President’s Message

Literacy. This is a topic being discussed in many Alabama school districts. What exactly is literacy? Definitions include “the ability to read and write” and “competence or knowledge in a specified area.” Alabama test data indicates that students across the state are performing below expectations in reading despite many districts increased instructional emphasis in that area.

Discussions through the years have included topics of “word calling vs comprehension, whole language vs basal readers, whole group vs small group” and the list could go on. For years Alabama educators have struggled with how to teach reading to a diverse population where poverty is increasing and financial resources are decreasing. Students being on grade level by the end of third grade has been a goal for many years. However, there is obviously not an easy fix or a step by step instruction book to make that happen. If there were, every educator in Alabama and across the nation would have it and there would be no need for a literacy act.

Unlike speaking, reading is not an inborn natural occurrence that is learned by just hearing. Children learn to speak by listening to those around them speak. Children do not learn to read by being around readers. It must be taught, and the brain must wire itself to read by learning the many connections – sound/symbol relationship, background knowledge, etc. – that make a text come alive to the reader. Many different programs and strategies have tried to address how to make this happen. But many students still are not proficient.
Why?

That is the million-dollar question. The teaching of reading is obviously a complex one. And, the “how to” changes as new research continues to show more about how the brain works and how the brain is changing as “screen time” increases for younger children. The tasks that Alabama educators face is daunting: increased poverty, financial restraints, increased mental health issues, rapidly changing technology, and the unknown of how all of this effects the learning in young children. BUT, one thing is certain in this very challenging environment – Alabama has dedicated educators who believe in their students. Educators around the state continue to go above and beyond on a daily basis and continue to work to overcome all of the obstacles.

As the ALSDE continues to look for ways to support classroom teachers and school and district leaders, the students of Alabama are in good hands. As AASCD and other organizations join hands to increase this support, we know that the students of Alabama will continue to move forward.

Thanks for all you do and know that AASCD will continue to provide the professional development that educators need to continue the charge.

Quality Coaching Professional Development Opportunity

I recently read an article by Kraft, M.A., Blazar, D., Hogan, D. (2016), on the effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement. According to the article, students’ access to high-quality education begins with an effective teacher in every classroom. Many districts and schools are investing in professional development (PD) programs that may include one to three-day workshops for teachers to further their skills and content knowledge. The article suggests that these types of training are often considered ineffective because they are generic and are not prescriptive to improve student learning. Do you have a quality professional coaching program embedded for your staff? Do you provide daily professional learning for your staff? Are your students struggling with teachers being absent from the classroom? Are you spending thousands of dollars sending your teachers “away” for professional development?

Many districts are researching opportunities to address these concerns through teacher coaching programs. Teacher coaching is emerging as an alternative to traditional models of professional development that removes teachers from the classroom. According to Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010, an effective teacher coaching program has a positive impact on staff development and impacts student learning. Are you currently researching how to improve teaching and learning within your school(s)? Are you attempting to create a learning environment where educators can enhance their knowledge, practices, and beliefs?

If you are interested in investing in high-quality professional development through quality coaching, I invite you to join educators from around the state, January 27 & 28, 2020 for the Alabama Association for Supervision and Curriculum and Development (AASCD) Winter Conference. This two-day conference will focus on improving school achievement through quality coaching and feature our very own State Superintendent Eric Mackey and Joelleen Killion, the deputy executive director of the National Staff Development Council. Killion focuses on improving teaching quality and student learning as well as the NSDC Academy and its new Coaches Academy for school-based staff developers. The conference offers a variety of topics and opportunities to network with colleagues from across the state. Sessions are designed to inspire and motivate educators to collaborate and implement practical educational techniques within their district, their school, and their classroom.
Executive Director’s Report

The Skills Leaders Need Now

Leadership really is timeless, but some of the specifics change with the situation and societal norms. Leaders do require persuasive skills which are actually the use of language to change thinking, attitudes and sometimes values. This is a complex skill comprised of many other skills. So, in essence, people skills matter a lot.

Leadership also requires the ability to motivate. Motivation is the focus on behavior, not thinking. Most psychologists argue that behavior is easier to change than attitudes or beliefs (Legacee Corporate Services, 2018). One caveat here is that a leader can only do so much motivation, much comes from within the individuals.

To be an effective leader, you need a good set of human relations and interpersonal skills. These have been documented through mega studies by Ken Blanchard beginning in the 1970’s. Some of these skills as just common sense such as: vision, persuasion, inspiration, communication, team building and evolution, counseling, coaching, teaching, and mentoring. 21st century skills that are in high demand include critical thinking, problem solving, and information and civic literacy. An effective leader in today’s world must be able to learn quickly, adapt, anticipate, and be mentally agile (Blanchard, 2017).

In a constantly changing climate, leadership traits and habits from the past may not be able to withstand the challenges of today’s educational environment. The 20th century model of the controlling leaders of the 1950’s will not get faculty and staff on your side. The move from dictatorial to more participative in the 1990’s was when the style of loose management became the trend. Although the leader can and should be able to articulate an overall vision, the success of ideas and initiatives usually depends on the “boots on the ground” employees (teachers and staff). With multiple generations of employees in a school, an effective leader needs recognize and embrace these generational differences. Some basic skills leaders have been developing since the early 2000’s are: highly self motivated, open to feedback, be authentic and make connections, open to other possibilities, risk taking with ability to set clear objectives, respect for individuality, establish trust, intuitive so do not lose Gen X and Y employees, be genuine (Legacee Corporate Services, Inc., 2018).

Nine skills are highlighted by Maxine Driscoll (2018) and seem to be sound advice for all leaders.

1. Embrace change and innovation --- understand how to manage organizational change
2. Master self-leadership --- see work as a joy, see failure as a growth point
3. Be emotionally intelligent --- use distributive leadership, empower others, use abundance mindset
4. Welcome and value diversity --- adjust communication and styles of collaboration across cultures and generations
5. Develop 21st century mindset --- growth mindset, use data to inform decision-making
6. Be visionary --- want to make a difference, believe in collective genius
7. Are learners --- use disruption to create better learning organizations, seek different perspectives about future of learning
8. Connect with world --- fluency with digital and social media, develop flexible partnership, understand sustainability must be embedded into curriculum
9. Take action --- operate with a strong results focus, emphasize importance of efficiency, productivity and priorities

Three resources that I have found to be insightful are Business Matters (2018), all the Harvard Business Review articles on leadership, and the book by Maxine Driscoll (2018), Leadership Really Matters: Applying Innovation to the Educational Crisis Today. And two questions that I have learned to be beneficial are: Do you know your top 5 weaknesses? Are you involved/engaged in a program of personal improvement?
Executive Director’s Report

This quote by Henry Mintzberg “Leadership like swimming, cannot be learned by reading about it”, reminds me that leadership is about listening, engaging, and guiding action. Leadership is no longer a fixed role. Leadership should be seen as an act. Displaying leadership means convincing others to change direction, to leverage the strengths of others, to hone your own strengths and acknowledge your weaknesses, and to follow a personal growth plan.

Follow Alabama ASCD on alabamaascd.org, engage in the Winter Conference, and attend Boot Camps in February to enhance your knowledge on curriculum, instruction, and leadership.

Professional Learning - Keeping Up with Constant Changes

Katie Martin once said, “If we want to change how students learn, we must change how teachers learn.” I am going to take it a step further and say that we must also change how administrators learn! Throughout my career, professional learning has always been a passion of mine. I believe in professional learning and have always ensured that those who I worked with participated in impactful professional learning opportunities. As I transitioned to the Director of Professional Learning for CLAS, I began to understand on a larger scale, the importance of professional learning for our members.

During the past few months, educators have seen a lot of changes that will have a huge impact on schools/systems in Alabama. Literacy Act, Power-school LMS Transition, Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP) and teacher shortage are a few of the changes that have had and will continue to have impact on the way that schools/systems conduct their daily operations. As the State’s premier educational leadership organization, our focus will be to not only keep you abreast of any changes, but also continue to provide exemplary professional learning opportunities for our members.

We have seen record numbers registering for our Lunch and Learns during September and October. Karen Porter and Tony Thacker provided excellent webinars on the Alabama Reading Initiative and Strategies for Implementing a new SIS. We hope that you found this information enlightening! If you missed the webinar and are a member of CLAS, you can watch the recording by visiting our website, www.cclasleaders.org.

In October, AASCD along with CLAS and the SDE, partnered for the Curriculum and Instruction Bootcamps. Over 100 participants attended the one-day informative training sessions on the topics that keep curriculum directors up at night! They had the opportunity to not only engage representatives from the State Department of Education, but also gain insight into tools and resources to use in their schools/systems. Make sure that you join us for the Curriculum and Instruction Bootcamps in February.

Additionally, make plans to attend the AASCD Winter Conference which will be held January 27-28, 2020 at the Marriott Birmingham Hotel! The theme of the conference is centered around Instructional Coaching and will provide effective practices designed to transform teaching and learning in school districts throughout Alabama! We look forward to seeing you there!

We are super excited to announce that the PLU for AASCD has been approved! If you are interested in earning a PLU while attending AASCD’s professional learning opportunities, register for PLUA-CLD790.

According to Nigel Hamilton, “thanksgiving is a time of togetherness and gratitude.” During this thanksgiving season, please take time to get some rest, and treasure those closest to you! As always, if CLAS can ever be of assistance, do not hesitate to contact us!
National Harbor, Maryland was the setting for the eleventh Leader to Leader (L2L) Conference held November 5-7, 2019. The conference connected Constituent Services leaders in “Aligning with the Whole Child” and provided a framework for using the Four Disciplines of Execution (4DX) framework.

A welcome reception was held on Tuesday evening, setting the stage for an action-packed conference to follow. On Wednesday, Ronn Nozoe, ASCD Interim Executive Director, welcomed attendees with a reminder that “whole child is a philosophical and pedagogical approach” supported by a growth mindset. Additionally, he encouraged educators to be vocal because “Educators are the experts. We need to use our voice.” After Ronn’s introduction to the revamping of the 2007 Whole Child platform, Kelisa Wing led attendees through a session on unpacking the Whole Child Indicators. Kelisa was the 2017 DoDEA State Teacher of the Year and a 2016 ASCD Emerging Leader. After a thorough analysis of the Indicators, she challenged individuals to answer the question, “What does Whole Child mean to me?” Then, Principal of Lake Ridge High School in Mansfield, TX and 2017 ASCD Emerging Leader, Brandon Johnson, facilitated the group’s utilization of the Four Disciplines of Execution (4DX) framework for improvement planning. I was privileged to serve as a small group thought partner, helping others determine their WIG (wildly important goal), Lead Measures (proactive steps taken every day to reach goals), and Lag Measures (how to know progress is made). After a productive, thought-provoking day, L2L participants then had the opportunity to meet the newly appointed Executive Director and CEO, Ranjit Sidhu.

Ranjit Sidhu comes to ASCD from the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP), where he has served as President and CEO since 2015. Before NCCEP, Ranjit led strategy development and product integration efforts at both the College Board and ACT. Earlier in his career, he was a high school social studies teacher. Ranjit officially joins ASCD on January 1, 2020. After welcoming Ranjit to the team, attendees were treated to dinner with 2005 ASCD Emerging Leader Pete Hall where Pete shared 7 important lessons:

1. Family first. Know your why.
2. Be the best you can be. (3) Put in the work. Folks will notice.
3. It’s not about you. (5) Useful ideas + compelling voice. (6) This life is a people business. (7) Enjoy every moment. Everyone left invigorated and ready to tackle L2L day two.

Day two started with an engaging Twitter chat where even more engaging questions (and answers) were posted including: why is change so hard to effect in education? Describe the characteristics of a change leader. How can teacher leaders be change agents? Share a success story of effective change. Sean Slade followed the Twitter chat with an introduction to the FREE resources available through the Whole Child Network accessible at www.ascd.org. Professional Learning Branding, Design, and Facilitation were the next items on the agenda where 2013 ASCD Emerging Leader, Allie Rodman, shared her work on personalized professional learning followed by a book signing. Over lunch, the Class of 2019 Emerging Leaders were welcomed and officially introduced, including Alabama’s own Anthony Oliver. Participants celebrated a successful ending to L2L by either participating in a Shark Tank presentation or supporting participants as they presented their plans developed using the Four Disciplines of Execution (4DX) framework. With a renewed spirit, L2L participants walked away with planning tools, priorities, and resources in hand to effectively align their work with the Whole Child as charged. What can you do to ensure students are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged?
Join us for the AASCD Winter Conference. The two-day conference will explore effective practices designed to transform teaching and learning in school districts throughout the state. Make connections and take home tools and strategies to understand and implement effective practices in classrooms, schools, and districts. Join AASCD and improve your skills as you participate in this powerful professional learning opportunity.

**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

Joellen Killion  
Dr. Eric Mackey

**January 27-28, 2020 - Marriott Birmingham - Birmingham, AL**

It Starts with a Ripple.

A ripple of innovation. A ripple of excitement. Ripples of newfound knowledge, engagement, collaboration, and so much more.

Our conference is designed by educators for educators, and empowers you to connect with the resources, knowledge, and community you need to implement innovative and effective instruction with a whole child approach. We learn from each other, we teach each other, and we lead each other, together. Start Your Ripple at Empower20.

Individual Information

Prefix  First Name  Middle Name  Last Name
Position/Title
Date of Birth  Personal Mobile Phone  Home Phone
Email Address
Home Address
City  State  Zip Code

Method of Payment
□ Check #  □ Payroll Deduction (authorization agreement must be signed below)
□ PO #  □ Visa/MasterCard/Discover
Invoice To:  

Card Number:  ___________ - ___________ - ___________ - ___________  CVV:  _______
Expiration Date:  _____/_____
Cardholder's Address:  ______________________________________________________
Cardholder's Signature:  ______________________________________________________
Cardholder's Phone:  __________________________

School/Organization Information

School/Organization Name
Address
City  State  Zip Code
Organization Phone  Work Phone
Direct Phone (include extension)  Fax
School System
Preferred Address:  □ Home  □ Work  □ Preferred Phone:  □ Mobile  □ Home  □ Work

Recruiter Information - New Members Only
I was recruited by:  ____________________________________________________________

Payroll Deduction Authorization (please verify your system's participation):  I authorize the Board of Education to automatically deduct dues each year for membership in the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools and such other affiliated professional organizations as indicated on this form unless I revoke this authorization in writing prior to Sept. 15 of any given school year. If for any reason employment is terminated, any amount still owed will be deducted from the last payroll check or be the individual's responsibility. Death of the member shall revoke this authorization, and no further deduction shall be made. This authorization shall permit and accept any changes in the amount of dues officially adopted by CLAS and affiliated organizations on this form.
Signature  ___________________________  Date  __________

I. CLAS DUES - Full Membership with Legal Services
(For school/system employees with administrative or supervisory positions ONLY)

A. CLAS Membership - Required
Individual/Institutional  □ $284

B. State Affiliate Dues - At Least One Affiliate is Required
AASSP Active (Secondary Principals)  □ $95 Renew  □ $30 New
AAESA Active (Elementary Principals)  □ $106
AAMSP (Middle-Level Principals)  □ $60 Renew  □ $30 New
ASA (Superintendents)  □ Must be approved by Superintendent
AASCD (Curriculum & Supervision)  □ $50
ALA-CASE (Special Education)  □ $40
AAPASS (Prevention, Attendance, Support)  □ $30
ACND (Child Nutrition)  □ $25
ACTA/AACTE (Career/Tech)  □ $125
AASPA (Personnel & HR)  □ $40
ALAEL (Leaders of English Learning)  □ $50

C. National Affiliate Dues - Optional
NAESP Active* (Elementary Principals)  □ $235
NAESP Institutional* (Elementary Principals, Transferable)  □ $280
NAESP Assistant Principal* (Elementary Principals)  □ $195
ACTE (Career/Tech)  □ $80
CEC/CASE (Special Education)  □ $125
NASSP Active** (Secondary Principals)  □ $250 Renew  □ $215 New
NASSP Institutional** (Secondary Principals, Transferable)  □ $250 Renew  □ $215 New

GRAND TOTAL:  $______

II. CLAS DUES - Membership without Legal Services
(For retirees, consultants, SDE, Higher Ed., teachers, non-supervisory employees, etc.)

A. CLAS Membership - Required
Retired  □ Emeritus membership may include legal services if no lapse from from full membership.  □ $75
At Large (Non-School/System Employee)  □ $75
Aspiring Administrator/Emerging Leader  □ $75

B. State Affiliate Dues - Optional
AASSP Active (Secondary Principals)  □ $95 Renew  □ $30 New
AAESA Active (Elementary Principals)  □ $106
AAMSP (Middle-Level Principals)  □ $60 Renew  □ $30 New
AASCD (Curriculum & Supervision)  □ $50
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ACTA/AACTE (Career/Tech)  □ $125
AASPA (Personnel & HR)  □ $40
ALAEL (Leaders of English Learning)  □ $50

C. National Affiliate Dues - Optional
NAESP Aspiring Administrator (Elementary Principals)  □ $80
NAESP Retired (Secondary Principals)  □ $80
ACTE (Career/Tech)  □ $80
CEC/CASE (Special Education)  □ $125
NASSP Retired (Secondary Principals)  □ $50

GRAND TOTAL:  $______

Where to Send This Form
Mail to:  CLAS  P.O. Box 428  Montgomery, AL 36101-0428
Fax to:  (334) 265-3611
Email to:  membership@clasleaders.org

Address questions to (800) 239-3616 or membership@clasleaders.org

CLAS is a nonprofit organization exempt from income tax under Code Section 501 (c)(6). Contributions or gifts are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal Income Tax purposes.
For schools looking for a partner in continuous improvement, the name Cognia may be new, but the organization behind it has a long-standing history of supporting and improving education in the state of Alabama and beyond. The improvement organization, formerly known as AdvancED, or regionally by its accrediting body SACS,* has changed its name and expanded its offerings to schools.

Cognia—which offers accreditation, assessment, and school-improvement services throughout the United States and in more than 80 countries—was formed to address the need for quality education, evaluation and student assessment. Think of Cognia as a network of educators to help strengthen schools so all students have the opportunity that knowledge brings. Accreditation by a reputable, internationally recognized body is one mark of quality, but sustained and continuous improvement requires an ongoing commitment.

Here are three areas where the right partner can support you:

1. **Professional Learning & Consulting:** Whether you need diagnostic services to identify areas in need of support, are looking to evaluate classroom environments, assess student engagement, or implement quality professional learning, a knowledgeable partner can leverage experience and innovative technology solutions to your benefit.

2. **Assessment:** As a school, system or a large education agency, work with an established assessment organization to design reliable, general, and alternate assessment solutions that measure what matters—to help you adjust teaching and learning in real time and for long-term impact.

3. **Accreditation & Certification:** Accreditation is a mark of distinction and school quality that can benefit your community. However, not all certifications are high quality. Be sure to align your institution with an accrediting agency that is reputable, standards-based and focused on improvement. An impartial third-party evaluation of your entire institution is critical. STEM Certified schools and programs should be more than in name only—look for rigorous, research-based standards that are applied holistically across all learning environments.

Cognia’s student-centric approach to improvement, innovative technology solutions, and decades of experience help schools make an impact on instruction and student learning. State, system, and school leaders gain clarity and perspective when provided with objective feedback and expert guidance. Educators can then more effectively evaluate their current reality, prioritize resource allocation, drive improvement and develop a roadmap for the future.

Schools looking for help with their continuous improvement journey turn to Cognia for a variety of school improvement, student assessment and engagement needs. From diagnostic reviews for intensive support, institutions seeking accreditation, or STEM Certification, Cognia offers a customizable experience to engage students in ways that matter and improve learning. Cognia STEM Certified schools offer rigor and holistically incorporate STEM principles into the entire curriculum. Currently, Alabama has almost 20 Cognia STEM Certified Schools throughout our state.

The result of the merger of AdvancED and Measured Progress, Cognia is a nonprofit and was formed to bridge the gap between school evaluation and student assessment. Cognia is an undeniable force for enhancing schools, engaging students, and driving better outcomes for all. Find out more at cognia.org.

*S Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement.
"Coaching & Teaching: The process is one-in-the-same," explains Assistant Superintendent of Instruction and former athletic coach, Dr. Jimmy Shaw. Whether it’s the on or off-season, any discussion with Jimmy Shaw relating to instruction, pedagogy, or professional learning could easily be inclined to a coaching-teaching analogy in efforts to sift away the theoretical jargon and bring clarity to what most would consider fundamental best practices—or as Dr. Jimmy Shaw would say, “…It’s just good teaching!”

“Practice makes permanent,” declares Shaw as he emphasizes the importance of why, like coaches, teachers must approach instructional design with a deliberate urgency to reach every learner through the daily activities that meet the individual needs of each learner within their instructional care. We cheer and rejoice on the day of the big game to see the champion team play together with calculated chemistry, execute plays with deliberate consistency, while scoring field goal after field goal with an unrelenting desire to reach their team’s goal—the big “W.” However, what we don’t see behind the team’s performance is the coach who has consistently conditioned his athletes, assessed their strengths and weaknesses, identified individual needs, and crafted personalized rigorous training to help each player discover his/her true potential—his/her individual best.

Even the very best athlete with “raw talent” could be deemed a second-rate player with little possibility to achieve real athletic success. If an athlete runs with improper technique, releases the ball using incorrect form, defends using improper stance, or lands without clear visual and mental focus, the athlete would surely develop habits that would not only cause teams to lose games, but such habits could also hold the athlete back from realizing his/her full potential. Even worse, if certain improper techniques aren’t corrected, it could lead to self-injury—which could, in turn, take an athlete out of the game, altogether.

Educators who are familiar with the logistics of athletic coaching would most likely agree that the principles are very much alike, and the qualities of the best coaches correspond with qualities possessed by the best teachers. Hence, we’ve identified four key principle coaching strategies that can be directly applied and/or used to enhance instructional strategies and classroom routines, even in the most challenging learning environments:

1. GREAT COACHES...

**Set Clear Goals**  
and use simulation & modeling to help players reach those goals

“…We try to define the standard that we want everyone to work on…” –Nick Saban

Great coaches make sure their players have no question about the expectations and goals that have been set for the team. The playbook diagrams with X’s and O’s shown on a demo-board are important. However, is it not more important for players to see the effective execution of the play in action? A good coach would never put players on the field on game night having only viewed X’s and O’s in playbook diagrams on the locker-room overhead.

Using step-by-step simulations with guide-on-the-side modelling, great coaches provide models and create hands-on simulations on the field for players contemplate possible opposing countermoves and potential foils that could cause the play to be ineffective?

Models and practical simulations provide athletes with a clear procedural understanding of every action and counteraction to effectively attain end-goals.

2. GREAT TEACHERS...

**Set Clear Targets for Learning**  
… alongside models to scaffold students in meeting those Targets

After handing out papers and explaining what students will do with the information we just used 20 minutes of instruction time to carefully and beautifully deliver, we suddenly pause to ask the BIG question:

“Does anyone have questions?”

Dr. Jimmy Shaw  
Superintendent  
Florence City Schools
After awkward moments of silence, one student raises his hand saying, “Uh...So...what are we doing?”

Many of us have seen or have even been this teacher. Whether its solving math equations, writing a persuasive essay, or dissecting a frog in the science lab, even the most carefully crafted lesson-plan can become an epic fail if the lesson disregards the use of effective instructional models (or modeling) alongside clearly-defined outcomes for learning—Learning Targets. Students often struggle to reach learning mastery because they are unclear as to what/how mastery should look nor the vital steps necessary to reach mastery.

Some of the best modeling happens in the elementary classrooms, as the best teachers use think-alouds, read-alouds to foster integral thinking and literacy skills needed for success across content areas and grade-levels. Models could be as simple as using a whiteboard (or overhead) to walk students through each step of a learning process and each phase of making application. Many teachers have found it effective to use exemplary student work examples as instructional models to clarify learning outcomes and targets. When teachers clearly define Learning Targets and model essential processes needed to reach such targets, frustration is often minimized for both students and teachers.

2. GREAT COACHES...

Use Small-Team Training Conditioning
... to Improve Weaknesses & Develop Strengths - “Front-Seven” or “Seven on Seven”

Great coaches skillfully utilize their coaching staff to be continuously responsive to the developmental needs of all player on their team. As strengths and weaknesses are identified, coaches address these needs using small-team training and small-teams drills, such as Front-Seven or Seven on Seven. Such methods of coaching (and peer-to-peer coaching) provide corrective training and conditioning customized to develop athletic abilities within players.

Observing these practice drills may give the impression that little forethought is needed in crafting these small-teams. Nonetheless, such an assumption would most likely be a certain misconception, as great coaches are not randomly make small-teams. These coaches utilize data from stats and formative observations to identify targeted skills lacking among his/her athletes. The coach knows exactly which players will receive specific training; which players will train together; which coach will facilitate what trainings.

GREAT TEACHERS...

Facilitate Small-Group Instruction
... to Close Learning Gaps and Deficits

Great teachers maintain a keen awareness of the students who “get it,” the students who are “getting there,” and the students who need a deeper level of support. Through deliberate instructional approaches, these teachers often allocate class time for students to learn and to demonstrate their learning within teacher-facilitated small-groups settings. This approach provides teachers with a laser-focused view into where students are in their learning, thereby, making real-time assessments to identify root causes of misconceptions and skill-deficits.

Small-group instructional strategies afford teachers opportunities to regularly monitor student-progress and, it provides critical student-driven data that will help teachers to tailor interventions to fit the learning needs of the students and to adjust future instruction accordingly.

Student-led cooperative small grouping and mixed-ability-grouping can also prove effective. The instructional challenge is to put structures in place that ensure all students in such groups have clearly defined roles, and no student is left out (or allowed to opt-out) of the learning task. When implemented effectively, cooperative learning within small-groups and partner-work (“pair-share”) can allow students to be valuable human resources for one another.

3. GREAT COACHES...

Provide Ongoing Personalized Corrective Feedback
Fundamentals Training

“We have got to use every opportunity to improve individually so we can improve collectively.” – Nick Saban, Alabama Crimson Tide

If an athlete struggles due to a lack of understanding or acquisition of fundamental skills or improper technique, that athlete is given one-on-one intervention time to correct the improper techniques or to develop essential skills necessary for the athlete to make advancements in his/her athletic abilities.
Despite an athlete's innate abilities or raw-talent, a great coach knows that if fundamental deficiencies are not corrected, the results could not only negatively affect the game, but this could also be injurious—even causing permanent injury—to the athlete.

**GREAT TEACHERS...**

**Provide Ongoing Personalized Corrective Feedback**

Teachers who make the greatest impact on student-learning are those who make strategic efforts to ensure each student knows, not simply a letter-grade or score, but also why he/she earned that grade. Great teachers strive to support individual growth in every student in their instructional care by providing specific personalized feedback to guide each learner to understanding how they can retool his/her thinking when necessary. Without corrective feedback, students often have no clue how to improve as learners.

As a minor example of how this affects students, I often share how, as a ninth-grade English teacher, I had students to honestly tell me “I’ve always written the pronoun I in lowercase!” I even had one student to say, after I capitalized the pronoun I on her paper, “That doesn’t even look right!” There are many more impacting examples when we consider reading and literacy in lower grades.

Hence, without proper correction, as Dr. Jimmy Shaw proclaims with true conviction, “Practice [really] makes permanent.”

> Coaching is about “How do I get people to play at their peak level?” – Phil Jackson, Chicago Bulls

Additionally, when a student demonstrates skill mastery, great teachers support deeper thinking and learning through authentic application and innovation—fostering a desire for curiosity and continuous learning and growth (e.g. project-based, problem-based, design-thinking, etc.).

**GREAT TEACHERS...**

**Support Learning through Student Engaged Reflection & Assessment**

Great teachers foster self-awareness within their students by creating protocols and routines that support self-reflection and self-assessment. They embed structures for students to routinely monitor their own learning progress. Just as an athlete runs down the court routinely looking up to check the scoreboard, students in a self-aware learning culture develop an intrinsic need to regularly monitor their own progress through self-assessment and self-reflection.

Below are just a few examples of student-engaged assessments and learning:

- Student Portfolios (e.g. digital formats such as Weebly sites or Seesaw. Paper formats serve the same purpose.)
- Reflection-Blogs
- Student-Driven Data Notebooks
- Peer Feedback Protocols
- Student-led Conferences

**GREAT COACHES...**

**Foster Ownership of Self Development through Self-Analysis & Self-Assessment (e.g. Film Study)**

> “You can't force your will on people. If you want them to act differently, you need to inspire them to change themselves...” –Phil Jackson, Chicago Bulls

Great coaches know the power and value of self-assessment and self-reflection. Even with star athletes, coaches understand the power of instilling a self-motivated desire within players work at getting faster, better, and stronger. Hence, great coaches regularly provide athletes with performance stats and video footage and from week to week in order that they compare themselves with themselves. These structures ensure athletes have no question as to what areas they need to focus on to improve their overall athletic performance.
Professional Ethics and Professionalizing Education

By Troy Hutchings, Ed.D.
Nationally Recognized Expert — Educator Ethics

Throughout this series, we’ve discussed what professional ethics mean for education. But what would happen if they became a way of life and a regular part of the working lives of teachers, the largest professional field in the United States?

At first, the changes would largely be structural — teachers would receive training on professional ethics in preparation programs, have discussions involving ethical issues with mentors as they navigate the early years of their careers, and ideally, continue to get refreshers in the form of regular professional development in which teams of teachers revisit the principles of professional ethics and are encouraged to discuss with each other how they apply to their own challenges in the classroom.

All of this would go a long way toward helping individual teachers navigate the complexities of their role and become more aware of the potential unintended consequences of the thousands of decisions they make on a daily basis. But over time, once the idea of professional ethics has become ingrained in the field as a whole — and as important to teaching and learning as content and pedagogy — the impact could be transformative.

Educators would avoid falling into the trap of assuming that misconduct is a discrete event and something that only happens to teachers who somehow lose sight of their personal moral compass. Instead, they would acknowledge the collective risk that all teachers face as a result of the demands of their overlapping roles and the intensely personal relationships they are expected to foster, and recognize the value of professional ethics as a governing principle to help them navigate these competing and highly nuanced tensions.

In turn, this understanding would give teachers permission to approach each other in candid, professional discussions about uncomfortable subjects — including how their actions might be misconstrued by students. Just as doctors and counselors are trained to discuss ethical dilemmas and their impact with one another, the framework that professional ethics provides can allow teachers to approach each other and acknowledge blind spots in a way that’s focused on professional obligations, not personal judgment.

This kind of professional environment would allow teachers to self-regulate as a field, much as codes of ethics guide doctors, lawyers and other professionals. And the collective awareness of professional obligations fostered by this environment would allow many situations to be addressed before damage is done and teachers’ reputations — and students’ lives — face irrevocable harm. But that’s just the beginning.

In light of professional standards that help educators govern themselves and their peers, district policies and education law could ultimately become far less complex and overly prescriptive. To revisit one example, there would be no need to explain in voluminous HR manuals why a $25 gift is unacceptable and a $24.99 one is perfectly fine if educators are trained to recognize the ethical challenges that receiving any gift presents and address them in ways that reflect the unique nature of every situation. And where policies impact large numbers of teachers, the ability to collectively discuss them could help change them for the better.

If these kinds of conversations are brought to light in transparent ways, parents and the community as a whole also could understand the challenges teachers face in a richer way. In the short term, that could mean a parent wouldn’t be offended when a teacher declines an invitation to a family event, but over time, this understanding could lead to a much deeper respect for teachers — and the profession as a whole.
And the profession itself could be strengthened in another way, by helping reduce the large numbers of teachers who leave the field, often early in their careers.

While there are many reasons that teachers leave the classroom, one of the most important ones is the sense of agency — the idea they often aren’t trusted to draw on their training and experience to make decisions that are best for their students. Instead of being straightjacketed by the inflexible policies and procedures that have been put into place in the absence of established professional ethics, teachers could become far more empowered — and empowerment is one of the things that make people less likely to leave a job. The conversations that professional ethics help engender also could help shatter the sense of isolation that many new teachers feel as they navigate the beginnings of their careers.

I’ve written before about how education in this country evolved in ways that, unlike professions like medicine and the law, made assumptions rooted in our cultural expectations about parenting about how teachers should rely on their own ingrained sense of personal values to guide them. Not only has that assumption left too many educators unprepared for the complexity of their role and the challenges of navigating their relationships with students and colleagues, I would argue that it also has ultimately diminished the profession. Now we have an opportunity to reconcile our expectations of teachers with a framework that holds them to a higher standard than policy or the law, while creating a collective network of support that protects individual educators, children and the profession. Perhaps more than anything, that’s what professional ethics can bring to the field — a rethinking of teaching as a true profession, in the eyes of policymakers, the public, and most importantly, in the eyes of teachers themselves.

About the Author

Hutchings has a record of full-time teaching, research and administrative responsibilities at the university level spanning 15 years; and has served as a high school teacher, administrator and coach in public and private schooling environments for 16 years. He researches, writes and speaks about professional ethics, educator misconduct, and developing a framework for an ethical and legal teaching practice. He was the primary subject-matter expert contributing to the development of the ProEthica® program, a professional learning program on educator ethics.

About the Program

The ProEthica program is an online professional development program designed to give educators the tools they need to guide decision making, mitigate professional risk, and support student safety and welfare. Throughout the program, educators are given the opportunity to think about and discuss a variety of ethical dilemmas, including many they may not have thought about before, and learn how to determine a course of action that would minimize risk for all involved. This program offers more than just instruction: it provides coaching, peer-to-peer feedback and access to relevant external resources. More importantly, it provides an opportunity for educators to engage in difficult, but crucial conversations to protect the safety of their students, schools and communities. The ProEthica program is being used in districts across the country, including Jefferson County School District in Alabama.

For more information on the ProEthica program, contact Syfr Learning’s Matthew Shafer at Matthew@syfrlearning.com or Christine Drew at Christine@syfrlearning.com.

RealClearPolitics

As Published on RealClearEducation.com
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