

## Wise Ways

**Professional development for teachers is determined by data (including classroom observations and review of lesson plans) that demonstrate the preparation for and application of Learning Supports. (CL16)**

### Evidence Review:

Researchers have identified core implementation components that support practitioners, such as teachers, in high-fidelity behavior. These components (also called “implementation drivers”) include but are not limited to: in-service training, ongoing coaching and consultation. In a meta-analysis of research on training and coaching, Joyce and Showers (2002) found that training with or without demonstration, practice and feedback had little to no impact on teacher behavior. However, when on-the-job coaching was also present, 95% of participants demonstrated increases in knowledge, skill demonstration, and implementation of the innovation in the classroom with students. Joyce & Showers also found that full support and participation of school administrators is necessary for successful implementation. In addition, implementation also works best with teachers who are willing and able to be fully involved. “Forthman, Wooster, Hill, Homa-Lowry, & DesHarnais (2003) found that feedback, provided in a timely fashion (short feedback loops, recurring), and delivered personally by a respected source was most effective when accompanied by written material and attended to the motivation of the audience...”

**Source:** Fixsen, D. et. al (2005), *Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature*

### References and Other Resources:

Forthman, M. T., Wooster, L. D., Hill, W. C., Homa-Lowry, J. M., & DesHarnais, S. I. (2003). Insights into successful change management: empirically supported techniques for improving medical practice patterns. *American Journal of Med Qual*, 18(5), 181-189.

Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (2002). *Student Achievement Through Staff Development (3rd ed.)*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

### Evidence Review:

According to Shulman (2004), “authentic and enduring learning occurs when the teacher is an active agent in the process...Teacher learning becomes more active through experimentation and inquiry, as well as through writing, dialogue, and questioning. Thus, the school settings in which teachers work must provide them with the opportunities and support for becoming active investigators of their own teaching.”

One effective strategy is a mentoring and induction program which facilitates professional conversations with beginning teachers about their practice and allows for novice teachers to reflect honestly, without fear. Some questions that may promote self-assessment and reflection include:

- Did you depart from your plan?
- If so, how and why?
- How did the modification improve the lesson?
- If you had to teach this lesson again to the same group of students, what would you do differently?

Mentors also find value in the process and report that their own teaching has improved as a result of focusing their attention on effective teaching practices.

Schools can further promote professional growth by engaging teachers in an annual process of self-assessment and goal setting which is critical to the development of their individual professional development plans. The results of this annual process can also guide schools and districts in the identification and coordination of professional development, including the creation of study groups or professional learning communities that focus on areas of interest.

**Source:** Danielson, C. A Framework for Learning to Teach  
Online June 2009 | Volume 66 Revisiting Teacher Learning

**References and Other Resources:**

Shulman, L. S. (2004). *The wisdom of practice: Essays on teaching, learning, and learning to teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

**Evidence Review:**

Researchers have found that teachers who develop relationships with professional colleagues for guidance and support are more likely to implement new practices and successfully address behavior problems in the classroom. Trusting peer relationships can occur through informal interactions, collaborative learning teams, mentoring, and peer coaching. Mentors and peer coaches often assist their colleagues by conducting observations, suggesting innovative strategies and techniques, and providing an environment conducive to trying new approaches. Studies have shown the positive impact mentoring and coaching have on attrition, teachers' attitudes and perceptions, procedural changes, student engagement, and students' social relationships. Collaborative learning teams have contributed to positive student social and behavioral outcomes.

Consultation with behavioral experts has also had a positive impact on student achievement and behavior. In a randomized controlled trial, Dunson et al., (1994) confirmed the effectiveness of teachers' consulting with behavioral experts in altering teachers' perceptions of student's disruptive behavior and in reducing behavior problems among students who exhibit inattentive and disruptive behaviors.

**Source-** IES Practice Guide for Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom

**References and Other Resources**

Dunson, R., Hughes, J., & Jackson, T. (1994). Effect of behavioral consultation on student and teacher behavior. *Journal of School Psychology, 32*, 247–66.

**Evidence Review:**

Schools must develop policies, infrastructure, mechanism, and procedures to monitor, evaluate and enhance the planning of all Learning Support programming. To ensure the quality of interventions meet current and evolving standards for practice, schools must take steps to analyze and use quality assurance data to “determine that all personnel have essential knowledge and skills to perform their roles and functions and all are pursuing education to enhance their job capabilities”.

Staff development may include a focus on ways to:

- (a) be a positive social model and create effective opportunities for students to communicate and bond with staff
- (b) improve the school atmosphere to support social and emotional development
- (c) build healthy, enduring, trusting bonds with families through developing proactive relationships and regular, meaningful, and effective two-way communications
- (d) increase understanding of healthy development and what motivates students (encompassing an appreciation of individual differences and group diversity)
- (e) provide opportunities for motivated practice (repetition, rehearsal) to integrate emotional experiences, and awareness with cognitive abilities (planning, problem-solving, etc.) and behavior
- (f) provide opportunities for all youngsters to engage in positive roles at school and in the community as part of their service, recreational, and enrichment experiences
- (g) plan, implement, and evaluate an integrated approach to fostering socio-emotional development
- (h) increase understanding of barriers to learning (including ensuring that staff understands the effects on students’ academic and social development of transient, but important stressors, such as school-related transitions, loss or trauma, family instability/divorce)
- (i) plan and implement strategies for identifying when a youngster is troubled, appropriately identify and refer individuals experiencing mental health and psychosocial problems
- (j) engage the family in shared problem-solving when early signs of learning, behavior, or emotional difficulties arise
- (k) develop appropriate strategies for enhancing the likelihood that all students have an equal opportunity to learn and succeed

Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA

Other recommendations for professional development include:

- linking Learning Supports professional development to school-wide improvement programs and integrating it with other staff development;
- including relevant stakeholders in planning, implementing, and evaluating the scope, timing, and delivery and impact of the Learning Supports professional development;
- planning, implementing and evaluating professional development in a well-conceived and effective manner (eg., the process reflects research-based approaches that underscore the importance of interactive and reflective learning over time);
- employing internet, distance learning, and other advanced technologies to enhance the feasibility, nature, and scope of professional development; and
- analyzing and using quality assurance data to improve Learning Supports programming.

**Source-** Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, Mental Health in Schools: Guidelines, Models, Resources, & Policy Considerations, May, 2001.