

## Best Practices in Professional Development

*“Paraeducator training programs should be long-range, comprehensive and systematic. Often the impact of training is lessened because it is based on available speakers or the current “hot topic” rather than on progressive development of an identified set of knowledge and skills” (Pickett and Gerlach, 1997)*



### What Works

- Attention must be given to follow up strategies for learning to go from professional development / training to sustained learning or practice.
- 20% of participant’s learning will occur inside the training room and 80% will come from practicing outside the training setting.
- Studies on professional development state:
  - Traditional workshops, with no follow up, will result in only 5-10% change.
  - A group of schools working together, with follow up, will result in 75-90% change.
  - The most effective ways to develop change in practice are interactive experiential learning activities connected to real work situations, reflective activities, practice in the actual training, followed by onsite observation and feedback.
  - Follow up supports are critical when there is an emphasis on skill development and transferring those skills to the classroom.
  - The use of technology supports educators to learn new practices.
  - Ongoing, intensive and rigorous opportunities for learning make the most difference.
  - Systematic and comprehensive plans are foundational for educators to enhance their competency.
- Follow up support can be face-to-face or virtual. Examples include problem solving discussions, study groups, focused team meetings, blogs, modeling, coaching, practice with feedback, mentoring
- Distributing learning over time i.e.: taking a workshop and dividing it into parts with work place related practice activities conducted between the scheduled sessions supports the development of changes in practice.

### References

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