective, even if those within it claim to be a professional learning community. The rise or fall of the professional learning community concept depends not on the merits of the concept itself, but on the most important element in the improvement of any school—the commitment and persistence of the educators within it.

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Every Child, Every Day
Six Literacy Experiences Children Should Have Every Day

Adapted from Richard L. Allington and Rachael E. Gabriel by Penny Kittle and found on www.Pennykittle.net

In this important *Educational Leadership* article, Richard Allington (University of Tennessee/Knoxville) and Rachael Gabriel (University of Connecticut/Storrs) present six high-quality experiences they believe all children should have every day if they are to become successful, engaged readers. These experiences are especially important for struggling readers – but tragically, they're least likely to have these experiences.

1. *Every child reads something he or she chooses*. "The research base on student-selected reading is robust and conclusive," say Allington and Gabriel. "Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they have the opportunity to choose what they read."

2. *Every child reads accurately*. This means reading material at the "just right" level of difficulty. Spending more time reading doesn't help unless students are reading at 98 percent or higher accuracy. "When students read accurately, they solidify their word-recognition, decoding, and word-analysis skills," say Allington and Gabriel. "Perhaps more important, they are likely to understand what they read – and, as a result, to enjoy reading."

3. *Every child reads something he or she understands*. Comprehension is the goal of reading instruction, say the authors. "But too often, struggling readers get interventions that focus on basic skills in isolation, rather than on reading connected text for meaning. This common misuse of intervention time often arises from a grave misinterpretation of what we know about reading difficulties." Struggling readers aren't "wired differently", as some brain research implies. Their brains benefit from high-quality reading instruction with engaging and comprehensible content. The bottom line: more authentic reading develops better readers.

4. *Every child writes about something personally meaningful*. "The opportunity to compose continuous text about something meaningful is not just something nice to have when there's free time after a test or at the end of the school year," say Allington and Gabriel. "Writing provides a different modality within which to practice the skills and strategies of reading for an authentic purpose."

5. *Every child talks with peers about reading and writing*. Research shows that conversations with classmates improve comprehension and engagement with texts – students analyze, comment, and compare, thinking about what they read. "Time for students to talk about their reading and writing is perhaps one of the most underused, yet easy-to-implement, elements of instruction," say the authors.

6. *Every child listens to a fluent adult read aloud*. Listening to a competent adult modeling good reading helps students with vocabulary, background knowledge, sense of the story, awareness of genre and text structure, and comprehension – and yet few teachers above first grade regularly read aloud to their students.

We recommend you read the full text from the article referenced here. It can be found at: http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar12/vol69/num06/Every-Child,-Every-Day.aspx.

Every Child, Every Day Companion Questions for Reflection

Consider the *Knowing the Child* study you referred to earlier to reflect upon relationship building with a particular student in your class. Keeping that child in mind, reflect upon the following questions:

- What types of books does this child choose or prefer to read?

- Is there access to a range of books he can read with accuracy?

- Does he understand what he reads? How do you know?

- What opportunities for writing has he enjoyed?

- Does he participate in talking with others about his reading and writing?

Allington, R. L., & Gabriel, R. E. (2012). Every child, every day. *Reading*, *69*(6), 10-15.

The Two-Minute Relationships Builder

(original title: Two Minutes to Better Student Behavior by Sarah McKibben)
http://inservice.ascd.org/education-resources/two-minutes-to-better-student-behavior/

There's a simple way to connect with a challenging student, according to "The Two-Minute Relationship Builder" from the July issue of *Education Update*. Spend two minutes a day for 10 days having a personal conversation with the student. Talk about whatever topic interests him— sports, cars, family life, Legos, whatever—but keep discipline and academics off the table.

Lisa Kitzmann, a 3rd grade teacher in California, tried the strategy several times over the course of a year, and the results were surprising. As she developed a personal connection with the students she targeted, their behavior in the classroom improved—and so did her outlook.

"When you become closer with [children] who used to drive you absolutely crazy and you begin to understand why they're acting the way they are, your attitude changes," says Kitzmann.

The Two-by-Ten strategy is more than an icebreaker; it's a trust-building exercise that goes both ways. At first, it can be difficult to break through, Kitzmann admits, especially when students affect the mood of the classroom or interrupt the learning that's taking place. But by taking the time to really get to know the students, you can begin to uncover the reasons behind their misbehavior.

"Most often it is because [children] lack a sense of trust and respect for the adults who are supposed to be their role models or because they lack structure, routine, and discipline at home," says Kitzmann. "We often forget that children need just as much respect as adults do—and they are taught by actions."

By practicing Two-by-Ten, Kitzmann had the extra push to give her most disruptive students structured one-on-one time, and they responded by opening up to her on a whole new level. "When a child told me that he had to meet his dad at the police station for weekend visitation exchanges so his parents wouldn't fight, it made me much more understanding of his situation," she says. "He was dealing with grown-up issues and circumstances that were beyond his control. My sense of patience and self-motivation to instill safety for him in the classroom became more important than reaching him academically. The child had more to deal with than learning to write a complete sentence and not being disruptive. The only world he knows outside the classroom is a disruptive one."

As Kitzmann emphasized in her article in *Education Update*, "you begin to see the child in a different light" when you initiate conversations that go beyond "how are you today, nice to see you."

"Deeper conversations lead to a compassion that only comes when you invest your time, listening ears, and an open heart," says Kitzmann. "The difference is learning about what's in the inside of a child's heart and head—not just focusing on the external casual talk that seems easy. [Children] know when you truly take those extra minutes to talk about their feelings on a personal level."

For Kitzmann, Two-by-Ten wasn't the answer to classroom misbehavior, but it was a start.

Learn the dos and don'ts of the Two-by-Ten strategy in "The Two-Minute Relationship Builder," *from the July issue of* Education Update.

Reflection Questions:

How can this strategy help you connect with and build more positive partnerships with parents/families of students?

How can the CPC Curriculum and Alignment Liaison, Parent Involvement Liaison and/or others in your school support teachers in using this strategy as they build trust and respect with children and families?