

A District Engages in the Five Practices

Jessica Slayton: The five practices are really infused into our task PD that we do in the district. We have three levels of PD. The first level focuses on setting goals, choosing high quality tasks, and then also anticipating students' solutions. The book refers to the goal setting and the planning as practice zero and we think that's so important because you can't have a good discussion if you don't have a task worth talking about.

Our task level II PD actually focuses on being able to maintain the cognitive demand of the task and that's done through the idea of assessing and advancing questions, which would occur during the monitoring phase. Our focus during that time is really helping teachers with the monitoring phase of the lesson.

And then, our task level III PD focuses on the selecting, sequencing, and connecting. It's such an exciting PD because the teachers they are making selections based on what was anticipated, but then we give them student work samples and say, "Hey, you have a plan, but it didn't turn out the way you planned. What do you do? How do you think on your feet?" We're trying to give them that real life experience so they understand how you might have to change your selection, or what do you do to infuse something you anticipated that no one did. So the teachers really learn how to do that selecting, sequencing, and then connecting of the student solution paths.

Another piece that we have done book studies. I did a book study two summers ago with about 120 math teachers across the district, and they realized wow, my lesson planning maybe isn't sufficient for this level of student engagement. It was a moment where they tripped over the truth, and they needed to change practice because they saw that they couldn't get the results with the planning they were engaging in. Most recently we did one with about 35 instructional coaches who then, in turn, are doing those book studies back in their buildings. It's been a really powerful journey with five practices and we've tried to infuse it in lots of different places professional learning.