

MINNESOTA REPORT

"Leadership for Learning"

Joint Newsletter Focuses on Staff Development

An introduction from Minnesota ASCD's Stan Hooper and the Minnesota Staff Development Council's Pete Ziegler

This issue of Minnesota ASCD's *Minnesota Report* presents itself as a combined effort between Minnesota ASCD and the Minnesota Staff Development Council (MSDC). Our organizations have much in common even though our perspectives are focused differently. Both our organizations spend a good deal of effort at professional development – the theme of this issue. Two articles are by our respective presidents, Jenni Norlin-Weaver for MSDC and RoAnne Elliott for Minnesota ASCD. The other articles were contributed by Dr. Richard Cash, president-elect of

Minnesota ASCD; Dr. Dana Carmichael, the founder of Dynamic Learner Consulting; and Mia Waldera, a member of the successful staff-development team at St. Louis Park Junior High.

Professional Development and the Teacher Effect

Norlin-Weaver discusses the critical difference the *Teacher Effect* has on student performance and how it overreaches all other aspects of the student experience. In her article, she emphasizes how important professional development is to maintaining and improving on that *Teacher Effect*, and how the development of

teacher leaders in various operational modes contributes to a strong teacher base in our schools that enhances the value of teacher teams working to the benefit of student performance.

Thoughts on feedback, the "big picture," and powerful staff learning

Elliott's article references three personal experiences and the impact that those experiences can have on everyone involved in education. In total, each was extremely important to her and has broad implications for all educators:

- First, strong, specific and constructive feedback builds professional expertise far more profoundly than isolated interpretation of expected results compared with what actually occurs and selective decisions about what to do next.
- Second, students need to understand the big picture alongside the bits and pieces, the "baby steps" as Elliott puts it, and many students need the —*continued on next page*—

Developing leadership among educational decision makers to improve curriculum and instruction for Minnesota students.

HIGHLIGHTS ...

Teacher Leadership and Professional Development

by Dr. Jenni Norlin-Weaver, MSDC President
 pages 4-5

Examples of Great Staff Development

by RoAnne Elliott, Minnesota ASCD President
 pages 6-7

Knowing You've Made a Difference

by Dr. Dana Carmichael
 pages 8-9

Reach and Teach the 21st Century Brain –

Sign up for our Winter Conference on March 6
 page 14



The collaboration between Minnesota ASCD and the Minnesota Staff Development Council (MSDC) represented in this joint newsletter is designed to foster one of the organizations' shared goals: staff development that leads to improved classroom learning.

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**Focus on Staff Development
(continued from page one)**

big picture now, not later. It is the venerable deduction vs. induction discussion, put in very practical, experiential terms that we can all understand so much better.

- Third, Elliott posits that working with colleagues in adult learning circumstances has power for everyone: accountability to each other and realizing the strengths of individuals in supporting everyone's learning are keys to powerful professional development that lead to a new definition that differentiates between training and learning for improvement.

Ways for staff developers to be more effective

A contributed article about working in behalf of teachers' professional development has been submitted by Dr. Dana Carmichael. In the classroom teacher's world, there is the power of directly observed results: teachers can see when students have learned, and they can determine, in a wide variety of ways, how well students have learned and how well they can perform or

exhibit their learning.

That's not as true for those who don't see students every day: it is harder for staff developers to know whether they have made a difference when they can't follow up the same ways. Further, the pressures of political decisions that result in policies from above, and filtering the nonsense from the useful aspects of politically derived edicts, make the non-classroom staff's determinations about their effectiveness even more muddled. So, Carmichael suggests four steps for making a difference in the work staff developers do and for the people they serve.

Making staff development part of the daily routine

The goal of the National Staff Development Council states that "all teachers in all schools will experience high-quality professional learning as part of their daily work." Mia Waldera tells us how St. Louis Park Junior High School is working to achieve that goal. She describes eight forms staff development takes at the school and explains how, taken together, the interwoven forms are leading to success.

How to motivate under-achieving students

Finally, Dr. Richard Cash offers five principles of curriculum and instruction to help teachers develop their adolescent students' intrinsic drive to learn: make it relevant, make it meaningful, make it rigorous, make it safe for intellectual risk-taking, and make choices available.

We hope that this issue is of value to all the members of our respective organizations. We'd also like feedback. What do you think of this joint effort? Should the two organizations, or other combinations of organizational expertise, repeat and continue the efforts when there are common elements to what they do? If so, how would you suggest that we proceed? What other endeavors could be useful to you? Finally, what might be done that would better meet your needs? In the meantime, we are respectfully yours,

*Stan Hooper,
Minnesota ASCD
Communications Chairperson*
Pete Ziegler, MSDC Secretary

About MSDC

The Minnesota Staff Development Council (MSDC) was re-established in 1994 as an affiliate of the National Staff Development Council to provide networking opportunities and to promote positive staff development experiences in the state of Minnesota. For more information on the group's mission and beliefs, visit www.mn-sdc.org.

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Accomplishing the National Staff Development Council Goal

by Mia Waldera, Staff Development Coordinator
St. Louis Park Junior High School

Here is the goal:

"All teachers in all schools will experience high-quality professional learning as part of their daily work."

How does one school accomplish the NSDC goal?

The National Staff Development Council's goal of high quality, professional learning every day takes intentional planning, effort, and follow-through. How has one organization made plans to accomplish this goal? St. Louis Park Junior High has been building a network of staff development that weaves together to accomplish the NSDC goal. The design is the result of a staff development team of educators ranging from deans, teachers, principal, staff development coordinator, and a para-educator who devote time, energy and site resources to design, implement, and evaluate the building's professional development.

Developing a staff-development system

The staff development team uses Joellen Killion's model to develop their staff development plan. So, first the team and other staff review the student data that are important to the school. Then they use that data to decide what adults will need in order to improve the student data. Smart goals, logic models and an evaluation plan are designed and communicated with stakeholders in order to accomplish the goals.

The staff development leadership team has designed, revised and supported eight different forms of staff development in the building in order to establish a system of staff development. The team works in collaboration with a site-based staff development coordinator. This year the district is implementing ATPPS (Alternative Teacher Professional Pay System or Q Comp) and the school's staff development leadership team is collaborating with the building instructional leaders in ATPPS to sustain this model. The following are the eight forms of staff development, with a quick definition of each, which have been put in place:

1. Faculty meetings

Faculty meetings focus on essential strategy and skill building for faculty in targeted areas that support the building goals. Content is differentiated to meet the needs of faculty in different stages of their careers and their professional development.

—continued on page 12—



Mia Waldera is a licensed teacher with 12 years experience in the classroom. She served with the Minnesota Department of Education for two years on an interagency agreement. During that time she was a member of a team of teachers called the IST Team (Improvement Support Team). The legislature formed this team when the Profile of Learning became law. The team traveled around the state providing professional development to a variety of stakeholders regarding the new law. She has been a member of three Quality Teaching Networks including language arts, social studies, and mathematics. She has an M.Ed in Teacher Leadership and a certificate in staff development from the

University of Minnesota. She currently works for St. Louis Park Junior High as a site-based staff developer. She has served on the Minnesota Staff Development Council board for several years and does independent consulting for school districts on a variety of topics.

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What SINGLE FACTOR has the largest impact on student achievement levels and on college readiness/graduation? It is, quite simply, the “Teacher Effect”...

LEADING FOR OPPORTUNITY: Teacher Leadership and Professional Development

by Jenni Norlin-Weaver, Ph.D.
President, Minnesota Staff Development Council

Using Collin’s terminology, the “brutal facts” are that “*the Teacher Effect* makes all other differences pale in comparison” (Sanders). Marzano and Kain, Hanushek & Haycock have all affirmed that “five years of effective teaching can completely close the gap between low-income students and others.”

Research has affirmed that five years of effective teaching can completely close the gap between low-income students and others.

It is clear that there are students we can serve better. It is also clear that we must ensure all students are well-prepared for post-high school experiences for our economy to continue growing. The powerful lessons of Friedman’s *The World is Flat* are reinforced in the recent *Time* magazine cover story, “Fixing our Schools” (Dec. 10, 2006), where all of America glimpses recommendations of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce. This bipartisan assembly of Education Secretaries and business, government and other education leaders released a “blueprint for rethinking American education from pre-K to 12 and beyond to better prepare students to thrive in the global economy.” *But HOW?* It will take teamwork.



Jenni is presently Director of Teaching and Learning at Edina Schools and has worked in the areas of curriculum and professional development for over 20 years. She has presented locally, nationally and internationally and is the president of the Minnesota Staff Development Council. She was an elementary and middle school classroom teacher, also working in Title I and

Gifted and Talented. She worked for several years in Saudi Arabia, in staff development and curriculum, and earned her doctorate at the University of Minnesota. Jenni has been a ‘T.A.L.L. Trainer’ (Teachers as Learners and Leaders) for Education Minnesota and has facilitated the planning work of multiple groups. As a member of the Minnesota Academic Standards committee, she also worked on the design of Minnesota’s standards for Middle Level Language Arts, and she is actively involved in the legislative process as it relates to the development of standards and related legislation.

It is increasingly clear that the success of these reforms, increasing both literacy and “21st Century Skills,” depends on teachers’ professional development. Unlike the “restructuring” reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s that attempted to improve student outcomes by making changes in the organization of schooling, these more recent reforms call for fundamental change at the very core of teaching and learning. As Thompson and Zeuli (1999) have noted, “Students must think in order to learn.” Teaching that provides students with frequent and well-designed opportunities to think departs in significant ways from what we see in traditional classrooms and those tied only to making the basics of AYP. Helping teachers to make this fundamental shift in practice requires more powerful, embedded approaches to professional development. As the National Staff Development Council has coined, “Every educator, in every school, every day” requires high-quality professional learning opportunities.

Teaching that provides students with frequent, well-designed opportunities to think departs in significant ways from what we see in traditional classrooms. Helping teachers to make this fundamental shift in practice requires more powerful, embedded approaches to professional development.

One response in districts throughout Minnesota, mirrored nationally, has been to identify and support *teacher leaders* to provide support to their colleagues in changing instructional practice. It is, quite frankly, the generational opportunity given to Minnesota within the spectrum of possibilities offered through the ATPPS legislation (Alternative Teacher Professional Pay System, also known politically as Q Comp).

“Teacher leader” is a generic term that has been applied to teachers in a variety of roles (Moller and Katzenmeyer, 1996; Lieberman, Saxl and Miles, 1988). It most often is about teachers who are out of the classroom full-time to assume some kind of leadership role in promoting change in classroom practice among large numbers of teachers. They may be based in one or more school buildings or have responsibilities across a district. Teacher leader also refers to teachers who remain in the classroom and assume, on top of their full-time teaching

responsibilities, some role in promoting change. Sometimes, teacher leader refers to teachers who have a reduced teaching load and act in a leadership capacity for the remainder of their day/year. Teacher leaders – in all capacities – are generally working toward the same goal: to promote and support change in teachers’ classroom practice (Medina and St. John, 1997; Smylie and Denny, 1990).

Although it appears that we don’t yet know enough about teacher leadership to make sweeping claims for its long-term effectiveness in supporting reform, preliminary findings point to one critical feature. “*Teacher leadership increases the number of professional development providers – putting in place more people to provide more contact hours with classroom teachers*” (Lord & Miller, 2000). One of the major advantages that they bring to a staff is in “deprivatizing” the work of school staff so that collectively it becomes part of a wider, systemic strategy within a well-aligned constellation of district supports (e.g., assessment and accountability systems and programs for curriculum implementation).

“Teacher leader” most often describes teachers who are out of the classroom full-time to assume some kind of leadership role in promoting change in classroom practice among large numbers of teachers.

Wise has noted in *Teaching Teams: a 21st Century Paradigm for Organizing America’s Schools* that “professionals do not work alone; they work in **teams** ... to accomplish the goal – to heal the patient, win the lawsuit, plan the building.” Teacher leaders are “front-line forces” who have the greatest amount of contact with classroom teachers and therefore the greatest likelihood to effect change in teachers’ practice and the wisdom to recognize the collective effort and understanding in their practice. Hargreaves (2005) indicates that it is sustainable leadership that matters because it will “preserve and protect deep and broad learning for all ...” Teacher leadership can assist in sustaining the efforts that make a difference – to students and to teachers. They know, intuitively, that within this work they must provide for celebration of the everyday gains made by both.

Schmoker (2006) summarizes the work of Marzano, Sanders, Stiggins and others by writing that for “swift, dramatic improvement, schools require 1) team-based learning communities, 2) a guaranteed and viable curriculum and 3) radical changes in literacy instruction.” Why bother? Marzano, Sanders and others have confirmed that these combinations can create a 35-50 percentile gain in achievement over a three-year time period.

Given the characteristics of these reforms, some kind of teacher leadership seems almost certain among the strategies for professional development. Find the opportunity to lead or to share leadership, and you’ll find gains for everyone.



Notes

1. Collins, *Good to Great*, page 65 (2001).
2. Sanders, *Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Academic Achievement* (1996).
3. Marzano, *What Works In Schools* (2003).
4. Kain, Hanushek & Haycock, *Teachers, Schools and Academic Achievement* (2004).
5. Friedman, *The World Is Flat* (2005).
6. Thompson & Zeuli, “The Frame and the Tapestry: Standards-Based Reform and Professional Development,” in Darling-Hammond and Sykes (Eds.), *Teaching as a Learning Profession: Handbook of Policy and Practice*, pages 341-375 (1999).
7. Moller & Katzenmeyer, *Awakening the Sleeping Giant* (1996).
8. Lieberman, Saxl & Miles, “Teacher Leadership: Ideology and Practice,” in Lieberman (Ed.), *Building a Professional Culture in Schools*, pages 149-166 (1988).
9. Medina & St. John, *The nature of teacher leadership: Lessons learned from the California subject matter projects* (1997).
10. Smylie & Denny, “Teacher Leadership: Tensions and Ambiguities In Organizational Perspective,” *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 26, 3, pages 235-259 (1990).
11. Lord & Miller, *Teacher Leadership: An Appealing and Inescapable Force in Education Reform* (2000).
12. Wise, *Teaching Teams: A 21st Century Paradigm for Organizing America’s Schools* (2004).
13. Hargreaves & Fink, *Sustainable Reform* (2005).
14. Schmoker, *Results Now* (2006). See also his December 2006 NSDC Conference presentation at www.nsd.org.

The BEST PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT I've Had Lately

by RoAnne Elliott
President, Minnesota ASCD

I was upsetting when for the first time someone watched carefully and spoke aloud in specific terms what I privately knew and was not in the habit of discussing – there were ways I needed to improve my work.

I was already 44 years old and 22 years into my professional career when I first experienced face-to-face, brutally accurate feedback about my performance from a supervisor. When it came, it was shocking and disconcerting, to say the least. It also marked an important turning point in my career as a learner.

Unaccustomed to her kind of feedback – direct, informed and referenced to explicit expectations, I was surprised and appalled when my new supervisor enumerated the ways my performance was missing the mark. As a classroom teacher in typical elementary and middle schools, I had been well-trained in the time-honored tradition of unspoken expectations and isolated learning and practice. Reflective by nature, I used my own perceptions to compare what actually was happening with what I believed should be happening in my classroom. On my own I made decisions about what worked and what didn't in my insular process of self-assessment. I also understood that taking steps to improve my work was completely voluntary and, as long as nothing either unusually or observably bad occurred, I was free to choose whether or not to adjust my course of action. As far as I knew, this is what everyone did. It was acceptable and expected.



Minnesota ASCD President RoAnne Elliott is the curriculum director for the Mounds View Schools. She has been a Minnesota educator since 1972, including 20 years as a classroom teacher in Minneapolis elementary and middle schools. She worked in research and development of the Minnesota graduation standards in the 1990s, and provided assessment consultant services to many

Minnesota districts prior to beginning her work in Mounds View in 1999. In addition to a master's degree in elementary education, she has completed course work in staff development, instructional leadership, and program evaluation at the University of Minnesota and Hamline University.

My new supervisor's approach challenged the well-established norms that had shaped my practice. So yes, it was upsetting when for the first time in my long and successful career, someone had watched carefully and had spoken aloud in specific terms what I privately knew and was not in the habit of discussing with anyone—there were ways in which I needed to improve my work. Fortunately, I went on to work with this person over several years and learned a great deal from her. Two enduring gifts she gave me in the course of our work together which continue to shape the way I learn, think about my learning, and conduct myself as a lead learner with other adults are:

- 1. The leader must structure the work so strengths and weaknesses are clearly observable.** We often avoid discomfort and try to save time by capitalizing on assumed strengths and by addressing undefined weaknesses. All learners need opportunities to apply their abilities to solve complex, real-world problems where high expectations exist with professional support. When those opportunities are observed, it allows for feedback, reflection and continued learning. As you lead the learning:
 - Be sure that you're working with people on problems that are highly relevant to them.
 - Speak with clarity about the desired outcome and the knowledge and understanding required to attain it.
 - Locate learning opportunities within the essential responsibilities of the job so that people understand that they are being paid to learn – we learn in the process of doing the thing we are trying to learn to do better.
 - Model the kind of behavior or practice that is expected, and be explicit about the behaviors and practices that are to be de-emphasized or eliminated.
- 2. Everyone's strengths and weaknesses must be discussable.** Clear, accurate, and timely feedback is the teacher's most valuable tool and the learner's most valuable resource. As you lead the learning:
 - Communicate high expectations for professional educators by providing specific, straightforward feedback and support for improvement. While it is always important to deliver feedback with respect and sensitivity, do not sacrifice clarity and accuracy to protect feelings or avoid confrontation.
 - Provide support that quells anxiety and increases the likelihood of improvement.



The fear of causing frustration often tempts the staff developer to avoid big ideas and start with details. Hook your staff into learning by having them process the big idea at the outset.

One summer I took an introductory course in program evaluation. The class consisted of professionals working in various education and human services agencies. On the first day of the course the professor arranged the class into groups and directed us to create an evaluation scheme for a program.

We looked at one another and grumbled ... the reason we were taking this introductory course was that we didn't know how to evaluate programs. Why would the professor ask us to do something we didn't know how to do? We complained for a while and then settled down to work using our collective knowledge and insights from our work experience to complete the assignment using the guidance provided by the tools the professor had given us. My group members included professionals working in diverse areas within the social sector. Our discussion was lively, informed by the various experiences and perspectives in the group, and we accomplished something that made sense to all of us within the time allotted for the task.

As each small group shared their work, the professor noted the variety of interesting approaches taken among the groups in the class and the knowledge and insight reflected in the presentations. Good work for people who thought we knew nothing about program evaluation. The professor then proceeded to introduce the class to principles of evaluation from the perspectives of various experts in the field and had us consider our work in light of these principles. In this single class session the topic was demystified through the work of both teacher and students, and the stage was set for in-depth study that occurred as the course proceeded.

My experience in this course led me to re-think the wisdom of starting out with baby steps. The fear of causing frustration often tempts the staff developer or project leader to avoid big ideas and start with details. My group started out more than a little skeptical about our ability to accomplish the task. We were conditioned to expect the professor to be the person doing the thinking, especially at the beginning of the student's learning process. Rather than starting out by spoon feeding us bits of knowledge about the topic to be used later, this professor turned the tables and got us involved in a complex problem right away. We were processing the big idea at the outset; it was engaging and motivating. She had us hooked into learning.

It may seem logical when introducing a complex topic to start with baby steps or building blocks, but many learners have had the experience of getting the building block information and skills, while the big idea remains a mystery. Sometimes the big idea gets lost in the baby steps, or the building blocks become

so important that they overshadow the big idea. Sometimes learners lose interest before the big idea ever arrives. The baby steps approach also robs the teacher of the opportunity to observe learners using their current knowledge to address a novel problem.

My professor knew her audience. She could reasonably assume that we had professional knowledge and experience in our backgrounds that would help us learn the next new thing. She also provided guidance. She learned more about the students by observing us as we used our current knowledge to delve into something new. I took a few compelling messages away from this experience in a graduate class that I believe apply as well to job-embedded professional learning. As you lead the learning...

- 1. Be clear in your own head about the big complex idea and keep it at the center of the learning experience.**
- 2. Honor the experience and current knowledge of the people involved in the learning work.**
- 3. Engage people at an early point in the learning process in a task that is some version of the big idea.**
- 4. Challenge learners to compare their current thinking to information that is new to them.**
- 5. Provide guidance with helpful tools and strategies for solving the problem.**



Another valuable learning experience was a staff development course in which my fellow students included teacher leaders, administrators, and support staff persons for whom professional development was a key job function. The professor organized the course to include numerous highly interactive activities varied to appeal to a range of learning styles. In doing so, she provided modeling of effective adult learning strategies in every class session. The student voice was amplified in this course as the professor designed a model within which each student accepted the responsibility to advance the learning of the entire class. Here are two key aspects of my learning experience in the class which greatly influence the way I conceptualize professional development:

- 1. Collegial learning with a balance of relevant theory and practical how-to information**
In this class I felt highly accountable to my classmates and could see how their work contributed to my learning.
- 2. Heavy emphasis on collegial and individual reflection**
I learned multiple formal and informal ways to structure reflection opportunities for adult learners that help the learner make the connection between learning and improvement.

—continued on page nine—

Knowing You've Made a Difference

by Dana Carmichael, Ph.D.

I have a good friend who is a fire fighter. He loves his job and is good at it. But one of the best parts is knowing he has made a difference. There is no confusion when you save someone's child. As educators our success with children is often not as clear. And the further removed one's role is from the classroom, the harder it is to know whether you are making a difference. The focus of this article is to better understand the impact of staff development provided by non-classroom staff (Teachers on Special Assignment, Coordinators and Directors) on classroom teachers and the children they teach.

Understanding the Role of Non-Classroom Staff

Before launching into an analysis of central office effectiveness, it's critical to understand how unique the role is in our public institutions. You get none of the joys of working with children, which is why most teachers stay in education; but you also don't have papers to correct, daily lesson planning, or the minute-by-minute fatigue that comes from constantly being "on." Okay, you can also go to the bathroom whenever you want.

But the job is far from easy because of the pressure that comes with implementing policies from the Federal and State Departments of Education, the district school board, and the superintendent. Many teachers don't realize how often non-classroom staff push back to fight for what would make sense for teachers. Non-classroom staff work hard to keep the nonsensical garbage at bay to bring forth only a distillation of the policy in its most practical form. At least that's the goal, and it takes the heart of a lion to keep fighting on behalf of teachers, even when they pummel you for not getting it right.

Many teachers don't realize how often non-classroom staff push back to fight for what would make sense for teachers. Non-classroom staff work hard to keep the nonsensical garbage at bay ...



Dana Carmichael is an educational consultant and the founder of Dynamic Learner Consulting. As a former Director of Staff Development, Director of No Child Left Behind, curriculum specialist and classroom teacher, she is no stranger to the politics of change. She has a Ph.D. in

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It takes the heart of a lion to keep fighting on behalf of teachers, even when they pummel you for not getting it right.

How Do We Know We're Making a Difference?

If we can agree that all the roles in a public school system have their unique challenges and personal rewards, the more interesting topic is whether the staff development done by non-classroom staff is making a difference. Here are four steps that can help you determine the effectiveness of your staff development.

STEP ONE

Use S.M.A.R.T Goals for Your Staff Development

Like the classroom teacher, non-classroom staff need to have Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Tangible goals for staff development (Conzemius and O'Neil, 2005). You get these goals by looking at data. Classroom teachers use student data. Non-classroom staff can use data from evaluations, surveys and focus groups; if you don't have any data, that's a good place to start.

STEP TWO

Cross-Check Your Goals

Once you have analyzed your data and developed one or two S.M.A.R.T. goals, it is critical to check those goals against two other documents. First, look at the district strategic plan or whatever written directive you've been asked to implement. If your goals don't align, then any progress you make will be down the wrong road and may derail the district's progress. Second, look at national standards, for example the National Staff Development Standards. This process will ensure that you are writing goals that support the district's goals and align with best practices.

STEP THREE

Keep Change Transparent

As we've explored, non-classroom staff are often caught between what teachers want and what the school board and superintendent want. The middle space is crowded with ideas and you often feel squished, even immobile. But the simple solution, once you have made sure the goals you've set come from data and are heading in the right direction, is SHARE. Taking a little time to explain the process you used in steps one and two goes a long way at developing trust with the people pushing you. Teachers, when they understand what you want to accomplish and why it's so important, will support the work.

Transparency can also help you impact district direction and advocate when there is misalignment between goals and resources or district initiatives and national best practices. You get voice and build trust. It is what Parker Palmer (2004) calls the third way, “a commitment to act in every situation in ways that honor the soul” instead of fighting or fleeing from the discord (170).

STEP FOUR Complete the Circle

In its most boring sense, completing the circle is evaluating the work you’ve done to see if you met your goals and then making adjustments accordingly. But done without authenticity, the act is tiresome number crunching. Success is better defined by both meeting the goals and establishing that the learning has been authentic. To determine the latter, I always gather information on the following four criteria, developed by Fred Newmann (1995) and his colleagues in the *Framework of Authentic Instruction and Student Achievement*. When modifying the criteria of authentic instruction in the staff development evaluation, consider asking these questions:

- 1. Higher Order Thinking:** Were participants manipulating, analyzing or synthesizing information in the workshop?
- 2. Deep Knowledge:** Was there content at the core of the workshop? Was it conceptually rich and theoretically accurate?
- 3. Substantive Conversation:** Did people have a chance to talk deeply about the content? Did the conversation lead to deeper collective understanding?
- 4. Value Beyond:** Did participants make connections between the workshop content and their own practice? Did they see relevance and value in the information? Were they asked to embed the content in their practice in a concrete way?

The lives saved in education will never be as clear-cut as the fire fighter’s rescue. But our impact is just as long lasting and real. That is why we owe it to the children to ensure that the work we do in staff development is having an impact on their lives via their teacher. Let’s take time to look at what we’ve done so we know where we need to go.

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Best professional development (continued from page seven)

I am grateful to have had these kinds of learning experiences because they have helped me better understand how to practice what I have always believed – that my main job as an educator is learning – and remind me to do the things that are necessary for significant learning to occur but ironically run counter to the culture of working in schools.

- Actively and continuously seek accurate feedback about the impact of your work;
- Keep the big idea at the forefront; don’t get lost in the minute aspects of a problem;
- “Training” and learning for improvement are two very different things. We often need to be about both kinds of learning at once and it is important to know the difference when improvement is at stake. Training can be about the transfer of information, telling people how to do things and guiding them through the technical steps of a task or process. Learning for improvement is change work. It can be slow and involves intense and sometimes uncomfortable work. It requires leaders to guide people through change processes, engaging them in dialogue and reflection, self-assessment and working together. It is stimulating, rewarding work that needs to span the entire career;
- Work together, expect conflict, expect diversity and use them to advance the work;
- Do the work in ways that allow you to learn from doing the work. We are not at school just to “get stuff done.” In a swiftly changing world our students need schools and educators who have the deep capacity to adapt. That is what professional learning work is all about.

—RoAnne Elliott



Direct inquiries about Minnesota ASCD
and correspondence to:

Lori Sandvig

Minnesota ASCD Executive Secretary

5033 West 56th Street, Edina, MN 55436

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e-mail: lori@isarep.com

MOTIVATING ADOLESCENT LEARNERS:

Battling Underachievement

by Richard M. Cash, Ed.D.

To help develop your students' intrinsic drive to learn, try Dr. Cash's five principles of curriculum and instruction.

Adolescent learners are some of the most complex students that teachers will encounter in their careers. Trying to keep adolescent learners motivated, engaged and productive is a never-ending battle. For the purposes of this article, I will focus on the one challenge most prominent in the battle of underachievement: motivation. Overwhelmingly, underachieving adolescent learners don't feel the need to achieve. They don't see the need for what they are required to do. They don't find the work valuable or interesting. To help teachers develop students' intrinsic drive to learn, I've created five principles of curriculum and instruction.

Principle 1: Make it relevant

Adolescence is a time for personal growth and development. During the middle school and early high school years, youth are struggling for a sense of identity, growing into their bodies, and working out mood and emotional reactions. Teachers must make the connection between what is being taught and the learner. For instance, in social studies have students identify a social issue that is important to them. Help them map out ways they can impact the situation either directly or indirectly. Another way to help students find themselves in the curriculum is through interest-based surveys or discussions.

Other ideas for making curriculum and instruction relevant:

- Allow students to share themselves or their passions with the class.
- Provide time for students to meet in interest-based small groups, to find commonalities and develop bonds.



Richard M. Cash, Ed.D., is the District Administrator of Gifted and Talented Programs and Services for the Bloomington Public Schools (ISD 271). He presents locally and nationally on issues in gifted education and talent development, differentiated instruction, and brain-compatible classrooms. Dr. Cash developed a public school for gifted children grades 4-8 in the Bloomington Public Schools (Dimensions Academy). He works closely with teachers and administrators to ensure that

complex and rigorous instruction and curriculum are delivered to all students. Dr. Cash may be contacted at 952-681-6438 or rcash@bloomington.k12.mn.us.

- Have students think about career pathways, built on their personal interests, then contact field experts and bring them in to share their schooling careers.

Principle 2: Make it meaningful

The adolescent brain is undergoing an enormous amount of change and circuit refinement, pruning and connection-making. These cognitive changes signal a shift in how adolescent youths approach learning. The connections made during the teen years will most likely hard-wire the brain for the future. Adolescents exposed to theater, dance, music and the arts will stay attuned to them in later years. Conversely, adolescents disengaged academically, socially or physically most likely will stay this way for years to come.

Meaningfulness in curriculum is when the learners are able to see themselves in the learning or find the information they are learning immediately useful. Lessons that incorporate personal experiences, authentic productions and self-reflection can bring the curriculum alive for the adolescent gifted learner.

Other ideas for making curriculum and instruction meaningful:

- Use metaphors, similes, and analogies to make unfamiliar topics familiar.
- Use mnemonic devices, acronyms or acrostics to help learners with lists and orders of items.
- Use mind maps to connect seemingly unconnected topics.
- Use elaborative rehearsals such as mock trials, role-playing, and simulations.
- Integrate personal stories (both the students' and yours) into the content.
- Connect the content to what is current (use the media, and/or internet).

Principle 3: Make it rigorous

Rigor involves the advancement of intellectual engagement that requires learners to stretch beyond their comfort zones in order to reach what Vygotsky terms their "zone of proximal development." Proximal development is the difference between what a child can do with help and what he or she can do without help (Morris).

Rigor also involves the use of complex thinking, which is the cognitive process that requires sophisticated forms of and interactions between creative thinking, critical reasoning and

advanced levels of inquiry, problem solving strategies and metacognition skills. Bloom’s Taxonomy provides an excellent scaffold for building a framework of increasing rigor. All learners must think and produce at high levels. For gifted learners, they must be required to go into more complexity and ambiguity of the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy (analysis, synthesis and evaluation).

Other ideas for making curriculum and instruction rigorous:

- Teach critical, creative and effective thinking strategies throughout your content areas, and encourage students to use them (see deBono’s CoRT Thinking Program: <http://www.edwdebono.com>).
- Teach the metacognitive skills of self-reflection, summarization, and effective memorization strategies (see mnemonic devices, acronyms or acrostics above),
- Use brainstorming and SCAMPER techniques to create new and original products.
- Help students apply content knowledge to applications across disciplines using authentic products.
- Use more complex/abstract concept development to encourage deeper investigation and understanding. Example: For the concept of “cycles” ...

SIMPLE/ CONCRETE	COMPLEX/ ABSTRACT
Water	Political
Air	Economic
Seasons	Philosophical
Single disciplinary	Multi-disciplinary
Requires less authenticity	Requires greater authenticity

**Principle 4:
Make it safe for intellectual risk-taking**

The lack of true challenge has not provided some with the opportunities to learn how to struggle, make mistakes or persevere at tasks that require complex thinking. Teachers must create safe and supportive learning environments that allow for intellectual risks. Students should be exposed to strategies and techniques for dealing with failure, keeping organized and persisting.

Other ideas for making curriculum and instruction safe for intellectual risk-taking:

- Show learners how making mistakes leads to incredible inventions (share the book: *Mistakes that worked* by Charlotte Jones and John Obrien).
- Play up problem-solving techniques – give them many types and help them identify when to use them.
- Encourage students to work outside of their preferred learning style.
- Offer learners appropriate strategies for dealing with stress: meditation, exercises, the arts, taking deep breaths, or listening to soothing music.

Principle 5: Make choices

Students are motivated to learn when meaningful choices are offered; ownership and responsibility for learning increases, and creative production is strengthened. Choices can be accomplished in a variety of ways:

- Allow for students to choose different ways to demonstrate ways of knowing;
- Allow students to develop and investigate topics of study;
- Allow students to use a variety of materials and resources to complete projects and assignments;
- Provide for various seating arrangements or grouping arrangements in the classroom; or
- Allow students to create their own evaluation rubrics and types of assessments.

Choice Menus

An excellent way for teachers to provide for choices in the classroom is to create choice menus. Choice menus are a formatting strategy for differentiating curriculum and instruction. Choice menus should allow students to:

- Use their preferred learning style;
- Incorporate their personal interests into their learning; and/or
- Study a topic in depth.

The first step in constructing choice menus is to decide what the “essential learning” is in the unit or project to be completed. These are the big ideas, concepts, themes or generalizations that make the topic/unit of study important to future learning.

Secondly, decide how the menu is to be arranged. Teachers can arrange the menu so that it focuses on learning profiles/ styles, interests, or students’ need to go into greater depth. Choice menus for students can be created to either replace or supplement the regular curriculum. Remember: Choice menus are not intended to be MORE work, but to be more engaging work.

Third, build your choice menu on Bloom’s Taxonomy, Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory, or other learning styles you prefer. Ensure the learning experiences scaffold to higher, more complex activities that move to authenticity. For an excellent template, see the Matrix Plan or Integration Matrix (pages 80-83) in Diane Heacox’s book *Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom* (Free Spirit Publishing, 2002).

Resources

Heacox, D. (2002). *Differentiating instruction in the regular classroom: How to reach and teach ALL learners, grades 3-12*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Morris, C. (no date). *Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development*. Retrieved December 12, 2006 from <http://www.igs.net/~cmorris/zpd.html>.

High-quality professional learning as part of daily work (continued from page three)

2. Early Release/Late Starts

These allow for continued work on curriculum and collecting students' scores on common assessments for each department.

3. SNACKS

The same topics and issues do not affect all staff, so by allowing different staff development content to be offered at times that work for all employees is essential. Optional staff development sessions offered to match the needs of the participants on topics affecting small groups of staff are called SNACKS.

4. Instructional Design Time

Revision of local critical outcomes (aligned with standards), design/collection of assessments for the identified outcomes, design/collection of rubrics for the assessments, and learning activities to support the assessments happen during this time which takes place two or more times a week for grade-alike members of departments (or for the entire department, in some cases).

5. Team Design Time

The main intent of this time is to allow interdisciplinary team members to meet together to discuss student issues for those students they have in common. This year the time includes regular examination of the classroom work which students produce, and scoring the work using Fred Newmann's scoring criteria in order to gather formative information on student progress.

6. Content Area Coaching

External coaches/consultants have been and are secured to work with specific content areas to refine the instruction being used to impact student achievement.

7. Professional Development Plans

Staff select an area of student achievement they would like to impact and set SMART goals for the year to accomplish their goals.

8. Think Tanks

Think Tanks target high accountability and interest areas for the school. This year they include:

- Reading/language arts (test strand analysis and identifying formative assessments)
- Mathematics (test strand analysis and identifying formative assessments)
- School climate

We continue to refine our practice in each of these eight forms of professional development to accomplish the goals of the building. High quality professional learning every day is a goal that we believe in and are working to accomplish.

Improving the Constitution: *We seek your approval to amend*

Every now and then an organization's constitution needs to be changed to make things more efficient, to improve on a process, to correct an oversight, and more. This time, Minnesota ASCD needs to add the language needed to make it possible to maintain its not-for-profit status: without the necessary language, that status could be challenged, even though we keep all our books and carry on all our activities the same way as all not-for-profit organizations do.

The present language of the Minnesota ASCD constitution states that all proposed amendments are required to be presented to the membership at least 30 days prior to a vote, and that voting for amendments should take place at the same time officers are elected. So, presented here for your consideration is new language proposed to be amended to the constitution if it is agreed to. The Board of Directors has done its constitutional duty to review the amendments and to forward them to the full membership for your consideration (see next page).

The constitution also stipulates that the new language is to be presented in a side-by-side format, with any existing language, so that the membership can see how things will change. That is presented consistently here, even though all the language of these amendments is new.

One final point. There is a plausible likelihood that you would like to see a copy of the constitution for yourself. Most members get a copy in a packet of new member material, but older members may have missed out on that, or perhaps the one you received has been mislaid. Contact Lori Sandvig (see the box on page nine) for a copy of the present constitution. She'll be happy to send it out to you. Give her plenty of time to do so before the forthcoming election!

MSDC Spring Conference



MSDC is once again planning a spring conference. This year's focus will be "Leading for Learning." Dates and details will be announced on the web site in early February (www.mn-sdc.org).

Note that the MSDC website is currently under construction. It is being totally redesigned and updated to better reflect the work we are trying to do. It will include links to current research on professional development. MSDC will use the site to publish its newsletter and let you know about the activities of the organization. At the new site you will also find professional development opportunities available in Minnesota and through NSDC.

**Minnesota Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
January 2007**

PRESENT LANGUAGE	PROPOSED LANGUAGE
<p>Article III. PURPOSE (There is no language that requires changing: this is additional language to be appended to Article III, and fits below the list of six items.)</p>	<p>Article III. PURPOSE The Association is organized exclusively for educational purposes including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code. All activities shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Internal Revenue Code and regulations relating to organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, as now or hereafter amended.</p>
<p>Articles XX through XXIV. (The present constitution and bylaws do not contain these articles; it is proposed that they be added to the document.)</p>	<p>Article XX. ASSETS ON LIQUIDATION Upon the dissolution of the Association, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a Court of Competent Jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.</p> <p>Article XXI. REGISTERED OFFICE ADDRESS AND AGENT The place in this state where the principal office of the Corporation is to be located is 5033 W 56TH St, Edina, Minnesota, 55436, Hennepin County, c/o Lori Sandvig.</p> <p>Article XXII. SHARES The Association is not authorized to issue shares.</p> <p>Article XXIII. EARNINGS AND ACTIVITIES No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article III hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the Association shall be carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Association shall not participate in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the Association shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an association exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, of the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by an association, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.</p> <p>Article XXIV. INCORPORATORS We the undersigned incorporators certify that we are authorized to sign these articles and that the information in these articles is true and correct. We also understand that if any of this information is intentionally or knowingly misstated that criminal penalties will apply as if we had signed these articles under oath.</p>

The ballot for the amendments will consist of a question asking whether the amendments should be added to the constitution in order to assure a not-for-profit (501(c)3) status in compliance with statute. All language in the constitution which is not listed here will not be changed.

Reach and Teach the 21st CENTURY BRAIN

Tuesday, March 6, at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, 3131 Campus Drive, Plymouth

Keynote Address: "Millennial Children and Our Classrooms"

by David Warlick of The Landmark Project

Children in our classrooms today are tech-savvy, adaptive, fast learners, always connected, and ultra-communicators. They are a species of learner who can see, hear, and speak through walls and around the planet. Information is what gives their experience meaning, and they do not merely consume the information. They play it, work it, and remix it into experiences that are personally enjoyable and valuable. What kind of classrooms address the unique learning styles of Millennials and a future that we can not even describe? In his keynote address, David Warlick will address questions that are pivotal to retooling classrooms and reforming education. A renowned innovator and leader in the field of educational technology, he will share his contagious passion and enthusiasm for reaching students who demand to learn, not to be taught.

The conference will emphasize using technology to reach and teach learners of the 21st Century, with breakout sessions also featuring a wide variety of other strategies and techniques (see complete list in the next column). There is something for all grade levels, with an emphasis on the middle and higher grades.

Conference Schedule

8:00-9:00	Registration
9:00-10:00	David Warlick Keynote Address
10:20-11:20	Breakout Sessions I
11:30-1:00	Lunch and Conversation
1:00-2:00	Breakout Sessions II
2:15-3:15	Breakout Sessions III

Breakout Sessions

- Moving Your School to Brain Compatible Learning
- Online Learning and the Digital Native
- Do Boys Ask for Directions? A Biologically Wired Question
- Bringing History Alive with Modern Technology
- The Psychological Work of Teaching High School English
- Not Afraid of 1s and 0s! The TICT Initiative in Osseo Area Schools
- Structure by Design: Strategies for Competent Secondary Writing
- Teaching to the Adolescent Brain: Strategies That Engage and Motivate
- What Do I Do With This Gifted Kid? Easy Steps to Differentiate in an Elementary Classroom for Gifted Kids
- Passion and Culture: Effective Schools for the 21st Century
- Differentiated Instruction for Today's Classroom
- Input Principles of the Brain: The Surprising Basic Instructional Actions for Every Teacher and Trainer at Every Level

Breakout Sessions With David Warlick

- Video Games as Learning Engines
- You and the New World Wide Web

The 2007 Minnesota ASCD Winter Conference on Teaching & Learning

"Reach and Teach the 21st Century Brain"

David Warlick, Keynote Speaker

Please print. Use a separate form for each enrollee. When four team members register at the same time, their leader attends at no cost (send all five registrations in one envelope).

Name of individual attending _____

School District _____

Mailing address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Registrations must be received by Tuesday, Feb. 27. Registrations are nonrefundable; substitutions must be confirmed by noon on Monday, March 5. Make checks payable to Minnesota ASCD (purchase orders are also accepted) and return with this form to: Lori Sandvig, Executive Secretary, Minnesota ASCD, 5033 West 56th Street, Edina, MN 55436.

You may also register online at www.mnascd.org or by fax at 952-920-9123

PRICING

Minnesota ASCD Members:

- \$170/person early bird (through Friday, Feb. 16)
- \$180/person after Friday, Feb. 16

Non-members (price includes one-year membership in Minnesota ASCD)

- \$210/person early bird (before Friday, Feb. 16)
- \$220/person after Friday, Feb. 16

When four or more members from a school pay, their leader attends at no cost.



Membership Form

Name (first, last, middle initial): _____

Position/Title: _____

School Affiliation (*please include ISD# whenever possible*):

Mailing Address (*circle one*): Work Home

Work Phone () _____ Home Phone () _____

FAX: (*circle one*) Work Home
() _____

E-mail: _____

Position (check one):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Director of Curriculum or Instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> District-Level Administrator or Specialist | <input type="checkbox"/> Full-Time Student |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Principal, Assistant, or Associate | <input type="checkbox"/> Professor, Dean or other University |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Superintendent, Assistant, or Associate | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal | |

Are you currently a member of our parent organization, International ASCD?
 yes no

Annual Membership Dues:
\$35.00 Active \$5.00 student/retired

If you chose student or retired, please enter the name of your school or former employer: _____

Optional – Enter your ethnic origin: _____

Please mail complete application with a check payable to Minnesota ASCD to:
Lori Sandvig
5033 West 56th Street
Edina, MN 55436

Membership form for you and your colleagues

Pass the form on this page to your friends, or make copies and distribute them among colleagues who can benefit from membership in Minnesota ASCD. The \$35 for dues provides basic funding for organizing several conferences and preparing follow-up materials, publishing newsletters, organizing Curriculum Expos, and other services for Minnesota educators.

One key feature of a membership in Minnesota ASCD is the unique opportunity it provides to educators in all career tracks to network with each other, share important ideas and information, and gain insights into the latest developments in educational initiatives designed for curriculum and instruction.

Thanks for your own membership, and many thanks for encouraging others to join!

**Welcome to Our New
Minnesota ASCD Members**

Alberts, John
Austin High School, Austin

Beaton, Andrew
Columbia Heights High
School, Minneapolis

Bosshart, Dustin D.
ISD 640, Truman

Brucker, Christopher,
New Brighton

Chen, Manling
St. Paul Academy & Summit
School, St. Paul

Ciccarelli, Teresa
Highland Park Elementary
School, St. Paul

Cin, Ronald
Marion W. Savage
Elementary School, Savage

Clusiau, Jeff
Ramsey Elementary School,
Anoka

Currier, DeeDee
Sioux Trail Elementary
School, Burnsville

Dean, Rhonda
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Cannon Falls

Ellison, Launa J.
Minneapolis

Garber, Gwen
Milaca High School, Milaca

Goodwin, Eliza
Southside Family Charter
School, Minneapolis

Grengs, Kim
Heart of the Lakes Elem.
School, Perham

Heffernan, Elizabeth A.
Riverview West Magnet
Elem. School, St. Paul

Heilig, Stephanie
Duluth Public Schools

Holt, Dennis
Anoka Hennepin ISD 11,
Minneapolis

Krall, Lisa
Minneapolis

Kuhns, Jeremy
St. Paul

Lindberg, Meg
So. Washington Co. ISD 833,
Cottage Grove

Lukens, Pamela
Lester Prairie

Muenich, John
Hibbing High School

Page, Joey
Richfield Public Schools

Peterson, Warren
Cloquet Sr. High School

Pingry-Kile, Laura
Burnsville ISD 191

Randall, Mark
Southgate Elementary School,
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Reitemeier, Patrick
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Samasal, Randy
Anoka Hennepin ISD 11,
Minneapolis

Schultz, Tamara
Marshall Public Schools

Skarvold, Jill
Moorhead ISD 152

Smith, Shawn
Lincoln Hi Elementary
School, Hendricks

Swenson, Beth
Brainerd ISD 181

Tschudy-Lafean, Kelly
Century Jr. High School
Forest Lake

Uselman, Tamara
Perham-Dent Public Schools
Perham

Weise, Teresa L.
Buffalo Middle School

Wilaby, Kevin
Lutheran High School
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