



BUILDING EXPERTISE 2026 BREAKOUT SESSION CATALOG

[Educator Conference for Teachers & Leaders | 2026 Building Expertise in Florida](#)

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Table of Contents

Opening Keynote Session: The Power of Being Perfectly You	4
Opening Keynote Presenter	4
Featured Keynote Session: AI and the Developing Brain.....	4
Closing Keynote Session: Rise and Shine: Building Resilient Educators for a Brighter Tomorrow	4
Closing Keynote Presenter:.....	5
Featured Keynote Session: Revitalizing Rigor	5
Keynote Presenter	5
The Right Task at the Right Time - Rethinking when to Release to a Team Task – Livestream.....	5
Leading by Example: Modeling Effective Student Teaming in the Classroom.....	5
The Right Task at the Right Time - Rethinking when to Release to a Team Task	6
Teaming Structures to Build Interdependence and Strengthen Students' Interpersonal Skills	6
How Principals and Coaches Transform Instruction and Student Success	7
Empowering Teacher Growth Through Coaching Conversations – Livestream	7
Stronger Together: How Coach–Teacher Partnerships Elevate Practice and Student Achievement.....	8
Empowering Teacher Growth Through Coaching Conversations.....	8
Empowering Every Learner: Applying the Model of Instruction with Elementary Students with Significant Special Education Needs	9
Agency in Action: The Specials Classroom as a Catalyst for Schoolwide Empowerment.....	9
Reimagining Learning: How Mitchell High School Moved Beyond Traditional Instruction to a Culture of Student Agency	10
Using Data to Decide When to Pause, Pivot, or Scale Initiatives- Livestream.....	10
Principal as Coach: Leadership Conversations That Inspire Growth	10
Panel Discussion: Leadership for Inclusive MOI Implementation- Livestream.....	11
Empowering Change: A Story of Growth through MOI 101 and 201 Implementation	11
From Data to Transformation: Leveraging RigorWalk 2.0 to Build Student Agency	12
Critical Thinking Pathways: Designing Lessons That Require Analysis & Evaluation – Livestream	12
Seeing the Story of Learning: Using Instructional Visits and Data to Lead with Purpose.....	13
Seeing the Story of Learning: Using Instructional Visits and Data to Lead with Purpose.....	13
Step Into the Hot Seat: Igniting Student Voice and Critical Thinking	14
When Leaders and Coaches Move as One: Aligning Support for Deeper Learning.....	14

The Evidence Tells a Story: Leading Transformation Through Clear, Credible Impact Narratives – Livestream.....	14
Building Strong Core Instruction Systems: A turnaround school principal's journey.....	15
Igniting Implementation: Essential District Leadership Moves for Deeper Learning – Livestream.....	15
Feedback by Design: Building Systems That Support Teacher Growth	16
Moving from Compliance to Impact: Reframing the role Rigor Walk data plays in your school or district	16
Building Communities of Practice that Lead to Lasting Instructional Change.....	17
Brick by Brick: How an ILT Built Collective Teacher Efficacy to Transform Teaching and Learning.....	17
Building Communities of Practice that Lead to Lasting Instructional Change.....	17
Questioning & Taxonomy for Sparking Discourse & Debate	18
Questioning & Taxonomy for sparking discourse & debate	18
Reflection as a Superpower: Teaching Students to Own Their Growth – Livestream.....	19
Districtwide supports for leaders: Building district systems to support successful Model of Instruction implementation	19
Navigating Student-Led Academic Teams: Reflecting on the Journey and Planning for The Future	19
The Good, The Bad and the Beautiful of Student Led Academic Teaming (SLAT).....	20
Shifting from a Facilitator to a Coach Teacher Modes During Teaming	20
Shifting from a Facilitator to a Coach Teacher Modes During Teaming	21
PLCs with a Purpose.....	21
Panel Discussion: Leadership for Inclusive MOI Implementation	21
Assessing Collaboratively: Strategies and Tools for Monitoring and Tracking Evidence of Student Learning - Session # 1	22
Assessing Collaboratively: Strategies and Tools for Monitoring and Tracking Evidence of Student Learning - Session # 2	22
Building and Integrating Effective Teams in the Classroom: Beyond Group Work	23
Building and Integrating Effective Teams in the Classroom: Beyond Group Work	23
Voices and Ideas: Boosting Engagement and Comprehension in Young Learners.....	24
Implementing MOI in Math	24
Rethinking Assessment Practices to Promote Ownership – moving from grades to evidence of learning.	24
Leadership Practices to Prevent Teacher Burnout	25
Seeking Grants and Philanthropic Support for Education - Session #1	25

Seeking Grants and Philanthropic Support for Education - Session #2	26
How Student Teaming and Autonomy Satisfaction Increase Student Well-being	26
Become a Fearless Educator Radio Contributor: Create Songs That Spark Curiosity and Joy.....	27
Stop Using AI. Start Leading With It: Designing Student-Led, Future-Ready Classrooms	27
Leading the Shift: Creating Classrooms Where Students Think, Struggle, and Debate.....	28
Making Instructional Change Stick: Scaling Rigor Across the District, Every Classroom, Every School, Every Day	29
Beyond the Silos: Cross-Curricular Learning Through the Lens of FTEM.....	29
Elevating Classroom Rigor with the Marzano Taxonomy	30
Principals as Coaches: Elevating Planning and Reflection Conversations	30
Leading with Accountability: How Administrators Can Confidently Conduct Critical Performance Conversations	31
Create Learning Tasks Students Can't "Fake"	31
Match Up: Aligning Model Of Instruction (MOI) with the Marzano Evaluation Model Part 2 Standards-Based Instruction	32
From Awareness to Action: Leading with Cultural Humility Drawing From Marzano's Leadership Frameworks	32
Flip the Switch and Power Up Your District and School Leaders!.....	33
From Critique to Catalyst: Ignite the Power of Feedback.....	33
Beyond the Rating: What FTEM Reveals About Student Learning	34
From Feedback to Impact: Designing Actionable Coaching Conversations.....	34
The AI-Assisted Evaluator: Using Artificial Intelligence to Coach and Elevate Teacher Growth	34
Elevating Rigor Schoolwide with the Marzano Taxonomy	35
FTEM as Your Instructional Catalyst: Leveraging the Focused Teacher Evaluation Model to Accelerate Student Achievement	35
Match Up: Aligning Model Of Instruction (MOI) with the Marzano Evaluation Model Part 1 Conditions for Learning	36
Enhancing Instruction Through Deliberate Practice	36
iObservation Updates	36

Opening Keynote Session: The Power of Being Perfectly You

It's a fact: People are at their best – at work and in life – when they feel like they can be themselves. They're more confident in the face of change and uncertainty, more engaged and resilient, and have a greater sense of purpose and well-being. But fear can sometimes keep us from being real. In this presentation, Mariana Atencio brings her energy, humor, and skillful storytelling to inspire people to embrace their authenticity and unleash the power that comes with being themselves. Being "Perfectly You" builds trust and connection – it attracts people like a magnet because authenticity stands out in a world of algorithms and A.I. content. Mariana's unique personal story and infectious optimism energizes people with the courage to fully engage, adapt to constant change, and reach new levels of fulfillment at work and in life.

Opening Keynote Presenter: Mariana Atencio, Bestselling Author and Award-Winning Journalist

Featured Keynote Session: AI and the Developing Brain

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has increased rapidly among students and inside schools. Educators are faced with serious questions about the impacts of educational technology and AI on the development of their students. How do we prepare students for an AI-driven world while ensuring healthy brain development and strong human skills? How much educational screen time is too much?

Please join Michael D. Toth, award-winning author and CEO of Instructional Empowerment, as he delves into the research behind AI's impact on the developing brain. This keynote will explore topics from his article "Deeper Learning and Educational Screen Time," published with the National School Board Association, and educators will leave with guidance on preparing students with the critical thinking skills vital to their future.

Featured Keynote Presenter: Michael Toth, Award-Winning Author and Founder/CEO of Instructional Empowerment

Closing Keynote Session: Rise and Shine: Building Resilient Educators for a Brighter Tomorrow

Join this powerful session designed specifically for teachers and school administrators who are seeking practical solutions to prevent burnout and reignite their passion for education. In this session, you'll learn practical and actionable strategies to maintain joy and balance in your professional and personal life. Through insightful discussions and real-life examples, you'll gain valuable tools to manage stress,

prioritize self-care, and create a healthier work environment without feeling guilty! By attending, you'll connect with like-minded people, share experiences, and develop a personalized plan to enhance your well-being and effectiveness. Don't miss this opportunity to transform your leadership approach and rediscover your joy as an educator!

Closing Keynote Presenter: Dr. Rachel Edoho-Eket, President of MAESP and a Top Influencer in Education

Featured Keynote Session: Revitalizing Rigor

Since the term “rigor” became popular in the 1990s as part of the “rigor, relevance, and relationship” movement in education, great strides have been made in how classroom teachers can and should enhance rigor in their classrooms. In this session, we build on the work of our 2019 book “Understanding Rigor” and present some of the newest approaches to this endeavor.

Keynote Presenter: Robert Marzano, Leading Researcher and Author

The Right Task at the Right Time - Rethinking when to Release to a Team Task – Livestream

Effective collaboration doesn't happen just because students are placed in teams—it happens when the right learning task is released at the right moment. This session invites educators to rethink how and when and why to release students to teaming tasks in order to maximize engagement, deepen understanding, and strengthen student agency.

Audience: Teachers

Presenter: Stephanie Terrell, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Leading by Example: Modeling Effective Student Teaming in the Classroom

A presentation on practical insights for school leaders to use their own skills to provide modeling student teaming for teachers in the classroom. As most effective school leaders were effective teachers and already possess the classroom skills necessary to model what a successful student teaming session should be, this presentation will give guidance on how to implement those skills.

District-wide: K–12

Audience: School Leaders; District Leaders

Difficulty Level: All

Presenters: Erin McGuire, Principal, LLT Academy South Bay & Carrie Johnson, Principal

The Right Task at the Right Time - Rethinking when to Release to a Team Task

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Presenter: Stephanie Terrell, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Teaming Structures to Build Interdependence and Strengthen Students' Interpersonal Skills – Livestream

In this session you'll learn how to take teaming to the next level by helping students learn to self-regulate their behavior, communicate respectfully, work collaboratively, summarize team thinking, and self-manage their learning while working interdependently in teams.

Audience: All

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenters:

Rob Obstgarten, District Lead, Implementation Coach

Jen Geoffroy, District Lead, School Leadership Coach

Teaming Structures to Build Interdependence and Strengthen Students' Interpersonal Skills

In this session you'll learn how to take teaming to the next level by helping students learn to self-regulate their behavior, communicate respectfully, work collaboratively, summarize team thinking, and self-manage their learning while working interdependently in teams.

Assessing Collaboratively: Strategies and Tools for Monitoring and Tracking Evidence of Student Learning

In this session, we will learn about structures, strategies, and tools individual students, student teams, and teachers can use to monitor, track, verify, and reflect on student learning progress before, during, and after a lesson

Grade Level: Early Childhood; Elementary; Middle School; High School

Audience: All

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenters:

Rob Obstgarten, District Lead, Implementation Coach

Jen Geoffroy, District Lead, School Leadership Coach

How Principals and Coaches Transform Instruction and Student Success

Effective teaching doesn't happen in isolation—it thrives when leaders collaborate with purpose. In this session, participants will explore how a strong partnership between a principal and an instructional coach can transform daily practice, elevate instructional quality and significantly improve student achievement. Attendees will see how this layered support ensures that principals and coaches work closely together, creating a consistent, high-impact approach across the school. Through real examples, practical strategies, and collaborative discussion, participants will learn how joint vision-setting, shared coaching practices, and aligned schoolwide support systems create the conditions for meaningful instructional growth. Educators will walk away with actionable approaches to building and sustaining high-impact partnerships that transform teaching and learning.

Audience: ALL

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenters:

Stella Barnaba, Hall Elementary Principal

Ashley Schubring

Empowering Teacher Growth Through Coaching Conversations – Livestream

In this session, we will explore the transformative power of questioning as a tool to support your coaching. We will discuss how the right questions can prompt teachers to reflect deeply on their

teaching practices. Rather than providing a to-do list, together let's discover how strategic questioning empowers educators to become reflective thinkers, fostering self-discovery and growth.

Audience: Instructional Coach; School Leader; District Leader

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter: Jessica Hessler, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Stronger Together: How Coach–Teacher Partnerships Elevate Practice and Student Achievement

High-quality instruction grows when teachers and instructional coaches work side by side with shared purpose. This session highlights how a strong coach–teacher partnership can transform daily practice, deepen instructional expertise, and accelerate student achievement. Participants will explore effective collaboration structures, feedback cycles, and real-world examples that showcase the power of trusting, data-informed coaching relationships. Attendees will leave with practical strategies for fostering meaningful partnerships that support continuous growth and lead to measurable gains in student learning.

Audience: School and District Leaders

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenters:

Danielle Bagdzius, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Marquardt School District 15

Sarah Riley, Instructional Coach at Marquardt School District 15

Empowering Teacher Growth Through Coaching Conversations

In this session, we will explore the transformative power of questioning as a tool to support your coaching. We will discuss how the right questions can prompt teachers to reflect deeply on their teaching practices. Rather than providing a to-do list, together let's discover how strategic questioning empowers educators to become reflective thinkers, fostering self-discovery and growth.

Presenter: Jessica Hessler, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Empowering Every Learner: Applying the Model of Instruction with Elementary Students with Significant Special Education Needs

This session will explore how the Instructional Empowerment Model of Instruction can be adapted and modified to meet the diverse needs of elementary students with significant special education needs such as Intellectual Disability and Autism. Participants will learn practical strategies for scaffolding instruction, fostering engagement, and promoting teaming for all students, while maintaining rigor. Drawing on real classroom examples and reflective discussion, the presentation will demonstrate how engagement strategies can be modified to meet learners at their instructional level and will highlight how intentional use of the model with students requiring intensive support enhances both engagement and achievement. Attendees will leave with practical tools for implementation in inclusive classroom settings.

Audience: ALL

Difficulty Level: Novice

Presenters:

Deirdre Shearer, Chief of Student Experience and Success, Colorado Springs School District 11

Gretta Walczak, Inclusion Support Master Teacher

Tracy de Ryk, Inclusion Support Master Teacher

Agency in Action: The Specials Classroom as a Catalyst for Schoolwide Empowerment

Discover how the elementary music (specials) classroom can serve as a powerful incubator for student agency and schoolwide empowerment. In this session, we'll explore practical strategies for fostering voice, choice, and ownership through music and other specials areas—and how these practices seamlessly transfer into students' broader learning experiences. Participants will learn how to design engaging, student-centered activities that build confidence, encourage leadership, and strengthen collaboration. Walk away with actionable ideas to elevate agency not only in the specials classroom, but across the entire school community.

Audience: All

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter: Kai Brown, Elementary Music Educator Audubon Elementary School in The Colorado Springs School District 11

Reimagining Learning: How Mitchell High School Moved Beyond Traditional Instruction to a Culture of Student Agency

Join Principal George Smith as he shares the story of transforming Mitchell High School into a campus centered on student agency. In this session, Principal Smith will walk participants through the school's key successes and honest challenges, offering practical insights to help campus leaders understand the need for a clear and compelling Vision of Instruction to drive Student Agency. Participants will leave with actionable ideas and strategies they can implement immediately to deepen student learning, elevate student ownership, and empower learners across campus.

High School (9–12)

Audience: School Leaders

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenter: George Smith, Principal, Mitchell High School

Using Data to Decide When to Pause, Pivot, or Scale Initiatives- Livestream

This session helps K–12 school leaders use data to make clear, confident decisions about their initiatives. Learn how to identify the right measures, recognize when an adjustment is needed, and determine when to pause or scale for greater impact. Walk away with simple, practical ideas to guide continuous improvement and ensure efforts align with student learning needs.

Audience: School Leaders

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter: Kristi Kinney, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Principal as Coach: Leadership Conversations That Inspire Growth

Join this interactive roundtable discussion led by Mitchell Nida, Principal of Berkeley Springs High School in Morgan County, West Virginia, to explore yearlong coaching and reflection models for sustainable MOI implementation. Participants will engage in conversation around intentional systems and schedules

that guarantee meaningful coaching cycles throughout the school year—from beginning-of-year check-ins to ongoing team and individual data conversations.

Audience: School Leaders

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter: Mitchell Nida, Principal, Berkeley Springs High School

Panel Discussion: Leadership for Inclusive MOI Implementation- Livestream

In this session, participants will hear from school leaders from multiple districts about how they support Model of Instruction for students with disabilities and language learners. The session will be moderated by school leadership coaches Kris Scallon, Ed.D., and Jen Geoffroy, Ed.D., who bring experience and background working with students with disabilities and language learners.

Grade Level: School Leader; District Leader; Instructional Coach

Audience: Elementary; Middle School

Difficulty Level: Advanced

Presenters:

Kris Scallon, School Leader Coach

Jen Geoffroy, District Lead, School Leadership Coach

Panelists:

Jamie Harris, Principal, Warm Springs Middle School, Morgan County, WV

Teresa Dowdell-Brown, Principal, Southside Estates

Meghan Powell, ELA Teacher, Warm Springs Middle School

Karen Reed, Special Education Teacher, Warm Springs Middle School

Empowering Change: A Story of Growth through MOI 101 and 201 Implementation

Change rarely unfolds neatly across a district—especially when each school stands at a different point on the instructional journey. Join secondary district leaders from Morgan County, West Virginia, as they take you inside their implementation of Instructional Empowerment’s Model of Instruction. Hear firsthand how they navigated successes, tackled challenges, and measured evidence of impact along the way. This session tells the real story of what it takes to move from pockets of practice to a shared culture of empowered teaching and learning. Expect an energizing conversation filled with stories,

reflection, and connection—where participants can exchange ideas, learn from one another, and leave motivated to apply new insights within their own districts and schools.

District-wide / K–12

Audience: School Leaders; District Leaders

Difficulty Level: All

Presenters:

Beth Golden, Secondary Education/CTE Director at Morgan County Schools

David Banks, Morgan County Superintendent of Schools

From Data to Transformation: Leveraging RigorWalk 2.0 to Build Student Agency

School and district leaders play a pivotal role in shaping learning environments that foster student success. In this session, participants will explore how to expertly use the RigorWalk 2.0 metric—a tool that measures both implementation of the Model of Instruction and the level of rigorous instruction and learning in classrooms—to drive meaningful change. Together, participants will learn with and from one another as they practice interpreting data deeply to identify patterns, uncover opportunities, and design logical, intentional next steps that strengthen instructional practices and transform school culture. Attendees will leave prepared to utilize data like an expert and with practical strategies they can take back to their schools and districts to build student agency and ownership of learning—ensuring that the impact of rigorous instruction extends beyond compliance to authentic engagement and empowerment.

Audience: School Leader; District Leader

Difficulty Level: Advance

Presenter: Dodi Davenport, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Critical Thinking Pathways: Designing Lessons That Require Analysis & Evaluation – Livestream

Today's learners need more than surface-level understanding—they need structured opportunities to analyze, evaluate, and make meaning from complex ideas. This session explores how to design lessons that intentionally guide students along clear critical-thinking pathways, moving them beyond recall and into deeper levels of reasoning. Participants will unpack practical strategies for crafting tasks that require students to compare, justify, critique, and synthesize.

Presenter: Dodi Davenport, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Seeing the Story of Learning: Using Instructional Visits and Data to Lead with Purpose

Instructional visits are more than observations—they're opportunities to see and tell the story of learning in action. In this interactive session, participants will explore how tools like the RigorWalk can transform visits into powerful leadership practices that connect evidence to action. Engage in hands-on activities to analyze classroom data, identify patterns in practice, and design purposeful next steps that strengthen engagement, agency, and continuous improvement. Leave with strategies to lead focused feedback cycles that turn data into a shared story of growth and impact.

Audience: Instructional Coach; School Leader;

Difficulty Level: Novice

Presenters:

Kimberly Alexander, District Lead, Implementation Coach

Stephanie Green, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Seeing the Story of Learning: Using Instructional Visits and Data to Lead with Purpose

Instructional visits are more than observations—they're opportunities to see and tell the story of learning in action. In this interactive session, participants will explore how tools like the RigorWalk can transform visits into powerful leadership practices that connect evidence to action. Engage in hands-on activities to analyze classroom data, identify patterns in practice, and design purposeful next steps that strengthen engagement, agency, and continuous improvement. Leave with strategies to lead focused feedback cycles that turn data into a shared story of growth and impact.

Audience: Instructional Coach; School Leader

Difficulty Level: Novice

Presenters:

Kimberly Alexander, District Lead, Implementation Coach

Stephanie Green, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Step Into the Hot Seat: Igniting Student Voice and Critical Thinking

Turn every student into a confident thinker and speaker with the Hot Seat strategy! This interactive approach invites students to step into the shoes of a character, historical figure, author, or even a scientific concept to respond to questions in real time. The result? Deeper analytical thinking, sharper inference skills, and richer classroom discussion. Learn how to craft meaningful questions, foster student voice, and apply the Hot Seat across all content areas to make lessons dynamic, engaging, and rigorous. Walk away with practical, ready-to-use strategies that bring texts and concepts to life while developing critical communication and perspective-taking skills—helping students take ownership of their learning like never before.

District-wide / K–12

Audience: ALL

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter: Dr. Regina Roberts, Principal at Chicago Public Schools

When Leaders and Coaches Move as One: Aligning Support for Deeper Learning

When principals and instructional coaches move with clarity, classrooms shift. This session offers a practical and inspiring look at what happens when leaders and coaches use the same language, pursue the same learning intentions, and model the same expectations for deeper learning. Participants will explore real scenarios drawn from school settings, practice aligned coaching conversations, and examine moves that strengthen coherence across a building. Whether you are a leader, coach, or partner in both roles, this session helps create the conditions that allow teachers to feel supported and students to think deeply.

Audience: Instructional Coach; School Leader

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenter: Theresa Staley, Instructional Empowerment

The Evidence Tells a Story: Leading Transformation Through Clear, Credible Impact Narratives – Livestream

This session equips school and district leaders to turn implementation evidence into clear, credible impact stories. Using the "Impact Story Frame Tool", participants will analyze high-leverage indicators from Look & Learns, Rigor Walks, Action Boards, and Dashboards to identify progress toward MOI Desired Effects. Leaders will draft a concise, compelling narrative they can immediately use with staff or stakeholders. Participants are encouraged to bring 1–2 pieces of authentic implementation evidence.

Grade Level: High School; Middle School; Elementary; Early Childhood

Audience: Instructional Coach; School Leader; District Leader;

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter: Gary Hess, Implementation Coach

Building Strong Core Instruction Systems: A turnaround school principal's journey

What does it take to transform a struggling school into a thriving learning community? In this session, participants will hear about the real-world journey of a turnaround school principal who rebuilt core instructional systems from the ground up. Attendees will explore how coherent instructional expectations, aligned professional learning, data-driven decision-making, and collaborative teacher teams became the foundation for stronger student outcomes. The session will unpack both the successes and the challenges—what worked, what had to be redesigned, and what ultimately made the biggest difference for teachers and students.

Audience: Coaches; School Leaders; District Leaders

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenter: Christiana Robbins, Principal, Alachua County

Igniting Implementation: Essential District Leadership Moves for Deeper Learning – Livestream

Empower your district to move from initiative to impact. In this session, School Leadership Coaches Jennifer Rinck, Ph.D., and Stephanie Green, Ed.S., share the essential leadership moves that energize teams, strengthen implementation systems, and drive results. Learn how to coach school leaders for deeper learning, use data to measure and celebrate progress, and create the conditions that sustain momentum and improve student outcomes.

Audience: District Leader

Difficulty Level: All

Presenters:

Dr. Jennifer Rinck, Instructional Empowerment
Stephanie Green, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Feedback by Design: Building Systems That Support Teacher Growth

Are you a school leader who is seeking to energize schedules and systems for Look and Learns and Rigor Walks to create increased momentum with Model of Instruction implementation? Join this session, facilitated by School Leadership Coaches Jennifer Rinck, Ph.D., and Kris Scallon, Ed.D., to explore practical and sustainable strategies that create conditions for consistent and frequent teacher feedback. Participants will explore approaches that strengthen leadership teams, maximize the strengths of instructional coaches, and amplify teacher actions that impact positive student outcomes

Audience: School Leader; District Leader

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter:

Dr. Jennifer Rinck, Instructional Empowerment
Kris Scallon, Consultant, School Leadership Coach

Moving from Compliance to Impact: Reframing the role Rigor Walk data plays in your school or district

Most teachers and school leaders have experienced instructional walks as something that is “done to them” rather than with them. This session reframes that experience by unpacking the purpose, intent, and instructional power behind the rubric. Participants will explore how the tool serves as a genuine thought partner—one that clarifies expectations, elevates instructional conversations, and creates a shared vision of high-quality teaching and learning. Rather than feeling evaluative or compliance-driven, the walkthrough becomes a catalyst for meaningful reflection, collaborative problem-solving, and sustained instructional growth.

Audience: Coaches; School Leaders; District Leaders

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenter: Merrick VanEllis, Education Professional, Chicago Public Schools

Building Communities of Practice that Lead to Lasting Instructional Change

When educators learn together, systems move forward. Discover how to build Communities of Practice that break down silos and drive lasting instructional change. In this interactive session, leaders will explore strategies for engaging adult learners, fostering cross-role collaboration, and using evidence and feedback to sustain momentum. Leave with practical tools to transform collaboration into coherent systems that elevate teaching, learning, and leadership impact.

Audience: District Leader

Difficulty Level: All

Presenters:

Stephanie Green, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Kimberly Alexander, District Lead, Implementation Coach

Brick by Brick: How an ILT Built Collective Teacher Efficacy to Transform Teaching and Learning

In this session, participants will explore how Austin College & Career Academy redesigned its Instructional Leadership Team to increase collective teacher efficacy and drive measurable improvements in student learning. Through intentional structures, evidence-based collaboration, and a shift from task-driven meetings to impact-focused inquiry, the ILT cultivated a shared belief that teacher actions truly influence student outcomes. Attendees will learn concrete practices—including evidence routines, discourse protocols, feedback cycles, and team learning structures—that strengthened trust, sharpened instructional focus, and empowered teachers to see their collective impact. This session offers practical tools and replicable strategies for any school ready to build a high-functioning ILT that leads meaningful change.

Audience: Coaches

Difficulty Level: Novice

Presenter: Marcus Clemons, Teacher at Chicago Public Schools

Building Communities of Practice that Lead to Lasting Instructional Change

When educators learn together, systems move forward. Discover how to build Communities of Practice that break down silos and drive lasting instructional change. In this interactive session, leaders will explore strategies for engaging adult learners, fostering cross-role collaboration, and using evidence and feedback to sustain momentum. Leave with practical tools to transform collaboration into coherent systems that elevate teaching, learning, and leadership impact.

Audience: Instructional Coach; School Leader;

Difficulty Level: Novice

Presenters:

Stephanie Green, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Kimberly Alexander, District Lead, Implementation Coach

Questioning & Taxonomy for Sparking Discourse & Debate

In this session, we will focus on using Marzano's Taxonomy to design questions that move students beyond surface learning into deeper thinking and meaningful conversations. Participants will learn to craft and sequence questions across Retrieval, Comprehension, Analysis, and Knowledge Utilization to promote student reasoning, evidence-based discussion, and structured debate. Educators will practice developing question stems aligned to each level and leave with practical tools and strategies to elevate student voice and academic discourse in any content area. Participants should have access to a previously delivered lesson for this session.

Audience: TEACHER

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter: Allyson Vail, Lead Faculty Coach

Questioning & Taxonomy for sparking discourse & debate

In this session, we will focus on using Marzano's Taxonomy to design questions that move students beyond surface learning into deeper thinking and meaningful conversations. Participants will learn to craft and sequence questions across Retrieval, Comprehension, Analysis, and Knowledge Utilization to promote student reasoning, evidence-based discussion, and structured debate. Educators will practice developing question stems aligned to each level and leave with practical tools and strategies to elevate student voice and academic discourse in any content area. Participants should have access to a previously delivered lesson for this session.

Audience: TEACHER

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter: Allyson Vail, Lead Faculty Coach

Reflection as a Superpower: Teaching Students to Own Their Growth – Livestream

Reflection is more than a classroom routine—it's a superpower that empowers students to take ownership of their learning journey. In this session, educators will explore practical strategies for embedding reflection into daily instructional framework, helping students recognize their progress toward learning target and standard. By shifting reflection from an occasional activity to a daily practice, teachers can cultivate student agency, resilience, and self-awareness.

Audience: All

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter: Clarita Thompson, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Districtwide supports for leaders: Building district systems to support successful Model of Instruction implementation

Effective districtwide implementation doesn't happen by accident—it happens when leaders at every level are supported by clear structures, aligned processes, and a shared vision for implementation. This session explores how districts can design and sustain the systems that make successful Model of Instruction implementation possible. Through real examples and practical tools, this fireside chat we will unpack how districts can create coherence across schools while still honoring the unique needs of individual campuses.

Audience: Teacher; School Leaders; District Leaders

Difficulty Level: All

Presenters:

BJ Price, Human Resources Director for Santa Rosa County School District

Christina Andrus, Coordinator for Professional Learning

Navigating Student-Led Academic Teams: Reflecting on the Journey and Planning for The Future

As a teacher who has been implementing Teams in their classroom, I would be able to describe the hurdles, challenges, triumphs, and reflective moments that have come from learning how to use and

implement Student-Led Academic Teams in my classroom. Rather than share only successes, we will discuss how to approach difficulties, roadblocks, and use the resources in a meaningful way to help deepen student autonomy, learning, and communication in the classroom. This will also parallel to the increase in rigor and results in the classroom.

Audience: All

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter: Emily McCallum, Teacher, Oriole Beach Elementary School

The Good, The Bad and the Beautiful of Student Led Academic Teaming (SLAT)

Step into the student experience in this hands-on session focused on Student-Led Academic Teaming (SLAT). Participants will actively engage in a SLAT lesson using practical SLAT tools, experiencing firsthand how student ownership and collaboration come to life. Together, we'll examine non-examples alongside strategies that worked—and those that worked exceptionally well—in both Science and ELA classrooms. A model lesson will anchor the session, with real classroom examples highlighted throughout. The experience concludes with an open, collaborative discussion, leaving educators with concrete strategies and confidence to bring high-impact student-led teaming back to their classroom

Elementary (K–5)

Audience: Teacher

Difficulty Level: Novice

Presenters:

Dawn Rodman, Teacher, West Navarre Intermediate School

Rebecca Neu, Teacher

Shifting from a Facilitator to a Coach Teacher Modes During Teaming

Ready to take your student teams to the next level? It's time to make the shift!

Are your students working together but still leaning on you for every move? Join us for an energizing session where you'll learn how to transition from Facilitator Mode to Coach Mode—the key to unlocking true student-led learning.

Discover practical strategies to step back without losing control, build student accountability and problem-solving skills, and create a classroom where students own their learning and you transform your role!

Teachers

Audience: All

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter: Jennifer Watson, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

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Presenter: Jennifer Watson, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

PLCs with a Purpose

This session will help instructional leaders and teacher team leaders plan for their PLCs. It will encompass norms, roles and the structure of planning in a PLC. The participants will do some learning and planning for their PLC cycles in the upcoming year.

Audience: Instructional Coach; School Leader; Classroom Teacher

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenter: Melissa Dolecek, Implementation Coach

Panel Discussion: Leadership for Inclusive MOI Implementation

In this session, participants will hear from school leaders from multiple districts about how they support Model of Instruction implementation for students with disabilities and language learners. The session will be moderated by school leadership coaches Kris Scallon, Ed.D. and Jen Geoffroy, Ed.D., who bring a background of working with students with disabilities and language learners.

Audience: School Leader; District Leader; Instructional Coach

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenter:

Jen Geoffroy, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Kris Scallon, Instructional Empowerment

Assessing Collaboratively: Strategies and Tools for Monitoring and Tracking Evidence of Student Learning - Session # 1

In this session, we will learn about structures, strategies, and tools individual students, student teams, and teachers can use to monitor, track, verify, and reflect on student learning progress before, during, and after a lesson

Audience: All

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenters:

Jen Geoffroy, District Lead, School Leadership Coach

Rob Obstgarten, District Lead, Implementation Coach

Assessing Collaboratively: Strategies and Tools for Monitoring and Tracking Evidence of Student Learning - Session # 2

In this session, we will learn about structures, strategies, and tools individual students, student teams, and teachers can use to monitor, track, verify, and reflect on student learning progress before, during, and after a lesson

Presenters:

Jen Geoffroy, District Lead, School Leadership Coach

Rob Obstgarten, District Lead, Implementation Coach

Building and Integrating Effective Teams in the Classroom: Beyond Group Work

Are you ready to move beyond traditional group work and unlock the true potential of student collaboration? Join us for an interactive and practical session focused on creating high-functioning classroom teams that thrive throughout the school year. This isn't about project work; it is all about regular routines and teaming.

In this session, we'll explore the essential conditions needed to build and sustain effective student teams, with a strong emphasis on intentional classroom culture, clear team roles, and structures that promote accountability and engagement. Rather than treating teamwork as an occasional strategy, we'll show you how to weave it seamlessly into your daily instruction. Let's make collaboration a natural and powerful part of your teaching routine.

Audience: Classroom Teacher; Instructional Coach; School Leader

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenters:

Mindy Province, Implementation Coach

Melissa Dolecek, Implementation Coach

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Audience: Teachers

Presenters:

Mindy Province, Implementation Coach

Melissa Dolecek, Implementation Coach

Voices and Ideas: Boosting Engagement and Comprehension in Young Learners

In this interactive session, participants will learn how to design highly engaging lessons for Pre K - 3 learners by combining conversation cards with powerful thinking structures. We will explore how structured student talk supports comprehension, and how the Summarizing Thinking structure helps students capture key ideas, while the Connecting New Learning structure pushes them to link new content to prior understanding. Educators will experience each routine from the student perspective, practice building their own conversation-card tasks, and walk away with ready-to-use strategies that increase discourse, ownership, and comprehension in any content.

Teachers, Principals

Early Childhood; Pre K-3

Presenter: Debra Friedman, Implementation Coach

Implementing MOI in Math

This session will guide educators through practical strategies for implementing the model of instruction for deeper learning in mathematics classrooms. Participants will explore how intentional structures can enhance student agency, build conceptual understanding, and support rigorous learning. The presentation will highlight how the model of instruction fosters deeper learning and demonstrate how the model can support diverse learning environments.

Audience: All

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter: Dee Wappes, School Leadership Coach, District Lead

Rethinking Assessment Practices to Promote Ownership – moving from grades to evidence of learning.

What if grades told you less than you think—and evidence told you more? In this interactive session, school leaders will explore how to redesign assessment systems to strengthen clarity, accelerate deeper

learning, and build true student agency. You'll walk away with practical tools, redesign templates, and messaging strategies that move your school from grading to growth.

Audience: School Leader

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenter: Robyn Warner, Implementation Coach

Leadership Practices to Prevent Teacher Burnout

Teacher burnout is a widespread and urgent challenge—one that affects instructional quality, student relationships, and the stability of the teaching workforce. In this session, learn what the latest research reveals about the factors that drive burnout and, more importantly, what school leaders can do to reverse the trend. You'll gain practical, evidence-based strategies for creating a supportive, collaborative environment where teachers feel valued, energized, and equipped to thrive.

Audience: School Leader

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenters:

Dr. Merewyn Lyons, Senior Research Analyst

Dr. Lindsey Basileo, Instructional Empowerment

Seeking Grants and Philanthropic Support for Education - Session #1

School districts nationwide face declining budgets. Expanding school choice funding, declining student enrollments, and changes in state and local tax policies are making it harder for districts to anticipate revenues, leading some to cut programs, reduce staff, and even close schools. A 2025 survey by EdWeek Research Center found that more than 75% of education leaders also expect decreased federal funding for education, and 23% are planning to ask for support from philanthropic foundations and local organizations. Although they cannot fully compensate for the loss of revenues, education-focused philanthropies offer grants and other forms of investments that can help mitigate the effects. During this hands-on workshop, you will learn how to identify potential funders, how to apply for grants, and how to engage with philanthropies as partners in education. You will practice developing and presenting a concept paper for funding and receive helpful feedback from your colleagues. Bring your ideas to this session, and come away with an outline of your grant-funded project and a plan to find the resources to make it a reality.

Audience: All

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter: Dr. Merewyn Lyons, Senior Research Analyst

Seeking Grants and Philanthropic Support for Education - Session #2

School districts nationwide face declining budgets. Expanding school choice funding, declining student enrollments, and changes in state and local tax policies are making it harder for districts to anticipate revenues, leading some to cut programs, reduce staff, and even close schools. A 2025 survey by EdWeek Research Center found that more than 75% of education leaders also expect decreased federal funding for education, and 23% are planning to ask for support from philanthropic foundations and local organizations. Although they cannot fully compensate for the loss of revenues, education-focused philanthropies offer grants and other forms of investments that can help mitigate the effects. During this hands-on workshop, you will learn how to identify potential funders, how to apply for grants, and how to engage with philanthropies as partners in education. You will practice developing and presenting a concept paper for funding and receive helpful feedback from your colleagues. Bring your ideas to this session, and come away with an outline of your grant-funded project and a plan to find the resources to make it a reality.

Audience: All

Difficulty Level: All

Presenter: Dr. Merewyn Lyons, Senior Research Analyst

How Student Teaming and Autonomy Satisfaction Increase Student Well-being

Deeper learning requires your students to work hard. But did you know that it can also make them happier? In this session you will learn about our Applied Research Center's recent study of the effect of student-led teaming and autonomy supportive teaching on student well-being. Participants will reflect on their own teaching practices and come away with research-based ways to build higher levels of student autonomy within teams.

Audience: Classroom Teacher, Instructional Coach

Difficulty Level: ALL

Presenters:

Dr. Lindsey Basileo, Instructional Empowerment

Dr. Merewyn Lyons, Senior Research Analyst

Become a Fearless Educator Radio Contributor: Create Songs That Spark Curiosity and Joy

Music has the power to transform classroom culture, spark curiosity, and restore joy in teaching—yet many educators believe songwriting is only for “musicians.” This interactive session introduces Fearless Educator Radio, a growing playlist of educator-created songs, and invites participants to become contributors.

Participants will experience the creative process of using AI as a collaborative partner to write original educational songs. Through live demonstration and hands-on practice, educators will learn a simple songwriting framework that makes classroom music accessible to everyone—no musical background required. We’ll explore how songs can reinforce academic concepts, support SEL, build classroom culture, and celebrate the work educators do.

This session empowers teachers to reclaim creativity and share their voice. Attendees will draft song ideas, learn the submission process for Fearless Educator Radio, and leave with tools to continue creating. Select songs may be featured during the conference, modeling student-led learning through adult professional development.

Audience: ALL

Difficulty Level: ALL

Presenter: Olivia Odileke, Executive Director, Kampus Insights

Stop Using AI. Start Leading With It: Designing Student-Led, Future-Ready Classrooms

This session challenges educators to move beyond surface-level AI integration and reimagine instruction through a student-led lens. Instead of positioning AI as a shortcut for productivity, we will explore how to design learning experiences where students critique, refine, build, and ethically manage AI tools to deepen understanding and strengthen engagement.

- Participants will examine practical models for:
- Using AI as a cognitive partner for error analysis and reflection

- Teaching students to audit bias and misinformation
- Empowering learners to design simple AI tools that solve authentic problems
- Embedding privacy, security, and ethical guardrails into classroom practice
- Grounded in instructional rigor and inclusive design, this session demonstrates how AI can increase engagement, support diverse learners, and enhance—not replace—professional judgment.

Audience: ALL

Difficulty Level: ALL

Presenter: Dr. M. Tricia Phillip-Magee, Director, Orange County Public Schools

Leading the Shift: Creating Classrooms Where Students Think, Struggle, and Debate

District leaders are grappling with a common classroom reality: students may be “on task,” but too often function as passive recipients of instruction, waiting for directions, relying on prompts, and disengaging when cognitive demand rises. This 90-minute, research-based Why Workshop helps leaders rethink their vision for instruction, so students become active participants in learning—initiating, collaborating, persisting, and taking responsibility for high-quality work.

Grounded in research on defining student agency, neuroscience/learning science (attention, motivation, cognitive load, and durable learning), and the instructional implications of screen time, participants will examine how today’s learning habits shape student stamina, self-regulation, and willingness to struggle productively. Leaders will unpack why some well-intended practices can unintentionally produce dependence (over-scaffolding, premature rescue, low-cognitive-demand tech tasks) and what coherent, high-rigor instruction looks like when ownership is the goal.

A key emphasis is designing learning so students do the heavy lifting together: working in teams on interdependent tasks where each learner’s contribution is necessary, talk is purposeful and evidence-based, and success requires coordination, accountability, and productive struggle.

Presenters:

Dr. Michelle Fitzgerald, Instructional Empowerment

Tricia McManus, Instructional Empowerment

Making Instructional Change Stick: Scaling Rigor Across the District, Every Classroom, Every School, Every Day

Many districts have embraced Instructional Empowerment's Model of Instruction and are seeing promising shifts in rigor, student thinking, and classroom engagement. Yet one of the greatest leadership challenges remains: how do you move from pockets of success to deep, systemwide implementation that lasts?

This 90-minute session is designed for district leaders who are actively implementing the IE Model of Instruction and are ready to scale their work across schools while maintaining quality and coherence. Grounded in implementation science and effective change management practices, this session will explore what it truly takes to move instructional transformation from initiative to institutional practice.

Participants will examine the leadership conditions, structures, and behaviors required to sustain instructional change over time. Using lessons learned from districts that have successfully scaled the IE Model, this session will highlight how leaders can build shared clarity around rigorous instruction, align principal supervision and central office supports, and use the Rigor Walk as a system-level feedback and learning tool.

Rather than focusing solely on training, this session will address how districts create cultures, systems, and accountability structures that support long-term instructional improvement. Leaders will leave with actionable strategies to strengthen implementation fidelity, build leadership capacity at every level, and ensure the IE Model of instruction becomes embedded in the daily work of teaching and learning across the system.

Presenters:

Dr. Michelle Fitzgerald, Instructional Empowerment

Tricia McManus, Instructional Empowerment

Beyond the Silos: Cross-Curricular Learning Through the Lens of FTEM

This hands-on workshop engages educators in designing and facilitating cross-curricular and STEAM learning experiences aligned to the Focused Teacher Evaluation Model (FTEM). Participants will actively practice strategies that connect standards-based planning and instruction across content areas while making student thinking visible and purposeful. Educators will leave with practical facilitation strategies they can immediately apply to support rigorous, integrated instruction and create classroom conditions that maximize engagement and learning for students of all ages.

Audience: Teacher, Instructional Coach

Difficulty Level: Novice

Presenters:

Jennifer Blaetz, Middle School STEAM Educator

Supt. Dr. Walter Kappeler, Superintendent Creativity CoLaboratory Charter School

Elevating Classroom Rigor with the Marzano Taxonomy

Join us for an engaging, hands-on session designed to strengthen the alignment between your classroom tasks and the rigor of your standards and learning targets. In this interactive experience, you will:

- Explore the Marzano Taxonomy in depth;
- Learn how to analyze whether a task reflects the true complexity of a learning target;
- Practice designing or refining tasks that match the rigor required by the standard. You'll leave with ready-to-use, high-quality tasks that elevate student thinking and honor the intent of your standards.

Whether you're new to the Marzano model or deeply familiar with it, this session creates space for every participant to explore, collaborate, and grow.

Audience: Teacher, Instructional Coach

Difficulty Level: Novice

Presenter: Julie Bettis, Implementation Coach

Principals as Coaches: Elevating Planning and Reflection Conversations

Planning and reflection conferences are powerful opportunities for instructional growth—when they are approached as coaching conversations rather than compliance-driven meetings. This session supports principals in strengthening their role as instructional coaches by deepening the quality and impact of planning and reflection conversations with teachers. Participants will examine the purpose and structure of effective conferences, explore questioning and listening strategies that promote teacher reflection, and practice using evidence to guide growth-focused dialogue.

Audience: School Leader, District leader

Difficulty Level: Novice/Intermediate

Presenter: Gwen Bryant, Implementation Coach

Leading with Accountability: How Administrators Can Confidently Conduct Critical Performance Conversations

This session equips administrators and school leaders with practical tools and structured approaches for leading critical performance conversations with clarity and confidence. Participants will learn how to use the Marzano Focused Teacher Evaluation Model to guide staff toward meaningful improvement and professional conduct, establish clear expectations, and to address concerns related to instructional practice.

Audience: School Leader, District leader, Instructional Coach

Difficulty Level: ALL

Presenter: Debra Friedman, Implementation Coach

Create Learning Tasks Students Can't "Fake"

This session supports teachers in designing meaningful student tasks—not just activities—that deepen learning and increase engagement. You'll explore how to create tasks that match the cognitive demand of your standards and learning targets, make student thinking visible, and actively engage learners in purposeful work. Anchored in the Marzano Focused Teacher Evaluation Model, this session offers concrete strategies you can use right away to design tasks that elevate learning and instructional rigor.

Audience: Teacher, Instructional Coach

Difficulty Level: Novice/Intermediate

Presenter: Eva Tucker-Nevels, Implementation Coach

AI-Assisted Teacher Growth: Top Five Strategies for Using AI to Master Marzano

This session will guide teachers on using AI as a personal coach to master effective instruction. Teachers will walk away with ready-to-use AI strategies to improve their practice and their professional growth. By the end of this session teachers will have established a thought partner, coach, and assistant to help leverage their time and talents.

Audience: School Leader

Difficulty Level: Intermediate/Advanced

Presenter: Tammy Quist, Implementation Coach

Match Up: Aligning Model Of Instruction (MOI) with the Marzano Evaluation Model Part 2 Standards-Based Instruction

Ready to continue strengthening the connection between the Marzano Focused Teacher Evaluation Model (FTEM) and the Instructional Empowerment Model of Instruction (MOI)? In Part 2 of this interactive series, participants will clarify the alignment between these two frameworks so teachers and instructional coaches can further elevate their instructional effectiveness in the Standards-Based Instruction Domain. Using Marzano's Taxonomy as a guide, participants will learn how to design and implement student tasks that promote higher-order thinking, deepen student ownership of learning, and provide evidence of effective teaching practices. This session brings both models into focus, helping teachers and coaches strengthen instructional impact through a unified lens. Note: It is recommended that participants have some prior knowledge of both frameworks.

Audience: Teacher, Instructional Coach

Difficulty Level: Intermediate/Advanced

Presenters:

Diane Stultz, Implementation Coach

Karen Doty, Implementation Coach

From Awareness to Action: Leading with Cultural Humility Drawing From Marzano's Leadership Frameworks

This session explores how school and district leaders can move from awareness to cultural humility drawing from the Marzano Focused School Leader Evaluation Model and the Marzano District Leader Model (2018) as guiding frameworks. Acknowledging that leaders may not share the experiences of the communities they serve, the session centers on leadership practices grounded in reflection, continuous learning, and shared responsibility.

Participants will examine how cultural humility aligns with key leadership actions in Marzano's models, including building trust, engaging stakeholders, ensuring systems promote equality of access, and making informed decisions. Leaders will leave with practical strategies for embedding cultural humility

into their daily leadership practice to foster belonging, strengthen community trust, and improve outcomes for all students.

Audience: School Leader, district leader

Difficulty Level: Intermediate/Advanced

Presenters:

Dr. Randy Speck, Superintendent

Dr. Azra Ali, Superintendent

Flip the Switch and Power Up Your District and School Leaders!

Step into a hands-on session designed to elevate your leadership practice! Learn how to leverage the Marzano Focused School Leader and District Leader Models to coach effectively, craft powerful feedback, and cultivate capacity within your teams. Discover intentional strategies to build agency, ownership, and growth in your leaders, whether you are being evaluated using these models or evaluating others. Walk away with practical tools and actionable strategies—ready to set yourself and your leaders up for your best year yet! Note: It is recommended that participants have some prior knowledge of one or both leader models.

Audience: School Leader, district leader

Difficulty Level: Novice

Presenter: Lorah Neville, Executive Director, Marzano Evaluation Center

From Critique to Catalyst: Ignite the Power of Feedback

This session equips school leaders with the strategies to ignite the power of feedback using the Focused Teacher Evaluation Model (FTEM). Participants will learn how to tie feedback directly to the FTEM scale and protocols for standards-based instruction, standards-based planning, and conditions for learning, ensuring observations lead to meaningful teacher growth. Through practical, non-judgmental strategies, observers will gain tools to deliver precise, actionable feedback that fosters reflection, promotes teacher ownership, and drives continuous improvement.

Audience: School Leader, district leader

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenter: Lisa Roman, Palm Beach County

Beyond the Rating: What FTEM Reveals About Student Learning

This session explores whether Marzano Focused Teacher Evaluation Model (FTEM) provides meaningful insight into student learning—not just teacher evaluation ratings. Drawing on data from nearly 5,000 teachers across 168 schools in Oklahoma, we found that FTEM observations form a strong, reliable measure of teaching effectiveness, and schools with higher effectiveness scores consistently show higher ELA and math proficiency, even after accounting for demographics. These findings position FTEM as more than an accountability tool—it is a powerful engine for actionable, growth-focused feedback. Join us to learn what the research reveals and to gain practical strategies for delivering high-impact feedback that strengthens instruction and elevates schoolwide performance.

Audience: ALL

Difficulty Level: ALL

Presenters:

Dr. Lindsey Basileo, Instructional Empowerment

Lorah Neville, Executive Director, Marzano Evaluation Center

From Feedback to Impact: Designing Actionable Coaching Conversations

This session invites instructional coaches and school leaders to deepen their ability to deliver feedback that truly moves practice. Participants will learn how to craft focused coaching points, structure coaching cycles that build teacher capacity while honoring autonomy, and facilitate reflective conversations that strengthen trust and reduce defensiveness—all grounded in the principles of the Focused Teacher Evaluation Model. You will leave with practical, ready-to-use tools, including a clear framework for actionable feedback, strategies for designing high-leverage coaching points, guidance for structuring effective coaching cycles, and protocols that support meaningful teacher reflection and continuous improvement.

Audience: Instructional Coach

Difficulty Level: Novice/Intermediate

Presenter: Eva Tucker-Nevels, Implementation Coach

The AI-Assisted Evaluator: Using Artificial Intelligence to Coach and Elevate Teacher Growth

This session will show evaluators how to use AI to enhance the feedback they give to teachers, making the process more efficient and empowering. Attendees will explore AI as a "co-coach" that provides actionable insights aligned to the Marzano research ultimately supporting teacher growth.

Audience: School Leader

Difficulty Level: Intermediate/Advanced

Presenter: Tammy Quist, Implementation Coach

Elevating Rigor Schoolwide with the Marzano Taxonomy

Strengthening rigor doesn't happen by chance—it requires a shared understanding of cognitive complexity and a consistent approach to task design across classrooms. This session equips school leaders with the tools and insights needed to support rigorous instruction using the Marzano Taxonomy as a clear, strategic framework. Leaders will learn how to:

- Analyze classroom tasks and learning targets for appropriate levels of cognitive complexity;
- Guide teachers in aligning tasks to the true intent and rigor of standards;
- Use the Marzano Taxonomy to calibrate expectations, strengthen coaching conversations, and monitor instructional growth. Participants will leave with practical strategies that help build a culture of rigorous, standards-aligned instruction across the school.

Audience: School Leader

Difficulty Level: Novice/Intermediate

Presenter: Julie Bettis, Implementation Coach

FTEM as Your Instructional Catalyst: Leveraging the Focused Teacher Evaluation Model to Accelerate Student Achievement

School and district leaders are invited to discover how the Focused Teacher Evaluation Model (FTEM) can become the driving force behind meaningful gains in student achievement. In this session, you'll learn practical strategies that elevate FTEM from an evaluation tool to your school's ultimate instructional model. Participants will explore simple, actionable initiatives that increase daily rigor, strengthen instructional consistency, and build a shared understanding of high-quality teaching across classrooms. Through real examples and leader-friendly tools, you'll see how FTEM can unify instructional priorities and accelerate growth for both teachers and students.

Audience: School Leader , district leader

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Presenter: Debra Friedman, Implementation Coach

Match Up: Aligning Model Of Instruction (MOI) with the Marzano Evaluation Model Part 1 Conditions for Learning

Join us for an interactive session designed to clarify the alignment between the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model (FTEM) and the Instructional Empowerment Model of Instruction (MOI). By joining this session, participants will leave with practical strategies, examples of effective student organization structures, and tools that make the connection between evaluation and model of Instruction seamless resulting in stronger Conditions for Learning classroom practice. Note: It is recommended that participants have some prior knowledge of both frameworks.

Audience: Teacher , Instructional Coach

Difficulty Level: Intermediate/Advanced

Presenters:

Diane Stultz, Implementation Coach

Karen Doty, Implementation Coach

Enhancing Instruction Through Deliberate Practice

Whether you are developing your own growth plan or supporting others through coaching or professional learning, this session will provide practical tools and strategies for making deliberate practice a sustainable and effective part of instructional improvement. The session will focus on how intentional, focused practice can lead to meaningful improvements in instruction. Participants will explore the principles of deliberate practice and examine how well-designed growth plans can move professional learning beyond reflection to measurable instructional change.

Audience: Teacher, Instructional Coach, School Leader

Difficulty Level: Novice/Intermediate

Presenter: Gwen Bryant, Implementation Coach

iObservation Updates



This session will provide all feature and functionality updates for the 2026-2027 school year. Participants may also provide input and feedback on current and proposed updates.

Audience: School Leader, district leader

Difficulty Level: Novice/Intermediate

Presenter: Lorah Neville, Executive Director, Marzano Evaluation Center