Developing High Impact Action Plans for Every Level of Learning
Douglas B. Reeves*
The Leadership and Learning Center

1. Professional Learning Objectives

1.1 Apply standards of evidence for educational research and professional learning
   Replication
   Sustainability over Time
   Identification of Sources and Verifiability
   Multiple methods and sources
   Examples: 90 90 90 Research
   Marzano’s Art and Science of Teaching
   Hattie’s Visible Learning

1.2 Define Professional Learning Objectives
   From labels to leadership
   “Assessment for Learning” for adults
   Liberating the phrase “needs improvement”

1.3 Identify Professional Learning Weaknesses
1.4 Create Plans for High Impact Professional Learning
1.5 Develop Plans to Sustain High Impact Professional Learning
1.6 Personal professional learning objectives

Learning Activity #1: “Today will be a success if . . . .”

1. 

2. 

3. 

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2. Begin with the End in Mind – A Case Study of High Impact Learning

Learning Activity #2:

- Review the section “From Frazzled to Focused” on pages 103 and 104. Consider the two essential questions that Bernice Johnston has posed: Are we really using it, and is there strong evidence that it is directly related to improving student performance?
- Consider the professional learning initiatives in place in your school or system, assessing the degree of implementation and the impact on student achievement. Write the names of your initiatives in the appropriate quadrants on the following matrix.

```
Lead

Invest

Weed

Evaluate

Low - - - Degree of Implementation - - - High
```

What questions must you answer in order to complete this matrix for every professional learning initiative in your school or system? Be as specific as possible:

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3. The Impact of Implementation of Professional Learning on Student Achievement

Synthesizing the evidence – schools make common claims about what they do, but have different results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low Implementation</th>
<th>Medium Implementation</th>
<th>High Implementation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Schools</td>
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<td>High SES Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low SES Schools</td>
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Learning Activity #3: How do you define implementation?

Select an instructional or leadership strategy to which you already have a commitment:

Define “proficient” performance. If a teacher or leader performs at the “proficient” level, then this strategy will lead to your student achievement goals:

Define “progressing” performance. If a teacher or leaders performs at the “progressing” level, then they may be working very hard, but they are missing key elements of implementation and their efforts will not lead to the achievement of your goals:
Define performance that does not meet your standards. Teachers and leaders performing at the “not meeting standards” level are failing to meet the most basic professional requirements you have established. Spell it out – what professional actions are completely unacceptable in your school or system?

Finally, consider “exemplary” performance by teachers and leaders. This level of performance is significantly better than “proficient” performance. These professional actions are extraordinary, having an impact not only in a single classroom or school, but throughout the entire system. The challenge to achieve this level of performance would stimulate and encourage higher levels of performance even among your most veteran, experienced, and qualified staff. Use rich and vivid detail with the most compelling descriptions possible.
4. What’s Wrong with Professional Development?

Learning Activity #4:

- First names A - F: Contradictions of Staff Development (pages 21-26)
- First names G - L: Law of Initiative Fatigue (pages 27-32)
- First names M - R: Brand Name Fallacy (pages 41-47)
- First names S - Z: Scattershot Learning (pages 48-53)

Please be ready to report:
The big idea:

A phrase or sentence that especially resonated with you:

Based on your personal professional experience, describe a “worst practice” in professional learning:
5. Redefining Professional Practice

Learning Activity #5:

Listen to interviews with professional athletes and musicians. What do you notice about the similarities and differences between the practice of athletes and musicians and the practice habits of educators and school administrators?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Characteristic</th>
<th>Musicians and Athletes</th>
<th>Educators and School Administrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Before practice sessions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Sources of feedback</td>
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<td>3. Response to feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Hours of practice compared to hours of performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Other characteristics of professional practice:</td>
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</table>

What are the implications for professional development?

1. Opportunity to practice:

2. Provision of effective feedback:

3. Definition of classroom and leadership activities as “performance” or “practice”:

4. Focus in professional learning:

5. Other implications?
6. **From Vision to Implementation**

Learning Activity #6:

Please first review the professional learning documents from your school or system. Read it with fresh eyes, focusing on your vision for the link between professional development and student learning.

Focus in particular on your . . .

- Vision
- Evidence
- Assessments
- Preflight checklists
- Timing and content of formative feedback

Now, complete chapter 7 (pages 57-62)

How has your vision for professional learning changed as a result of this work?
# 7. Action Research for Professional Learning

Learning Activity #7: Assessing Action Research:

**Scoring Rubric for Action Research Proposals**

(From: *Reframing Teacher Leadership: To Improve Your School*, ASCD 2008. Pages 153-154)

Total Score: __________________________________________________________________

Proposal Number: ________________________________________________________________

Primary Contact Name: ____________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Research Question</th>
<th>SCORE: ___</th>
<th>4. Question has vital importance and clear relevance to district needs.</th>
<th>3. Interesting question, clearly relevant to district needs.</th>
<th>2. Question already addressed by significant body of research.</th>
<th>1. Question unlikely to reveal new or relevant insights.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Student Data</strong></td>
<td>SCORE: ___</td>
<td>4. Data sources are related to research question and meet high standards of validity and reliability.</td>
<td>3. Data sources are related to research question and have adequate validity and reliability.</td>
<td>2. Data sources somewhat related to research question, and validity and reliability are uncertain.</td>
<td>1. Data sources have limited relationship to research question and are unlikely to yield valid and reliable observations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Professional Practice Data</strong></td>
<td>SCORE: ___</td>
<td>4. Professional practice observations are related to research question, are clear, systematic, and represent a range of performance.</td>
<td>3. Professional practice observations are related to research question and are clear and systematic.</td>
<td>2. Professional practice observations are somewhat related to research questions and have limited clarity.</td>
<td>1. Professional practice observations have limited relevance to research question and are unsystematic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D. Resource Requirements</strong></td>
<td>SCORE: ___</td>
<td>4. Proposal either requires no additional resources or clearly provides for all resources, support, and permission.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Proposal requires resources, support, or permissions that are not provided in the proposal.</td>
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| TOTAL SCORE: ___ | | | | | |

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Sample Action Research Proposal
(From: Reframing Teacher Leadership: To Improve Your School, ASCD 2008. Pages 153-154)

E-mail to:

[Insert e-mail address]

Part I. Contact Information

1. Primary Contact:
   Name:
   School or Department:
   Job Title:
   Primary Telephone Contact:
   Alternate Telephone Contact:
   E-mail Address:
   Mailing Address:

2. Additional Team Member(s)
   Name:
   School or Department:
   Job Title:
   Primary Telephone Contact:
   Alternate Telephone Contact:
   E-mail Address:
   Mailing Address:
Part II. Research Question(s):

- How do math journals influence student achievement in Grades 9 and 10 mathematics?
- How do home language math journals influence student achievement in Grades 9 and 10 mathematics?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of home language math journals, rather than English language math journals, for students, teachers, and parents?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of math journals for learning disabled students?

Part III. Student Population to be Observed

Grade level(s): 9 and 10

Special characteristics, if any: 40% of these students have a primary language other than English. 12% are learning disabled.

Subject(s): Mathematics

Part IV. Student Achievement Data to be Gathered

- Weekly quizzes (teacher created)
- District standards-based tests (IDMS assessments)
- Chapter tests (textbook)
- Final exam results (math department)
- Semester grades (teacher assigned)
- Rubric-based score on math journals (new rubric I have created in collaboration with ESL teacher)

Part V. Professional Practices to be Observed

- Support for creating math journals – The math and cooperating ESL teacher will assist students as they create math journals and apply the information. We will include exemplary models of math journals, have students practice scoring of anonymous student work in math journals, and allow students to choose to use English or their home language. After this instruction, students will provide anonymous feedback to the teachers, assessing the clarity of the instruction and student interest in the journal project.

- Teacher feedback – Teacher feedback will be evaluated quantitatively in terms of the number of questions posted by the teacher in the math journals and the number of productive questions – those that elicited a response from students in subsequent journal entries.

- Use of math journals – The project will evaluate the frequency of journal entries once weekly for the 20 weeks of this research project. Scoring totals in the category will be from 0 to a maximum of 20 for the project period.
- Quality of math journals – The project will evaluate the quality of journals using a 4 point rubric:

  4 = Entries are directly related to the math work for the week and include multiple insights on student learning, along with specific steps the student has taken for improved performance.
  3 = Entries are related to the math work for the week and include at least one insight on student learning.
  2 = Entries are somewhat related to the math work and contain minimal insights on student learning.
  1 = Entries are unrelated to math and disconnected from student learning.
  0 = No journal entry.

- Student language – Each journal will be coded based on the language chosen by the student for the journal entries.

- Student special needs – Each journal will be coded with student special needs.

Part VI. Support, Permission, or Resources Required

None. The math department chair and school administration are aware of my intention to use math journals, including home language journals, and have no objection to this project.

Focus on your greatest need in student achievement, and then complete the following:

Research Question:

Student Population:

Student Achievement Data:

Professional Practices to Be Observed:
## 8. Sustaining High Impact Professional Learning

Learning Activity #8:

Apply the essentials of sustainability (Fullan, 2005) to your professional learning plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essentials for Sustainability</th>
<th>Application to Our Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Public service with a moral purpose</td>
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<td>2. Commitment to changing context at all levels</td>
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<td>3. Lateral capacity building through networks</td>
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<td>4. Intelligent accountability – both capacity building and accountability</td>
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<td>5. Deep learning</td>
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<td>6. Dual commitment to short-term and long-term results</td>
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<td>7. Cyclical energizing</td>
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<td>8. Long level of leadership</td>
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9.0 Personal Professional Learning Objectives

Learning Activity #9:

Where do you feel affirmed?

Where do you feel challenged?

What questions do you still have?
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**Free Resources:**
PowerPoint slides, research evidence, white papers, articles, and downloads:

**For Further Reading: Books:**
Reeves, D. B *Transforming Professional Development into Student Results*, ASCD, 2010.

**Articles: Douglas Reeves**
“Three challenges for education leaders,” *ASCD Express*, January 7, 2010
“Turning to national standards,” *ASCD Express*, January 21, 2010
“Sizing up your leaders,” *American School Board Journal*, April 2010
“Commentary/Common standards: From what to how”, *Education Week*, May 12, 2010
“Fixer or Multiplier?” *American School Board Journal*, September, 2010
FEEDBACK FOR FACILITATOR

WORKSHOP TITLE: ________________________________________________________________

LOCATION & DATE: ______________________________________________________________

FACILITATOR: ________________________________________________________________

Your feedback is very important. It fosters continuous improvement for me and for this work.
Feel free to make additional comments on the back of this page.

What was the most helpful thing you learned as a result of this session?

What would have helped you learn more effectively/efficiently?

What questions do you still have about the discussion?

What else would you like the presenter to know about this session?

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SCHOOL DISTRICT: ______________________________________________________________

NAME: ________________________________________________________________

TELEPHONE: ____________________________ E-MAIL: ____________________________

SCHOOL WEBSITE: __________________________________________________________

SCHOOL NAME/ORGANIZATION: ______________________________________________

JOB TITLE: ________________________________________________________________

ADDRESS: ________________________________________________________________

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _________________________________________________________

FAX #: ________________________________________________________________
Burning Questions, Challenges, and Success Stories…