



Randi Weingarten
PRESIDENT

Volume 1 • Issue 1
FALL 2002

Inside

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

UFT Teacher Center
publishes
**Inside Professional
Development,**
a quarterly newsletter
of resources for
designing effective
school-based
professional
development

CENTER ON ENGLISH LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT:

Steps for the Reflective Educator

Inside professional development there are many resources to assist us as we work independently and with colleagues to plan and implement professional development that positively impacts student achievement. One resource is *English Update*, the newsletter from the Center on English Language and Achievement (CELA). Focused on English achievement, it is useful for all educators and can be viewed online, downloaded or ordered in print.



the School of International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. Rodgers' key point, that as teachers we need to understand that good teaching is a *response* to student learning, prepares us to learn about Project teachers "learning to see" and "seeing to learn."

From "Learning to See" to "Taking Thoughtful Action"

Inside Research

The theme of this year's winter issue of *English Update* is professional development. In it CELA's researchers highlight an array of important practices, including reflection, which is at the heart of our professional growth, especially "ongoing reflection, ... nourished by discussion, research findings, and a wide array of resources" (p. 2).

Author Jacqueline Marino underlines its importance in "Model for Reflection: Helps Teachers Sharpen Observation" (pp. 4-5), detailing the work of teachers and Carol Rodgers in the Teacher Knowledge Project at

Marino writes of four steps forming a spiraling, repeating pattern that the teachers working with Rodgers follow. These steps begin with a special kind of seeing, "learning to see ... (being fully present in the classroom and open to signs of student learning)." Next is learning to describe ("the act of describing provides a way to hold up an event, an experience or an individual for further inspection"). The third step is learning to think critically ("when we review evidence that we have gathered with respect to four 'different, but interrelated aspects of analysis'"), see below. The fourth step is "learning to take intelligent action."

Continued on page 2

IN THIS ISSUE:

Developing a
Professional Portfolio

Resources

Online with the
UFT Teacher Center

Dimensions of Effective
Professional Development

Four Key
Professional Development
Practices

Teacher Center
Conferences Calendar

New Teacher Professional
Development Hours

THE PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

A professional portfolio provides the opportunity for self-assessment and improvement of elements in job performance. Creating a portfolio offers individuals a powerful opportunity for their own growth and development.

“The professional portfolio provides teachers with a framework for initiating, planning and facilitating their professional growth while building connections between their interests and goals and those of the school,” says Mary Dietz (1995).

This practice is useful when: you want a consistent representation of your work, there is need for authentic assessment, you need to see growth and learning over time, and you need to see in detail how instruction impacts student achievement.

Steps in creating a portfolio include:

- ✓ Selecting a focus.
- ✓ Specifying a goal.
- ✓ Making a plan to reach the goal.
- ✓ Collecting data—recording growth and development.
- ✓ Reflecting on the results.

Further Reading

Burke, K. (1997). *Designing Professional Portfolios for Change*. Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight Professional Development.

Fogarty, R. (1993). *Best Practices for the Learner-Centered Classroom*. Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight Professional Development.

Dietz, M. (1995). Using Portfolios as a Framework for Professional Development. *Journal of Staff Development*, 16, (2), 40-43.

Steps from CELA continued from page 1



Aspects of Analysis in Step Three

According to teachers in the Project, the interrelated aspects that have had power for them as they have used them over time within their professional community are:

“1. Examining the data [the evidence that they have collected] for contrasts or other patterns that will enable an informed interpretation and thoughtful action.

“2. Working toward developing a shared language—clarifying terms and probing meanings to assure common understandings about teaching and learning.

“3. Pushing one another to identify and question assumptions about practice, theories and the intersection of the two.

“4. Turning to the professional reading for other paradigms and frameworks that

will help them to name, understand and test emerging theories” (p. 5).

For Searching Further

In addition to *English Update* CELA posts other materials on its Web site. These include CELA research, reports

related to effective professional development, booklets and links to other educational sites (learning materials, online journals, teaching resources and funding opportunities).

Individual Professional Development

An excellent individual professional development task is to spend an hour carefully reviewing this site and exploring these materials, noting what will be helpful now and what might be in the future. To share with colleagues: we can create a Web site overview by downloading key pages to be viewed in print offline, and to be kept in an education Web site portfolio.

Reference

Marino, J. (2002, Winter). Model for Reflection: Helps Teachers Sharpen Observation. *English Update*. Albany, NY: Center on English Learning and Achievement (CELA), 4-5. Online: <http://cela.albany.edu>.

RESOURCES

New and Free Online: Designing Powerful Professional Development

Online this fall from the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) is an entire book offered free to educators to be used for school improvement. It is Dennis Sparks' *Designing Powerful Professional Development for Teachers and Principals*. It can be read online and also downloaded by chapter or in its entirety.

Author Sparks is nationally known as a speaker and writer and is the executive director of NSDC. He and NSDC offer this book in the hope that it will benefit many of us. Divided into five sections, the book's focus ranges from setting the stage for professional development to getting to the heart of the matter.

The book is clearly written and beautifully laid out and edited, giving us two key understandings. We receive both a broad picture of what is important in professional development today and a fine rendering of the details that each of us needs to know and understand to function highly in our own profession. The references are wide, the research base clear, and each chapter is prefaced with

an inspiring quote which serves as the word *inspiring* is intended to—we take a breath after reading it. This is a book worthy of extended study. To find it go to www.nsd.org.

Photo Copyright © UFT/TC



Author Dennis Sparks at the UFT Teacher Center Advanced Professional Development Academy in New York City in 2000.

Recommended in Print: Handbook of Research on Improving Student Achievement 2nd Edition

After an introduction by editor Gordon Cawelti, this enormously helpful book (in its second edition) is organized into ten chapters focused on summaries of research about student achievement. Included are generic practices, the arts, foreign language, health education, language arts, oral communication, mathematics, physical education, science, social studies and a staff development chapter by Dennis Sparks.

Each chapter has its own introduction and is then further divided into subtopics in which the reader can find “Research Findings,” “In the Classroom” and “References.” There is an extensive additional reference list at the end of each chapter. This book can be used many ways and all of us can benefit from the chapter on generic practices by Herbert J. Walberg and the chapter on professional development by Dennis Sparks. *Handbook* is an excellent reference and it is also worthy of extended study.

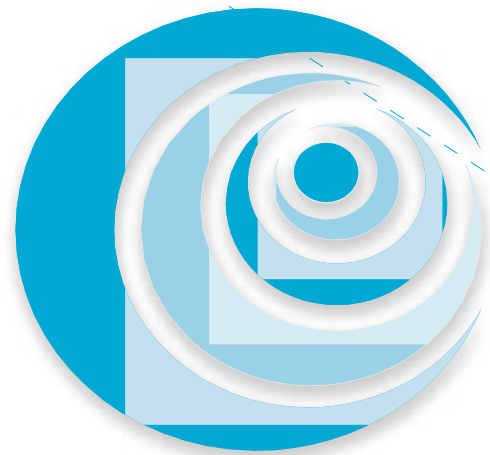
Gordon Cawelti. (Ed.). (1999). *Handbook of Research on Improving Student Achievement* (2nd ed.). Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service. Online: www.ers.org.

Online with UFT Teacher Center at www.ufttc.org

Join us online at our Web site! If there is no Teacher Center at your school, find a Teacher Center near you (click Teacher Center Sites on our home page) and telephone to learn about open access afternoons. Read our publications and download them (click on Professional Development for publications, courses, conferences, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and more).

You can use search tools (use the pull-down menu) to visit other education sites such as www.eric.org (Educational Resource Information Center [ERIC] Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Education) and the Library of Congress (www.loc.gov). Yes, the Library of Congress Web site has special help for teachers and a section on professional development!





Dimensions of Effective Professional Development

Planning professional development hinges on:

- a** “What do our students need to know and be able to do?”
(As determined from curriculum and City and State standards.¹)
- b** “What do students already know and what are they able to do now?”
(As determined from classroom performance and standardized-assessment scores.)
- c** “What do we (educators) need to know and do so that our students will be able to achieve?”
(The answers to this question form the basis of our professional development.)

1. Standards online: New York City Performance Standards can be accessed through www.nycenet.edu. New York State Learning Standards and Learning Resources can be downloaded. Go to www.nysed.gov; search the site using A-Z and select the letter “L.”

We have learned from research and practice that effective professional development is multidimensional and includes the 10 dimensions on the facing page.

Professional development is driven by its desired results: student achievement.
The goal of effective professional development is always students' increased achievement.

Professional development is job embedded.
Effective professional development is job embedded, that is, based on real classroom instruction. Some professional development activities, such as study groups, take place away from the classroom. In such cases, the work from the study group is applied in the classroom, and this work is then followed up in subsequent study group sessions.

Professional development is linked to learning needs.
Effective professional development is linked to the learning needs of both students and teachers.

Professional development is standards based.
Effective professional development is built on the New York City and State standards that are also the bases of New York City and State assessments.¹

Professional development is differentiated.
Effective professional development is not the same for every teacher since teachers' needs vary as do those of students.

Effective professional development is content rich.
Effective professional development is rich in content, offering opportunities for deep and complex learning.

Professional development is collaborative.
Effective professional development is collaborative, as educators work to analyze, plan and participate in activities designed to support their shared goals.

Professional development is sustained over time.
Effective professional development is never a one-shot event; rather, it is sustained over time. This is not to say that all professional development units take the same amount of time or number of sessions.

Professional development includes time for reflection.
Effective professional development includes time for reflection. This time is built in to activities, enabling participants to “hear themselves think,” share their thinking and have the opportunity to practice skills that they will model for and expect from students.

Professional development includes evaluation.
Effective professional development includes evaluation. Evaluation enables us to know that we are reaching our goals.

Four Key Practices

Study groups, peer coaching, professional book talks, and analysis of classroom audio- and videotape are four key professional development practices. What follows offers an overview and further reading for each.

Study Groups

A study group is a collection of people who gather to examine an agreed-upon topic. It is also:

- A forum that allows colleagues opportunities for an ongoing examination of factors influencing classroom practice and student learning as well as for sharing diverse perspectives.
- A collaborative commitment among learners with a common vision.
- A learning opportunity promoting participants' construction of knowledge through research and interaction with selected materials and collegial discourse.

A study group is important because it:

- Promotes professionalism creatively.
- Offers a means to address the integral components of daily school life: classroom practice, student outcomes

and the school as an organization.

- Develops a respectful, mutually supportive environment in which each staff member's expertise and learning is acknowledged and encourages development of meaningful dialogue among staff.

A study group is useful, for example, when educators want:

- To learn and apply new teaching techniques.
- To study research on effective schools as a school-wide community.

The way study groups work is that all participants:

- Agree upon and commit to the purpose of the group.
- Select the content for study.
- Develop a schedule and meeting places.



Photo Copyright © UFT/TC

- Establish group norms.
- Make an action plan.
- Identify group leadership.

Further Reading

Gusky, T., Huberman, M. (1995). *Professional Development in Education: New Paradigms and Practices*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Peer Coaching

one another while planning instruction, developing materials and thinking together about how instructional practice impacts student learning.

Peer coaching is important because it:

- Builds a safe, supportive environment for the practice of new skills.
- Builds a community of educators who continuously engage in a study of their craft.
- Encourages the development of the shared language and common understanding that are essential for the collegial study of knowledge and skills.

Peer coaching is a useful process for:

- Supporting change in instructional practice and implementation of curriculum innovation.

- Providing the follow-up structure so essential in skill acquisition.

How peer coaching is practiced:

- Both the rationale for and the purpose of the skill to be acquired are studied.
- New skills are both modeled for and practiced by the person receiving coaching.
- Observation and accurate, specific and non-evaluative feedback about the new skill are provided.
- Coaching proceeds in a cycle, a process that enables the person being coached to apply learning in a particular context over time.
- Coaching takes on the nature of collaborative problem solving.

Further Reading

Showers, B., Joyce, B. (1996, March). *The Evolution of Peer Coaching*. *Educational Leadership*, 53, 17-20. Arlington, VA: ASCD. Online: www.ascd.org.

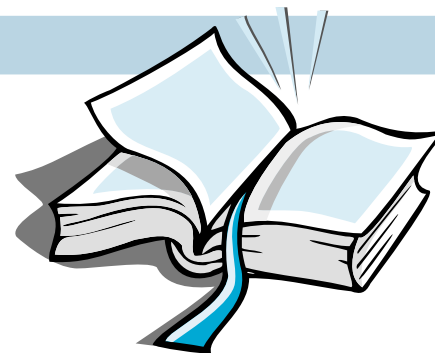


Photo Copyright © UFT/TC

Peer coaching is:

- An ongoing, cyclical process of observation, collaboration and conferencing that includes shared planning of goals and materials.
- Voluntary, reflective practice to implement instructional change.
- Supportive.

In peer coaching feedback is non-judgmental and supportive, its purpose to help partners think through specific skill practice. More than observation and conferencing, peer coaching is the collaborative process of learning from



Professional Book Talks

Professional book talks are opportunities for educators to engage in professional discourse around a specific teaching and learning topic. Individuals are committed to reading and discussing a selected book and are guided by the question "How will this book influence professional practice at the classroom and school levels?"

Professional book talks are important because:

- They initiate examination of and discussion on a professional topic selected by peers.

- They encourage a school-wide community dialogue on diverse educational issues impacting student achievement.
- They maintain staff interest in contemporary issues, topics, programs and educational theories.
- They offer the opportunity for staff to contribute constructively to school-identified areas of interest.
- They contribute to an environment for staff members that is supportive of engaging in job-embedded practices for personal and professional growth.

Professional book talks are useful when:

- A group of educators wish to explore a topic of common interest.
- There is a need for discussion and examination of a school-wide issue leading to changing a practice or implementing a new instructional focus.

- There is a need to bring staff together for examination and study of a topic from different perspectives.

The way the professional book talk process works includes:

- Identification of the topic and reviewing and selecting a book for study.
- Engaging in formal and informal conversations about the book's specifics.
- Participants, working as partners or in small groups, present information from particular perspectives.
- Study that results in recommendations that will impact student achievement.

Further Reading

Donohue, Z., Van Tassel, M., Patterson, L. (1996). *Research in the Classroom: Talk, Texts, and Inquiry*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Analysis of Classroom Videotape and Audiotape

What is it?

Videotapes and audiotapes of classroom practices can extend the dimensions available for educators to view, note and analyze their practice or practices in a classroom over time and space. This can inform them about professional development practice in ways that that can positively impact student achievement.

It is important because:

- Educators can view, hear and then reflect on their own instruction and teaching practices, clarifying an area or areas of strength and indicating possibilities for a change in instruction.
- Videotapes and audiotapes can provide a baseline against which change can be measured.

It is useful:

- To enable educators to focus intently on one area or concern.
- To enable educators to see how they teach to, interact with and respond to students' behavior and learning.
- To record newly acquired instructional strategies for the purpose of analyzing what works or what needs to be adapted to support student achievement.

How is it used?

- Independently, with a colleague or with a staff developer.
- Repeatedly over time to observe progress in mastering implementation of a strategy.

- To capture demonstrations of exemplary teaching for professional development purposes.

Further Reading

Theme Issue. (1997, November). *Educational Leadership*, 55, (3). Arlington, VA: ASCD. Online: www.ascd.org.

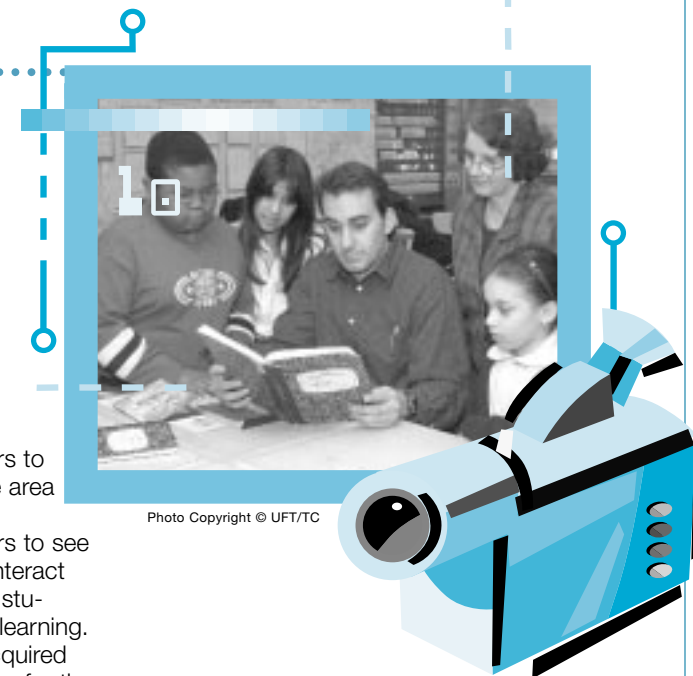


Photo Copyright © UFT/TC

TEACHER CENTER CONFERENCES

For K-12 Educators

OCTOBER 6, 2002 - JANUARY 12, 2003

- **SEMINAR IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: Accentuating the Positive: Reframing Classroom Behavior**
Sunday, October 6, 2002. (Register by October 1.)
- **Research Update: Best Practices in Reading**
Saturday, October 26, 2002. (Register by October 12.)
- **Super Science Saturday**
Hall of Science in Flushing Meadows in Corona Park, NY.
Saturday, November 16, 2002. (Register by November 8.)
- **How Big is B-I-G? (Mathematics)**
Saturday, December 14, 2002. (Register by December 6.)
- **Strategies that Work: Engaging English Language Learners for Success**
Sunday, January 12, 2003. (Register by January 3.)

All conferences, except for Super Science Saturday, take place at the United Federation of Teachers, 260 Park Avenue South, 2nd floor, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Continental breakfast is served. Participants receive classroom resource ideas and new teacher professional development hours for all conferences.

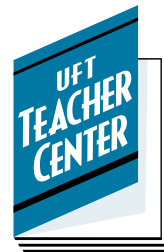
To register, obtain forms at your Teacher Center or online at www.ufttc.org.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED...

New Teacher Professional Development Hours

Teachers entering the New York City public school system for the first time will need to complete a number of professional development hours during their first year of teaching. This number of hours will vary, depending on such factors as previous experience and length of service in other systems. To determine *exactly* how many hours *you* will need, call the Office of New Teacher and Paraprofessional Staff Development, New York City Department of Education, at (718) 935-4463. Be prepared to give your name, file number and social security number.

Activities for which you can receive new teacher professional development hours include all UFT Teacher Center conferences. (See the conference ad in this issue.) The New York City Department of Education publishes (annually) a book which lists many events and courses. Always check out your copy of the UFT's *New York Teacher*, published every two weeks during the school year. If you are not receiving it, make sure to check in with the UFT Membership Department: (212) 777-7500.



Aminda Gentile
DIRECTOR

Inside
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A UFT Teacher Center
publication