

Keys to preparing literacy leaders in your school

By Janice Van Dyke

The nonprofit Learning Policy Institute, led by Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, has identified seven key common elements of effective professional development. The components were identified in a review of 35 rigorous studies that showed a positive link between teacher professional development, teaching practices, and student outcomes. Successful PD models, the report finds, generally feature a number of these elements.

Effective professional development

- is content focused
- incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory
- supports collaboration
- uses models of effective practice
- provides coaching and expert support
- offers opportunities for feedback and reflection
- is of sustained duration

Similar features were identified within the standards for preparing specialized literacy professionals, developed by the International Literacy Association.

Successful literacy leaders

- serve as liaison with the principal on literacy teaching and learning
- understand theories of adult learning and practice
- facilitate communication, problem solving, and decision making
- support the acceleration of literacy learning in the school
- help design curriculum and differentiated instruction to meet literacy needs of all students
- collaborate effectively using data and progress monitoring to inform decisions and improve achievement
- are skilled working with colleagues in a professional learning community
- work closely with the principal to support development, implementation, and operation of school teams

An exemplary PD model

The Learning Policy Institute report cited Reading Recovery as the only effective PD model studied that includes all seven of the essential components identified in their research.

Reading Recovery-trained professionals become the literacy leaders in their schools and districts, helping build comprehensive systems and professional learning communities that focus on strengthening literacy for every child.

In addition to providing instruction for the lowest achieving first-grade students, they deepen the understanding of classroom teachers and interventionists in literacy processing theory and practice. They provide professional development in running records, assessment, guided reading/writing, book selection, small-group instruction for students having difficulty, and by collaboration on coaching, demonstration lessons, and progress monitoring.

Learn more in this free video: *Promising Literacy for Every Child*

<https://vimeo.com/218945670/>

Elementary principals, superintendents, and other stakeholders explain how a comprehensive approach to literacy teaching and learning strengthens the entire team and makes a difference for all students. A free comprehensive literacy system planning guide is also available.



Reading Recovery® Council
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www.readingrecovery.org/



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