

Engaging Professional Development Strategies for Adult Learners

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Get Ready for this Session



Think about one of the best professional learning experiences you've had.

- What helped you feel engaged, supported, or inspired to learn, grow, and take action?

Introduce yourself to your neighbor and share *OR* reflect on your own.

Today's Plan

- Create a shared understanding of Adult Learning Principles
- Review steps for supporting teacher leaders to plan, deliver and evaluate Professional Development
- Explore and experience strategies for engaging adult learners in ongoing professional development



Today's Agreements

- Take care of yourself, including choosing how to participate
- Take care of others, including listening with positive intent
- Take care of this work, including centering children, families and our colleagues
- Other agreements?



Adult Learning Principles

What do we know about Adult Learners?



Need to feel safe to learn

Consider any power dynamics, co-develop learning agreements, and create opportunities for everyone to participate and share ideas in ways that work for them



Come to learning experiences with histories

Ask first and build on adults' prior experiences, perspectives, and even mistakes



Have a problem-centered orientation to learning

Connect learning to real situations people experience in their work and lives



Want to learn

Find out what participants want to learn about, how they want to learn it, and offer a variety of ways to engage



Need to know why they have to learn something

Help people understand why the learning matters and how it impacts their work



Want agency in their learning

Plan for adults to make decisions, including how to participate, contribute, reflect on, and give feedback about their learning experiences



Where Are We Right Now with the Adult Learning Principles?

- Which principle are you currently most confident with?
- Which principle are you most interested in learning more about?



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Adults Need to Feel Safe to Learn

Principle #1 in Action

- Intentionally plan ahead to reduce unknowns
 - Agenda, handouts, materials, clear directions for activities, etc.
- Create and use community agreements
- Plan to invite equitable participation in discussions and activities
 - Opportunities to participate in different ways, reflection/wait time, strategies to make sure many voices (not only the quickest/loudest) are heard
- Acknowledge and build on ideas, contributions, and participation (*guide thinking after if needed*)

Principle #1 Example

Sharing “Getting Ready” Info

In-Person Training

Getting Ready for EC-PBIS Module 1 Training



What Do I Need to Bring?

- Laptop
- Handouts as needed
- Pyramid Model Practices Checklist
- Layered Clothing (to be comfortable throughout the day)
- Snacks and Beverages as desired
- Lunch if desired (1-hour lunch break on your own) 11-12

What Do I Need to do BEFORE EC-PBIS Tier 1 Training?

- Download and print handouts applicable to Tier 1 Training.
- Review Pyramid Practices Checklist: Responsive Relationships
 - What are practices I want to do well?
 - What are practices I want to learn more about or strengthen?

Agenda Overview

- Creating a Caring Classroom Community
- Relationships with Children
- Relationships among Children
- Relationships with Families
- Relationships with Colleagues



This event is a “TEAMING DAY!”
Come ready to actively participate with your team!

Virtual Training

We look forward to seeing everyone virtually for EC-PBIS Tier 1 Training.

Please plan to log in to the Zoom room on your own device at least 10 minutes before the start time. We plan for active participation in this training, so you must be prepared to have your webcam on and become comfortable with muting and unmuting your microphone.

To prepare for the training:

- Please review the attached Zoom tip sheet and have your technology ready! You will need a microphone, webcam, and speakers to participate fully.
- Please review the **Virtual Training Tips video** to support your active participation!
- If you experience technical difficulties using a Chromebook, please refer to the attached handout, “Zoom Troubleshooting Tips for Chromebooks.”
- Please be prepared to participate in breakout rooms during this training event. Each breakout room must self-identify a facilitator and notetaker for each conversation. Detailed directions will be available for all breakout room activities.
- Training handouts can be located in the shared folder.
- Find a space to attend training where you can sit, stand, listen, and talk.
- To help you stay engaged, consider having beverages, snacks, fidgets, paper, pens, or other materials available.
- We will take short morning breaks and afternoon breaks, as well as a one-hour lunch break.

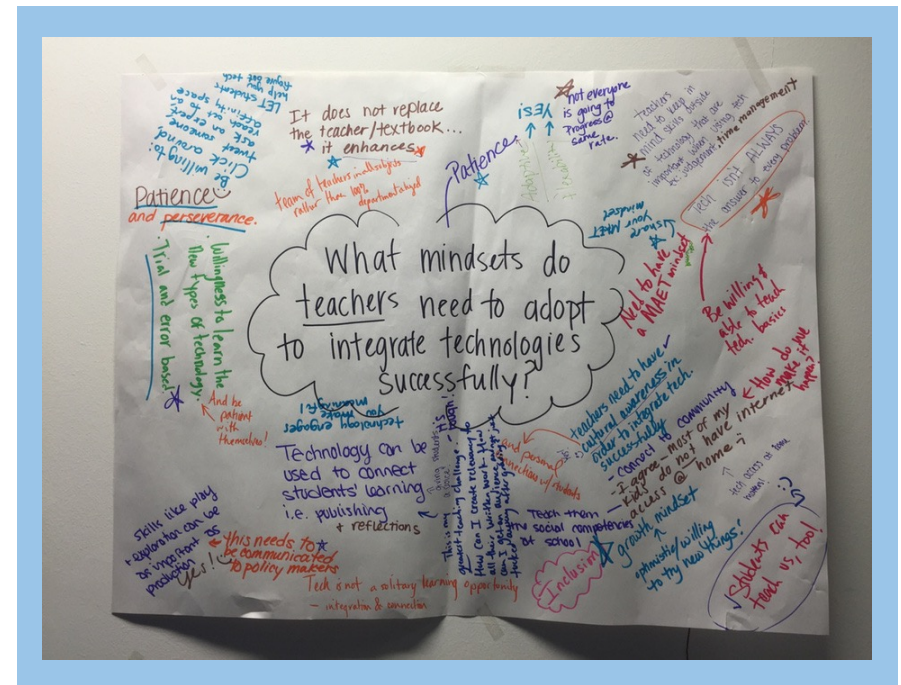
The following topics will be covered at the training:

- Building relationships with children, families, and classroom teams
- Creating engaging environments
- Schedules/routines/transitions
- Teaching classroom rules
- Ongoing monitoring
- Positive encouragement

Principle #1 Example

Chalk Talk Activity

- This activity is done quietly
- Take your marker to the poster on the wall
- Read and reflect on the questions
 - Write or draw your responses as you feel comfortable.
 - You might also star, circle, or connect other ideas.



Adults Come to Learning Experiences with Histories

Principle #2 in Action

- Ask Before You Tell
- Respect participant professionalism
- Help connect participants to learn from each other
- Build on participants' existing knowledge throughout your session



Principle #2 Example

You Belong Here — Introductions & Connections

If you're comfortable, stand up and find someone wearing the same color shirt, and share any of the following:

- Your name, where you're from, and what you do.
- What does this quote mean to you?

If you prefer, stay at your table and talk.



"WHEN A FLOWER
DOESN'T BLOOM YOU FIX
THE ENVIRONMENT IN
WHICH IT GROWS, NOT
THE FLOWER."
Alexander den Heijer

Adults are Problem-Centered Learners

Principle #3 in Action

- Ask what participants' goals are for the session
- Connect content to their current issues, goals, and problems throughout
- Ensure activities are relevant and directly applicable to their work
- Offer time to reflect and make connections



Pause and Reflect

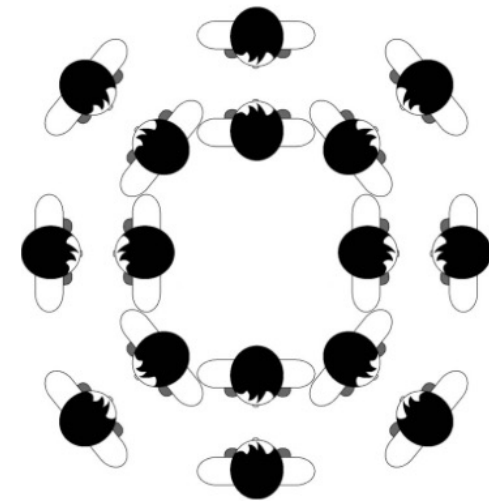
In your experience leading professional learning, what is something that has been difficult for you or that you wish you had more ideas about?

Jot down your reflections and save it for an activity in a few minutes.



Activity: Rapid Rounds

- **Choose a piece of candy** — Starbursts or Tootsie Rolls
- **Bring the notes** with your reflection (*if you want to take notes as others respond, you might also bring pen & paper*)
- **Form two circles** with the outer circle facing the inner circle
 - **Starbursts** outer circle
 - **Tootsie Rolls** inner circle
- **Round 1:** Inner circle asks their question; outer circle offers responses. Rotate on our cue.
- **Round 2:** Outer circle asks their question; inner circle offers responses. Rotate on our cue.



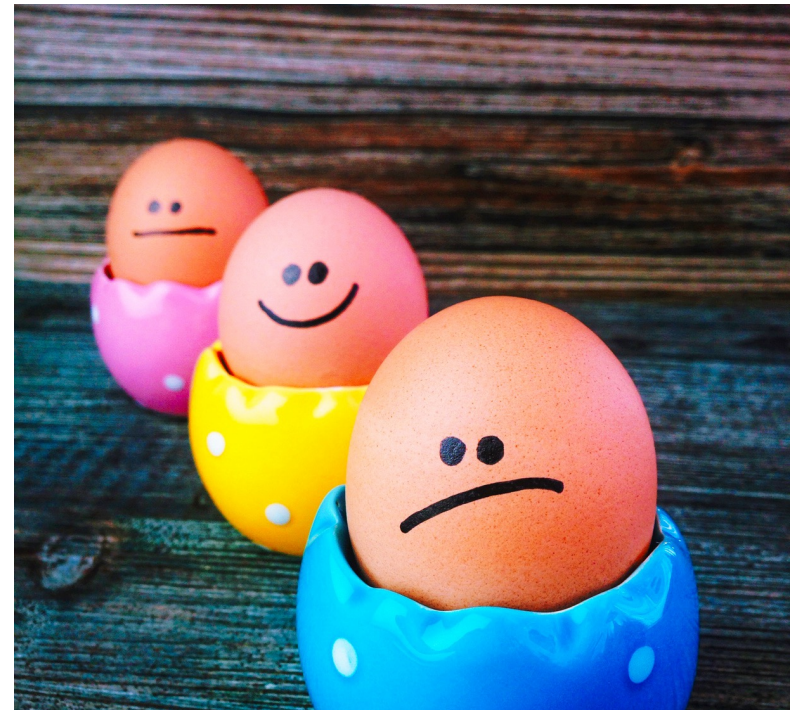
OR, stay at your table and continue reflecting on your own



Large Group Discussion

Rapid Rounds Key Take Aways

- What was it like to have a choice?
- How did hearing multiple ideas shift or expand your thinking?
- What stood out to you as you listened to different perspectives?
- How can different perspectives help us move beyond quick fixes and toward real understanding?



Adults Want to Learn

Principle #4 in Action

- Positively assume everyone wants to learn
- Express curiosity about participant questions and ideas
- Offer a variety of options for learning—reading, writing, reflecting, activities, discussion, etc.



Visual:
diagrams,
charts, videos,
slides, & other
visual aids



Auditory:
lectures,
discussions,
podcasts, &
verbal
instructions



Kinesthetic:
movement,
simulations,
role-playing, &
practical tasks



**Reading &
Writing:**
reading texts,
manuals, &
handouts /
writing notes



Reflective:
Self-study,
journaling, &
personal
reflection



Active:
Discussions,
group work, &
interactive
activities that
involve
participation



**Logical
(Analytical):**
Problem-
solving tasks,
structured
information, &
data analysis.

Turn and Talk OR Pause and Reflect

First, think about what you do to offer adults a variety of ways to learn or engage.

- What is something you have done and want to do more of?
- What is something new you want to try?

Next, Turn and Talk to a Neighbor.

Would you rather think on your own?
Just let your table know you are passing and take time to reflect.



Other Engagement Ideas

- *One-word Introduction*
- *Chat Packs*
- *Kahoot*
- *Gallery Walks*
- *Walk and Talk*
- *Jig-Saw*
- *Candy Partners*
- *Practice Cards*
- *Chalk Talk*

Your favorites?



Adults Need to Know Why *Principle #5 in Action*

- Get really clear on the purpose of the content, activities, examples, videos, etc.
- Share why something matters, how it impacts children, the research base (briefly), and/or how what you are doing supports their goals
- Help learners connect the information to specific children, families, or colleagues



Let's Think About Choice

- Think about all of the choices you have had in this session or at this entire conference.
- Jot down a few choices that stood out to you.
- Shout out the choices you're thinking about.
- What impact have these choices had on your engagement and learning?

**Your Way is
a Real Way**

Joseph & Hansen, 2026



Adults Want Agency

Principle #6 in Action

- Offer choices often and explicitly
- Value all ways of learning, engaging, and participating
- Collect formal and informal input about what and how participants want to participate
- Use all kinds of data to adjust as you go



Before You Go!

*Jot down **one idea** you plan to
use in your next
Professional Development session!*



THANK YOU



Let's Stay Connected

If this got you thinking and you want to chat more (or if someone on your team might want to dig into these ideas with us) reach out anytime!

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