

Breaking the habit of ineffective professional development for teachers (Mckinsey & Company)

A teacher professional-development (PD) program that is integrated with a system for evaluating teachers' strengths and areas for improvement can provide a serious boost to teacher performance and student outcomes. Many systems invest significant sums in PD programs but do so as a habit, tending to offer the same set of training courses each year without regard for how they might fit into a comprehensive program or how effective they are—even when teachers complain that some of the courses are not useful. According to a recent survey, 59 percent of teachers found content-related learning opportunities useful, fewer than half found PD on non-content-related areas useful, and only 27 percent of teachers rated the training they received on student discipline and classroom management as useful, though this topic is a frequent challenge and a key to enabling student learning.

School systems need processes to ensure that teacher PD programs contain high-quality content to help their teachers master valuable skills relevant to their individual development needs. We sought out ideas on what such processes might look like based on our extensive global experience and research in education and other sectors into topics related to talent management, training, and professional development. We studied school systems at the national, state, and local levels, as well as other leading educational institutions and public- and private-sector organizations.

This article highlights five promising ideas that we identified:

1. Base the PD program on a vision of effective teaching;
2. Segment teachers and deliver PD strategically;
3. Make coaching the centerpiece of PD;
4. Move from “push” to “pull,” so that teachers get what they want, when they want it; and
5. Only offer PD with demonstrated impact.

<http://mckinseysociety.com/breaking-the-habit-of-ineffective-professional-development-for-teachers/>