

MARCH 2016

LOOKING OUTSIDE EDUCATION

What School Leaders Can Learn About Professional Learning From Other Industries



Center on
**GREAT TEACHERS
& LEADERS**

at American Institutes for Research ■

learningforward 

THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors gratefully acknowledge the helpful feedback and thoughts of the following individuals in the development of this brief: Jane Coggshall, Jenni Fipaza, Angela Minnici, Laura Steighner, and Liwen Liu of AIR; and Stephanie Hirsch and Tracy Crow of Learning Forward.

Looking Outside Education

What School Leaders Can Learn About Professional Learning From Other Industries

Lauren K. B. Matlach
Consultant
Center for Great Teachers and Leaders

Janice Poda
Learning Forward

Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Culture First: Organizational Mindset and Approach
- 6 Elevating Practice Using Technology
- 10 The Importance of Relevance: Professional Learning That Matches One's Role and Context
- 11 Using Professional Learning and Growth Opportunities to Target and Support a Diverse Workforce
- 16 Conclusion
- 16 References

Introduction

Ongoing, job-embedded professional learning is a critical piece of talent management frameworks in all professions. Organizations in every industry invest in the ongoing development of their employees. Recent estimates suggest the United States annually spends more than \$400 billion on formal and informal training by employers (Carnevale & Smith, 2013).

The education field has long recognized the importance of ongoing professional learning and growth opportunities, and recent policy priorities have underscored the importance of ongoing learning. Concerns about teacher shortages, a lack of diversity in the workforce, and inequitable student access to excellent educators have spurred increased focus on professional learning and growth opportunities. For example, a preliminary analysis by the U.S. Department of Education of 49 submitted state equity plans found the most common identified strategy for eliminating equity gaps was improving or expanding professional learning (U.S. Department of Education Office of State Support, 2015).

Given the important roles of professional learning and growth opportunities, continuing to increase our understanding of what makes professional learning high quality is critical. Our understanding of innovative professional learning practices is ever-evolving. In this brief, we look to lessons learned from other professions. This brief shares eight approaches to professional learning and growth from other industries that school and district leaders can leverage, and identifies which ones state leaders can support and encourage. Questions follow each section to help readers reflect on how the lessons learned might inform work in readers' local contexts.

Lessons Learned Legend

As a shortcut to help readers quickly identify which professions are under discussion, we have included icons throughout the brief for the following professions:

From Psychology 	From Business 	From Medical Fields 	From Law Enforcement 	From Military 
---	---	---	---	---

Culture First: Organizational Mindset and Approach

Effective professional learning often begins with a strong organizational culture. In education, research suggests that teachers in supportive professional environments improve their effectiveness more than teachers in less supportive environments (Kraft & Papay, 2014). Studies highlight that principal leadership and peer collaboration, school culture, and relationships with colleagues are associated with increased student achievement (Ladd, 2009; Jackson & Bruegmann, 2009; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012). Similar lessons learned from psychology and business underscore the importance of organizational culture and offer examples of how organizations can establish a strong culture oriented toward ongoing development.



Growth Mindset

From the classroom to the boardroom, the idea of a “growth mindset” is becoming more commonly used. A growth mindset is the belief that intelligence is developed over time through hard work, compared to a fixed mindset, which is the belief that intelligence is static. However, these two mindsets are not dichotomous; Dweck (2015) notes that “we’re all a mixture of fixed and growth mindsets [and] we will probably always be.” Individuals and organizations can adopt more of a growth mindset through thoughts and actions. Leaders can take actions to establish a growth mindset culture and help employees identify when reactions to adversity may reflect a fixed-mindset reaction, such as feelings of anxiety, defeat, envy, or incompetence (Dweck, 2015).

A growth mindset can help shape an organization’s management practices, talent management approach, and focus on relationship building (Hagel & Brown, 2010). Having an organizational culture focused on growth positively influences employee satisfaction, as well as perceptions of culture, levels of collaboration, innovation, and ethical behavior, according to a recent study of seven Fortune 1000 companies (Dweck, Murphy, Chatman, & Kray, 2014). The study found that supervisors in growth-mindset organizations were significantly more positive about their employees, and that employees in these organizations—compared with their counterparts in fixed-mindset organizations—were:

- 47 percent more likely to say that their colleagues were trustworthy
- 34 percent more likely to feel a strong sense of ownership and commitment to the company
- 65 percent more likely to say that the company supports risk taking
- 49 percent more likely to say that the company fosters innovation (Harvard Business Review, 2014)

Shifting the organizational culture often requires changes in talent management practice. Some key changes businesses have made include adopting behavioral interviewing techniques using mindset-focused questions, hiring for potential rather than experience, rewarding effort rather than output, and providing ongoing job-embedded coaching (Harvard Business Review, 2014).

Teacher Mindsets

In his doctoral dissertation, Greg Gero found that teachers with a growth mindset did the following:

- Engaged in more professional development than teachers with a fixed mindset
- Observed other teachers
- Asked other teachers to model lessons to see how the teacher approached and worked with students
- Asked for feedback on their teaching from a colleague or supervisor (Dweck, 2014/15)

How can leaders help teachers develop growth mindsets?

Recent case studies of districts in Massachusetts leading the implementation of high-quality professional development found that all four case-study sites worked to cultivate a growth mindset among educators. They did this through the following:

- Constantly communicating about and focusing on student learning to galvanize and sustain an orientation toward continuous improvement
- Collaboratively reviewing data to see the need for change, as well as its impact
- Discussing books, articles, or videos on the concept of mindset
- Leveraging the new model educator evaluation framework to encourage teacher engagement in professional learning
- Providing teachers with options for professional development that address their individual goals (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015)

For example, Easthampton High School (EHS) uses the “Inquiry Cycle” model as the basis for an action research approach. Educators work in small groups to examine and discuss student learning data and then generate solutions for challenges. This iterative process, and the results of it, help educators create a growth mindset. In addition, EHS staff also regularly engage in learning walks and discuss the findings of their walks to identify student and educator learning needs. The Melrose Public Schools district requires all new teachers to read Carol Dweck’s *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. During the year, educators use faculty meeting time to review student work and identify opportunities to enhance student learning through changes in teaching practice (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015).

Hiring for the growth mindset also can help establish a school culture focused on growth. In 2011, Ben Marcovitz described the Sci Academy’s hiring process which looks for teachers with growth mindsets. In the first screener interview, Marcovitz describes the culture of the school, where teachers continuously set progressively higher targets for themselves. At the end of the



interview, Marcovitz tells educators to call him if they are interested in working at Sci Academy; those who do move on to the second round of interviews. Interview questions at this stage focus on sharing examples of how they have improved over time and how they might react to a particularly bad day. During the third round of the hiring process, candidates teach two lessons with coaching in between so interviewers can look for growth in response to the feedback. Marcovitz cites multiple examples of educators whose first lessons were mediocre but had much-improved second lessons, then went on to be extremely successful educators at the school; had he not hired for the growth mindset and included two lessons in the hiring process, Marcovitz says he would not have hired them (Marcovitz, 2011)

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. How does the mission and vision of your state, district, or school reflect a growth mindset? In what ways could it improve?
2. How, if at all, do you look for growth mindsets during the recruitment and hiring processes?



Deliberately Developmental Organizations

Some businesses have worked to create a climate that promotes ongoing professional learning that encourages employees to use weaknesses as opportunities for professional and business growth. These companies, called deliberately developmental organizations (DDOs), provide structures and opportunities that promote owning mistakes, learning from them, and continually stretching employees. Bridgewater Associates, an American business management firm, has worked to create a culture where employees feel comfortable admitting mistakes. According to the company’s website:

Bridgewater’s unique results are a product of its unique culture. Truth and excellence are valued above all else. In order to be excellent we need to know what’s true, especially those things that we would rather not be true, so that we can decide how best to deal with them. We want logic and reason to be the basis for making decisions. It is through this striving to be excellent by being radically truthful and transparent that we build meaningful work and meaningful relationships (Bridgewater Associates, 2015).

For example, Bridgewater Associates asks employees to detail their contributions to mistakes in a companywide “issues log” and applauds employees for logging errors. The company also has a “pain button app” installed on all employee iPads that allows sharing of negative emotions at work. Meetings regularly include not only root-cause analyses and reflection but feedback on how to address underlying causes (Kegan, Lahey, Fleming, & Miller, 2014, p. 45).



Decurion, a corporation that owns and operates a chain of theaters, spins “being in over your head,” which is normally perceived as negative, in a new direction. At Decurion, being in over your head indicates that you are in the right job and able to continue to develop and grow; if you can perform all responsibilities at a high level, then you need to shift to a stretch assignment. The organization’s president, Christopher Forman (2014), acknowledges that adults continue to develop over time and notes that “Decurion does not push people to develop; instead, it [creates] conditions that pull people to greater levels of complexity and wholeness.” Decurion identifies its purpose as providing a place for people to flourish. Managers at Decurion review goals and employee performance on a weekly basis and use that data to determine staff assignments and responsibilities. Managers use competency boards, which record progress as employees develop new skills, to inform scheduling, peer mentoring, and learning expectations. Finally, Decurion works to provide opportunities for employees to connect day-to-day work with what is meaningful to them. For example, after learning about an employee’s desire to eventually work in set design, managers had the employee provide input into decorating the theater (Kegan, Lahey, Fleming, & Miller, 2014).

How can education learn from DDOs? The two companies highlighted previously create safe environments for people to stretch themselves, admit mistakes, and continue to increase their skills. In education, school leaders can leverage current talent management structures to improve organizational culture in several ways, including the following:

- Recognizing educators who have shown improvement in practice during observations or have demonstrated progress in implementing professional growth goals
- Encouraging educators to assume leadership roles and challenging educators to implement new strategies as part of continuous improvement
- Utilizing team or faculty meeting time to explore problems of practice

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

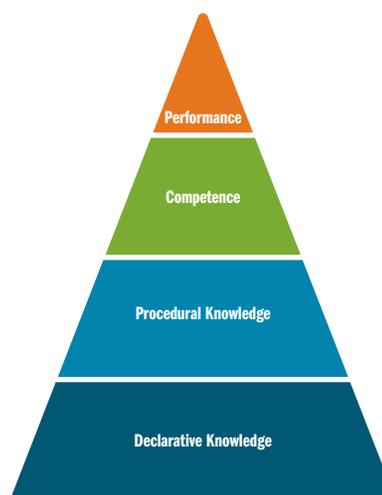
1. Are there structures in place to promote regular reflection and problem solving?
2. What data sources and tools can school and district leaders use to determine staff assignments and responsibilities?
3. How can the state, district, or school provide opportunities for educators to “stretch” through professional learning and career advancement?

Elevating Practice Using Technology

Establishing a norm of continuous growth and improvement is only useful if opportunities, supports, and resources are allocated to support professional learning for even the highest performing educators. Moore, Green, and Gallis (2009) present a framework for planning and assessing continuing medical education that identifies four stages of development of physician clinical skills: Knows (Declarative Knowledge), Knows How (Procedural Knowledge), Shows How (Competence) and Does (Performance). Each type of learning is important: You cannot do heart surgery without understanding the basic anatomy of the cardiovascular system, knowing the procedures for conducting surgery, or practicing the procedure.

However, Roessger (2013) observes that declarative and procedural knowledge are important but insufficient components of expertise. As Moore et al. (2009) note, presentations lead to the development of declarative language and demonstrations lead to the development of procedural knowledge. However, to get to the higher levels of the pyramid, practice opportunities and ongoing feedback are critical; many industries use technology to provide these opportunities.

Health care, police, and other professions are increasingly looking to simulations and videotaping to provide professionals with additional opportunities for practice and feedback. Such approaches to professional learning facilitate ongoing application of knowledge and refinement of practice.



Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. How are professional learning and growth opportunities offered and scaffolded to help educators move from declarative knowledge to performance?
2. What opportunities do educators have to apply learning in practice situations?
3. How do educators receive feedback on their practice?



Simulations

To move from procedural knowledge to competence and performance, police and medical students engage in opportunities to practice and apply their knowledge. Practicing has especially high stakes in those professions: Misfiring a live gun or misdiagnosing a patient can have fatal consequences. Simulations provide such opportunities to practice responding to high-stress situations. For example, police officers in a refresher training that used scenario-based use-of-force simulations experienced changes in heart rate patterns that were similar to the elevated physiological stress produced by real-world experiences (Armstrong, Clare, & Plecas, 2014). In another study, 92 percent of 372 police recruits stated that a technology-supported simulation provided them an opportunity to apply their decision-making skills (Davies, 2015). In follow-up interviews three months post-simulation, participants noted that the simulation exercise improved decision making, replicated the stress in real-world situations, and helped build confidence and prepare for the unexpected (Davies, 2015).

In medicine, virtual patient cases—computer-based simulations of patient scenarios—provide learning opportunities to practice on patients. Multiple studies show completion of virtual patient cases resulted in improvements in practice, although magnitude of effect sizes varies (Benedict, Schonder, & McGee, 2013; Cook, Erwin, & Triola, 2010; Konge, Annema, Clementsen, Minddal, Vilmann, & Ringsted, 2013; Sperl-Hillen et al., 2014; Okuda et al., 2009). However, evidence does not indicate that virtual patient cases are more effective than other training methods (Benedict et al., 2013; Cook et al., 2010).

Simulation-based assessments may also offer potential benefits. A study of 439 federal law enforcement officers found that results of a video-based test (VBT) using simulations were significant predictors of performance in training and on the job. During the test, participants watched vivid job-related situations using recorded videos and then responded to the situation as if he or she were in the video; this response was recorded and then reviewed by raters. The VBT led to higher interrater agreement and evidence of internal consistency when rating interpersonal skills, emotional maturity, cooperativeness/sensitivity to the needs of others, judgment/decision making, and task orientation because raters could review video records of responses multiple times (Cucina, Su, Busciglio, Thomas, & Payton, 2015). Although more research on such assessments is needed, it is possible that simulation-based assessments could be used in education to support ongoing development of cultural competency, communication, judgment/decision making, and other such skills.

Despite the advantages of simulations, including providing safe spaces for practice and providing opportunities for self-directed learning, obstacles to successful implementation exist. Simulations require significant time to design, develop, and implement (Benedict et al., 2013). In addition, not all students prefer virtual learning environments, suggesting that virtual patient cases or simulations might supplement rather than supplant or be offered as one of multiple learning formats (Benedict et al., 2013).

Simulations in Education: simSchool

SimSchool is a classroom simulator that can be used for both educator preparation and ongoing professional development. The digital media platform was originally funded by the Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology (PT3) program of the U.S. Department of Education. Since then, simSchool has received funding support and recognition from the National Science Foundation, the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education, and Educause Next Generation Learning Challenges Program. As of October 2015, more than 124 institutions serving more than 14,000 users in 158 countries used simSchool modules.

According to the simSchool website, outcomes show that after two hours of using simSchool, users reported an increased belief in the value of technology and games in the classroom; after four to six hours, users reported an increased understanding of classroom management and individual student needs; and, after 10–12 hours, users reported believing they have the ability to have an impact on every student's learning and reported having increased knowledge of differentiation of instruction. In a 2012 California study, 94 percent of teacher candidates who used simSchool passed the edTPA on their first try—34 percent better than the national average. Other studies have noted that teacher candidates who used simSchool reported greater increases in instructional self-efficacy than candidates in comparison groups (McPherson, Tyler-Wood, McEnturff, & Peak, 2011; Gibson, Christenson, Tyler-Wood, & Knezek, 2011).



Video Review, Reflection, and Coaching

Instant replay is not just for sports anymore. Video review and reflection can lead to reflection and learning that impacts practice in a variety of occupations (Scherer, Chang, Meredith, & Battistella, 2003; Hamad, Brown, & Clavijo-Alvarez, 2007; Hu et al., 2012). For example, a 2003 study with a limited sample found that after receiving three months of verbal feedback, surgical residents did not improve their performance during trauma resuscitations. However, behavior improved after one month of conference-based video review of performance and continued to improve over time; this change was statistically significant (Scherer et al., 2003).

Recording lessons is not a new development in education. Video reflections often are used in preservice programs and have long been an essential component of the National Board Certification process. However, new advances in technology have increased ease of use of this approach and offer new opportunities for long-distance or asynchronous mentoring and feedback. Videotaping no longer requires up-front investment in time and expense and has become easily scalable (Hu et al., 2012). Although videos may not capture everything that would be seen during an in-person observation, videotaping provides time savings to mentors because they can fast-forward the tape as appropriate (Hu et al., 2012). Coupling videotaping with videoconferencing reduces the need for in-person observations and feedback, which could be critical to those working in rural

areas. Instead of having an in-person visit or setting up bulky and expensive equipment, educators can record their lesson, share it with a peer or coach, and then meet virtually at a convenient time to receive job-embedded and timely support.

New Research in Education: Best Foot Forward

Researchers are currently investigating whether allowing teachers to submit their own recorded lesson videos as part of the teacher observation process affects teacher and principal perceptions of the teacher evaluation process. Teachers and administrators in Delaware, Georgia, Colorado, and California were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups, with treatment groups using digital video of teaching and control groups using in-person observations as evidence collection for teacher evaluations. After the first year of study implementation, researchers found that teachers who participated in the treatment group rated their instruction lower than comparison teachers, especially related to time management and assessment. In addition, 42 percent of teachers in the treatment group reported that they identified previously unnoticed student or teacher behaviors “quite often” or “extremely often” while watching videos of their practice. Teachers in the treatment group also were more likely to report that their teaching practice had “improved somewhat more” or “improved much more” in the current year than in recent years. Finally, 46 percent of teachers reported that feedback from a virtual coach who used the videos was “quite helpful” or “extremely helpful” and 59 percent identified a specific change in practice they made as a result of feedback (Kane, Gehlbach, Greenberg, Quinn, & Thal, 2015).

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. What are the potential benefits and challenges of video recording classroom lessons, either as part of formal observations or for formative coaching and feedback purposes?
2. In what ways might recording video and videoconferencing enable us to better provide educators with timely and expert support?

The Importance of Relevance: Professional Learning That Matches One’s Role and Context

Every teacher likely has at least one story of a professional learning opportunity that was irrelevant to him or her because of context. For example, a physical education teacher is forced to sit through a professional development day focused on math pedagogy, or a teacher receives training on a how to implement 1:1 initiatives even though the school lacks the infrastructure and funding to make such an initiative successful. Leaders need to plan professional learning opportunities that are relevant to the role and context of the individual and recognize that, over time, as roles and contexts change, additional professional learning will be needed. The Army’s focus on continued professional learning offers some potential lessons for education.



Ongoing, Role-Specific Training and Support

The Army’s leadership development strategy emphasizes that “leader development is a deliberate, continuous, and progress process” that includes a “career-long synthesis of training, education, and experience” (Odierno, 2015, p. 10). This process includes training in essential skills with opportunities to practice prior to assuming the position and then providing ongoing feedback and support through coaching and 360-degree assessments (Odierno, 2015; von Zastrow, 2010). When someone assumes a new position, they receive additional role-specific training and support (von Zastrow, 2010).

In education, teachers often assume new placements or roles with little to no support. A study by Blazar (2015) found that teachers who switch grades exhibit lower impacts on students’ achievements after they switch; therefore, role-specific support might be needed. In addition, multiple organizations have highlighted the specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed by teacher leaders, but a lack of training for teacher leaders persists (Natale, Basset, Gaddis, & McKnight, 2013).

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. What onboarding, training, and support are provided to teachers before they assume a new position or role?
2. What supports are in place to help teachers transition to new placements or roles and to continue to develop in these placements and roles?
3. What supports are in place to for teacher leaders, instructional coaches, department heads, and school administrators to help them transition and continue to develop their skills needed for their roles?



Context-Relevant Training and Support

As the context in which our armed forces works has changed, so too has the training, helping to ensure that professional learning continues to be relevant. For example, given the complex nature of threats, the military is increasing multiechelon joint and multinational exercises at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Germany. (Multiechelon trainings allow the army to train individuals, crews, platoons, companies, battalions, brigades and divisions under the cover of one exercise.) Combat training centers replicate environments featuring hybrid threats reflective of the complex situations the nation faces (Odierno, 2015).

Today's students come to school with different backgrounds, resources, and needs than they did years ago. For the first time in 2014, the number of Latino, African-American, and Asian students in public K–12 classrooms surpassed the number of non-Hispanic whites in education (Maxwell, 2014). In addition, the majority of Americans own at least two digital devices, and more than 36 percent of Americans own a smartphone, computer, and tablet (Anderson, 2015). The context of the classroom—and the world surrounding it—is changing constantly. Therefore, education leaders need to consistently reevaluate whether the training and support provided continues to be relevant.

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. How has the context in which teachers worked changed in recent years?
2. Given current student, school, and district needs, are professional learning opportunities relevant?

Using Professional Learning and Growth Opportunities to Target and Support a Diverse Workforce

More than half of public school students are non-White, but fewer than 20 percent of educators are non-White (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). Although minority teachers have entered teaching at higher rates than non-minorities, they also have left schools at higher rates (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). Recent data, combined with research that students benefit from having diverse teachers, have spurred a renewed focus on recruiting, supporting, and retaining educators from diverse backgrounds. As other industries have embraced it, professional learning through mentoring and induction can help diversify the workforce by providing needed supports for new recruits to help them succeed and stay.

In addition, when advertised, professional learning can increase interest in a particular position, thereby helping recruit nontraditional employees. In a recent study, subjects who received a recruiting message that provided a specific professional development program description were more likely to say they would apply for the job than those who received a general description of programs and opportunities (Huang et al., 2011). In education, having formal structures focused on supporting educators of diverse backgrounds might set one school district apart from another and potentially could increase the number of applicants for positions.



Mentoring and Sponsorship

Mentoring is an important form of job-embedded learning that can have impacts on other outcomes. Studies suggest that mentoring can impact employee's income, intent to stay with an organization, job satisfaction, number of promotions, and promotion opportunities (Underhill, 2006; Xu & Payne, 2014). Both employees from underrepresented genders or ethnicities and organizations seeking to increase diversity can benefit from mentoring programs (Dworkin, Maurer, & Schipani, 2012).

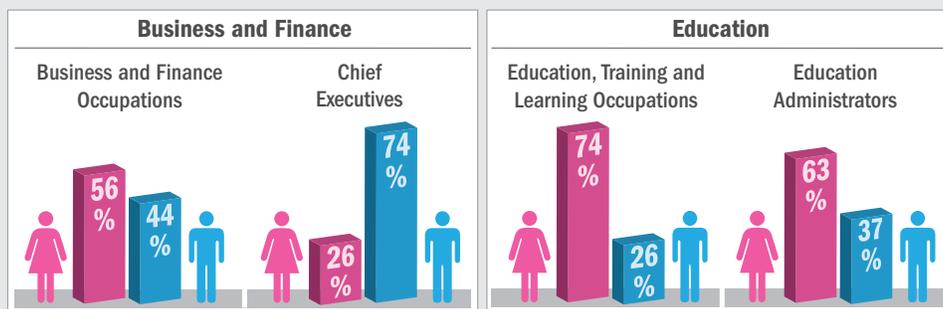
A Note

The GTL Center and other educational organizations have multiple resources focused on the importance of high quality mentoring and induction programs. The focus here is specifically on important considerations when providing mentoring and induction programs centered on the development and retention of educators from underrepresented genders and backgrounds.

The Gender Gap: Differences Between Business and Education

Research and trade literature highlights the need to recruit, develop, and retain women in business occupations, with a particular focus on how to help more women reach the executive suite, aka "the C-suite." However, the education field has a different need: to recruit, support, and retain males in teaching and leadership positions. That said, education leaders can benefit from the lessons learned related to mentoring women and minorities.

Figure 1. Gender Representation in Two Industries, 2014



Source: <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>



Mentoring can lead to professional learning as well as career advancement. A recent report found that women with a mentor increased their odds of becoming a midmanager or above by 56 percent and increased salary growth, as compared to women without mentors (Carter & Silva, 2010). In business, women are as likely, if not more likely, to be mentored than men; however, men are more likely to have senior-level mentors (Ibarra, Carter, & Silva, 2010). This difference is a disadvantage, because a recent study showed that the more senior the mentor, the faster the mentee's career advancement. In fact, the mentor's organizational level, not gender, affected career advancement (Carter & Silva, 2010).

Research on both mentoring for women and professionals of color note the importance of mentoring for professional learning, but also noted the importance of sponsorship—having someone who not only mentors you but also advocates for you and connects you with additional career and growth opportunities (Ibarra, Carter, & Silva, 2010, Thomas, 2001). In his study of career trajectories of minority and white professionals at three U.S. corporations, Thomas (2001) found that some mentees of color propelled their careers, but other mentees showed only moderate career growth; those who enjoyed closer, fuller developmental relationships with mentors who also acted as sponsors tended to show greater career growth. These articles share the following common lessons learned:

1. **Mentors must play a dual role as coach and counselor, and they need to understand their role.** As Thomas (2001, p. 104) notes: “Of prime importance is an understanding of the kinds of developmental relationships that people need at different points in their careers.” Providing training to mentors can help provide additional support. Training quality has both direct and indirect effects on perceived program effectiveness by mentors and mentees (Allen, Eby, & Lentz, 2006).
2. **Mentoring programs need to address stereotypes and biases.** Mentors should acknowledge that mentees may face additional obstacles based on their gender or race. Through training or reciprocal mentoring, mentors should learn to confront their own biases, recognize different approaches to the work, and trust their mentees.
3. **Mentors and mentees should not avoid uncomfortable topics.** After establishing a rapport and finding something in common, mentors and mentees should speak candidly and directly. In addition, mentors should accept his or her own limitations as a role model and seek out others as needed.
4. **Networks matter.** Mentors can play a helpful role in establishing or connecting mentees with a diverse peer network that includes role models and peers.
5. **Mentors need to sponsor.** Moving beyond mentoring to sponsor means protecting and advocating for the mentee—making sure mentees are considered for growth opportunities and laying the groundwork to support successful promotions.

Mentoring Minorities in Education: Building Our Network of Diversity Project

Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland recently developed The Building Our Network of Diversity (BOND) Project, a new mentoring program focused on providing additional supports to black, male educators of color. This program will run parallel to another mentoring program that, unlike the BOND Project, matches colleagues from the same location without consideration of race and gender. The coexistence of the two programs will enable the district to determine the extent to which additional mentoring based on gender and race affects teacher growth (Harris et al., 2014).

The BOND Project offers Black, male teachers professional networking experiences and access to peers who serve as confidential counselors, with the goal of increasing retention. All BOND Project participants meet quarterly. 2015–16 is the first full year of the BOND Project.

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. Are mentoring or induction opportunities available? What are the results of such programs, especially when looking at educators from diverse backgrounds?
2. What type of training do mentors or coaches receive? Do mentors receive training on different types of developmental relationships?
3. How is the cultural competency of mentors or coaches assessed?



Employee Resource Groups

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) (sometimes also referred to as business resource groups) offer less structured professional learning opportunities to subgroups of employees with potential implications for hiring, advancement, and retention. “Employees from traditionally underserved groups, allies who support these groups, and/or people who share a common purpose, interest, or background” generally comprise ERGs (Jennifer Brown Consulting, 2010). A recent study of factors influencing the hiring and retention of employees with disabilities found that only 13.1 percent of the 582 HR professionals surveyed noted that their organization had a disability-focused employee network. However, more than half of those who had such a group thought it was effective, defined as leading “to improved recruitment, hiring, retention, engagement, workplace climate, and/or advancement of people with disabilities” (Erickson, Schrader, Bruyere, & VanLooy, 2014).

ERGs began as affinity groups, which were mostly social networks, but they have evolved into groups charged with strategic goals and tasks. ERGs might be asked to help with marketing efforts, recruitment and retention of diverse employees, or generating new ideas or business opportunities. Because each ERG usually has its own leadership, ERGs offer opportunities for employees to develop leadership skills. In addition, ERGs often receive targeted opportunities and supports. For example, Starr, an insurance company,



offers multiple ERGs that aim to provide employees with career coaching and mentoring, a sense of community, and resources to help them develop their skills. The organization provided a two-day Successful Communication workshop to the Asian American Employee Group. Day 1 of the training covered obstacles that Asian Americans confront when trying to communicate. During Day 2 of the training, participants analyzed their own communications by reviewing video recordings and audiotapes.

MasterCard, a company with a reputation for leveraging diversity, has eight ERGs. Each ERG has a specific mission. For example, Leveraging Employees of African Descent is focused on “facilitating an environment that attracts, promotes, and retains employees of African descent”; the Women’s Leadership Network seeks to “advance women’s careers and performance through a culture of mentoring and coaching” (MasterCard, 2015). MasterCard provides its ERGs with company-sponsored supports and events, such as employee-networking events, multicultural summits, and a women’s forum (Groysburg & Connolly, 2013).

ERGs can provide employees with valuable learning and experience, but they also can make significant contributions to the culture and success of the organization. For example, the 2014 Nielsen Employee Resource Group Report highlighted the impact of ERG efforts on recruitment, professional development, community outreach, as well as education and engagement. For example, Nielsen hired 162 veterans and members of the military in 2013 partly because of participation of Support & Employee Resources for Veterans members in a “Hiring Our Heroes” video (Nielsen, 2014). The Abled and Disabled Employees Working Together ERG assisted recruitment by developing relationships with universities and attending disability career workshops and expos. ERGs also provided professional learning opportunities to fellow employees by hosting development conferences, offering a “Learning How to Effectively Network” series, piloting virtual Spanish-language classes, and sponsoring workshops on a range of topics. When implemented well, ERGs can encourage and support a diverse workforce as they make substantial contributions to the success of the organization. (MasterCard, 2015).

ERGs in Education: Oakland School District

Teach Tomorrow in Oakland (TTO) seeks to recruit and retain a cadre of teachers from the local community. In addition to providing financial and development supports, such as reimbursement of fees and tutoring for certification tests that might otherwise present obstacles to candidates of color, TTO provides additional supports to help teachers combat cultural isolation. Recognizing that at times a teacher of color might have only white colleagues at their school, TTO offers affinity groups to educators of color so that they have a community to discuss and work through challenges of being one of only a few diverse educators. For example, TTO offered a “Men in the Classroom” series led by a male educator. During these events, men talked through challenges associated with working in a female-dominated field (Rogers-Ard, 2015).

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. Are there formal or informal opportunities for educators of similar backgrounds and interests to meet?
2. How can you create Employee Resource Groups and engage members in meaningful work toward shared goals?
3. What types of relevant professional learning opportunities and supports could you offer to ERGs? How could you leverage the expertise of ERGs with other staff?

Conclusion

Professional learning and growth opportunities are not the solution to issues of equitable access, but it may be the start of one. High-quality professional learning and growth opportunities can help educators continue to advance their practice and careers, making them more likely to persist in education. The education field continues to push beyond providing traditional “sit-and-get” professional learning opportunities. Leveraging lessons learned from other professionals can provide sparks for innovative ways to increase and strengthen supports available to today’s educators.

References

- Albert Shanker Institute. (2015). *The state of teacher diversity in American education*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.shankerinstitute.org/resource/teacherdiversity>
- Allen, T. D., Eby, L. T., & Lentz, E. (2006). The relationships between formal mentoring program characteristics and perceived program effectiveness. *Personnel Psychology*, 59(1), 125–153.
- Anderson, J. (2014, April 1). *On deliberately developmental organizations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education. Retrieved from <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/14/04/deliberately-developmental-organizations>
- Armstrong, J., Clare, J., & Plecas, D. (2014). Monitoring the impact of scenario-based use-of-force simulations on police heart rate: Evaluating the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Skills Refresher Program. *Western Criminology Review*, 15(1), 51–59.
- Balazar, D. (2015). Grade assignments and the teacher pipeline: A low-cost lever to improve student achievement? *Educational Researcher*, 44(4), 213–227.
- Benedict, N., Schonder, K., & McGee, J. (2013). Promotion of self-directed learning using virtual patient cases. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 77(7), article 151.
- Bridgewater Associates. (2015). *Our company* [Web page]. Retrieved from <http://www.bwater.com/home/our-company/company.aspx>

- Carnevale, A. P., & Smith, N. (2013). Workplace basics: The skills employees need and employers want. *Human Resource Development International*, 16(5), 491–501.
- Carter, N. M., & Silva, C. (2010). Mentoring: Necessary but insufficient for advancement. Retrieved from: http://www.catalyst.org/system/files/Mentoring_Necessary_But_Insufficient_for_Advancement_Final_120610.pdf.
- Cook, D. A., Erwin, P. J., & Triola, M. M. (2010). Computerized virtual patients in health professions education: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Academic Medicine: Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges*, 85(10), 1589–1602.
- Cucina, J. M., Su, C., Busciglio, H. H., Thomas, P. H., & Peyton, S. T. (2015). Video-based testing: A high-fidelity job simulation that demonstrates reliability, validity, and utility. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 23(3), 197–209.
- Davies, A. (2015). The hidden advantage in shoot/don't shoot simulation exercises for police recruit training. *Salus Journal*, 3(1), 16–30.
- Dweck, C. (2014/2015). "Teachers' mindsets: 'Every student has something to teach me.'" *Educational Horizons*, 93(2), 10–15.
- Dweck, C. (2015, September 22). Carol Dweck revisits the "growth mindset." *EdWeek*. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/09/23/carol-dweck-revisits-the-growth-mindset.html?qs=dweck>
- Dweck, C., Murphy, M., Chatman, J., & Kray, L. (2014). *New study findings: Why fostering a growth mindset in organizations matters*. Los Angeles, CA: Senn Delaney. Retrieved from http://knowledge.sennadelaney.com/docs/thought_papers/pdf/stanford_agilitystudy_hart.pdf
- Dworkin, T. M., Maurer, V., & Schipiani, C. A. (2012). Career mentoring for women: New horizons/expanded methods. *Business Horizons*, 55(4), 363–372.
- Erickson, W. A., von Schrader, S., Bruyere, S. M., & VanLooy, S. A. (2014). The employment environment: Employer perspectives, policies, and practices regarding employment of persons with disabilities. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, 57(4), 195–208.
- Forman, C. (2014, October 21). *Business: A place for people to flourish* [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://www.decurion.com/dec/business-a-place-for-people-to-flourish/>
- Gibson, D., Christensen, R., Tyler-Wood, T., & Knezek, G. (2011). SimSchool: Enhancing teacher preparation through simulated classrooms. In M. Koehler & P. Mishra (Eds.), *Proceedings of Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education International Conference 2011* (pp. 1504–1510). Chesapeake, VA: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education.
- Groysburg, B., & Connolly, K. (2013). Great leaders who make the mix work. *Harvard Business Review*, 91(9), 68–76.
- Hagel, J., & Brown, J. S. (2010, November 23). *Do you have a growth mindset?* [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2010/11/do-you-have-a-growth-mindset/>
- Hamad, G. G., Brown, M. T., & Clavijo-Alvarez, J. A. (2007). Postoperative video debriefing reduces technical errors in laparoscopic surgery. *American Journal of Surgery*, 194(1), 110–114.
- Harris, D., Swimpson, I., Boddy, T., Epps, G., & Delany, B. (2014, August 25). *Building BONDS to retain African-American male teachers* [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://www.gtlcenter.org/blog/building-bonds-retain-african-american-male-teachers>

- Harvard Business Review staff. (2014). How companies can profit from a “growth mindset.” *Harvard Business Review*, 92(11), 28–29.
- Hu, Y.-Y, Peyre, S. E., Arriaga, A. F., Osteen, R. T., Corso, K. A, Weister, T. G., et al. (2012). Postgame analysis: Using video-based coaching for continuous professional development. *Journal of American College of Surgeons*, 214(1), 115–124.
- Huang, W.-H. D., Huang, W.-Y., & Chiu, C.-C. (2011). The impact of specified professional development programme information as a marketing tool for effective recruitment. *Human Resource Development International*, 14(1), 57–73.
- Ibarra, H., Carter, N. M., & Silva, C. (2010) Why men still get more promotions than women. *Harvard Business Review*, 88(9), 80–5, 126. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2010/09/why-men-still-get-more-promotions-than-women>.
- Jackson, C. K., & Bruegmann, E. (2009). Teaching students and teaching each other: The important of peer learning for teachers. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 1(4), 85–108. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w15202.pdf>.
- Jennifer Brown Consulting. (2010). Employee resource groups that drive business. New York, NY: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.cisco.com/web/about/ac49/ac55/docs/ERGREportEXTERNAL.pdf>
- Johnson, S. M., Kraft, M. A., & Papay, J. P. (2012). How context matters in high-need schools: The effects of teachers’ working conditions on their professional satisfaction and their students’ achievement. *Teachers College Record*, 114(10), 1–39.
- Kane, T. J., Gehlbach, H., Greenberg, M., Quinn, D., & Thal, D. *The best foot forward project: Substituting teacher-collected video for in-person classroom observations*. Cambridge, MA: Center for Education Policy Research, Harvard University. Retrieved from http://cepr.harvard.edu/files/cepr/files/14a_best_foot_forward_research_brief1.pdf?m=1443808234
- Kegan, R., Lahey, L., Fleming, A., & Miller, M. (2014). Making business personal. *Harvard Business Review*, 92(4), 44–52.
- Konge, L., Annema, J., Clementson, P, Minddal, V., Vilmann, P, & Ringsted, C. (2013). Using virtual-reality simulation to assess performance in endobronchial ultrasound. *Respiration*, 86(1), 59–65.
- Kraft, M. A., & Papay, J. P. (2014). Can professional environments in schools promote teacher development? Explaining heterogeneity in returns to teaching experience. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 36(4), 476–500.
- Ladd, H. (2009). *Teachers’ perceptions of their working conditions: How predictive of policy-relevant outcome?* (Working Paper 33). Washington, DC: National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research.
- Marcovitz, B. (2011, September). The steepest slopes. [Web log post]. *MindsetWorks*. Retrieved from http://tntp.org/assets/tools/SciAcademy_Hiring+Philosophy+and+Process_TSLT%203.12.pdf
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2015). *Seven levers for establishing high quality professional development: Findings from interviews with Massachusetts educators*. Retrieved from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/PlanAssess/HQPD-levers.pdf>

- MasterCard. (2015). *Business resource groups*. Retrieved from <http://www.mastercard.com/corporate/careers/business-resource-groups.html>.
- Maxwell, L. A. (2014, August 19). U.S. school enrollment hits majority-minority milestone. *EdWeek*. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/08/20/01demographics.h34.html>.
- McPherson, R., Tyler-Wood, T., McEnturff, A., & Peak, P. (2011). Using a computerized classroom simulation to prepare pre-service teachers. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 19(1), 93–110.
- Moore, D. E., Green, J. S., & Gallis, H. A. (2009). Achieving desired results and improved outcomes: Integrating planning and assessment throughout learning activities. *Foundations of Continuing Education*, 29(1), 1–15.
- Natale, C. F., Bassett, K., Gaddis, L., & McKnight, K. (2013). *Creating sustainable teacher career pathways: A 21st century imperative*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, and Arlington, VA: National Network of State Teachers of the Year. Retrieved from http://researchnetwork.pearson.com/wp-content/uploads/cstcp_21ci_pk_final_web.pdf
- Nielsen. (2014). *2014 Nielsen employee resource group report*. Retrieved from <http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/nielsen-global/us/docs/about/2014-nielsen-employee-resource-group-report.pdf>
- Odierno, R. T. (2015). Leader development and talent management: The Army competitive advantage. *Military Review*, 95(4), 9–15.
- Okuda, Y., Bryson, E. O., DeMaria, S., Jacobson, L., Quinones, J., Shen, B., et al. (2009). The utility of simulation in medical education: What is the evidence? *Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine*, 76(4), 330–343.
- Roessger, K.M. (2013). But does it work? Reflective activities, learning outcomes and instrumental learning in continuing professional development. *Journal of Education and Work*, 28(1), 83–105.
- Rogers-Ard, R., in Ferlazzo, L. (2015, September 16). *Re: Response: Strategies for recruiting teachers of color* [Web log comment]. Retrieved from http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/classroom_qa_with_larry_ferlazzo/2015/09/response_strategies_for_recruiting_teachers_of_color.html
- Scherer, L. A., Chang, M. C., Meredith, J. W., & Battistella, F. D. (2003). Videotape review leads to rapid and sustained learning. *American Journal of Surgery*, 185(6), 516–520.
- Sperl-Hillen, J., O'Connor, P. J., Ekstrom, H. L., Rush, W. A., Asche, S. E., Fernandes, O. D., et al. (2014). Educating resident physicians using virtual case-based simulation improves diabetes management: A randomized controlled trial. *Academic Medicine*, 89(12), 1664–1673.
- Thomas, D. A. (2001). The truth about mentoring minorities: Race matters. *Harvard Business Review*, 79(4), 99–107, 168.
- U.S. Department of Education Office of State Support. (2015, July 30). All in: Achieving results together. Presentation made at Combined Federal Programs Summer Meeting, Washington, DC.
- Underhill, C. M. (2006). The effectiveness of mentoring programs in corporate settings: A meta-analytical review of the literature. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 68(2), 292–307.

- 
- Von Zastrow, C. (2010). *A partnership between the military and education: A conversation with General Benjamin Freakley*. Retrieved from <http://www.learningfirst.org/partnership-between-military-and-education-conversation-lieutenant-general-benjamin-freakley>
- Xu, X. & Payne, S. C. (2014). Quantity, quality, and satisfaction with mentoring: What matters most? *Journal of Career Development*, 41(6), 507–525.



Center on
GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS

at American Institutes for Research ■

1000 Thomas Jefferson Street NW
Washington, DC 20007-3835
877.322.8700

www.gtlcenter.org



AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH®

www.air.org

Copyright © 2016 American Institutes for Research. All rights reserved.

This work was originally produced in whole or in part by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders with funds from the U.S. Department of Education under cooperative agreement number S283B120021. The content does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department of Education, nor does mention or visual representation of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the federal government.

The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders is administered by American Institutes for Research and its partners: the Council of Chief State School Officers and Public Impact.