

Implementing Effective Professional Development: Key Improvement Processes

ISSUE: To create and sustain high-quality learning environments, leaders guiding reform efforts must devote resources to: (1) **improvement structures** — the tangible, concrete elements of an improvement plan; and (2) **improvement processes** — the interactions and continuous learning that result from the effective use of these structures, and that ultimately influence quality. All too often, we design and implement reforms that stop at structures. Yet lasting change depends upon attention to improvement processes — the way in which each structure is carried out.

In Brief 6, we described key improvement structures; here, we present key improvement processes and their relationship to the structures, in the context of effective professional development (Brief 3).

| 5-PART CYCLE BRIEF 3 | KEY IMPROVEMENT STRUCTURES BRIEF 6 | KEY IMPROVEMENT PROCESSES |
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| NOTICE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom-based coaching Assessment tools | <p>Educators and coach notice and document specific challenges and strengths related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the educator (e.g., responses to daily classroom situations) children (e.g., behaviors, relationships, and learning) the setting (e.g., cycles of interaction, transitions and routines, learning opportunities) |
| ANALYZE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PLC group sessions 1:1 coaching conversations Information & data collected | <p>Educators and coach use guiding questions to reflect on and analyze what they notice, identifying patterns that shed light on strengths and challenges. Questions might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the messages behind children’s behaviors? What are classroom stressors that interfere with teaching and learning? How do adult and child responses influence one another? What are priority areas for instruction? |
| BUILD KNOWLEDGE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PLC group sessions 1:1 coaching conversations | <p>Educators and coach engage in knowledge-building conversations. Educators learn about and/or design a strategy that addresses an identified challenge related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> themselves (e.g., deescalating stress, increasing classroom talk) children (e.g., calming strategies, using descriptive words) the setting (e.g., preventing hotspots, smoother transitions) |
| PLAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PLC group sessions 1:1 coaching conversations | <p>Educators plan how they will incorporate the new strategy. Supported by the coach and a planning guide or protocol, educators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> outline steps for implementation, including strategy adjustments for their context brainstorm potential roadblocks and ways to prevent or address them discuss plans with the larger group, building off of each other’s ideas |
| TRY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom - based coaching | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators try their plans in classrooms, implementing the plan while responding flexibly to children’s behaviors and classroom situations Educators and coach notice and discuss what’s working and what’s challenging so that they can collaboratively problem solve in real-time. |