MyTeachingPartner: Coaching Teachers to Improve their Interactions with Children

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Overview

• Focusing on Process in Professional Development

• MyTeachingPartner – An Overview and Illustration of Ongoing Refinement of the Model

• MTP In-depth: Focused Reflection that Increases Observational Skills
Take home messages

• All our work with teachers should model the intentionality we want our teachers to have with their students

• Need to have clear goals for teachers and clear methods for getting them there

• Designing and implementing effective professional development takes time – we have much to learn!
FOCUSBING ON PROCESS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
What we know

- Growing consensus around a general set of parameters for “effective” professional development (Zaslow et al., 2010)
  - There are **specific and articulated objectives**
  - **Practice is an explicit focus**, and attention is given to linking the focus on early educator knowledge and practice.
  - There is **collective participation of teachers** from the same classrooms or schools
  - The **intensity and duration is matched to the content** being conveyed.
  - The educators are prepared to **conduct child assessments and interpret their results** as a tool for ongoing monitoring of the effects of PD
  - It is appropriate for the organizational context and **aligned with standards for practice**.
What we don’t know

• The early childhood field is at a place where professional development practice and craft knowledge require a larger and firmer platform of theoretical and empirical expertise... **We need to know more about the dynamic and transactional teaching and learning processes underlying these effects** as they function in real-world early childhood settings. (Sheridan et al., 2009 p. 378).
Focusing on the Process of PD

• We need to know not just **what** we are teaching in PD, but **how** we are teaching it. Why?
  – Learn how to create more efficient and effective PD experiences
  – Provide general recommendations to the practice community that they can take into their own work
  – Inform modifications of evidence-based programs as they go to the field
Intentional Teaching
The ECI Course: How Will You Get There
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOWING</th>
<th>Understanding current information on how to interact with children in ways that promote social, behavioral, and cognitive development.</th>
<th>Knowledge of child development, knowledge of a range of effective teaching practices, knowledge of individual children’s needs, content knowledge, knowledge of self</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEEING</td>
<td>Identifying effective teacher-child interactions in action – both in others as well as in ones’ own interactions.</td>
<td>Analysis of videos of effective teachers and self, to identify when things are going well or not well in interactions with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOING</td>
<td>Enacting effective teacher-child interactions in the classroom.</td>
<td>Effective implementation of curricula, ability to modify plans as needed in the moment to meet specific goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>REFLECTING</td>
<td>Engaging in self-observation and critical analysis of teaching with goal of becoming more effective.</td>
<td>Guided reflections, coaching/mentoring</td>
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MTP – AN OVERVIEW
What is MTP?

• A professional development program in which
  – Coaches provide teachers with individualized, one-on-one support over the course of the school year.
  – Using the CLASS as a guide, coaches assist teachers to boost the effectiveness of their interactions with children.
The Development of MTP
Teacher-Child Interactions Are Key

Teacher-child interactions are the components of classrooms that matter most to children’s social and academic development.
What Does the CLASS Measure?

**Emotional Support**
- Positive Climate
- Negative Climate
- Teacher Sensitivity
- Regard for Student Perspectives
Classroom Organization

Behavior Management

Productivity

Instructional Learning Formats
Instructional Support

- Concept Development
- Quality of Feedback
- Language Modeling
Why focus on CLASS?

Higher CLASS scores were associated with

- Higher standardized tests of early literacy
- Higher standardized tests of academic functioning
- Lower levels of internalizing behaviors
- More behavioral engagement

Incremental differences in teacher-child interactions net real differences for children’s outcomes.
Implications of CLASS Research for Professional Development

– Teacher-child interactions are the components of classrooms that matter most to children’s social and academic development.

– Professional development needs to focus on teachers’ interactions with children.

– Teachers need support to improve interactions in all domains, with sustained attention on the lower-scoring Instructional Support dimensions.
MTP – More Details

- Year long program
- Remote, online coaching
- Cycles of video-based feedback – average about 11 a year
- Teachers videotape self teaching
- Coaches edit video and provide feedback through written prompts and phone conversation
- All feedback uses CLASS as a lens for viewing practice – teacher and coach decide together on focus of sessions
  - Start year focused on Emotional Support, then Classroom Organization
  - Every cycle includes Instructional Support feedback
The First Study of MTP
(The MTP Professional Development Study)

– 240 participating pre-k teachers
– Three different treatments
  • Materials (traditional)
  • Website access, materials
  • Website access, materials, MTP coaching
– Goal: Boost the effectiveness of teacher-child interactions
Effects of MTP Support on Classrooms

- Teachers with MTP coaches
  - Grew more sensitive in interactions with children
  - Increased children’s engagement in instruction
  - Improved language stimulation techniques
  - Reported higher levels of satisfaction and motivation and lower levels of isolation
- MTP coaching was a more powerful intervention in high-poverty classrooms.
Results: Teacher Sensitivity

Improvements in Teacher Sensitivity

- Control
- MTP
Results: Language Modeling

Improvements in Language Modeling

- Control
- MTP

Graph showing improvements over time from September to June.
MTP Effects under High Poverty Conditions

- MTP - 100% Poverty
- Control - 100% Poverty
- MTP - 50% Poverty
- Control - 50% Poverty
Effects of MTP Support on Children

• Children with MTP teachers
  – Made greater gains in tests of early literacy
  – Experienced lower levels of problem behavior

• Children in classrooms with early-career teachers may benefit more from teachers’ participation in MTP.
Lessons Learned & Next Steps

• Need to focus more on knowledge part, at least for some teachers – so we designed a course

• Also need to test scalability by hiring external coaches and developing ways to train and support them

• Needed to test model with a broader set of teachers
NCRECE research design

- Randomly selected into Course or No Course
- Randomly selected into Coach or No Coach

**Phase I**
- Summer 2008
  - Course
    - Consult
    - No Coach
  - No Course
    - Consult
    - No Coach

**Phase II**
- Fall 2008 - Spring 2009
# Teacher Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Course Condition</th>
<th>Control Condition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( N )</td>
<td>( \text{Percent} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach in Head Start Program</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach in a Public School Building</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree of Less</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree or higher</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience: Pre Kindergarten</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>10.82 (7.66)</td>
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Differences in knowledge about interactions

- Teachers in the course condition scored higher on multiple choice items about effective interactions
- Effect Size = .79
Teacher skills in detecting effective interactions

- Teachers in the course demonstrated better skills in detecting effective interactions in video.

- Effect Size = .59
Emotional Support

Positive Climate: ES = 0.35
Negative Climate (reversed): ES = 0.18
Teacher Sensitivity: ES = 0.29
Regard for Student Perspectives: ES = 0.48**
Classroom Organization

ES = .14

Behavior Management

ES = .21

Productivity

ES = .40*

Instructional Learning Formats
Instructional Support

- Concept Development: ES = .64***
- Quality of Feedback: ES = .55***
- Language Modeling: ES = .55***
- Literacy Focus: ES = .15

CLASS Rating
Potential mechanisms?

- Changes in instructional support were, in part, mediated by improvements in “seeing” effective interactions

- This has led us to enhance this part of the course in new online course
### Effects during Coaching Year

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<tr>
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<th>Course</th>
<th>MTP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Live - Feb</td>
<td>Video – Mar to June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional Support</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Organization</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional Support</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(effect for Feedback only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Focus</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAIL</td>
<td>.74***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASS Knowledge</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Instructional Support

- Live-Jan to March
  - Course Only
  - Consult Only
  - Course and Consult
  - Control

- Video - March to June
  - Course Only
  - Consult Only
  - Course and Consult
  - Control
Intriguing Questions

- What are mechanisms of change in coaching if we don’t see changes in knowledge and skill in “seeing” effective interactions?

- Would we get same, or bigger, effects on instructional practice without the early focus on Emotional Support and Classroom Organization?
MTP IN-DEPTH: FOCUSED REFLECTION THAT ENHANCES OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS
Two Elements of MTP

• Selecting video to focus on interactions

• Writing prompts to enhance observational skills
The MTP Cycle

Step 1: Teacher records classroom video

Step 2: Coach reviews and selects video and writes prompts

Step 3: Teacher reviews video and responds to prompts

Step 4: Teacher and coach discuss prompts and practice

Step 5: Summary and action plan inform next cycle

The MTP Cycle: 2 weeks
Video Selection –
General Recommendations

• Keep it short and focused

• Find elements of good practice, along with areas for growth

• Almost any moment can stimulate important teacher growth – but be intentional in the selection
MTP Guidelines for Selecting Video

- Maintain focus on the teacher’s interactions with children.
- Use the CLASS dimension of focus as a guide.
- Use previous discussions with the teacher and the last cycle’s action plan to guide selection.
- Always select strengths; when appropriate, provide challenges.
Video Selection Activity

• Watch 5 minutes of a classroom

  – Which 1 minute clip would you choose and why?

  – What elements of practice would you focus on and why?
Focus of Prompts by Coach

- Emotional Support
- Instructional Support
- Classroom Organization
- Literacy Focus
Predictors of Dimension Focus

• Coaches with more time teaching early childhood (0 to 5) were less likely to focus on Instructional Support \( (r = -0.55, p = .03) \).

• Coaches that reported stronger beliefs in teachers taking an active role in children’s learning spent significantly more time on Literacy Focus \( (r = .55, p = .03) \).
Lessons Learned

• Need to be thoughtful about how we support coaches to select dimensions on which to focus

• Also need to look more at match between teacher needs and coach selection
Writing Prompts –
General Recommendations

• Only focus on one element of teaching at a time

• Work from a shared understanding of teaching practice (e.g. CLASS)

• Be specific and stay in the moment
MTP - Each Prompt Has a Different Purpose

- **Nice Work**—provides a clear positive example of a teacher’s CLASS-based interaction; builds self-observation skills

- **Let’s Look**—improves teachers’ observation skills and their skill at identifying the impact of their behavior on children

- **Making the Most of Language and Literacy**—enhances instructional support in teacher-child interactions
Goals of Prompts

• Improve teachers’ observational skills:
  – Model observation in prompts and during conferences.
  – Ask specific questions that require specific responses.
  – Ask questions that focus teachers on the video. Stay in the moment!
Goals of prompts

• Help teachers see impact on children’s learning and development – in the moment
  
  – Describe teacher behaviors – ask teacher to see impact on children
  
  – Describe children’s behaviors or learning – ask the teacher what she is doing to create this
Effective Example

- A teacher who has strong Regard for Student Perspectives will follow children’s leads. In this video, you notice that the children are interested in the inchworms when Bryan says, “Look how they move.” You ask, “How do they move, guys?” When you stop and talk to them about this, you show willingness to go with the flow of their ideas rather than strictly following your plan. How do you see the children responding to your regard for them here?
Ineffective Example

• It looks like the children were having a great time examining the inchworms that you have in the classroom. It was nice to see you stop and talk to them about this. What other times in the day are you able to stop and talk to the children about their interests?
Effective Example

- Feedback loops are a key indicator of Quality of Feedback. In this segment, you do a wonderful job of engaging Shanae in these back-and-forth exchanges by asking her lots of follow-up questions that deepen her knowledge of letters and writing. Please watch as Shanae is writing letters, copying the word “apple” on the tabletop chalkboard. She says, “A for apple,” and you respond, “Yes, Shanae! What other letters are in the word ‘apple’?” What specifically do you do here to persist in this feedback loop with Shanae to help her think further about the letters in “apple” and writing those letters? What do you think she learned?
Ineffective Example

• Feedback is important for children. Why do they need feedback?
Prompt Writing Activity

• Watch short video

• Pick an element of teaching on which to focus

• Write a prompt (comment and question) that:
  – Increases observational skills
  – Focuses on teachers’ impact on children’s learning or development
Take home messages

• All our work with teachers should model the intentionality we want our teachers to have with their students

• Need to have clear goals for teachers and clear methods for getting them there

• Designing and implementing effective professional development takes time – we have much to learn!

• **Need more research** to document elements of coaching that really make a difference
Thanks

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Questions/Discussion