



Learning Forward 2022 Standards for Professional Learning

What's Changed and How Thinking Maps® Supports the Standards

The new *Learning Forward* Standards for Professional Learning, released in April 2022, continues the organization's focus on the content, process, and context of professional learning. The goal of the standards is to maximize the impact of professional learning on teacher practice and student outcomes. The new 2022 standards retain the emphasis on student-centered content and high-quality, research-based practices for adult learning, with a renewed emphasis on equity, leadership, and curriculum, assessment and instruction. The 11 standards are divided into three strands:

- **Rigorous Content for Each Learner:** How the essential content for educators will lead to improved student outcomes.
- **Transformational Processes:** How professional learning is structured to sustain significant changes in knowledge, skills, practices, and mindsets.
- **Conditions for Success:** The context in which professional learning takes place, including leadership support, school culture, and resource allocation.

The Professional Learning Standards and Thinking Maps®

Thinking Maps supports the *Learning Forward* standards in five important ways.

- Thinking Maps are a research-based teaching and learning strategy that builds educator capacity to serve students of all learning needs and backgrounds.
- The brain-based Thinking Maps support effective learning for adults just as they do for students. Using Thinking Maps to present key content, take notes, and conduct hands-on learning exercises in the context of high-quality professional development improves retention and understanding of new concepts.
- Our training model and rollout plan were designed using best practices in adult learning to maximize their impact and produce lasting, transformative change.
- The resources and training materials in the Thinking Maps Learning Community (TMLC) support ongoing, sustained and job-embedded professional learning and help educators translate theory into classroom practice.
- Thinking Maps can be used by educators, trainers and leaders to support planning, collaboration, data analysis, and communication within Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), teacher teams and school communities.

THINKING MAPS ALIGNMENT WITH THE 2022 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING STANDARDS

Standard		Thinking Maps Alignment
Rigorous Content for Each Learner		
<i>Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators....</i>		
Equity Practices	...understand their students’ historical, cultural, and societal contexts, embrace student assets through instruction, and foster relationships with students, families, and communities.	Thinking Maps are a key driver for student equity and can be used to help teachers better understand their students’ identities, culture, and needs. The My Story exercise is used each year during the 8-week rollout to both introduce students to Thinking Maps and give teachers insights into their students’ backgrounds, interests, and personalities. Thinking Maps can also be used in a variety of ways to address social-emotional needs and communicate with families.
Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction	...prioritize high-quality curriculum and instructional materials for students, assess student learning, and understand curriculum and implement through instruction.	Thinking Maps are grounded in brain research and proven to improve academic outcomes for students. Teachers participating in Thinking Maps training learn high quality, research-based strategies that can be applied across all content areas and grade levels. Using Thinking Maps consistently builds the critical thinking skills required for success across all academic disciplines and improves understanding and retention of grade-level content. Teachers learn how to use the Maps in a variety of ways to improve instruction and to assess student learning and understanding so that they can adjust instruction to meet student needs.
Professional Expertise	...apply standards and research to do their work, develop the expertise essential to their roles, and prioritize coherence and alignment in their learning.	Thinking Maps training builds teacher capacity to serve students of all backgrounds and ability levels. Teachers learn how the brain learns and processes information and how to apply that knowledge in practical ways to improve instruction and learning. Thinking Maps also act as a “shared language for learning” across the school, which creates natural coherence and alignment across content areas and grade levels.

Standard	Thinking Maps Alignment	
Transformational Processes		
<i>Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators...</i>		
Equity Drivers	...prioritize equity in professional learning practices, identify and address their own biases and beliefs, and collaborate with diverse colleagues.	Thinking Maps as an organization is committed to equity for both students and teachers. The strategies learned in Thinking Maps training can be used successfully by teachers of all backgrounds and with students of all backgrounds and ability levels. Both students and teachers learn how to use the metacognitive “Frame of Reference” for Thinking Maps to question the perspectives and contexts of the content they are learning. The <i>Path to Proficiency</i> training provides additional support in adapting the Thinking Maps strategies for English Learners and other students with language-based learning differences, further supporting equity for underserved students. The first two chapters of <i>Path to Proficiency</i> focus on identifying, understanding and honoring the unique perspective and experiences of English Learners. In addition, Thinking Maps provide an ideal vehicle for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to collaborate and interrogate issues around equity and inclusion at their schools. TMLC users will find Map Builder exercises on equity that can be used as a starting point.
Evidence	...create expectations and build capacity for use of evidence, leverage evidence, data, and research from multiple sources to plan educator learning, and measure and report the impact of professional learning.	School leadership teams and PLCs can use Thinking Maps to support the process of gathering and analyzing student data to plan professional development and instructional initiatives. Observable Behavior Forms and Analytic Improvement Rubrics are provided for leadership to evaluate the integrity and impact of a Thinking Maps implementation. The Thinking Maps “Plan of Action” (POA) is a data-driven process designed to help leaders evaluate the impact of the Thinking Maps implementation and plan next steps for educator training. The POA is aligned with recommendations for sustained, ongoing, data-driven professional learning that follows the Four-Part Learning Cycle (Learn, Apply, Assess, Plan). This process is explained in detail in the <i>Language for Leadership</i> training and manual (Collecting, Analyzing, and Applying Data: From Inquiry to Understanding to Action).

Standard		Thinking Maps Alignment
Transformational Processes (Continued)		
Learning Designs	...set relevant and contextualized learning goals, ground their work in research and theories about learning, and implement evidence-based learning designs.	Thinking Maps training is designed in accordance with best practices in adult professional learning. Both virtual and onsite training use evidence-based learning design principles, including clear goals, active and collaborative learning, feedback, and systematic reflection on and application of learning.
Implementation	...understand and apply research on change management, engage in feedback processes, and implement and sustain professional learning.	Thinking Maps uses a Training of Trainers (ToT) model to build capacity in the school for ongoing coaching, support and training. ToT participants receive in-depth training, support, and resources to provide ongoing, job-embedded professional learning opportunities for peers. Thinking Maps is introduced to all teachers and students through a systematic 8-week rollout plan. Led by the ToT participants, the 8-week rollout includes training, modeling, guided application, and review and reflection. This provides teachers with the ongoing support they need to make substantial changes in classroom practice. Ongoing learning is also available through TMLC in the form of on-demand, self-directed online courses, exemplar Thinking Maps, Map Builder exercises, and an ever-growing bank of articles discussing timely and relevant topics in education. These resources can be used individually or within the context of a PLC or collaborative learning group to support and extend the Thinking Maps implementation.
Conditions for Success		
<i>Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators....</i>		
Equity Foundations	...establish expectations for equity, create structures to ensure equitable access to learning, and sustain a culture of support for all staff.	The Training of Trainers model addresses equity by ensuring that all teachers have access to the support they need for success with Thinking Maps. Thinking Maps also ensures equity in access to training and resources through our Virtual Training offerings and online resources in TMLC.

Standard	Thinking Maps Alignment	
Conditions for Success (Continued)		
Culture of Collaborative Inquiry	...engage in continuous improvement, build collaboration skills and capacity, and share responsibility for improving learning for all students.	Thinking Maps is a whole-school “language for learning” that is designed to build alignment between teachers across grades and content areas. The Maps themselves are also used to support collaboration and planning within teacher teams and PLCs. They provide a powerful visual tool for sharing ideas and information, building consensus, analyzing student data, and creating shared instructional plans. <i>A Language for Leadership</i> provides support for leaders wishing to use Thinking Maps for communication and collaboration within the school community. Teams can also collaborate asynchronously within the online Map Builder, part of TMLC. Map Builder allows for easy asynchronous collaboration, making participation easier for teachers with diverse roles and schedules.
Leadership	...establish a compelling and inclusive vision for professional learning, sustain coherent support to build educator capacity, and advocate for professional learning by sharing the importance and evidence of impact of professional learning.	Our leadership workshops and <i>A Language for Leadership</i> manual were designed to support leaders in creating the necessary conditions for sustainable change and successful implementation of Thinking Maps. School leaders also learn how to create a living Plan of Action (POA) to plan continuing learning needs for teachers based on student data. The POA becomes the basis for ongoing Thinking Maps training and implementation. It can also be used to identify areas of need that suggest other professional learning opportunities. <i>A Language for Leadership</i> includes explicit discussion of the change management process and tools for team decision making and problem solving.
Resources	...allocate resources for professional learning, prioritize equity in their resource decisions, and monitor the use and impact of investment resources.	Thinking Maps Virtual Training and the Thinking Maps Learning Community are cost-effective investments with a big impact on student learning outcomes. Thinking Maps training benefits teachers from all grade levels and content areas. Because they are used by all students in a school, Thinking Maps have a large and broad impact on student achievement—in particular for students who have historically struggled with learning.