Concepts addressed:
Types of resources available for professional development and learning: Ability to read, understand and apply articles and books about current research, views, ideas and debates regarding best teaching practices

Research and Best Practices

Constructivism suggests the goal of schools is to help students learn new meaning in response to new experiences not simply learn the meanings others have created. This suggests that learning needs to emphasize the personal, intellectual and social nature of learning.

Eight Principles of Best Practice

1. Learning is Meaning Making - Learning is the "natural, continuous construction and reconstruction of new, richer, and more complex and connected meanings by the learner" (Morrow, Gambrell, and Pressley, 2003).
2. Prior Knowledge Guides Learning - The best indicator of what a student will learn is what they already know. Prior knowledge is the foundation upon which new learning is built. This principle is consistent with Vygotsky's notion of ZPD.
3. The Gradual Release of Responsibility and Scaffolded Instruction Facilitates Learning - Teacher modeling- not telling - of skills, concepts, and strategies must occur to assist the learners in taking over in the application phase of learning.
4. Learning is a Social Process - Collaborative learning refers to individuals who actively engage in an exchange of ideas resulting in co-constructed understanding.
5. Learners Learn Best When They are Interested and Involved - Motivation often makes the difference between superficial and shallow learning and learning that is deep and internalized. Therefore, teachers must be able to present learning choices so students are engaged in learning.
6. Learning Must Promote High-Level Thinking and Problem Solving for all Students.
   a. Designing instruction that asks questions beyond the literal level places much more responsibility on the learners.
   b. Encouraging learning "risks" puts students in a position of responsibility to be active and reflective of their own work.
7. Learning is Multimodal and Best Facilitated through a Multidiscipline Approach.
   a. Effective teachers adapt and integrate a multitude of components to enable each student to achieve learning potential.
   b. Effective teachers understand and apply principles of literacy into individual content areas.
8. Learning is a Process - Effective teachers understand that learning is not the dissemination of information to students - it is an on-going process that students must be engaged so concepts become applicable to their world.

Professional Journals and Best Practice

- Teachers must engage in professional development to be able to know and understand how best practices research affects instruction.

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Journals for each content area as well as instructional area are available for this ongoing learning.

Journals and Publications

- **Reading**
  - [http://www.ira.org](http://www.ira.org)
  - [http://www.nete.org](http://www.nete.org)
- **Social Studies**
  - [http://www.ness.org](http://www.ness.org)
- **Math**
  - [http://www.netm.org](http://www.netm.org)
- **Science**
  - [http://www.nsta.org](http://www.nsta.org)