

Focusing on Student, Professional, and System Learning: How HP/HP Schools Do It

From a Pedagogy of Poverty to Powerful Teaching and Learning

Too often, schools continue to use ineffective curricular approaches and instructional practices with students who live in poverty. Such practices have been described as “a pedagogy of poverty” (Haberman, 1991; Padrón, Waxman, & Rivera, 2002). This pedagogy is characterized as an overuse of teacher-controlled discussions and decision making, lecture, drill and decontextualized practice, and worksheets. Other researchers have documented differences in the intellectual quality of tasks required of students in high-poverty schools in contrast to schools where most of the students are middle- or upper-middle-class (Anyon, 1981; Finn, 1999). This contrast can be seen within a single school when students are tracked into courses such as Consumer Math or Opportunity Math, usually provided for students who are thought to be “unable” to learn algebra. Rather than a pedagogy of poverty, what students who live in poverty need is “powerful pedagogy”—powerful instruction resulting in powerful (or deep) learning. Such pedagogy is consistent with a large body of research related to how people learn (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2002).

Uncommon Sense

All students at Tekoa High School take Algebra I in 8th grade. To prepare them to be successful, the high school math teacher, who teaches all secondary math courses in this rural district, met with the elementary teachers to ask for their help. His goal was to have every 8th grader successfully complete algebra and be positioned to take the advanced mathematics courses needed to pursue higher education should they choose to do so when they graduate. Elementary teachers agreed to teach math for a 90-minute period each day, which has greatly enhanced students’ readiness for algebra and other advanced math courses. With the goal of all students successfully completing Algebra I in 8th grade, this school, enrolling fewer than 100 students, is able to offer a full continuum of advanced math courses.

Source: Excerpted from *Turning High-Poverty Schools into High-Performing Schools* (pp. 159–169, 174–175, 177–178), by W. H. Parrett and K. M. Budge, 2012, Alexandria, VA: ASCD. Copyright 2012 by ASCD.

Powerful pedagogy has been conceptualized in various ways—as relevant to the learner (Brandt, 1998); meaning centered (Knapp & Adelman, 1995); supporting the development of various kinds of understanding (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005); accelerated, strength based, and empowering (Levin, 1989); as well as encompassing higher-order thinking, deep knowledge, and connections beyond classrooms (Newman et al., 1996). When a powerful pedagogy is employed, students are actively engaged in meaning making and developing understanding not only of content but also of one’s self as a learner. Problem solving, reasoning, critical and creative thinking, and inquiry are integral. Lessons and units access and build upon students’ prior knowledge and focus on understanding. Students are empowered through choice and given a voice in decision making.

The staff of the Center for Educational Leadership at the University of Washington in Seattle has developed a 5D Framework focused on five dimensions of powerful teaching and learning: (1) purpose, (2) student engagement, (3) curriculum and pedagogy, (4) assessment for student learning, and (5) classroom environment and culture. This framework, supported by a comprehensive research base, includes the key instructional elements from which coherence in practice can be developed. Additional information regarding this instructional framework, as well as other resources linking powerful teaching and learning with leadership, can be accessed at www.k-12leadership.org.

Begin with a Common Understanding of Good Teaching

As a profession, education lacks a clear definition and a common language for describing good teaching. According to Robert Pianta (Wiltz, 2008), who has conducted studies of thousands of classrooms in hundreds of schools across the United States, our definition of good teaching “is all over the map” (p. 1). Charlotte Danielson (1996), author of *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, highlights this important problem of practice, saying, “Indeed, other professions—medicine, accounting, and architecture among many others—have well-established definitions of expertise and procedures... such procedures are the public’s guarantee that the members of a profession hold themselves and their colleagues to the highest standards” (p. 2). Although progress has been made, as witnessed through the work of Pianta, Danielson, and others, the field of education continues to be plagued by the lack of an “established definition of expertise.” Having spent decades studying teachers in high-poverty, diverse urban

schools, Martin Haberman (1991) who, as noted earlier, coined the term “pedagogy of poverty,” describes “good teaching” as a “core set of teacher acts” (p. 293) that tend to be more evident in what students are doing than in what the teacher is doing. He suggests good teaching is going on when students are

- Working on problems and issues they care about and in experiences that help them make sense of their world and their place in it;
- Focusing on big ideas rather than the pursuit of isolated facts;
- Planning what they will learn;
- Wrestling with ideals such as fairness, equity, and justice;
- Learning from real-life experiences;
- Thinking creatively, questioning common notions, and connecting ideas to prior learning or new problems;
- Revising, polishing, or perfecting their work;
- Using technology to solve problems; and
- Reflecting on themselves, their beliefs, and their feelings. (Adapted from Haberman, 1991, pp. 293–294)

Even in schools employing a CSR model, where the notion of what constitutes good teaching is, at least partially, conscribed by the model itself, the time spent on topics, the focus of skill development, and the use of instructional practices vary greatly from classroom to classroom. Furthermore, such variation in instructional practice is often not linked to students’ needs, such as socioeconomic background or prior achievement (Correnti & Rowan, 2007).

This is an area in which HP/HP schools appear to stand in stark contrast to the norm. Teachers and administrators in HP/HP schools collectively make modifications to meet the needs of their students. Believing the work is never done, these schools endeavor as a community of practice to develop a common understanding of what good teaching looks like; establish clear expectations for students and teachers; use research-based instructional strategies; and monitor what happens in the instructional core through coaching, classroom walk-throughs, and a variety of other informal means.

Knowing and Using Practices That Address Underachievement and Poverty

High-performing, high-poverty schools include strategies, curricular approaches, or instructional processes in their instructional framework to specifically address the learning needs of students who are underachieving and in poverty. Such strategies, approaches, and procedures not only focus on improving students' academic achievement but also speak to the needs of the "whole" child. Figure 10.3 provides a synthesis of practices, supported by empirical evidence, that appear to work because they mitigate the poverty-related factors that adversely affect learning (discussed in Chapter 9). Many of the studies included in this synthesis examine the effectiveness of the practice not only with students living in poverty but also with culturally and linguistically diverse populations of students.

Assessments and Assessment Literacy

Things are a lot better now. There's been a culture shift with teachers *and* students using data to make the most of our decisions. We have powerful standards and curriculum maps that really help guide our teaching. We are just beginning to work on developing common assessments.

—Teacher-leaders, HP/HP high school on the West Coast

Another important aspect of creating a coherent instructional framework is the use of high-quality assessments. A balanced and effective assessment system includes three levels of assessments: classroom, school, and district. Each assessment serves multiple purposes, including both formative and summative purposes (Stiggins & DuFour, 2009). It is critical that principals and teachers become assessment literate so that assessment can be used to gauge learning and make appropriate instructional and programmatic decisions.

Five elements of sound classroom assessments, the competencies necessary for teachers to develop and use high-quality classroom assessment to measure learning, and recommendations to support students in developing assessment literacy are described in Figure 10.4.

FIGURE 10.3

Practices That Address the Needs of Underachieving Students Living in Poverty

Effective Practice	Examples Used in Classrooms and Schools	30 Years of Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a bond between students and school. • Foster a sense of belonging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class meetings • Home rooms • Advisories • Placement in higher-level courses • Athletics/clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smerdon (2002) • Lareau (1987) • Murray & Malmgren (2005) • Kovalik & Olsen (1998)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach, model, and provide experiences that develop creative and critical thinking skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher-order questioning • Problem-based learning • Socratic seminars • Multidisciplinary units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Langer (2001) • Johannessen (2004) • Ornelles (2007) • Lalas (2007) • Eisenman & Payne (1997) • Pogrow (2005) • Schlichter, Hobbs, & Crump (1988)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to build short-term working memory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multisensory instruction • Memory aids (e.g., mnemonic devices) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jensen (1998) • Jensen (2009) • Fogarty (2009)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide specific opportunities for the development of social skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative learning • Peer tutoring • Mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Langer (2001) • Lalas (2007)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access and build on prior knowledge to expand knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming • Semantic mapping • Advance organizers • Tuning and reconstruction • Autobiographical activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lareau (1987) • Johannessen (2004) • Rockwell (2007) • Kovalik & Olsen (1998)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediate and scaffold learning experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reciprocal teaching • “Think-alouds” • Visual organizers/models • Guided practice • Shelter instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johannessen (2004) • Palinscar & Brown (1985) • Echevarria, Vogt, & Short (2004)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalize based upon diverse learning needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning styles • Multiple intelligences • Differentiated instruction • Tiered structures for learning (Response to Intervention) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honigsfeld & Dunn (2009) • Tomlinson and others (2003) • Campbell & Campbell (1999)

Effective Practice	Examples Used in Classrooms and Schools	30 Years of Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accelerate and enrich rather than remediate learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talent development College-prep courses for all Advanced placement/honors for all Arts education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McCormick & Williams (1974) Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga (1999)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively engage students in learning experiences for authentic, meaningful purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project-based learning Place-based learning Authentic assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smith & Sobel (2010) Williams (2003)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect physical activity, exercise, and motor development to learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical education focused on life-long sports and fitness Schoolwide fitness goals and progress monitoring Sensory motor labs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sibley & Etnier (2003) Pellegrini & Bohn (2005) Newman (2005) Tremblay, Vitaro, & Brendgen (2000) Palmer, Giese, & Deboer (2008)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide learning experiences that help students envision their futures and foster hope. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service learning Community-based internships Mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furco & Root (2010)

FIGURE 10.4

Sound Classroom Assessment Practice

<p>1. Clear purposes</p> <p>Assessment processes and results serve clear and appropriate purposes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Teachers understand who uses classroom assessment information and know their information needs. b. Teachers understand the relationship between assessment and student motivation and craft assessment experiences to maximize motivation. c. Teachers use classroom assessment processes and results formatively (assessment for learning). d. Teachers use classroom assessment results summatively (assessment of learning) to inform someone beyond the classroom about students' achievement at a particular point in time. e. Teachers have a comprehensive plan over time for integrating assessment <i>for</i> and <i>of</i> learning in the classroom.
<p>2. Clear targets</p> <p>Assessments reflect clear and valued student learning targets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Teachers have clear learning targets for students; they know how to turn broad statements of content standards into classroom-level learning targets. b. Teachers understand the various types of learning targets they hold for students. c. Teachers select learning targets focused on the most important things students need to know and be able to do. d. Teachers have a comprehensive plan over time for assessing learning targets.

3. Sound design Learning targets are translated into assessments that yield accurate results.	a. Teachers understand the various assessment methods. b. Teachers choose assessment methods that match intended learning targets. c. Teachers design assessments that serve intended purposes. d. Teachers sample learning appropriately in their assessments. e. Teachers write assessment questions of all types well. f. Teachers avoid sources of mismeasurement that bias results.
4. Effective communication Assessment results are managed well and communicated effectively.	a. Teachers record assessment information accurately, keep it confidential, and appropriately combine and summarize it for reporting (including grades). Such summary accurately reflects current level of student learning. b. Teachers select the best reporting option (grades, narratives, portfolios, conferences) for each context (learning targets and users). c. Teachers interpret and use standardized test results correctly. d. Teachers effectively communicate assessment results to students. e. Teachers effectively communicate assessment results to a variety of audiences outside the classroom, including parents, colleagues, and other stakeholders.
5. Student involvement Students are involved in their own assessment.	a. Teachers make learning targets clear to students. b. Teachers involve students in assessing, tracking, and setting goals for their own learning. c. Teachers involve students in communicating about their own learning.

Source: From *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Doing It Right—Using It Well* by R. Stiggins, J. Arter, J. Chappuis, & S. Chappuis, 2004, Portland, OR: Pearson Assessment Training Institute, 2010. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 10.5 lists 10 competencies leaders need to develop to improve the quality of assessment practices schoolwide. Although these competencies were intended to describe “a well-qualified principal,” in HP/HP schools these competencies are present in teacher-leaders as well.

Early in Lapwai Elementary School’s improvement journey, leaders in the district used professional learning time to focus on developing assessment literacy and common, classroom-based assessments. In retrospect they viewed this step as vital to creating coherence in the instructional program and significantly improving student achievement. At Port Chester, teachers and leaders have developed formative and summative common assessments aligned to the content of New York State’s redesigned standardized test. Data from these assessments inform decisions related to instruction and program design.

FIGURE 10.5

Ten Assessment Competencies for School Leaders

1. The leader understands the attributes of a sound and balanced assessment system, and the conditions required to achieve balance in local systems.
2. The leader understands the necessity of clear academic achievement standards, aligned classroom-level achievement targets, and their relationship to the development of accurate assessments.
3. The leader understands the standards of quality for student assessments, helps teachers learn to assess accurately, and ensures that these standards are met in all school/district assessments.
4. The leader knows assessment *for* learning practices and works with staff to integrate them into classroom instruction.
5. The leader creates the conditions necessary for the appropriate use and reporting of student achievement information, and can communicate effectively with all member of the school community about student assessment results, including report card grades, and their relationship to improving curriculum and instruction.
6. The leader understands the issues related to the unethical and inappropriate use of student assessment and protects students and staff from such misuse.
7. The leader can plan, present, and/or secure professional development activities that contribute to the use of sound assessment practices.
8. The leader knows and can evaluate the teacher's classroom assessment competencies, and helps teachers learn to assess accurately and use the results to benefit student learning.
9. The leader analyzes student assessment information accurately, uses the information to improve curriculum and instruction, and assists teachers in doing the same.
10. The leader develops and implements sound assessment and assessment-related policies.

Source: From *Assessment Balance and Quality: An Action Guide for School Leaders* (p. 98), by S. Chappuis, C. Commodore, & R. J. Stiggins, 2009, Portland, OR: Educational Testing Service. Copyright 2009 by ETS. Reprinted with permission.

In many HP/HP schools, students actively participate in using assessment to support their learning. Teachers set clear learning targets and engage their students in activities that help them acquire assessment literacy. These include selecting individual learning benchmarks, compiling portfolios, making public presentations of work, completing reflective revisions, and participating in student-led conferences. In these schools, the initiation of student-led conferences not only improved students' understanding of their own learning but also significantly improved parental attendance rates at school conferences.

Rick Stiggins (2007) argues that our current obsession with standardized testing has led to a neglect of classroom assessment. He and others have pointed to the use of classroom assessment as vital to the improvement of teaching and learning, particularly the development and use

of common assessments within a professional learning community structure (DuFour & Marzano, 2009; Stiggins & DuFour, 2009). Nearly all the HP/HP schools we studied were engaged in the development and use of common assessments. This high-leverage strategy provides a means for teachers to use their collective wisdom and expertise to (1) address the learning needs of individual students, (2) refine instructional practices, (3) increase the clarity of the learning targets they are attempting to reach, (4) enhance the quality of their assessments, and (5) support the development of a common vision of powerful teaching and learning (Stiggins & DuFour, 2009). High-performing, high-poverty schools connect curriculum and instruction to assessment. The development and use of common assessments in turn contribute to their success with under-achieving students.

THE DISTRICT'S "AD-VANTAGE POINT"

Ensuring a Balanced and Effective Assessment System

"To be truly productive, a local district's assessment system must provide different kinds of information to various decision makers in different forms and at different times" (Stiggins & DuFour, 2009, p. 641).

Creating a comprehensive assessment system is a district-level responsibility. At a minimum, district-level leaders can play an important role in

supporting high-quality assessments in schools and classrooms by ensuring that components of the leadership infrastructure described in Chapter 6 are in place. This includes access to a comprehensive, user-friendly database and a school calendar that supports time for professional learning.

The Importance of the Teacher

You have to understand when you commit to a job like this, in an area like this where everybody's poor, that you're committing to something that's way different than working in middle- or upper-income neighborhood schools. By necessity, you're a bigger part of the children's lives here. I think the people at this school understand that. The kids know we care about them. If they didn't believe that we cared for them, then I don't think they would do as well as they do.

—Teacher, HP/HP school in the West

Leaders in HP/HP schools know that aligning curriculum, selecting research-based instructional practices, and using high-quality classroom assessments are only part of the picture. The school-related factor that makes the most difference in the lives of students who live in poverty (or all students, for that matter) is the quality of teaching that occurs in the classroom. Moreover, leaders and successful teachers know high-quality teaching includes attributes well beyond technical knowledge and skills. Sara Fry and Kim DeWit (2010) conducted a study of teachers who themselves struggled in school and asked them to identify, based on their experiences in K–12 schooling, what they believed to be the characteristics of effective teachers. Four characteristics emerged. Effective teachers (1) have caring relationships with students, (2) set high standards and help students reach them, (3) connect the curriculum to students' lives, and (4) participate in ongoing professional development. Fry and Dewit state, "These qualities reflect the belief that all children can learn. This disposition comes naturally to the teachers we interviewed because they know exactly what it is like to be the student who can—and did—learn despite facing challenges" (p. 71).

Haberman (1995) identified 15 functions of what he calls "Star Teachers of Children in Poverty." The functions not only encompass characteristics and behaviors demonstrated by effective teachers, but also provide a glimpse into the theories of action that underpin their practice:

- Persistence
- Protecting learners and learning
- Putting ideas into practice
- Approaches to at-risk children
- Professional/personal orientation to students
- Care and feeding of the bureaucracy
- Fallibility
- Emotional and physical stamina
- Organizational ability
- Effort, not ability
- Teaching, not sorting
- Convincing students "I need you here"
- You and me against the material

- Gentle teaching in a violent society
- When teachers face themselves [examine their mental maps]

We explained earlier that a theory of action is both the action chosen and the rationale for action—the *what* and the *why*. These theories are underpinned by mental maps, or mind-sets. Understanding the theories of action and the underlying mind-sets that guide the practice of teachers who are successful with students who live in poverty is equally as important as understanding what teaching techniques they use. In fact, Haberman (1995) warns it is not possible to create “easy steps” for other teachers to follow because the manner in which effective teachers “think about their work cannot be separated from their observable behavior.” To do what these successful teachers do requires that others understand the theories that guide their practice “because it is this foundation that guides the countless decisions they make daily” (p. 21).

We consistently found attributes in the teacher-leaders and principals we interviewed that were similar to Haberman’s 15 functions. These leaders incorporate into their professional practice a particular ideology related to working with students who live in poverty that is foundational to all that they do. They care about the lives of their students and view them as equally worthy of powerful instruction as their more affluent and, at times, higher-achieving peers.

School Culture Alert

These educators know that their students who live in poverty are capable of learning to high standards; thus they hold high expectations for them, insist they will learn, and provide the support they need to succeed. What was most striking among those with whom we talked was an unwavering professional accountability for learning. Teachers in HP/HP schools are confident in their ability to teach every child and do not make excuses for or blame students and families for their students’ performance.

Reflecting on the theories of action underpinning professional practice, fostering a shared vision for what is possible, and developing a common understanding of good teaching are critical for instructional coherence; nevertheless, it can be an overwhelming task for leaders to facilitate. Based on the research on HP/HP schools; our interactions with many educators who work with

children and adolescents who live in poverty; and our interviews with school leaders, teachers, and staff in the schools we visited, we have created the mnemonic device shown in Figure 10.6 to help you absorb the information presented thus far in this chapter and to serve as a conversation starter among staff.

FIGURE 10.6

Successful Teachers: A Mnemonic Device

Teachers Who Succeed with Students Living in Poverty		
T	Teach in a thinking way.	Create a thinking-focused, meaning-making classroom in which students develop thinking skills through both explicit instruction and embedded use of problem-centered, inquiry-based learning.
E	Engage students and emphasize effort.	Engage students in learning for authentic, real-life purposes that build understanding of themselves and their world. Emphasize the importance of effort as it relates to targeted outcomes and actual results. Expect persistence, encourage risk taking, and help students view mistakes as opportunities for growth.
A	Accurately assess students and advocate for them.	Accurately assess students' academic, social, emotional, and physical needs. Advocate for students to ensure the school is providing equitable services—and for students' families when needed.
C	Create community.	Create a community in the classroom that provides a learning climate conducive to cooperation, choice, and risk taking.
H	Hold high expectations and are bearers of hope.	Hold high expectations for students, insist they are capable of powerful learning, and provide them the support necessary. Hold in their minds the reality of the students' life circumstances, while steadfastly encouraging students and providing them with challenging learning experiences in the classroom, as well as in the community, that open doors to multiple possible future opportunities.
E	Educate the whole child.	Educate the whole child based on the comprehensive needs that characterize every student. Ensure that music, drama, art, and health/fitness are a part of schooling.
R	Regard relationships as paramount to learning.	Regard relationships of mutual respect as paramount to high-quality teaching and have confidence that through such relationships students will learn.

Targeted Interventions

In her book *White Teachers/Diverse Classrooms*, Julie Landsman says the following:

We cannot follow the statement “All children can learn” with conditionals. No matter where we teach, we will rarely have a classroom in which every student is motivated, has a full stomach, lives in a safe neighborhood, and has a relationship with both of his or her parents. We must teach the students we have before us, understanding the complexities of their lives and helping each student deal with these complexities. Teachers must be bearers of hope in places where there are depression and despair. (Landsman & Lewis, 2006, p. 26)

Even with the development of a comprehensive instructional framework that leads to improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, underachieving students who live in poverty will need additional support. Catching up often means more time and specific strategies aimed at the unique needs of individual students. Too often, for too many students in poverty, the need for additional support has resulted in referral and placement in special education programs (Howard, Dresser, & Dunklee, 2009). With the advent of Response to Intervention (RTI), many schools are becoming more systematic about the use of interventions. Response to Intervention represents an approach used by many schools to structure the instructional day in such a way that students are systematically provided additional time and support. Based on comprehensive assessments, RTI models provide additional support for students at the Tier 2 level, and for those with exceptional needs, Tier 3 interventions. Our use of the term *targeted intervention* is in some instances synonymous with the RTI Tier 2 support, and in other cases, targeted interventions are offered as extended learning opportunities outside the school day or year.

High-performing, high-poverty schools have long been systematically providing targeted support for students within and outside the traditional school day, week, or year. All HP/HP schools constantly review data to identify students who need before-, during-, and after-school small-group and individual tutoring; self-paced interventions using technology; one-on-one academic advising and coaching; homework support; or additional assessment time.

All the schools we studied provide interventions within the school day. Dayton's Bluff offers preschool and provides full-day kindergarten; Taft Elementary offers reduced-class-size kindergarten, supported in part through Title I funding; and Lapwai Elementary works in partnership with the Nez Perce tribe to offer preschool.

Molalla High School provides a Learning Strategies Lab, in addition to a regular English course, for students who are English language learners. Molalla teachers work collaboratively to support students enrolled in these labs. When students no longer need to attend, they are able to select another elective immediately. This collaboration often results in a midterm change of schedules, which proves well worth the effort required because it provides an effective incentive for students to work hard to catch up.

All the HP/HP schools we visited also provided interventions outside the school day, week, or year. For example, Port Chester Middle School offers after-school tutoring in language arts and math for students who have not reached state standards.

Uncommon Sense

Osmond A. Church operates both an after-school program and a Saturday Academy. Students who did not make at least one year's growth in the previous school year are targeted for participation in the after-school program. Additionally, students needing enrichment are encouraged to attend the Saturday Academy, which operates from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Approximately 500 students attend the Saturday Academy, which also provides a variety of support courses for the 100 to 300 parents who regularly participate. According to Principal Valarie Lewis of Osmond A. Church, because about 75 percent of the enrolled kindergarten students had no preschool experience, the Core Knowledge preschool program is also offered on Saturdays. As Lewis explains, "You just can't get it done in 6 hours and 20 minutes per day—no way."

Not all interventions are created equal. If an intervention is to be effective, the manner in which it is structured and implemented must be of concern to leaders. Figure 10.7 includes descriptions of four common interventions and tips for design and implementation.

FIGURE 10.7

Tips for Design and Implementation of Four Common Interventions

Before- or After-School Programs

- Document need for before- or after-school program.
- Assess financial capabilities.
- Determine scope of intended program.
- Hire a program director to oversee and coordinate.
- Involve parents, businesspeople, and other community members.
- Provide ongoing evaluation.
- Focus on strengthening academic skills: direct instruction, learning strategies and skills, peer/cross-age tutoring, homework assistance.
- Plan group time focused on building healthy relationships and on opportunities to solve problems and increase self-esteem.
- Provide opportunities to widen students' horizons—recreational and cultural activities, technology-related activities, involvement in community-based youth organizations.
- Establish parent resource centers—parents participate or volunteer in children's activities, offer parenting knowledge/skill development.
- Provide transportation.
- Spend time on project-based, experiential and hands-on learning, challenging students to think.

Related research: Kraft (2001); Schwendiman & Fager (1999)

Tutoring

- Find partner teachers, determine content.
- Determine methodology.
- Determine program length.
- Training and feedback for tutors.
- Prepare the tutees.
- Match tutors and tutees.
- Inform parents.
- Monitor and assess the program.
- Structure lesson plans for tutors to follow.
- Provide frequent tutoring sessions (2–3 per week).
- Identify a framework in order to ensure quality control and participant autonomy.
- Incorporate district administrators, principals, and teachers into the program.
- Provide an avenue to network with other programs.

Related research: Bond (2002); McClure & Vaughn (1997)

Early Childhood/Readiness Programs

- Provide prekindergarten programs, 12 weeks in duration, housed in the school.
- Supply services two or three days per week.
- Staff with teachers with kindergarten experience.

Early Childhood/Readiness Programs (*continued*)

- Base curriculum on literacy and numeracy.
- Include programs for parents.
- Support 10–15 child-parent dyads (20–30 total).
- Encourage parents to drop in and participate in circle time.
- Extend learning by having teachers spend time in individual or small-group interactions.
- Provide outreach to hard-to-reach families.

Related research: Pelletier & Corter (2005)

Summer School

- Identify potential summer school students early in the year.
- Separate behavior from academics.
- Develop a rubric to determine which students need summer school.
- Make sure class sizes are small and focus on students who have shown a higher level of failure.
- Create a handbook for the summer to include policies and procedures for summer classes.
- Set up courses to fit the compressed schedule.
- Deal with complex topics early in the course.
- Allow students to complete assignments more readily; break larger assignments into frequent short assignments.
- Maintain expectations and standards.
- Assign only one course per teacher.
- Make sure administrators and teachers are available to parents and students beyond class time.
- Ensure teachers aren't teaching the course for the first time in a compressed format.

Related research: Kops (2010); Rischer (2009)

Research-Based Models for Professional Learning

Leaders in HP/HP schools hold a view similar to this one expressed by a superintendent in a Northwest school district: "There is a bright red thread running from every student-learning problem to a problem of practice for teachers, and finally to a problem of practice for leaders." Professional learning and student learning are two sides of the same coin—they cannot be separated. Many HP/HP schools, including those we studied, are either engaged in the process of developing common assessments or have begun using them within the context of a community of practice. During this work, as students' needs are identified, so too are the learning needs of the adults in the school.

Most of the HP/HP schools were also supporting professional learning through various types of walk-through processes. At Osmond A. Church, principals and teachers are engaged in conducting Instructional Rounds. Principal Lewis uses a modified version of the model described in

Instructional Rounds in Education: A Networking Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009) to meet the needs of the teachers in the school.

Uncommon Sense

At Taft Elementary, teachers are vertically paired (e.g., a 1st grade teacher with a 2nd grade teacher) as “thinking partners.” These two-person teams observe instruction in their school, as well as engage in dialogue and reflection about instructional practice. Each set of thinking partners conducts a 30-minute classroom observation, takes a break to dialogue with each other, and conducts another 30-minute observation. The intervening dialogue is structured using a 3-2-1 model: teachers are asked to list three observed components of the district’s instructional framework, two ideas they will take back to their classroom, and one question they are wondering about. After the final classroom observation, teachers engage in reflective journaling.

In addition to the approaches described here, several other structures and processes are effective in supporting professional learning and promoting reflective practices. These include action research, lesson study, case-based learning, networks, journaling, portfolio development, and tuning protocols.

High-performing, high-poverty schools constantly endeavor to enhance professional capacity to better meet the needs of their students. The adults in these schools take their own learning as seriously as their students’ learning, understanding they are truly two sides of the same coin. As one teacher explained, “When I learn to do something better, it helps a lot of my kids. We all know this and continually work to find the time it takes.”

Action Advice

- Create coherence in the instructional program. Is your curriculum aligned to state and district standards? Have you articulated the curriculum across subjects and grade levels? Have you identified benchmark standards?
- Employ a powerful pedagogy. Are students primarily engaged in meaning making, developing various kinds of understanding, problem solving, reasoning, inquiry, and critical/creative thinking?

- Develop a shared vision of what good teaching looks like. Can all teachers describe a community-held understanding of good teaching? Can they list a core set of things to look for related to what teachers do and what students do when good teaching is happening?
- Use research-based teaching strategies that specifically address the needs of students living in poverty. Do teachers know which instructional strategies have a solid research base? Do teachers have the required expertise to employ research-based strategies?
- Develop assessment literacy. Do teachers understand and employ sound assessment practices? Do principals have the competencies necessary to improve assessment practices schoolwide?
- Involve students in assessing their learning. Are students engaged in activities that help them assess and monitor their own learning?
- Develop and use common formative and summative assessments. Have benchmark standards been identified? Have teachers been provided opportunities to collaborate to both develop assessments and use the information gained to inform instruction?
- Ensure teachers develop and demonstrate the attributes and functions that lead to success with students living in poverty. Do teachers know which teacher attributes and functions lead to success? Do teachers possess these attributes and fulfill such functions?
- Provide targeted interventions when needed. Does your school use data to identify students who need additional support? Has time been scheduled during, before, or after the school day to provide extra help for students?
- Develop reading proficiency in all students. How many students are not proficient in reading by 4th grade? Is reading taught after the elementary years when needed?
- Link professional learning to student learning and employ research-based models. Do students' learning needs drive the content for professional development? Do professional development models support the development of communities of practice and prompt reflection and inquiry?
- Engage in continuous data-based inquiry. Is inquiry embedded in the way the school does business? Are people curious, eager to innovate, and encouraged to take risks?