

The Main Idea's PD Suggestions for *Designing & Implementing Effective Professional Learning*

I. Group Teachers for Planning and Selecting PD

Murray explains that PD is not one-size-fits-all: dividing teachers into small groups, based on grade levels or subject areas, can help them set effective goals and select PD that meets their particular needs. Therefore, as a first step, decide how you will group teachers during this process, and tell them about the groupings and the reason for them. ("This year, to make sure teachers have a voice in choosing professional development, we are going to have you work in small groups to set goals for your students' learning and your own professional learning. We'll then talk about different PD models and figure out which ones fit your goals.")

II. Determine What Teachers Find Useful About PD

To get a sense of teachers' past experiences and attitudes about PD, which is important for planning future initiatives, have teachers meet in their grade-level or subject-area groups (see above) to reflect upon and share out about their previous experiences with PD. Teachers could discuss which aspects of previous (and current) PD have been effective in improving their teaching and increasing student learning. This could also serve as an assessment of the effectiveness of the school's current PD program.

After everyone in the small groups has had time to share, you can ask the groups to share out in a larger discussion. During that discussion, be sure to mention some key points from Murray's research; for example:

- To be effective, PD must be ongoing and collaborative
- Effective PD relies most heavily upon the knowledge and expertise of teachers *from the school*, rather than outside "experts"
- Planning for effective PD begins with setting goals for student learning

III. Set PD Goals

To assist teachers in setting PD goals, have each group go through the steps below.

1. Analyze a range of student data to figure out students' learning needs (such as test scores, student work, trends in school leadership observations, and teachers' observations about students' areas of challenge).
2. Decide which one of the students' learning needs seems to be the most widespread and important in your group.
3. Write a student learning goal. (See the chart below for some examples.)
4. List the strategies teachers have already used to try to meet that goal, and describe the success or failure of those strategies.
5. List what else teachers need to learn in order to address the student learning need.
6. Write a teacher learning goal and submit both goals to a school leader for review. (See the chart below.)
7. Revise the goals as needed, and submit final versions to a school leader.

SAMPLE STUDENT AND TEACHER LEARNING GOALS

<i>Student Learning Goal</i>		<i>Teacher Learning Goal</i>
1. Students will be able to analyze scientific data.	→	Teachers will know and use strategies that result in improved data analysis by students.
2. Students will improve their reading comprehension.	→	Teachers will know and use strategies the result in improvements in students' reading comprehension.
3. Students will successfully complete mathematics word problems.	→	Teachers will know and use strategies that result in improvements in students' ability to solve word problems.

Once groups have drafted or finalized their goals, it may be useful to have the groups share out. You may discover some similarities in goals between various groups (e.g., science and mathematics teachers need to learn more about supporting critical thinking skills). The information gathered in this exercise will be helpful in determining which PD models are the best fit for each group.

IV. Introduce Six PD Models to Teachers

When it's time for each group to select PD models, divide the six models between several groups of teachers, and have each group research one of the models and present the model to the rest of the faculty. Presentations should describe the model and outline the benefits. The chart below summarizes some of Murray's findings on various types of PD – presenting teachers should add to the last column from their own research. *All* of the models improve instruction and learning and help teachers problem solve.

Type of PD (and pages in the summary)	Helps Solve Problems with Classroom Practice	Particularly Focused on Student Work/Learning	Gives Teachers Feedback on Instruction	Other Benefits Found
Lesson Study (p. 4)	✓	✓	✓	
School Rounds (p. 5)	✓	✓	✓	
Mentoring (pp. 5-6)	✓		✓	
Peer Coaching (pp. 6-7)	✓		✓	
Online PD and PLNs (pp. 7-9)	✓		✓	

The second chart lists some resources teachers can use to research the six models -- including several summaries from The Main Idea. There are tons of additional resources on these topics all over the Internet!

Types of PD	Research Resources
<i>Lesson Study</i>	<i>Leading Lesson Study</i> by Stepanek et al., summary available from The Main Idea
<i>Teacher Rounds</i>	<i>The Power of Teacher Rounds</i> by Vivian Troen and Katherine Boles (TMI summary coming, in the meantime, read the book -- it's short!)
<i>Mentoring</i>	<i>Ready For Anything</i> by Howard, summary available from The Main Idea
<i>Peer Coaching</i>	<i>Coaching Matters</i> by Killion et al., summary available from The Main Idea
<i>Online PD</i>	The National Education Association's database of quality-reviewed online courses, available at: http://www.neacademy.org/ce-splash.html
<i>Personal Learning Network</i>	The Educator's PLN Ning, Education Podcast Network, EduBlogs, Diigo social bookmarking

V. Select PD Models

Murray writes that "everyone should be involved" in selecting PD models. After teachers have learned about the different PD models listed above, have each teacher group select 2-3 models that would be a good fit for its goals, and give the list to a school leader along with a written rationale for why they want to try these PD models.

The school leader can then look for areas of overlap among the groups (for instance, perhaps both the science and the mathematics departments are interested in Lesson Study). Based on those areas of overlap, the leader can decide on several models of PD the school will be implementing, and match the groups of teachers to a model they requested. Choices might look like this:

<i>Science Teachers' Desired PD Models</i>	<i>ELA Teachers' Desired PD Models</i>	<i>Math Teachers' Desired PD Models</i>	<i>Social Studies Teachers' Desired PD Models</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson Study Teacher Rounds Mentoring 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Coaching Mentoring Personal Learning Networks 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Online PD Lesson Study Personal Learning Networks 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Coaching Teacher Rounds Online PD

Depending on the amount of time and the school's needs, in the case above, the principal might propose the math and science teachers engage in Lesson Study and the ELA and Social Studies teachers implement Peer Coaching. Even if the math and science teachers work in different groups, the school might provide training in Lesson Study for those groups together.

VI. Plan to Evaluate Your PD during Implementation

Even when a school has been thoughtful about choosing a PD model, it is vital to see whether the model is actually bringing about the desired results. The results of an evaluation can help a school make mid-course improvements in its use of a PD model and guide decisions about whether a particular model is ultimately a good fit.

So, as soon as teachers and leaders have selected PD models to implement, teacher groups should figure out how they will evaluate the impact of the PD models they will be using. Once their plans for evaluations are in place, they can begin implementation.

Have the teacher groups (the same subject-area or grade-level based groups that selected goals and models) put together **evaluation plans** and submit them to you or another administrator for review. The plans should include:

- An outline of what kind of data they will collect, and when
- Plans for formative assessments of the PD, such as check-ins at meetings, or classroom observations by instructional leaders

Below, you'll see a chart that outlines different ways teachers can assess the impact of PD models on their practice and on student learning. The groups should plan to collect several different kinds of data. (For instance, a group might look at classroom observations, student work, and standardized test scores.)

Evidence Type	How to Collect	Questions to Consider
1. Teacher Reactions	Questionnaires or interviews	Did the PD make sense? Can you use what you learned?
2. Teacher Learning	Teachers' demonstrations of new skills, written responses, or interviews	Did teachers' knowledge, understanding, attitudes or skills improve?
3. Teacher Practice	Observations of teachers, interviews, & written reflections	Are teachers using what they've learned?
4. Student Learning	Grades, test results, student work, student interviews and questionnaires	Are students improving in the areas that the PD targeted?