

KS Direct Connection

March 2015

Learning Forward Kansas

An Affiliate of Learning Forward

The Professional Learning Association

UPCOMING EVENTS

- June 9-10: LF KS Advance, Stafford, KS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Conference Highlights	1
Building Bridges for Change	2
Awards	2
Student Engagement	3
Learning Agendas	4
Change and Collaboration	5
KLFA	6
LF National Conference	6-9
LF KS Board	10

LF KS Annual Leadership Conference



Bridge to Change, Closing the Knowing and Doing Gap

Our conference is over and I'm still processing the information shared from all of our wonderful presenters. Dr. Scott Smith kicked off our conference sharing KSDE's vision for a blueprint for college and career readiness. He highlighted changes in accreditation and how our state is moving forward with meeting guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Ed.

Fred Brown, Director of Strategy and Development for Learning Forward, provided great insight into what it means to become a learning system. Conference participants heard about the pieces that must be in place in a system in order for effective professional learning to occur. One of the statements that Mr. Brown made that has resonated with me is that "Educators are the variable, NOT the students." This is such a critical point to make as we determine what needs to change in the classroom to increase student achievement.

Our final keynote, 2014 Kansas Teacher of the Year Jeff Baxter, shared his passion for teaching and learning during our second day of learning. He shared how he has reinvented his classroom these past few years from the environment it had been during the first part of his career. Increasing the thinking level for all of his students is a goal he strives for every day. Building relationships with his students has proven to be one of his greatest rewards.

In addition to our keynote presentations, we had the privilege to hear from educators from around the state as they shared the practices they use in their classrooms/buildings every day to ensure all students are performing at their highest potential.

Mark your calendars for the 2016 conference January 27th and 28th. Visit our website often for more information: <http://www.learningforwardkansas.org/>



Pam Irwin,
2015 Leadership
Conference Chair





Sandee Crowther
KS Learning Forward
Executive Director

“Building Bridges for Change”

At the KS Learning Forward Leadership Conference in February, Vicki Bechard provided an excellent session: “Building Bridges for Change.”

During her session she shared several ideas that would be important for educators to know: to understand the change process and adult learning needs.

She started with Enduring Understandings:

Adult learning needs play a significant role in going from knowing to doing.

Change models provide perspective for leaders and doers.

The Standards for Professional Learning are a framework to support any change initiative.

Sustaining change requires a transformation of beliefs and a transfer of knowledge and skills.

She reminded us of the average retention rates in the Learning Pyramid moving from “passive teaching methods” such as lecture, reading, AV, and demonstration where greatest retention would be 30% to “participatory teaching methods” such as group discussion, practice and teaching others where learners move from 50% retention to 90%.

Some of the key principles of adult learning theory that she shared:

Adults need to be involved in planning and evaluation of their instruction.

Experience provides the basis for learning activities

Adults are most interested in topics that have immediate relevance and impact to their job or personal life.

Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content oriented.

She continued her session with understanding change: Technical vs. Adaptive Change, 1st order vs. 2nd order change, and some of the various change models.

Check out her great website for lots of resources:

www.teachingandlearningnetwork.com You can also leave her a message at her website if you want a copy of her power point from this session.

Learning Forward Awards Celebrate the Best in Professional Learning



**Dr. Kelly
Gillespie**

At the leadership conference in February, one award was given out. The Learning Forward Kansas Staff Developer of the Year is Dr. Kelly Gillespie - executive director of the Southwest Plains Regional Service Center. Dr. Gillespie was nominated by Alan Cunningham, superintendent of Dodge City Public Schools, who indicated that Dr. Gillespie has been responsible for tremendous gains in learning and teaching in Dodge City. Through her role as the Kansas Learning Network Implementation Coach, Dr. Gillespie was tasked with helping to turn around a school identified as one the state’s lowest performing. For two years, Dr. Gillespie has worked with teachers and staff, helping to train them in high-yield strategies identified by Robert Marzano as among the most effective for impacting student learning. Utilizing walkthrough data that she helped to develop, regular teacher use of explicit checks for understanding has grown from 33% to 84%, and instructor use of content and language objectives has grown from 31% to 80%. Additionally, second grade reading data shows a 13% growth in on-grade-level reading in just one year.

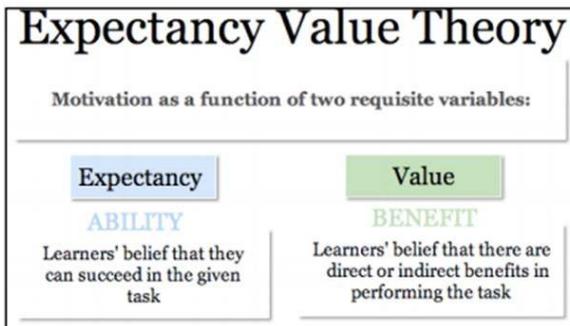
What Every Educator and Administrator Need to Know About Student Engagement

“Please draw what teaching looks like in this school.” Curtis Chandler, Ph.D. asked the participants of his session to predict what the most common drawing he receives every time this task is posed to multiple students at various grades. What is your prediction? The image shared by Dr. Chandler framed the content and design of his session - What Every Educator and Administrator Need to Know about Student Engagement. Dr. Chandler focused the content of his session on establishing the connection between motivation and engagement, developing an understanding of the Expectancy-Value Theory and sharing keys to engaging students.

Through a variety of active learning strategies, Dr. Chandler (n.d., p.2) helped participants construct an understanding of the influences on student motivation as described in his whitepaper - WHAT EVERY TEACHER NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT STUDENT MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT.

Though they are actually two distinct elements of student learning, the terms motivation and engagement are often used interchangeably to describe students’ energy and drive to engage, learn, work effectively, and achieve to their potential at school and the behaviors that follow from this energy and drive. While the term student engagement is often defined in various ways, Chapman’s (2003) definition is widely accepted and applied—student’s cognitive investment in, active participation in, and emotional commitment to learning. Regarding student engagement, Maehr and Meyer (1997) define motivation as a construct used to explain initiation, direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of behavior, especially in goal-directed behavior. In other words, why it is that we are doing what it is that we are doing. Better yet—general needs or desires that drive people to initiate purposeful action sequences (Brophy, 2004). In a nutshell, motivation is an essential part of engagement, just as engagement is an essential part of learning. Teachers must preoccupy with motivation and engagement due to the key role that they play in students’ interest in and enjoyment of school. Motivation and engagement also underpin student achievement (Martin, 2008). But if we were to walk into any classroom, we would likely find a sort of polarization—a split between kids who are excited about learning, and those who seem to hate every minute of it (Sagor, 2010).

To guide participants constructed understanding of the Expectancy-Value Theory, Dr. Chandler instituted a variety of strategies and practices including – formative and summative assessment; student [participant] involvement in the teaching-learning-assessing cycle; active learning through an authentic task; immediate feedback; and instructional adjustments during the learning process. It is safe to say, that all participants left the session at least a little bit better at following a beat! This visual representation (Chandler, n.d., p. 3) sums up the Expectancy Value Theory.



See Dr. Chandler’s (n.d., p.3) whitepaper - WHAT EVERY TEACHER NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT STUDENT MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT for deeper learning on this theory.

Throughout his session, Dr. Chandler revealed a number of keys of what teachers can and should do to maximize their students’ engagement. He repeatedly asked participants to start with “understand[ing] that much of what goes on in school is perceived by students as A) too difficult or too easy, B) irrelevant to the real world, or C) a combination of A and B.” Strategies that teachers can/should do shared by Dr. Chandler included

- WORK TO ENSURE THAT LEARNING TASKS ARE NEITHER TOO EASY OR TOO DIFFICULT
- SCAFFOLDING OF NEW SKILLS AND THOUGHT PROCESSES
- WHEN POSSIBLE, FOCUS ON TOPICS THAT STUDENTS CARE ABOUT...
- TEACH STUDENTS TO THINK CRITICALLY ...ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO ON-LINE CONTENT
- CREATE ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS THAT RESEMBLE THE ACTIVITIES THEY ENGAGE IN THE MOST
- MAKE EXPLICIT CONNECTIONS TO REAL WORLD
- DELIBERATE ‘BLURRING’ BETWEEN CONTENT AREAS
- PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING CHALLENGES
- A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES AND APPROACHES!

Oh, and you were correct if you predicted something like the drawing below as what most students showed as learning looking like in their school....



You can find Dr. Chandler’s whitepaper and many other great resources on his website www.betterlearningforschools.com



Jill Bergerhofer, Ed.D.
Membership Chair, LFKS

Have you developed your school or district “learning agenda for educators?”

Attendees of “Have you developed your school or district ‘learning agenda for educators?’” presented by Fred Brown, *Deputy Executive Director*, Learning Forward were treated to an interactive and purposefully designed professional learning session that expanded their understanding of a learning agenda and challenged each to consider strategies that ensure educators' learning needs are being met. “A learning agenda is a collection of strategies or designs leaders select in order to ensure that educators can understand and apply practices that improve their own performance and student outcomes. Learning agendas help create a supportive environment that allow individuals and teams to reflect on and learn from their own and others' practices, and then create action plans to deepen their practice around what they are learning.”

Mr. Brown shared key insights from the soon to be released companion to the publications *Becoming a Learning School* (NSDC, 2009) and *Becoming a Learning System* (Learning Forward, 2014) on building a learning agenda. He noted learning agendas that impact learning, both teacher and students include:

- Reflective questions - regarding what it will take; needs to happen; the journey would look like; barriers that will need to be faced; and, what evidence will demonstrate progress.
- Goals – the student learning intended to be impacted and those established for adults.
- Skills/Attitudes/Behaviors – what is expected to be seen and how clearly the what and why has been articulated to the staff.
- Characteristics of adult learning – what factors need to be considered and what learning designs will maximize active engagement in the learning process.
- Theory of change – what ensures that all staff successfully embeds the new skills, attitudes and behaviors in practice.
- Implementation design – how is it ensured there is deep understanding and effective use of the strategies throughout the learning community.

To support the components of a firm learning design, Mr. Brown also presented information on several models including:

- Stages of Concern – this describes six stages that an individual might experience when going through any type of change and is important to assess and use this data to help support a personalized learning experience for the members of the learning community.
- Theory of Change – this “defines all building blocks required to bring about a given long-term goal. This set of connected building blocks—interchangeably referred to as outcomes, results, accomplishments, or preconditions is depicted on a map known as a pathway of change/change framework, which is a graphic representation of the change process (<http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/>).”
- Structure for professional learning – illustrations of how professional learning is achieved within an organizational system such as a school district.

Mr. Brown summarized the discussion with the implementation Standard for Professional Learning as another resource to what teams should refer when developing a learning agenda.

IMPLEMENTATION: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

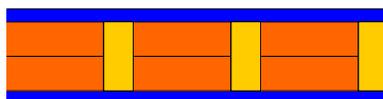
CORE ELEMENTS:

- Apply change research
- Sustain implementation
- Provide constructive feedback

This session was an entry point for thinking about developing a “learning agenda” for the educators in ones learning community. To learn more about this topic visit the Learning Forward website www.learningforward.org view the handouts from Mr. Brown’s session listed below and be sure to watch for the release of the new LF publication.

[Standard for Professional Learning, Quick Reference Guide](#) (PDF 1MB)

[Tool Index](#) (PDF 724KB)



By Jill Bergerhofer, Ed.D.
Membership Chair, LFKS

Change and Collaboration

For most of us change is a scary thing. Chances are that as you read that first sentence your heart beat just a bit faster! As educators we know that change is just a part of the daily routine. Fortunately, there are many ways of dealing with change in positive ways that will ensure great outcomes.

Collaboration is one great way of handling change. A great example of this is Learning Communities, which is one of the Standards of Professional Learning. Here is how Learning Communities is defined: **Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.** Here is more explanation of how Learning Communities can be used:

Engage in Continuous Improvement

Learning communities apply a cycle of continuous improvement to engage in inquiry, action research, data analysis, planning, implementation, reflection, and evaluation. Characteristics of each application of the cycle of continuous improvement are:

- The use of data to determine student and educator learning needs;
- Identification of shared goals for student and educator learning;
- Professional learning to extend educators' knowledge of content, content-specific pedagogy, how students learn, and management of classroom environments;
- Selection and implementation of appropriate evidence-based strategies to achieve student and educator learning goals;
- Application of the learning with local support at the work site;
- Use of evidence to monitor and refine implementation; and
- Evaluation of results.

When I read all of that information, change does not seem so daunting to me. Being a part of a collaboration rich environment like a Learning Community would be an ideal way to meet all of the change challenges that educators face. So the next time you are facing another change in education and your heart starts beating a little faster, know that collaboration may be your best path. "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." - Helen Keller

**Learning Communities information was gathered from the Learning Forward Kansas website.



By Kim Panzer

Rep B West of Highway 281

Commissioner Watson Makes KLFA Visit



Incoming Commissioner Dr. Randy Watson shared details about the upcoming “listening” tour he and state board members will hold in January and February at the January 8 Kansas Learning First Alliance meeting held at the KNEA building. He will introduce the tour at the KASB Governmental Relations Network Seminar Jan. 22 with an abbreviated version he hopes will attract legislators. Other cities on the tour include Arkansas City, Wichita, Salina, Hutchinson, Hays, Colby, Sublette, Greenbush, Emporia, Topeka, Kansas City, Olathe and Hiawatha. He also discussed his plans to make education a student-focused endeavor to which the system responds, focusing on STUDENT SUCCESS! His presentation concluded with a discussion on building communications channels to share important information about schools, their achievements and challenges.

Dr. Doug Moeckel, KASB Deputy Executive Director, led a session on change and leadership that dovetailed well with Dr. Watson’s presentation.

As part of a year-long study of change and the Standards of Professional Learning, Dayna Richardson, KLFA chair, focused on the standard Learning Designs. Strategies/actions that have the biggest impact on classroom practices and student success were shared.

Finally, the meeting celebrated the 16th anniversary of the organization, which is modeled after the Learning First Alliance. Twenty-five members representing 18 organizations attended the meeting. Those 18 organizations unanimously approved the Association of Teacher Educators-Kansas (ATEK) to membership in KLFA. The next meeting will be April 16 at KASB.

For more information on KLFA, visit its Website at KLFA.org.



Article by
Dayna Richardson,
Advocacy Chair



LEARNING FORWARD NATIONAL CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 2014

NASHVILLE



REFLECTIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES



LEARNING FORWARD ANNUAL CONFERENCE: **CONNECT.ENGAGE.LEARN**

December 6-10, 2014
Nashville, Tennessee

By Vicki Bechard, LFKS Secretary

Decked out for the holidays and brimming with hospitality, the **Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center** was the place to be in December for the **Learning Forward Annual Conference**. Always a worthwhile professional learning experience, the Gaylord served as a festive backdrop to a great conference. *Learning Forward Kansas* was represented by Executive Director, Sandee Crowther; President, Lana Evans; President-Elect, Pam Irwin; Secretary, Vicki Bechard; board member and KLFA Chairperson, Dayna Richardson; and board member, Donna-Augustine Shaw.

Pam Irwin attended the pre-conference session that focused on the new Executive Leadership Program. This is something LFKS is studying this year with a launch for school leaders planned for the fall and we will benefit from her pre-conference experience as we perfect this program for our use with Kansas educators.

The main conference was filled with keynote speakers to inspire all participants, and a wide variety of breakout (concurrent) sessions that allowed participants to personalize their learning experience. Dayna, Vicki, and Lana presented *On the Road to Change: Transforming Professional Learning*. Donna was a part of a group that included members of KSDE who presented *'Principaled' Learning: Meeting the Needs of Building Leaders.* Some of the breakout session experiences have been shared in this issue of the **Direct Connection**.

Stephanie Hirsh, Learning Forward Executive Director, unveiled the new vision for Learning Forward: **Excellent Teaching and Learning Every Day**. Read more [here](#) about how this clarifies our work to support professional learning that makes a difference.

Conference Speakers inspired us with their thoughts on leadership, learning, and change.

Aviator Barrington Irving challenged us to *sell others on the end result not the journey* to better effect change.

Family Therapist and Canadian professor Michael Ungar shared 9 things all children need:

- Structure*
- Consequences*
- Parent Child Connections*
- Lots of STRONG Relationships*
- Powerful Identity*
- Sense of control*
- Sense of belonging/life purpose/spirituality*
- Rights and responsibilities*
- Safety and Support*

Australian Professor and well-known author John Hattie noted *it's better to be improving than cruising*, and educators should *talk about their impact rather than their teaching*.

Steve Gross from the Life is Good Foundation shared his secret to motivation and success: *All you need are super powers: Optimism and Courage to achieve whatever you want!*

Learning Forward also honored retiring LFKS Executive Director, **Sandee Crowther**, at the Affiliate Meeting during the conference. They recognized Sandee's 27 years of work on behalf of Learning Forward's efforts to promote professional learning with song lyrics written just for her and a cake and punch reception afterwards. More about Sandee's retirement and years of dedicated service will appear in the next Direct Connection.

Every conference is an enjoyable experience, and this one was no exception. Participants had plenty to do in the hotel shopping and eating district as well as opportunities for shows on site or nearby. **Learning Forward** provided **The Little River Band** for Monday evening's entertainment. Vicki even won a selfie contest with "Tina Turner" that Learning Forward promoted throughout the conference. The [2015 Conference is December 5-9 in the Washington, DC area](#) also at the Gaylord Hotel and Convention Center at National Harbor, MD. Make plans now to experience high quality professional learning in our nation's capitol!

2014 Learning Forward Conference in Nashville: Improving HS Assessments Using Performance Tasks

This breakout session, presented by educational leaders from a high achieving New Jersey high school, focused on ways to improve the use of assessments. The information they shared is based on the work of Grant Wiggins, author of *Understanding by Design*. Using the premise that worthwhile assessments are performance tasks, they pointed out that many students who do well on traditional tests often struggle on performance tasks because they are uncomfortable with the challenges of not having a “right” answer. To be successful at performance tasks, students may need to learn how to think differently and respond appropriately to failure during the process. In fact, teachers may need to learn to think differently as they plan assessment and instruction, and as they evaluate performance assessments.

What constitutes a performance based task/assessment (also known as authentic assessment)?

- New or simulated, real-world context
- Integration of new and existing skills, content, requiring judgment and innovation
- Asks the subject to “do” the subject instead of reciting, restating or replicating
- Challenges with specific purposes and meaningful goals in a complex, multi-stage task
- Allows for opportunities for practice, consult resources, get feedback, and refine/revise products

Because of these characteristics, a performance task is “messy” in terms of the process and evaluating the results. It is also not a secure type of assessment, since processes will be personalized by students resulting in products that may differ as well.

Clearly defined expectations that allow room for personalization and inquiry are the challenges that educators face when using and evaluating performance tasks. The presenters pointed out that the better the task (i.e. the more challenging the task), the harder it is to grade. While the presenters noted that it is well documented that rubrics help with clarity in the assessment process, **the school did not require rubrics as they implemented performance tasks** because they thought it was overwhelming to the faculty. *Several in the audience questioned this practice and suggested they were putting both teachers and students in more difficult positions because this key piece was missing.* (Author’s note: It is always good to listen for new ideas, but don’t be afraid to question presented information as to its usefulness, authenticity, and accuracy)

Suggestions on what to look for when creating and/or assessing performance tasks were:

- Begin with non-graded formative performance assessments so feedback can be given while students learn the process.
- Create a continuum from best to worst
- Provide opportunity (*preferred*) vs “help”
- Recognize that “struggle” is part of the learning process
- Create Open-Ended Questions or Problems. (*The more open the question, the more opportunities for differentiation, problem solving, and interdisciplinary connections.*)
- Allow for explanation (*even if it’s hard to watch them struggle or do things incorrectly at first*)

In general the concerns of the faculty, as shared by the presenters, focused on the time involved, they were not trained to write these kinds of assessments, and students were not trained to think this way. Essentially, the same things that bothered students bothered teachers too: the time required to complete performance assessments, the “messiness” of the process, and the uncertainty of the “right answers.”

It is my belief that good learning sparks more thinking. My questions after experiencing this session about going from a focus on traditional assessment to more authentic performance assessments in a school included:

- What kind of professional learning did they do/must be done to ensure successful implementation?
- What were/are the leaders doing?
- What support was given throughout the process to both teachers and students?
- What does the data say when planning for the next steps in this implementation process?

How can the lessons from this New Jersey high school help you successfully implement authentic performance assessments in your school (or any other change initiative)?

Breakout Session Info:

Improving HS Assessments with Performance Tasks

Brad Siegel, Director K-12 Curriculum and Instruction
Amy D’Ambola, K-12 Staff Developer
Northern Highlands Regional HS, New Jersey



Article by
Vicki Bechard,
LF KS Secretary

Reflections from LF National Conference

The Teacher Knowing and Doing Gap

By: Vicki Bechard, LFKS Secretary

We don't know what we don't know. This statement is often used to explain one of the reasons that we keep doing ineffective practices. Jane Pollock and Gary Nunally presented this session to address and provide ideas and strategies that will help close the knowing and doing gap for educators.

Research says in business, most people know what to do, but they don't always do it. But is this the same for educators? Pollock says that we have a knowing gap: *"We don't know what we don't know and that is keeping us from doing."* This is not to say that educators aren't doing the best they can with what they know, but if professional learning is not continuously improving our knowledge and skills, then we may not be "doing" what is best practice because we can't do what we don't know.

The presenters cited the work of several researchers to identify 3 things that cause us to be ineffective:

- Information Overload
- Negativity
- Bad Habits

Who among us can't relate to these 3 issues? When we feel overwhelmed, we can't think or prioritize. We may feel negatively about the change, or because we feel overwhelmed. Bad habits cause the "yes buts" to creep into our thoughts and derail the possibilities of new ideas, knowledge or skills.

Using Curriculum and lesson planning as an example to go from Knowing to Doing, the presenters demonstrated ways to plan and deliver curriculum that has a positive impact on student learning. They emphasized the use of the [Marzano 9 High Yield Strategies](#) as **LEARNING** strategies rather than *teaching* strategies. Schools typically hold teachers accountable for using these strategies, but in reality they are for learning. When **students** can use these high yield strategies on their own then they will retain more information. The more you can retain, the more likely you will use it again.

With the inclusion of Common Core (*Kansas College and Career Ready Standards*) in today's instruction, teachers have been challenged to revamp the way they think about how they teach. Many struggle with how they will plan and teach differently for maximum effectiveness. As a result, there is a knowing and doing gap.

For curriculum planning, Pollock and Nunally referred to Marzano's work in his book, *Classroom Instruction that Works*, and Pollock's own books, *Improving Student Learning One Teacher at a Time*, and *Minding the Achievement Gap One Classroom at a Time*. They encourage **unit planning** where the teacher

- Identifies the unit and the standards that will be taught in that unit;
- Distributes the standards over the length of the unit; and
- Matches essential questions with each standard or set of standards

This provides the big picture for connecting assessment and instructional activities to the learning goals and mirrors some of what Wiggins and McTighe advocate in the *Understanding by Design* framework.

Once the unit is planned, they encourage the use of the acronym **GANAG** for lesson design.

- G** = Goal
- A** = Access Prior Knowledge
- N** = New information
- A** = Application or practice of new information
- G** = Generalize, Goal review, or Grade

Marzano's High Yield Strategies are incorporated into the instruction so that **STUDENTS** learn to use them to deepen their own understanding of the content.

Using these planning and delivery strategies will help teachers close the knowing and doing gap as they re-tool their instruction to better meet the demands of Common Core, 21st Century Learning, and student learning needs.

For examples of curriculum that has been designed with these strategies in mind, click [here](#) or go to www.rogersschools.net. Click on the STAFF tab, and then CURRICULUM tab. Select the grade level and content to view. You will not be able to access everything, but you will be able to get the big picture.

Breakout Session Information:
The Teacher Knowing – Doing Gap
 Jane E Pollock, PhD
 Gary S Nunally, EdD

2014-15 LF KS Board

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