

Using Brain Science to Inspire and Motivate Education Staff

Vanessa Maanao-French: Hello, and welcome to our webinar "Using Brain Science to Inspire and Motivate Education Staff." My name is Vanessa Maanao-French. I'm from NCECDTL, or the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning. I am joined again by my amazing colleague, Katie.

Katie Miller: Hello. My name is Katie Miller. I am also with, we'll use the short version, DTL – Development, Teaching and Learning part of it. But we are so excited to be here. This is one of my all-time favorite things to talk about. It's more difficult to get me to stop talking about it honestly about using brain science. But Vanessa and I are very excited, and we'll try not to go off on too many excited tangents. But we're very happy to have you here with us today.

Vanessa: We are former education managers. And there are so many things that we're sharing with you today that I wish I knew when I was an education manager. I would have been so much more effective. But we're going to share them with you so you can benefit from us sharing what we wish we knew.

But before we get started, in our Resource Widget, please download our Viewer's Guide. It walks through the content. And there are spaces designed just for you to capture your notes, your thoughts, your next steps. And it includes a lot of the content that we're going to share today because, purposefully, we have a lot of new words, new terms, new strategies. We're talking about brain science, friends. We have that included in the Viewer's Guide so you can take some light notes on the side, but know you can walk away with that information, too. I hope I talked long enough for you to be able to grab that guide because you're going to need it.

During today's webinar, we're going to try to do three big things. One, we're going to discuss the connection between motivation and staff productivity. We're going to talk about strategies to engage your staff using brain science. And we're going to bring in some really practical strategies that you can use today and tomorrow in your role to motivate and inspire your team.

You've got your guide; you've got your Viewer's Guide ready? Because we're going to use it right now. Katie and I are really bought into this idea that we want you to be the drivers of your own learning. This is your webinar. We're bringing information that you get to make some decisions about how you use that information. And that starts with developing your own learning objective.

In your Viewer's Guide, you'll see there's a little spot for you to capture what are you hoping you will leave this hour with us knowing or thinking about doing as a next step. We'll give you a moment to write it down. And we are so curious, so curious. We want to be able to peek over your shoulder and see what you're writing in your Viewer's Guide. If you are so willing if you could pop that into the Q&A Widget and that helps us to be able to see what your learning objective is. And we'll share that with your peers. You may find there's a lot of synergy in the virtual space today.

Katie: Hopefully, you will take a moment to include those. We will also make sure and revisit that a little bit later in our session as well.

Vanessa: We're going to make sure we're keeping on track with [Inaudible]

Katie: Absolutely.

Vanessa: For those who have been with us on the ride of the 5Rs either through our series a couple of years ago or last year, where we used the 5Rs and connected it to approaches to learning, this will be review for you. If you want to stand up and stretch, go grab a cup of water and come back in like two minutes, I'm going to do a little overview of the 5Rs.

First, in terms of the purpose. Why did we develop the 5Rs? It was really to figure out, to tease out what is it, what are those qualities, what are those practices that help education leaders be successful in leading their teams. And we found through looking at research that it was skewed in a certain direction. There wasn't a lot about early learning. We could find things in education or other business sectors. But there wasn't as much about us.

What we needed to do was ask us, we needed to interview directors, Head Start teachers, home visitors, coaches to find out what are those qualities. And between the research and our interviews, the magic happened in the middle. That is what we call the 5Rs. These may be very familiar to you by now if you have been on this ride, as I mentioned.

But effective leaders build responsive relationships. They get to know who they are and they build a workplace culture that is unified, that is comfortable with collaborative. Effective learning leaders really emphasize the purpose of why we do what we do. A policy just doesn't stand on its own, a procedure doesn't just stand on its own, there's a reason, the why behind everything that we do. It's, also, about connecting to your own personal vision, mission and purpose.

Next, effective leaders are really mindful of how they use their resources. And that includes time, it includes budget, it's all about the equipment there on your budget sheet, that stuff. But, also, people as resources. How do we invest in our people resources, and how do we help them see each other as resources to one another?

The next one is reflective dialogue. Because, as Katie knows, I have a soft spot for data. But data in a reflective dialogue space means making meaning of data. It's not just about being evaluative, which is part of it it's also about building a space of inquiry, of curiosity, of wanting to try new things without risk. It's about using data to get excited and about bringing up new questions. That's the best part.

Finally, recognition, which is my other favorite. Recognition. The bottom line it's about making sure that every staff person feels visible, valued, and validated in their work, recognizing who they are as people first and then the work that they do after that. It's about recognizing their small and big wins and the work that they do. And sometimes those small things are actually

really, really big. Our first home visit is a big deal and something to celebrate [Inaudible] Not just a big degree or five years of service and all – I could do a whole other webinar on recognition.

Katie: We have.

Vanessa: We have. If you would like to learn more about recognition, go out to ECLKC, and we break down each of these 5Rs one by one, each.

Katie: I just want to acknowledge really quickly some of the answers that we were getting. We got a lot of great feedback. Thank you all for sharing a lot of your thoughts, your ideas, your intentions with us. But I wanted to just mention that we have a lot talking about what we sometimes the call 5R reason. We talked about some purpose.

We had some people talking about recognition, getting staff excited again, and inspiring teachers who've been working a long time, or maybe are in a position that they didn't originally intend to because of organizational needs. I really love how well those fit within our discussion of the 5Rs. I hope that we hit on some of those points in some meaningful ways for people.

Vanessa: Thank you all for – and thank you pointing that out because, I was going off on my opinion. Okay. Quick poll. We want to get a little bit of a sense of your experience using the 5Rs, and how you have learned about them. Maybe it's just today, and that would be answer D. But let's get that poll started.

Have you learned about the 5Rs through our past webinars? Or maybe you've had some training within your own region or within your own program with regional TTA early childhood specialists. Or a combination. I'll pause for a moment and see how those answers come in.

Katie: We're always excited both when people have heard about them, but also when people are brand new to the 5Rs because, clearly, we love to talk about them. We'll do our best to, based on what you say, make sure that we are either covering them clearly and thoroughly, or just highlighting new things for you. Figure out what you're saying and make sure that we adjust to that.

Vanessa: Well, we've got a significant chunk of answers so far. Oh, we have some brand new.

Katie: Great.

Vanessa: Welcome to our world. We hope that the 5Rs resonate with you. We'll focus on just a couple of them today. Actually, just resources today, I believe. But you will get to know them and love them as we do.

Katie: Awesome. As we said, we're going to talk about resources. And that 5R, just as a reminder, early learning leaders support staff growth and learning by providing resources needed to engage effectively with children and families. When we asked effective early learning leaders how they do this, some of the things that they said was they talked about providing

resources, including materials, training, and professional development. That's going to be a big highlight for us today to really talk about that professional development especially.

The second one is one of my favorites, though, is to create the condition for educators to engage in teaching and learning groups, and to use each other as resources. You'll hear us talk about that a lot. And we really want to emphasize that to you all as well is that idea that you all are experts in many different ways, and so are the staff that you work with. We want to find our strengths and use each other as resources, and really draw on everyone's knowledge and experiences.

Then, last but, of course, not least, to ensure there are organizational processes and policies, like our budgeting, scheduling, planning time, educational supports, really reflect a priority on staff growth and support. No matter how expert we are, there's always an opportunity for growth and support. We want to make sure that we're really considering that and putting our efforts and our resources in that direction.

How do we do that? We start with providing responsive resources that are varied and that use concrete presentation modalities. And we'll talk a little bit more about what that really looks like. We translate theory into practice in doable chunks. You'll hear us say "chunking" a lot. It sounds funny, but I promise there's a lot of really interesting information behind it.

Vanessa: It's awesome.

Katie: We provide pure learning opportunities. And I will tell you, we want to treat this as a pure learning opportunity. You'll see both in how we talk about the Q&A that you enter, as well as our wonderful Q&A staff behind the screen, thank you so much, how they push those out to you that we can all share in strategies and knowledge.

Then last, we want to seek external and internal support for those identified needs in the learning environment. Let's spend some time on that first point. Helping staff utilize resources by translating theory to practice in doable chunks. And, yay, we're going to start with brain function. I might be the only person that says it that way, the "yay, we're going to start with brain functioning."

Vanessa: Your hands are like this.

Katie: I get very excited about it. Research tells us the early years are foundational for brain development. We're going to talk about one of the ways that our brain functions, and how we can use that knowledge to strategize. Here's a quick way to think about the brain. You hold up your hand. Wherever you are, hold up your hand. And that's what we'll do, hold up our hand. Your wrist, you can think about that as the spinal cord upon which the brain sits. And then your palm is your inner brain stem. And your thumb is your amygdala.

If you know a little bit about brain development, you don't have to know a lot, we're going to explain, I promise. Amygdala is our fight, flight, or freeze. Those motions really happen a lot in the amygdala. If you place your thumb in front of your palm, like that, you'll form the limbic system. We're going to call the other fingers our cerebral cortex. The tips of those fingers, right here, are the prefrontal cortex.

You might have heard some of those words before, but the prefrontal cortex is the one that really does like executive function skills, thinking, problem solving, reasoning. That's what's happening a lot in here. If you close those fingers over your thumb, this is what we're going to call the hand model of the brain.

Why is this important? The brain stem and this limbic system that we just talked about, they work together to release chemicals, like cortisol, and prepare our bodies for that fight, flight, or freeze response when we feel overwhelmed or in a large amount of stress. This is true for children and for adults. A large amount of stress really sends us that direction. This can be a really good thing when we react to danger. The prefrontal cortex tries to kick in and calm us down once we realize the threat is either unreal or over. Think about what feels like a threat to us, what feels like a threat to children. It might be very different.

To be honest, to different individuals what the brain perceives as a threat is going to be very different. The challenge comes is that when we are in survival mode, we sometimes flip our lid. And the limbic system takes over. When we flip that lid, our cortex is no longer in control. All of that problem solving, thinking, reasoning is not in control. We can't really effectively communicate with others, we can't control our emotions, we can't respond to reasoning.

We think about this is why we say when we work with children that it's really difficult to teach children anything when their lid is flipped. We have to wait until they have calmed down, closed the brain so the cortex is back in control. And the same is true for adults. We really need to have a calm. We can't really teach when we're up here. We have to come back down here before we can really share strategies as well.

This is also a reason why we practice some of those strategies ahead of time. We really want to have that prefrontal cortex mostly in control. Of course, with children, it's not maybe always consistent and to be very honest, with adults, it's not always going to be consistent either. But we practice that a lot outside of those times of stress so that we can really process information and use strategies in a meaningful way. One of those three ways that we talked – actually, Vanessa might have talked about this before.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Katie: The reason that we practice things like mindfulness and breathing is partly because of this. It might be really easy to think, "Oh, like self-care has, to some, become a word that's a little bit overused, or doesn't feel like it's completely addressing whatever the need or the stress is," but we want to really connect to that reason and remind ourselves that those strategies we have to practice when we are in our thinking mode, the prefrontal cortex mode,

so that they are really at the forefront and easy to call upon when we get in those stressful times.

Vanessa: Exactly. If you open your trainings with a mindful moment, some deep reading or even interspersed throughout the training to help keep that sense of stress at bay, keep the flipped lid down, it's more likely that your staff will be able to better receive what [Inaudible] you're trying to provide. No one's taking anything in like this. It's basically not saying no.

Katie: We just have to get through the moment, that's just to survive.

Vanessa: To survive, to survive. Thanks for that, Katie. Isn't that a great way to explain all of that? And here's another plug for the Viewer's Guide. It's a new Viewer's Guide. If you would like to share this with others on your team. And we did have our recent Teacher Time episode that also featured this brain model and how to -- and how adults and children can use them. We're going to switch gears just a little bit. And I'm going to ask you quickly.

We've got some things on the screen here and I'm going to talk through them. In the Q&A, tell us how many of these you have experienced between one and five in your experience receiving training. I felt like I needed more instruction or preparation to really feel like I could benefit from the training. I felt like I was talked at by the trainer for an hour and a half. Hopefully, that's not this.

Katie: Asking a lot of questions to help with it.

Vanessa: I felt overwhelmed with too much detailed information that was presented far too quickly. I felt lost in the use of acronyms and jargon. Or I was distracted by the near constant telling of stories, sharing of memes or jokes. Please tell us how many of those, five out of five, two out of five. If anybody has a zero, I want to meet your trainers.

Katie: Yeah.

Vanessa: Because they are happy with that, too.

Katie: And just a note, some of those sharing of stories and jokes and memes, when they are meaningful and relevant, is welcome. We just don't want to go an overwhelming or irrelevant level of those.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Katie: Oh, we have some great answers.

Vanessa: Ooh, lots of fives and several twos. Well, we're going to stay away from all of these things here, because these are the things that we don't want it to. Any comments that are coming in that I should -- I'm seeing lots of voting happening. Thank you all for those responses. Let me talk to you about cognitive load theory and why those things are a help. We've got to get through this. Oh, Katie knows how I feel about this slide. This is cognitive load, friends. This

is too much information all at one time. And if you have experienced a slide like this, I am sorry. But we talked about this earlier, too.

There's probably a moment back in our early days of creating training where we thought this was the best slide because it's animated, it catches your attention, all the information you need is right there on the slide, just read. But we'll talk about is this is too much. This puts too much of a strain on the brain, and could actually have some on your team, some of the learners in your space, flipping their lid. Because this is stressing me out, the amount of animation, the amount of text. Am I supposed to read that? Or am I supposed to listen to you right now, Vanessa? I'm going to take this slide away because it's making me crazy.

Katie: That was a deliberate like nine sampler. We don't want to do that. We want to do this instead.

Vanessa: Please do this instead. What we want to do is filter out all of those extraneous things, the things that do not add to the learning, because what we want to do is make the learning stick. If we have too many of these extras, they're not extras with a purpose, they're extras that distract.

We want to limit the visual load if we can. We want to make sure that people don't have to make that worst choice of is this a slide I read, is this a slide I listen to. Once we start having folks ask that question, we've lost them along the way. But what we want to do instead is what is called intrinsic load. That is when you spend time making sense of new information.

For example, I think we're going to probably use CLASS a couple of times in this. If you've gone through CLASS reliability training, that provides this amazing foundation and new language for being able to talk about teacher/child, adult/child interactions. On top of that, you can build in – you can use the in-service suites and see the connections. You can look at the effective practice guides that are on ECLKC and see those connections.

But it's about connecting new information. We want to decrease the extraneous. We want to give time for the intrinsic. We want to make sure we can add more time to really play around in that germane load. That's when we connect something old with something new, or that we're able to use some not really tricks, but like games for the mind, like thinking of mnemonics.

Katie: Learning strategies.

Vanessa: Learning strategies, awesome.

Katie: That city, the official name. A better way to say it.

Vanessa: Like mnemonics. We have the Teacher Time. If you've watched Teacher Time webinars, they have created the basics. If you have been watching those webinars, you'll likely know that it stands for behavioral expectations in advance, attend and encourage, scaffold with cues, create or add challenge, specific feedback.

You wrap your mind around that and it helps you remember, it helps you connect these different behaviors and skills of teachers to the basics. The others could be visual representations. I immediately think of the PBC cycle that we all know and love around coaching, or the Head Start management systems we offer.

Katie: A personal favorite of Vanessa's.

Vanessa: A personal favorite of mine. The other one we could talk about – actually, we'll save that for chunking. I was going to bring up CLASS again, but we'll save that for chunking. If we can decrease the extraneous, really focus on intrinsic and germane, we're going to have learners who are engaged.

Katie: And just a quick note, if you would like to learn more about that – that's a lot to take in, I know, all at once...

Vanessa: Yeah.

Katie: ...in your Viewer's Guide, there are a whole list of links. You can learn more about each part or the whole idea of cognitive load in general.

Vanessa: I've already said this slide. We can move on to the next one. What do you think?

Katie: All right, that sounds good.

Vanessa: Awesome. This is really a brain game now.

Katie: Yeah.

Vanessa: A little bit. We're going to memorize a number together, 88310. This is just such a manageable combination of somewhat random numbers, but it'll be something that we learn together and we will revisit.

Katie: We'll come back to that; I promise. There was a purpose. But I just want to talk about application. No relation, I promise. But this is George Miller. Wouldn't that be wonderful if it was my theory. But, no, it came well before me. But George Miller used what he called the "seven, plus or minus two" rule to talk about the limits of human memory.

Basically, it's focusing on the short-term or working memory which can store, he said, about five to nine pieces of new information at a time. And sometimes five when the information is complex and nine when it is simple.

One example that I have used before when I've talked about this is the word "umbrella." When children are learning new words if they are unfamiliar with "umbrella," then they are looking at each of the letters or they're looking at each of the phrases or pieces of it together. But if they're – each letter becomes its own chunk. But once they become familiar with the word "umbrella," then "umbrella" becomes one chunk.

He talks about how do we use those chunking, those strategies to put information together, and build with it as a method for making learning accessible and easily to recall. This obviously functions and works best with information that somebody is already familiar with it.

When you're using – when you're bringing in new information, you want to try to attach that to previously known information, strategies you already know, information you know. That seems like common sense. We do that with children all the time. But I think sometimes we forget to do that when we're engaging adults in new learning. This is just a reminder that, as early learning leaders, we don't want to think only about how much information we provide, but how do we organize it, how do we connect it, how do we put it in manageable chunks.

This is the example that Vanessa started out with about CLASS. In CLASS, and we're going to do a small pop quiz, we have 10 dimensions tucked under three domains. And they do this on purpose because our brains can really access that information easier when it's in chunks. Each domain is a chunk that has three or four dimensions.

If anybody wants to throw in Q&A what are the three dimensions in the domain of instructional support. We'll just keep that in there. I promise, there's no stress, if this is – now we're blanking on this, we put too much stress on you. But that's just one of the ways that we, in early childhood, without necessarily being explicit about it, use the strategy of chunking. Exactly, someone else mentioned in Q&A that that's one of the reasons that our social security numbers are in nine digits, in those chunks, three, three, four.

And then also phone numbers as well. It's because of this idea of chunking. Area codes and whatnot. Of course, we want to talk about how do you use this in your work. I'm just going to encourage you to reflect for a minute. If you want to put it in Q&A, please feel free. But, mostly, I just want you to think about this and maybe consider coming back and reflecting on this later.

When you conduct training, how do you help staff chunk information? Does it happen by design in the way you present information? Do you encourage staff to group information in meaningful ways? Do you say to them like, "Think about this together with this," or "this is how this all fits together." We think about like agendas and like even presentations when we list out sections. We're deliberately chunking information.

Vanessa: Or going back to when we talked about wanting to have time in that germane mode, connecting to previous learning, or something they already feel really proficient in. When you – we'll keep talking about CLASS. When you were talking about CLASS, how can you bring in new strategies and connect it to things they're already doing using language that's already utilized in CLASS.

Katie: Love it. And we've got a lot of people that were right on the spot with their instructional support.

Vanessa: Cool.

Katie: That's awesome. Chunking leads to this idea of thinking about microlearning. We're going to explain what we mean by that. Microlearning is focused and offers just the right amount of information to learn new pieces and information or skills. When it's done well, it's action oriented and it increases our learner engagement, because it's relevant and immediately applicable.

A lot of you talked about your goals or to help motivate and energize staff or connect them with perhaps new roles that they might not have expected to be in. Microlearning is where it's at, people. Each microlearning segment takes advantage of that chunking, and should cover one or two learning objectives.

Studies have found that learners learn best and are more likely to recall learning when they can process that information through small manageable chunks instead of through a longer or more concentrated timeframe. That's why we try to keep these as compact as we can. We've even thought about making them more compact.

But we're curious from you, what have you experienced in microlearning that you've found successful? What are your resources that maybe seem like they may take advantage of microlearning? This can be things on the ECLKC or other training that you've experienced or strategies that you've experienced. If you can throw that in Q&A, we'll do some peer learning opportunities with this. What kind of microlearning has worked for you? We'll give people just a moment to throw in their ideas. There's some brain development. Wonderful.

Vanessa: I feel like this is the time where I should do a little mini commercial, a little mini microlearning push for our IPD courses...

Katie: Yes.

Vanessa: ...because each of those are broken down into a smaller module. It is chunked very intentionally. And, specifically, the practice-based coaching competencies have these microlearning. They're just these small chunks so you can learn them all. But, just enough with some application.

Katie: Seen some great information coming through already. Some TED Talks. What a great example. TED Talks are a perfect example.

Vanessa: Oh, I love me some TED Talks.

Katie: TED Talks are a perfect example. The three big ideas. Using coaching microlearning within coaching. Quick bullet slides or trivia. Awesome. Teacher time. Yay, we love to shout out.

Vanessa: Somebody said the suites.

Katie: I was really hoping that someone would say the 15-minute in-service suites. Those are exactly how and why those are built, so that you can take little pieces at a time and immediately apply them to your work. Love it.

Vanessa: Keep the ideas coming. We will keep pushing them out so you can see what your peers are sharing. We're going to walk away so much brighter than when we started. We're revisiting our number. I'm sure you remembered it, 88310. I'm curious, just as a random, does anybody know what city this happens to belong to? Take just a micro pause for that, because we did have somebody who did know that. Didn't we?

Katie: Yeah. I've experienced someone that said, "Actually, I've been there." No way.

Vanessa: And is it Alamogordo? Yeah. Alamogordo, New Mexico. Now you have some knowledge to bring to your next gathering of friends, "Did you know". Just kidding. My point in having us memorize this somewhat random number is to show you a different number. And what if it was this number instead? What if I asked you to memorize or think about 90210? Oh, somebody did [Inaudible] it. Yay. 90210. I talked with you that at some point I will no longer be able to use this as a reference because there'll be a whole generation of people who won't know this reference.

But for those of us who do, you likely started to have memories flashing back, the Peach Pit, Brenda, Brandon, Dylan. Things are coming back to you. And it's all because you see this number. The reason why we bring this up, not just to take you on a little trip down memory lane, was to have that be something we think about when we design training, how do we make it memorable, how do we lock it in in things like the visuals.

Everybody knows the practice-based coaching cycle because it's so visual, and you can actually move through as the actually very complex process of coaching. But it's broken down and presented in a way that makes it just click. You see that wheel and you know immediately what it is. When we think about the strategies we use to design training, we want to think about get rid of the experience. We're going to say this again. We want to build in that time for intrinsic and germane, so that we can really have -- lock in, like I said, those practices moving forward.

Katie: And you can see on this slide that there are -- the numbers within each zip code do have things that are referring to national areas, sections, centers. They really do make sense. And it's interesting that they're built that way on purpose...

Vanessa: On purpose.

Katie: ...to take advantage of chunking.

Vanessa: Let's talk about why we need to do all these things. This could be either something that's very depressing to look at, or something that'll inspire us to do something different for our staff. This is Ebbinghaus' forgetting curve. And what it is telling us is about 30 days from now you will forget 80% of what Katie and I have said today. That is typically how long we hold on to new information.

However, I say that, but I offer a solution. Because we can disrupt this curve of forgetting. And we can do that with frequent repetition that helps us to keep that up to the top of our mind. It's

like rehearsing the content. But it's spaced and it's intentional. Everytime time we repeat the content, we revisit the content, you can see how those pink little dives don't go nearly as deep, don't go nearly as deep, don't go nearly as deep.

The idea is a day later, maybe tomorrow, you rewatch us because we're fascinating. You rewatch the webinar or maybe you pick up your Viewer's Guide again tomorrow. Then, a couple of weeks later, maybe you're really digging into those modules to really think more about cognitive load. Then the third and fourth repeats are happening a little bit later so that you're developing a training.

Trying to make it something that you're actually moving forward, but you're intentionally spacing out those repetitions so that you forget less and less and less. And that gets you to that place of mastery. This is why my friends, cramming for a test did not work back in the day. Unfortunately, it did not work. But if we had crammed for a month then, yes, it probably would have. But cramming the day before.

Katie: We've talked a little bit about this in thinking about our habits in our current education system of really focusing on short-term memory and focusing on facts and figures. And, instead, thinking about how could we shift that perspective and instead think about more like the procedural knowledge, like how to do things and how to apply things.

Vanessa: I like that idea. You know? As we keep trying to pull this back to motivating and inspiring your staff, thinking about this curve of forgetting, how often do we revisit. We do this amazing training – You do an amazing training with your staff, and then next month it's a totally different topic because we have to move on to the next thing. Is there a way for us to chunk that information? At the next time we repeat, we revisit that chunk and we add a little bit more that connects. We're putting all of these strategies together. Just some food for thought.

Katie: Yeah.

Vanessa: Chunking and spaced repetition.

Katie: I think about that especially in terms of how we orient staff to new curriculum or assessment, and how important it is not to only train about that one time, because there's generally just an incredible amount of content and context around those two things, and how much more helpful it would be to bring that back even just in pieces every time we talk or to connect it to what's happening in the classroom or the program.

Vanessa: In your Viewer's Guide – thanks for that, Katie – there is a spot in the Viewer's Guide where you can make some choices about how you might think about spacing out your repetition of us. I'll just note that that's there for you to make some notes for yourself about next steps.

Katie: We told you we were going to come back to it. Here's a little bit of our own spaced repetition, as well as a check in seeing how we're doing so far with revisiting your information. I want to do a quick pulse check. Ryan has just pushed that out. Thank you so much.

Give us a thumbs up if you have learned something, anything at all, related to the goal that you set when we started. We're going to just do a pause. If the answer is no, it's okay because sometimes either we're not sure what's going to happen when we come into this, or we can always improve our own processes, too. We can keep working on that.

Vanessa: Or maybe it's coming up.

Katie: Or maybe it's coming up. Very cool. When we think about this, and we'll let a few more people have answered and then move forward, but we just want to think about how do you apply this sort of check in your own work. How do you check in about your program's progress toward goals in informal ways or between regular checkpoints?

It's really important to understand that adults need to set some of their own goals and intentions toward their own learning. We'll talk more about what that means. But it's important, also, for us to then check in and see how that's going. Just a reminder, we do have some adult learning principles linked also within your Viewer's Guide. I think we can end our post-check and see how we're doing.

Vanessa: For the most part.

Katie: Yeah.

Vanessa: Great.

Katie: Very good. It looks like we have a pretty high percentage, 244, that are meeting part of their goals so far, 12 still working on it. We'll work with you. Hopefully, we'll continue to cover things that will make sense and work towards your goals.

Vanessa: Great.

Katie: Once again, coming back to thinking about our resources. We just talked about chunking information. But now we want to think about in terms of our resource, how do we provide responsive resources through varied concrete presentation modalities. You might have seen some of this before if you've done any study about adult learning principles. But we really engaged in this from the very beginning of our talk today, taking ownership of our learning.

And we do want to acknowledge that there are some pieces of our learning that are not always in our control. We might have a performance standard that's going to determine [Audio drop] that we need to cover for our role. But, wherever possible, we really want to connect some piece to the learner being able to have controller autonomy over their own learning. Maybe it's the method they're gaining the information, maybe it's the source of the information.

As education managers, we want to think about how staff learn and set their own goals, how we can help them track down materials, how we can create a plan to foster their learning, and then self-evaluate against these goals. We want to keep some of these ideas in mind, some of the key ones that you see on your screen here.

The first is that control over learning, self-direction. Adults really do appreciate that ability to control some or all aspects of their learning, even if it's the topic or just the learning strategy. We encourage you to always think about learning as a reciprocal process. Hopefully, we continue to do that with you, learning from the strategies that you are including in our Q&A as well. We encourage you to always have that attitude of learning from staff, families, and children. The more that we model that growth mindset, the more our colleagues will too.

Then, setting our pace. Again, that's one that's hard to have shared control over. It's a really delicate balance when we have a lot to orient new staff to quickly, but it's important to find that pace that lets our staff absorb new information thoroughly, so that'll ensure that they are ready to apply it. Again, that repetition can make a big difference.

Finally and very importantly, we're going to say it again, we want to acknowledge previous learning and experiences of our learners, so that we're ready to connect new information to that. They often come to us with very rich early childhood backgrounds, but, of course, there's always something new for us to learn. How do we learn it? Of course, we're going to say experiential learning. It's incredibly effective for both children and adults learning.

When we set up this type of learning, we really want to remember that it should be relevant to the work. Anytime we include a new theory, we want to make sure that the connection to the work is very clear. We can do that by showing how it's immediately applicable. We need to be able, of course, to apply that learning right away.

We want to use strategies and tips that demonstrate or help staff visualize that application. Think about like case studies, think about scenarios, ask them questions, encourage them to talk to somebody about how it applies, and offer that opportunity to practice that learning. We recently had a conversation with some colleagues. And we talked about in teacher education or preparation, how challenging it can be to teach teachers how to play if we don't let them play in our learning.

And what are some ways that we can really encourage that play within the training that we do? Still relevant, still official learning, but it can be in a very playful way. You see on the side of the screen, we have our plan, do, review. And if you're familiar with high scope, that's what I always think of when I see plan, do, review. But we really learn by doing. The education managers do a lot of that planning. And we learn by doing. Then together with the staff, we reflect and discuss how it went and how we can do better. It's a continuous, ongoing cycle.

And someone in the Q&A mentioned learning styles. I just want to encourage that, too. Even if we don't necessarily only have one learning style, like research says that there's not necessarily one learning style that will work consistently, it is really important to engage in a variety of learning styles and methods, teaching methods.

They mentioned like visual learning, auditory learning, kinesthetic, which is that hands-on or body-involved learning. We often, as adults, do have a learning preference. We really want to make sure that we engage in multiple strategies for that, so that we can hit different individual preferences and give everyone an opportunity to engage in whatever way is most meaningful. Whew, that was a lot of information.

Vanessa: That was a lot of information. Extraneous load.

Katie: We're going to try really hard to keep our extraneous load low. Now the most important part of this, how do you take this and use it in a concrete way in your work? I mentioned at the start, we're really going to talk a lot about professional development strategies. We really want to think about how those strategies are linked to the outcome that we desire and the needs of your learners.

A lot of you talked about in your goals motivating learners and energizing them. That, a lot of times, means matching their needs and what we need to get out of the training to what we deliver. Professional development includes several different methods depending on the needs of your staff.

We start with that "why." You see that X-axis that happens to be the "Why" axis, which I thought was a little bit funny, that you're developing this professional development plan. Is it to increase knowledge, to provide skill demonstration, or maybe to use the practice in context? And acknowledging that it might be a build of those things. It might mean not just one, but the progression of those things, ultimately, we want to practice it.

Then we want to think about how do we get there. Often, that's a combination of professional development methods based on the quality data of what has the most impact. Here, we brought our little bit of our reflective dialogue back in here talking about using data to make sure that what we think is working is actually working.

If implementing teaching and home visiting practices in context is that desired outcome, the professional development strategies we choose will probably be relatively complex and require a relatively high amount of effort from the learner. I just want to pause, and I want to think about how does that connect to our cognitive load theory that we talked about earlier, those extraneous things that might get in the way of learning. Are we trying to do something really complex while their attention is split, or on a Friday afternoon? I don't know about you, but my cognitive resources are a little bit...

Vanessa: Tapped.

Katie: ...low by the time Friday afternoon rolls around. Context is really important. This graph, you can see as we're starting here, can support teams to determine the best professional development strategy or strategies based on what we want to accomplish. The "how" that falls on the low end of the complexity of the learner application, for this outcome might include reading, lecture or training video options. You can see those as that low. Then the medium rolls up to learning checks, and the high would be like team meetings and simulations.

But based on the "whys" and the "hows" you want to find that happy place where those overlap. Ultimately, we want to provide staff with a variety of professional development opportunities, including those both intensive and informal coaching, that's that far end of that, to improve their coaching in probably their teaching and home visiting practices.

I want to pause for just a moment and emphasize coaching has the highest rate of return of any professional development strategies. But I do acknowledge that it can be sometimes either an uncomfortable experience for staff, or you might feel like it's difficult to access because maybe you need more coaches to go around than you have places, where they can get to. Just a reminder that we have lots of resources specifically around coaching from the Head Start Coaching Companion to the Coaching Corner webinar.

Vanessa: Yeah, the Coaching Corner webinar is amazing.

Katie: Yeah. That combination, really we want to look at what the data says has the greatest impact, and then pick based on our "whys" and "hows."

Vanessa: Yeah. I should probably do a shout-out to our regional TA friends as well, who can provide training on practice-based coaching.

Katie: Absolutely. A quick example, just so we can make sure and see this in action. If our desired outcome is to build or extend knowledge, the "how" might fall on that low end of the complexity. Strategies for that outcome would include reading, lectures or watching an example video to recognize what that effective practice might look or sound like. Love that idea of what it sounds like.

Think about, when you come into a program, how much we think about the visual, but actually we're taking in so much of what it sounds like. I want to pause for just a moment and acknowledge that there is a cultural context to our expectations around what an effective practice or what even children's staff behaviors might look or sound like.

We really want to make sure and reflect on what do we think is maybe too loud or too much, and is it actually – or is it an appropriate reaction based on that child's background, culture, context and community. We really want to make sure that we're not shutting down some of that joy, and that we're still balancing out our needs.

Vanessa: Sometimes enthusiasm for learning is loud.

Katie: Yes, that is right. We've talked about some of these things, but we just wanted to really reemphasize and highlight both the literal and figurative hands-on or constructivist learning is beneficial. I love that this – it comes from like a Piaget sort of background. If you're familiar with Piaget, he was an early childhood theorist in the early 1900s that talked about how children learn by practicing learning by getting their hands involved and constructing meaning for themselves.

Awesome news, this is true for adults, too. We really derive a lot of learning from being hands-on from past experiences, but it's important to acknowledge that it's actively constructed by the learner rather than passively absorbed. What the learner comes to us with is very important. What does that look like?

We can move forward. Well, again, here's our visual to help us understand how these things come together. Each learner interprets experiences and information in the light of their personal history, their knowledge, their state of cognitive development and, as we mentioned, their cultural background. This really fits well within those principles of adult learning that we've discussed, as well as what we know about embedding equity principles into our work with children as adults.

As you reflect on how you support programs, we encourage you to really think about how does the perspective, the background or the culture of your participant impact how they engage in learning. I'm going to ask you to answer just to pause, ponder for just a second. Now, for you, how do you consider this perspective, background, and culture when you're planning and implementing learning? Do you strive to use plain language to ensure ideas and planning goals are understood by all learners? How could you improve in this area?

I will tell you, Vanessa and I have talked about this a lot, so plain language is a really important priority for the work that we do with the Office of Head Start. Very important. People might come to us with a variety of reasons why plain language is most helpful to them. They might be multilingual. They might have not have experienced a certain phrase before. This phrase might be specific to your state or region.

I always want to make sure that we are doing our best to express our ideas and our intentions in language that make sense to a wide variety of people that we work with. We have two things for you to think about. And I'm going to ask one piece for you to reflect with us in the Q&A.

The first thing I want you to think about, and maybe write down for yourself for later, because I feel like this is more of a pondering one, how do you embed inclusion strategies in your work and ensure that spaces and materials can be accessed easily by all learners. This is adults. We really – I think we do a pretty good job of thinking about this in context for children, but do we think about it with adults? Do we think about color combinations or font or size or complexity of visuals? How do we do that in a way that makes sense?

And here's your one I would love to hear your feedback on. How do you make sure that all voices are heard during your training or process consultation sessions? How do you make sure that you're hearing all voices, different kinds of learners, learners with different backgrounds, different inclusion needs perhaps? What strategies do you use for that? I already have one. I'm not sure if she was answering this, but it fits really well. A great answer, cultural sensitivity is really important, making an intentional effort to show your compassion and show cultural respect. Yeah, front-loading materials.

Vanessa: Asking, so simple, but so powerful. Thank you for that.

Katie: Yeah, loving this information we have rolling in. Hands-on teaching and training. Great. Well, keep those rolling in and we will check in with them. Oh, and evaluation forms to see how we did.

Vanessa: Oh.

Katie: Get feedback.

Vanessa: Now that you've called it out, we're going to ask you to do that at the end of this webinar we can do better. We want to talk really quickly about this concept called mere measurement effect. What is fantastic about this is it's something you can do today, tomorrow and for the rest of your life. What this is telling us that just merely asking the question, "How will you do," or "what will you do," "when will you do," increases the impact of you actually doing that.

The more the brain contemplates a behavior, the more likely the brain will help you act on that behavior. There have been studies. There was one where they asked 40,000 people if they were going to purchase a new car in the next six months, just asking the question increased sales by 35 percent.

Katie: Wow.

Vanessa: You know those calls you get around election time? You know those robocalls asking you, "Are you going to vote," "are you going to vote,"? There is science that backs up that that's an effective strategy to get people out to vote. It increases voting by 25 percent, which I find...

Katie: That's incredible.

Vanessa: ...fascinating. When we think about this — I'm actually going to move this to the next slide, because we'll talk about the [Inaudible] a little bit, and then we'll say why we need to do this. I'm going to keep this very high level. Please fill in details as needed.

But, again, when we ask the brain to contemplate a behavior, it's triggering neural activity. Things are happening. Brain chemicals are rushing around in your brain, including serotonin. And those are those feel-good chemicals; serotonin. We like the way that feels. It creates these new pathways in your brain to contemplate "will I do this," "when will I do this," "how will I do

this." And those pathways get connected to actions and memories. And, typically, they're feel-good things. I like the smell of a new car, I think I'll buy one.

Katie: I wish it was that easy.

Vanessa: I know. And we're motivated to repeat things that make us feel good. Asking the question, going back to this is what's happening in your brain, but mere measurement, if just contemplating a behavior increases the likelihood as a leader, and you're providing training, the end of the last thing you should do or throughout what you should do is ask those questions about future behavior. Pausing for action planning, so valuable. It increases the likelihood that it will happen.

Katie: Absolutely. That really transitions us well to one of our final thoughts. We could spend all day, multiple days, talking about motivation. We're just going to hit on a tiny bit for today, because we want to also not exceed our little chunks of learning, too. But Vanessa talked really well about that connection between our brain, what we feel, and our behavior. What an amazing way to capture motivation.

I have a quote that just says that, "To be motivated is to be moved to do something." Just a way to describe motivation. I love that they use this very simple phrase because when I think of being moved, I often think of emotions, something was very moving to me. Motivation ties all of these areas together, our behavior, our brains, and our emotions.

We want to think about what is motivation. From within is what that intrinsic motivation is. That focus on satisfaction, growth, autonomy and competence. Here, we're going to focus on autonomy and competence. We've talked about that a lot already. From extrinsic motivation is like from the outside. That might be pay, it might be benefits, it might be praise and awards, it might be fear. But anything that's about someone else.

We just want to be really cautious when we think about this. Pay is absolutely important. We need to have pay to live. But if we focus our strategies on increasing motivation in our pay too much on extrinsic motivation, it actually can decrease their intrinsic motivation. We want to think about what do we do daily to help our staff feel inspired, driven, happy and satisfied. And we want to think about how do we involve them with that task, how do we help them enjoy it more, how do we help them intentionally seek out challenges.

And then one of the phrases that I have loved that Vanessa uses frequently is "let's try this together." Think about how do you help do this together, how do you use your authentic relationships to increase that motivation.

Vanessa: And we are sadly at time.

Katie: Yes.

Vanessa: Can you believe how fast an hour can go? Thank you for being with us during our webinar. We really do hope you'll join us again in May. We're going to be shifting topics a bit and talking about the learning leaders' role in addressing persistent challenging behavior.

That being said, use your evaluation to let us know if this topic is one that you would like for us to revisit in a future webinar. If there's something you'd like for us to dig in a little bit more, please, please, please let us know. But this has gone by too quickly. Let's do it all again. Ready, set.

Katie: You can replay this on Push Play later.

Vanessa: Absolutely. From myself and from Katie, thank you for joining us. We know this hour is hard to come by in your busy, busy schedules. We feel honored that you took time to be with us.

Katie: Absolutely. Thank you so much. We look forward to seeing you next time or on the MyPeers page.