
Preface

One of the most powerful indicators of a successful school is teacher competence, described as teachers who know their content and strategies so well that they can open a virtual toolbox and take out information or processes they need so that all students can be successful. The idea that no child would be left behind was conceived not to diminish the high expectations of teachers but to be certain that all children have the opportunity to be successful and can count on support, encouragement, and expertise to give them an equal chance.

Since 1997, when Linda Darling-Hammond published her landmark book *The Right To Learn*, researchers, professors, school administrators, parents, and teachers have challenged each other to create the circumstances to cause each child to be successful. With the notion that each child has a right to learn was the underlying premise that each teacher has a right to the most current information, strategies, teaching conditions, and professional learning the schools could offer. Teachers took the premise of student success a step further. They became designers of their learning. They formed collaborative teams to study data, draw conclusions about failure and success, and practice new strategies evaluated for effectiveness. As teachers achieved mastery, they taught and coached others, investing more time in building their capacity as professionals in their classrooms and schools. We chronicled their processes and work in our first edition, *Why Can't We Get It Right? Professional Development in Our Schools*.

The second edition of *Why Can't We Get It Right? Designing High-Quality Professional Development for Standards-Based Schools* is intended to give teachers, teacher leaders, professors, supervisors, and administrators an edge in the race for personal efficacy and collective power focused on student achievement. Since our book was published in 2000, numerous practitioners have asked us for the following: a smaller text that would fit into notebooks, more tools to accomplish the work, less on history and more on action, key points to help review chapters, and open-ended scenarios as reflective tools. We welcomed their suggestions and made revisions. Each chapter is designed to begin with a brief scenario that serves as a discussion point to ground readers in the authenticity of the work.

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Essential questions provoke deeper thought about each topic. To assure readers that professionals have evaluated the concepts over time, we included the research. Complete with graphics to illustrate the text, the body of each chapter provides information and challenges current practice. In some chapters, a blank frame is provided after the completed example so that readers can try out the ideas as they reflect on how to use the conceptual frameworks to improve their schools. Key points at the end of each chapter serve as reminders to busy professionals of the chapter content.

We hope that leaders will select the most meaningful and relevant chapters to digest, reflect on with colleagues, and incorporate into their collective actions for one purpose: to improve student achievement. Because the meaning of adventure includes spirit and excitement, we welcome our readers to the adventure of exploring *Why Can't We Get It Right? Designing High-Quality Professional Development for Standards-Based Schools*.