

Foreword

The power of high quality professional learning is not to be underestimated. It provides the opportunity to collaborate and reflect on teaching practice, the curriculum, and student performance. I suspect that if you picked up this book, you agree with this premise.

What becomes tricky is designing and delivering professional learning in a way that moves student learning and teacher practice forward. This task often falls on school and district leaders who are juggling many responsibilities. How many of us have sat at our desks and wondered, “What are we going to do in our [fill in the blank] meeting next week?” Or, “How am I going to make the meeting relevant, engaging, and focused on student learning so that teachers don’t feel like it was a waste of time?” The pressure is real.

In *Professional Learning Redefined*, Sawyer and Stuckey present a conceptual design for professional learning that is rooted in the research. This includes making the case that effective professional learning impacts student and teacher outcomes. They argue that duration and evaluation of impact are essential, as is building content knowledge and coherence for teachers. Together, these elements create a vision for professional learning that is student-centered and outcomes-based.

Having spent decades as a practitioner, author, and coach, I have learned the importance of putting student learning front and center. This led me to develop a model for instructional coaching known as Student-Centered Coaching—an approach that operates under the same conceptual framework as what is offered here. For example, we provide duration through the use of coaching cycles. We ensure student outcomes through goal setting that is standards-based. We monitor and evaluate student learning through the development of learning targets. And we develop instructional and content knowledge through co-planning and co-teaching sessions. These practices are echoed in what Sawyer and Stuckey offer as qualities of effective professional learning.

I’ve often struggled to find a resource that presents the research for adult learning in a way that is practical and actionable. I’d search for protocols online, read about adult learning in a book, and find facilitation strategies someplace else.

How inefficient is that? *Professional Learning Redefined* puts everything one needs to engage adult learners in one place. It explores not only the research on effective professional learning but also the skills, strategies, and tools that are required to make it happen. This includes a look at theories of adult learning, the key components of high quality professional learning, collaborative structures, protocols, and characteristics for effective facilitation. When sitting down to plan professional learning, this will now be my “go-to” resource. It is organized, accessible, and rich with tools that any reader can use tomorrow. Some of my favorite are the protocols and planning documents.

We must constantly ask ourselves, “Are the students at the center of this conversation?” If not, then our professional learning structures are failing to serve us.

We all want teachers to feel inspired and supported, yet executing on this demands a vast amount of knowledge, skills, and strategies. Reading this book provides just that.

—**Diane Sweeney**

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