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Howes, Carollee; Hamre, Bridget K. & Pianta, Robert C. (Eds.) (2012) *Effective early childhood professional development: Improving teacher practice and child outcomes*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

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The question of effective professional development in early care and education (ECE) is a critically important one for this young field to wrestle with as it becomes increasingly professionalized, affiliated with schooling, and expected to ameliorate social inequalities. Carollee Howes, Bridget Hamre, Robert Pianta and their contributors are to be congratulated for helping to push the field's notions of professional development away from the more common, workshop-based, "train and hope" model

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(Snyder & Wolfe, 2008) towards more evidence-informed approaches; however, this focus is also one of the collection's limitations. Readers seeking a volume that integrates research and evaluation findings with practical illustrations and advice may be disappointed, as the collection largely reports on early studies of proprietary professional development models, which are described in the broadest of terms. This said, *Effective Early Childhood Professional Development* is a worthy addition to early childhood teacher educators' collections and would be of use as a graduate text, for it raises important issues about the field's future directions, provides exemplars of the kinds of applied research that should be happening more frequently, and highlights the need for new lines of inquiry in traditionally understudied areas in ECE, such as early mathematics, science, and adult learning. While it might fall short of the promise that the ambitious title suggests, it represents a meaningful beginning.

The collection is well-organized into three sections: (1) Effective Models of Professional Development Interventions in Promoting Teacher and Child Outcomes; (2) Factors Facilitating and/or Moderating Implementation; and (3) Scaling Up Professional Development. These are framed by an introductory chapter by Carollee Howes and Catherine Tsao that lays out some of the key issues and problems in ECE professional development. For one, as a burgeoning profession, a major focus in ECE professional development has been on formal education and specific training in child development and early education, an emphasis that some recent research findings have called into question. Importantly they highlight the features shared by the models presented in the volume: relationship-based methods (e.g., consultation, coaching and hybrid in-person/online) that explicitly teach evidence-based practices; model teaching practices (including through technology) and incorporate a degree of "accountability" for participating teachers' actual application of what is being taught.

For another, they note that there is no standardized content for teachers working in ECE, nor is there a uniform professional pathway - or clarity about who can or should be counted a teacher, an issue that none of the authors touch. Related to this, and somewhat surprisingly, this

framing chapter does not address how the field's youth and history have contributed to this confusion and that what is often referred to in monolithic terms as ECE is actually a mixed, public/private, and bifurcated field with the multiple aims of enriching children's development, providing custodial care for working parents, and more recently acting as a compensatory education strategy (Cahan, 1989). While not mutually exclusive, these ends are difficult to coordinate because most child care sites, that is most ECE in the U.S., are privately owned businesses (Cochran, 2007), and each of the major public ECE program areas: early intervention and special education, child care subsidies, Head Start, and state preschool programs have all developed separately with unique policy objectives, regulations, professional development, funding and financial accountability systems (Gallagher, Clifford & Maxwell, 2004; Hayes, 1982). This is important missing context for considering the book's main sections, in particular the concluding chapters that deal with systematizing these practices.

Section One addresses effective models in four chapters describing work with Head Start teachers to promote children's oral language, emerging literacy, social and emotional development and with teachers in a state preschool program regarding designing professional development to support early math, science and literacy. Each of these chapters is valuable as a summary of the existing knowledge base in each area, as additions to this knowledge, and by raising key conceptual considerations for curricular and program development, such as fidelity and intensity.

For example, in Chapter 2: Designing Effective Curricula and Teacher Professional Development for Early Childhood Mathematics and Science, Mable Kinzie and her colleagues lay out a cogent argument for the importance of these subjects in ECE based on cross-national comparisons of math and science test scores, the existence of high quality ECE curricula and uneven professional development with the key issue lying at the nexus of professional development and implementation with fidelity, that is adherence to a program or curriculum. They conducted a small-scale randomized controlled study of the My Teaching Partner Math and Science Curriculum (MTP-M/S) and online professional development platform,

with teachers being assigned three conditions: (1) comparison (using the district's existing curriculum); (2) the basic group who accessed only the MTP-M/S curriculum and materials; and (3) a plus group who received the MTP-M/S curriculum, materials and workshops (online and in-person). Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, both groups demonstrated strong fidelity but that the basic group showed greater variability in adherence to the curriculum than the plus group (although within that group, higher education teachers showed lower levels of fidelity). While their team has further work to do, a promising line of inquiry for other researchers is around the explicit linkage of professional development and implementation in less-controlled environments.

Laura Justice and Anita McGinty's Chapter 4, drawing upon the MTP- Language and Literacy Curriculum, provides an important illustration of professional development intervention intensity and its relation to outcomes for children. As with the previous example, the particular findings are subject to ongoing reflection: print-referencing "dosage" (the amount in a given session) was associated with children's print knowledge gains in "low" or "average" educational environments but not in "high" quality classrooms, as measured by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System. Their conclusion that intervention dosages should be considered contextually is an important, policy-relevant, but tricky-to-translate point that is ripe for further study. Furthermore, their definition of intervention intensity as the product of dosage, frequency (the number of intervention sessions), duration (overall intervention period) is a more precise definition that assists the field in its move away from "train and hope".

Similarly the second section, while brief at two chapters, provides new openings for rethinking the subject. Both draw upon cognitive theories in recognition of the cognitive and affective loads being placed on teachers to assimilate new information into their existing professional schemas. Cybele Raver and her colleagues introduce the voguish topic of executive functioning into their discussion of the variability of emotional climate across classrooms and the role of emotional regulation, attention, and orientation to conflict in classrooms. They offer an

interesting perspective on inter-subjective cycles of conflict that can develop between children and teachers, recognizing that child care settings and schools are highly stressful workplaces. Therefore teaching teachers to be more effective involves more than fidelity to a curriculum and should also consider coaching techniques to monitor emotional arousal and reframe interpretations of charged situations. Coaching is then not only about helping teachers to implement content knowledge but can also act as a moderator of stress to enable teachers to put this learning into practice.

Relatedly, Jason Downer and his colleagues draw upon information processing theory to argue for professional development that is informed by understandings of how people learn and how teaching practice is affected by the multiple sensory inputs and cognitive overload that can affect the balance between conscious and automatic thought. Implementing new learning requires additional demands, therefore content must be focused on relevance, linked to prior knowledge, organized through conceptual frameworks, and informed by a developmental perspective (i.e., considering the differences between early career and seasoned professionals); all of which drawing upon combinations of information sources, employing different modalities and integrating technological supports. While these recommendations are nothing new in adult education, this is a departure from ECE's more pre-professional conceptions of professional development-as-workshops (Hargreaves, 2000).

The book's final section addresses the million-dollar question, how to move beyond tightly controlled demonstration projects? Given the state of the field as still negotiating its dual child care and educational identity, while now increasingly being called upon as an early compensatory education strategy, the concluding chapters provide reasonable and logical recommendations to address this question, such as clarifying theories of change, building upon existing professional development and higher education infrastructure, stopping ineffective practices, investing in evidence-based models, funding research on implementing projects on a larger scale, and borrowing the idea of "technology transfer," that is taking research-based lessons to the field through commercial ventures. However these recommendations are also

somewhat frustrating, not because the answers should be simple and clear but rather because taking these kinds of model to a larger scale is more than a rational process and involves confronting barriers to change such as institutional ossification, administrative fragmentation, professionals' affiliations to program models, economic interests, and inertia (Gallagher, Clifford & Maxwell, 2004).

However, what has happened over the past fifteen years in Texas does provide some clues about what is possible. Susan Landry and her colleagues describe the considerable achievements integrating their work with the Texas Education Agency's preschool model, Texas School Ready!, which like many state preschool programs seeks to address systemic fragmentation by providing funding to traditional public schools, charter public schools, private child care and Head Start. This is then linked to the professional development system developed by Landry and her team and the state's School Readiness Certification System, which rates program quality.

They provide a thorough overview of the model's key features, from its conceptual framework, educational approaches, strategic use of evaluation data, and systemic integration. Of key importance is a legislatively mandated advisory panel made up of state agencies concerned with young children, which is only given brief mention but hints at the degree of political activity involved in moving this initiative statewide. This is not a criticism but rather highlights an important reality in spanning the divides that exist between theory, research, policy and practice: good ideas and research are only a part of the puzzle, skillful and persistent persuasion is also necessary (for some perspective on this, see David Kirp's *The Sandbox Investment*). The issues and complications of academic advocacy go unaddressed in their discussion but would be a welcome contribution to this literature.

Overall, the collection points to promising approaches and also offers readers much to think about, in particular how research and evaluation findings (and which ones) influence the kinds of federal and state policies needed to shift systemic resources towards evidence-informed professional development practices. While laudable in concept, there may be unintended consequences from this

advocacy that the field should consider. For this focus on effectiveness raises questions about what the future might hold in terms of likely attempts to intensify measurement of young children's early learning, moves towards so called value-added measures, and calls for performance-based pay for teachers. While these are not issues that the contributors raise, they do accompany schooling in the contemporary U.S. and the authors are implicitly choosing the education side of early care and education's dual identity. In the end, *Effective Early Childhood Professional Development* is representative of the field itself - the product of long and hard labor but also indicative of how much more is to be done in terms of clarifying the field's collective identity, knowledge base, and directions.

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