



CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH-QUALITY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Research demonstrates a positive link between high-quality professional learning (HQPL), high-quality instructional resources (HQIRs), teaching practices and student outcomes. Effective professional learning not only has the potential to improve both classroom instruction and student outcomes, but also it can be effective in educator recruitment and retainment.

When designing and/or selecting HQPL at the local level, ensure alignment with the characteristics below:

Content-focused and standards-aligned: Deepens educators' understanding of what to teach and how to teach it within the context of the Kentucky Academic Standards, local curriculum and high-quality instructional resources.

Equity-focused: Supports educators in effectively engaging all students in rigorous, grade-level appropriate tasks, including students with acceleration needs, English learners, and students with exceptional needs.

Considerate of adult learners: Incorporates active learning. Addresses expressed and unexpressed expectations and motivations while attending to mindsets and emotional states, is asset-based, builds on participants' prior knowledge and experience and invites them to connect learning to meaningful goals and immediately useful actions.

Symmetrical to a vibrant student experience: Is inquiry-based, interactive and collaborative. Involves expert models and practice as educators participate in lessons as learners, plan, internalize, rehearse, observe and reflect with colleagues who teach in the same content area and use the same curriculum.

Uses models of effective practice: Is based on the local curriculum and provides modeling of high-quality instruction that offers educators a clear vision of what evidence-based practices look like. Models may include, but are not limited to, lesson plans, unit plans, sample student work, observations of peer teachers, and video or written cases of teaching.

Provides coaching and expert support: Offers expertise about curriculum, adopted high-quality instructional resources and evidence-based practices, focused directly on educators' and students' individual needs.

Offers feedback and reflection: Provides job-embedded time for educators to intentionally think about, receive input on and to refine practice.

Is sustained and continuous: Provides educators with adequate time to learn, rehearse, implement and reflect upon new strategies that facilitate refinements in practice over time.

Darling-Hammond, L. Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). Effective professional development. Research brief. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Hill, H., & Papay, J. (2022). Building better PL: How to strengthen teacher learning. Research Partner for Professional Learning. Accessed at <https://annenberg.brown.edu/sites/default/files/rppl-building-better-pl.pdf>.

