

Early Development of Great Educators (EDGE)

What is EDGE?

Effective teachers share the attributes of a positive attitude, knowledge of subject matter, skill in the practice of teaching, and the desire for lifelong learning. The EDGE program seeks to bring together pre-professionals with experienced teachers and other education professionals who can share their wisdom, foster collaboration among professionals, and ignite a desire to excel as a great educator. PSEA members and staff are committed to the success of Student PSEA members, and the EDGE program provides an opportunity to interact, share ideas, and discuss the issues facing public education and the teaching profession.

EDGE Program Goals:

- Develop a series of mini-courses for pre-professionals
- Provide an opportunity for pre-professionals to interact with veteran teachers and other education professionals
- Provide an opportunity for pre-professionals to discover the positive and rewarding career that is education

Arranging for a Speaker

If you are looking for a speaker for your Student PSEA event, please review the list of available topics and email students@psea.org, noting your requested date, time, location, and presentation topic, along with your contact information.

A PSEA staff person will contact you to schedule your session, or if there are any questions or if additional information is needed. Most speakers are free of charge to Student PSEA chapters, but a few do request a fee. This information, along with the date, time, and place, can be arranged with the individual speaker once you have submitted the completed form.

Don't see the topic you are interested in?

If you are interested in a topic that is not included in this catalog, please let us know.

Questions? Need additional information?

Have a question about one of the topics? Are you looking for additional information? Contact Student PSEA at students@psea.org.



1. Student PSEA, It's Just Liability Insurance, Right?

This session provides Student PSEA members with an overview of all that Student PSEA is and can be for its members. Covered in the session are the “Four Pillars” of PSEA which include myriad opportunities for action, learning, and resources in professional development, community service, member development, and political action. Participants will also learn about the many “member benefits” that come with being a Student PSEA, PSEA, & NEA Union member and will walk away with an enhanced and broader sense of the organization, its values and its mission.

2. What Every Pre-Professional Educator Should Know as They Transition from College to Career

This session will help future educators understand and prepare for the important time period between college and career that serves as a vital bridge to the profession of teaching. Included in the session will be tips on making the most of your student teaching experience, an overview of PDE’s formal student teaching evaluation process, Level I to Level II Certification, Tenure, PDE’s TIMS and PERMS, social media tips and guidance, and specific strategies and take-away resources that student teachers can immediately incorporate into their planning as they prepare to transition into being a teacher in the classroom.

3. Effective Classroom Management for Today’s Teacher: What does the research tell us works?

This contemporary session is for both elementary and secondary teachers and it introduces participants to Harry Wong’s work on classroom “procedures” and Robert Marzano’s work on the most effective research-based classroom management strategies. It encourages educators to examine and reflect upon their own practices in terms of Marzano’s descriptions and categories. Participants will walk away with an enhanced understanding of where their own practice is strongest, learn from the strategies, techniques, examples of other teachers and will leave with numerous resources and strategies to improve their own craft and technique immediately within the confines of their own classroom.

4. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in the Classroom Today: What is it and what does it look like in the classroom?

In this session participants will explore Social Emotional Learning (SEL) approaches, including a comprehensive model of SEL to integrate into everyday content instruction, no matter what subject or grade level they teach drawing on experts and authors in the field such as Nancy Frey, Douglas Fisher, and Dominique Smith, Marilee Sprenger, Jeffrey Benson, and more. Participants will come away with a toolbox of strategies for addressing essential competencies and real-world examples highlighting the many opportunities for social and emotional learning within the K–12 academic curriculum as well as approaches, strategies, techniques, and resources for educators to more effectively operationalize SEL in their classrooms.

5. AI in Education Today: Moving Forward After all the Hype Settles

As AI use and platforms expand and proliferate in our world at breakneck speeds, come explore the cutting-edge role of artificial intelligence (AI) in today's schools in this thought-provoking presentation. Drawing from the work of experts such as AJ Juliani, Ethan Mollick, and many more, the session explores how AI is already substantially impacting society and the workplace and how AI can be utilized to help revolutionize and augment teaching and learning.



Participants will come away with immediately actionable information, strategies, and a myriad of “take-away” AI tools and resources that educators can immediately actualize into their practice and will engage in thinking about and integrating AI in four key aspects of education:

- Legal/Policy
- Academic Dishonesty, Cheating, Plagiarism, & Attribution
- Tool to Reduce Educator Workload, Increase Efficiency, & Productivity
- Making AI Student Facing

5. Tools, Strategies, and Resources to Help New and Early Career Educators

Your first few years of teaching will test you more intensely than just about anything you’ve done up to now. It will be exhausting, super stressful, and make you question your skill, talent, and decision to become an educator, but it can also be so rewarding and will leave you better and stronger than you are today. Advice is available everywhere you look, and some good, some bad, and with all that you have to do as an ECE right now, it’s easy to get overwhelmed by the sheer volume of it all. So, join us for this webinar and let PSEA help you start your year out with a focused array of articles, videos, and other resources that are chock-full of tips and advice for early career educators to help make it the best year possible.

6. The PSEA AI Task Force Impact Report: Keeping Education Human with Ethical, Practical, and Professional Guidance for AI Use in Pennsylvania Schools Moving Forward

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping the educational landscape at an unprecedented pace. In response, PSEA’s Artificial Intelligence Task Force developed a thorough and valuable set of recommendations to ensure educators—not algorithms—remain at the center of teaching and learning. This interactive session will provide an overview of the Task Force’s Impact Report, including best practices for student- and teacher-facing AI use, legal and legislative considerations, and guidance for crafting local AI policies rooted in professional judgment and ethical responsibility. Participants will explore AI’s implications for pedagogy, privacy, academic integrity, and labor protections—while engaging in hands-on reflection around AI literacy, equity, and professional learning. Designed for PSEA members across roles and regions, this session empowers educators to protect what matters most: the human connection at the heart of education.

7. Effective Instruction: What does the research tell us are the most effective instructional approaches, strategies, and techniques?

This session will explore what current research tells us are effective instructional strategies and what does not work. Within the session, we will delve in to the works of Robert Marzano, Doug Lemov (“Teach Like a Champion 2.0”), John Hattie (“Visible Learning”) and other titans of educational research to explore the most effective instructional approaches, strategies, and techniques for educators to implement within their classrooms.

8. Fostering a “Growth Mindset” in the Classroom Today: Shifting the Focus to Growth and Development with Assessment & Grades Rather than Measurement for Sorting & Classification

This session is centered on the work of Dr. Carol Dweck and author Mary Cay Ricci’s book entitled “Mindsets in the Classroom,” along with examples from Dr. Clayton’s own practice and many other experts, explores the importance of cultivating a “Growth Mindset” so foundational to effective



social emotional learning (SEL) in the classroom with students, teachers, and parents. Participants will emerge from the session with an understanding of “growth” versus “fixed” mindsets and be armed with knowledge and resources to effectively implement productive “mindsets” in their classrooms in order to help develop and foster growth, development, grit, and intrinsic motivation for learning while looking at flipping the paradigm of assessment and grades from one that is focused on measurement in order to sort and classify students (which reinforces “fixed” mindset thinking) to one that focuses on growth and development which reinforces learners having “growth” mindsets about their learning.

9. Transforming School Culture & Climate: The Servant Leadership Model in Schools and its Role in Social Emotional Learning & Character Development in Schools Today

This session details how educators can implement and utilize the Servant Leadership Model advocated by Robert K. Greenleaf and based on the work of James C. Hunter within schools to foster more positive, safe, inclusive, and welcoming school climates and cultures. A culture of servant leadership within schools, for both the staff and students, can be truly transformative in changing the culture of a school and the community it serves, and participants will emerge from the session with understanding and framework for actualizing the Servant Leadership model in their school.

10. Differentiated Instruction for Today's Educator

Effectiveness as a teacher is now more than ever predicated on the teacher's ability to meet the needs of a wide range of students. Effective teachers must know the standards and their students, and it is the standards and the needs of the students that should determine instructional decisions. Programs, materials, and resources should not guide curriculum and instruction. This course is specifically tailored to provide teachers research-based and teacher friendly approaches, materials, and resources to differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of the particular group of students and the standards being taught.

11. Text-Centered Socratic Seminars

This session introduces Socratic Seminars and presents practical methods for implementing the approach in classrooms to help students investigate multiple perspectives in texts, as Socratic seminars function most effectively in today's PA Core era with authentic texts that invite authentic student inquiry. Participants will leave the session with an understanding of what Socratic Seminars are and resources to begin to implement them in their own classroom.

12. Using the Science of Learning and the Brain to Optimize My Teaching and Instruction

This session explores current research around neuroscience and how the brain learns. Participants will delve in to the cognitive processes of how the brain learns, debunk myths associated with effective learning, and reflect on instructional practices to help students become more effective and efficient learners. The session is focused around the book *Make it Stick: The science of successful learning* by Peter Brown, Henry Roediger III, and Mark McDaniel and “The Cognitive Science of Education” by Peter Nilsson as well as other experts in neuroscience and brain research to help explore the most effective brain-based instructional approaches, strategies, and techniques for educators to operationalize in their classrooms.



13. Effective Co-Teaching Models

This session will share information on a variety of models that can successfully support co-teaching initiatives. Learn the roles and responsibilities for co-teachers in order to provide effective practices that enhances the learning of all students. Audience: Regular and Special Educators as well as Para-Educators.

14. Poverty and Student Achievement

This session examines socio-economic status and student achievement and takes a look at approaches and interventions that are being implemented to help “close the achievement gap” for students around the country. Participants will leave the session with a better understanding of the facts and helpful knowledge and resources related to poverty and student achievement.

15. Certification, Tenure, & Act 48 for Educators in PA

This session provides an overview of PDE’s various certifications for educators, including Emergency Permits, Intern Certificates, Educational Specialist Certificates, Level I Instructional Certificates, and converting Level I Instructional Certifications to Level II. Information about acquiring and maintaining both an “Active” and a “Valid” Pennsylvania certificate will be reviewed, with specific information and resources provided regarding “service time” and educational requirements for maintaining a “Valid” certificate and “Act 48” requirements and resources for keeping certificates “Active”. Also covered will be the provisions for tenure for educators in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

16. Curriculum and Equity Audits: What are they and how can they be used to create more equitable and excellent schools?

Attendees of this session will come away with an understanding of what curriculum and equity audits are, how they can be implemented, and the powerful role they can play in creating excellent and equity-focused schools. Participants will also leave the session with knowledge about and access to pertinent resources, templates, and models of effective curriculum and equity audit instruments utilized by school systems around the country.

17. Critical Race Theory, Multi-Culturalism, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, and Social Justice for Equity in Schools Today

This session delves into the differences between multi-culturalism, critical race theory (CRT), and social justice and explores how educators can begin to implement and actualize a platform of multi-cultural curricula, culturally responsive pedagogy, and social justice practices within the classroom to work towards fostering increased equity for all students. Based on the work of experts such as Dr. James Banks, Zaretta Hammond and her book “Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain”, and many others, participants will emerge from the session with an enhanced understanding and a myriad of strategies and resources for actualizing a culturally responsive and more social justice and equity-focused classroom and school community.

18. Close Reading Techniques, Text Complexity, and Text Dependent Analysis

This session will focus on emerging instructional techniques and strategies often commonly referred to as a “Close Reading” with its use of text-dependent questions and aim of increasing text-complexity levels for students. The PA Core Standards call for students to independently read, analyze, and synthesize information from multiple texts and to the use evidence from the texts to formulate well-defended claims with clear evidentiary support. A “Close Read” can serve as a



central tool for educators to help students develop these skill-sets. In addition to close reading instructional strategies and resources, in this session educators will also walk away with knowledge and resources to help write and evaluate text-dependent questions, as well as links to lesson materials. Participants will examine techniques to move students to more in depth text structure analysis and text complexity.

19. A “Balanced Literacy & Numeracy” Approach to Literacy & Numeracy Instruction

This course is designed to engage teachers in taking a Balanced Literacy & Numeracy approach to their instruction. This approach is grounded in the Gradual Release of Instructional Responsibility model where responsibility to learn and perform is gradually released from teacher to students. This session will also discuss the philosophical and pedagogical alignment of a Balanced Literacy & Numeracy approach with the new PA Core Standards for literacy and the PA Educator Effectiveness teacher evaluation system.

20. A Balanced Assessment Approach and Empowering Student Ownership of Their Learning Through Metacognitive Strategies Connected to Their Assessment Data

Participants will take home strategies and techniques about creating and implementing a balanced assessment approach in their classrooms to generate specific student data that informs both the teacher and each respective student about their strengths and specific targets for improvement, while engendering an emphasis on growth and learning from mistakes or misunderstandings in the classroom. Teachers will leave with both theoretical strategies/concepts and tangible examples as models.

21. Personalized Learning & Student Inquiry-Centered Learning, including introduction to PBL, Design Thinking, Genius Hour, and Maker Movement

This session provides an introduction for teachers to developing instruction for students that is student-centered with their own authentic inquiry as the driver. Participants will be introduced to and have an opportunity to explore resources such as Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) and Mathematics Design Collaborative (MDC), Problem/Project Based Learning (PBL) as well as introduction to and resources for Design Thinking, Genius Hour, and Maker Movement for the development and actualization of student-centered instruction in their own classroom.

22. Grammar & Mechanics Instruction to Improve Student Writing

This session will introduce participants to a grammar and mechanics instructional approach that that is a hybrid, “middle-ground” approach, combining elements of Traditional School Grammar (TSG) direct instruction with strains of the “context-only” approach insisted upon by the likes of Atwell (1987), Weaver (1996), and others all with the express aim of helping students become more syntactically aware, fluent, mature, and effective writers. Participants will receive an understanding of this research-based, “middle ground” approach, complete with examples of pre-, post-, and formative assessments, instructional frameworks, and growth tracking and reflection and meta-cognitive awareness processes and instruments for students that they will be able to put to immediate use with the students in their classes in an effort to help students improve, foundationally, as writers.

23. Effective Reading Instruction Across the Content Areas

The PA Core Standards call for students to independently read, analyze, and synthesize information from multiple texts and to the use evidence from the texts to formulate well-defended claims with



clear evidentiary support. This session will present educators with information and tools to support reading instruction across the content areas. It includes a variety of specific strategies and take-away resources that content area teachers can immediately build into their lesson planning and actualize in their instruction.

24. Effective Writing Instruction Across the Content Areas

The PA Core Standards call for students to independently read, analyze, and synthesize information from multiple texts and to use evidence from those texts to independently write informational, narrative, and argumentative pieces of their own, formulated with well-defended claims and clear evidentiary support. Geared toward the middle and high-school levels, this session will present teachers with information and tools to support writing instruction across the content areas. It includes specific instructional and assessment strategies and “take-away” resources that educators can immediately actualize into their lesson planning and classroom instruction.

25. Effective Vocabulary Instruction Across the Content Areas

The PA Core Standards present unique demands on students’ ability to learn vocabulary and teachers’ ability to teach it. In this session educators will come away with knowledge, strategies, and resources to help foster a successful school-wide vocabulary approach across the content areas, guided by both academic and content-area vocabulary. Word knowledge contributes significantly to reading comprehension and to general academic achievement, not only in reading and language arts but also across content areas. Students learn vocabulary best when teachers make consistent use of direct and indirect vocabulary instructional strategies, but many instructional materials provide little guidance to teachers in the area of vocabulary instruction. This session discusses the importance of comprehensive vocabulary instruction and provides examples of instructional tools and strategies that teachers can immediately apply in their classes.

26. Literacy Across the Content Areas in the PA Core Era

This session will focus on the new PA Core Standards with approaches and resources to help educators challenge students in a variety of content areas to show evidence of learning in new ways. Literacy and what it means to be literate is changing dramatically as our world rapidly changes, and instructional shifts are required, especially for teachers who must now incorporate literacy into content areas; consequently, discussion can encompass, depending on time, literacy instructional and assessment strategies and resources for educators in reading, writing, vocabulary development connected to the various type of texts used in a myriad of content areas.

27. Professional Learning Communities (PLC’s) 101

This session will be an overview of Professional Learning Communities and much more! Participants will walk away with an enhanced understanding of PLC’s along with multiple strategies and resources that are available to sharpen their skills in PLC specific aspects, such as, shared mission, norms, values, collaborative SMART goals, enhanced meeting structures and protocols, group data analysis processes, PLC RTI resources, and more.

28. Professional Learning Communities (PLC’s) 201: Taking Your PLC’s to the Next Level

Already working in PLC’s in your schools? If so, then in this session participants will explore specific avenues to improve and invigorate their PLCs. The session will focus on the stages of development that PLCs typically progress through, and then will hone in on specific strategies to help expedite



PLC development. Included will be resources, templates, and examples of integral PLC components, such as: meeting agendas, structure, and roles; group data analysis; PLC protocols; team SMART goals, portfolios, and action plans; common formative assessments, PLC RTII resources; and self-reflection tools all sure to help take your PLCs to the next level.

29. Technology in Education Today 2.0: Web Resources & Apps for Today's Digital Age Teachers and Students

Already on board with getting devices in classrooms? If so, then in this session we will explore the rapidly evolving and changing role that technology is playing in our daily lives and its connection to the field education and the practice and craft of teaching. Included will be a discussion of the shift inherent in moving from “institutionally organized” to more “self-organized” educational practices and the integral role that technology has played and is playing in this monumental shift. From “BYOD” (Bring your own device) to “1 to 1” (one device for each student provided by the district) to “Blended Learning” and “Flipped Classrooms,” this session will focus on exploring these educational technology paradigms of instruction and will present attendees with information, strategies, and “take-away” tools and resources that educators can immediately actualize into their planning and instruction. Beginning with “why” technology should be used in the classroom, we will then shift to “what” teachers can do to effectively utilize technology in the classroom with a myriad of web-based and app resources that teachers can use to integrate devices into the classroom effectively with students.

30. Blended and Hybrid (Synchronous and Asynchronous) Learning Best Practices and Resources for Today's Modern Educator

This session will help educators think through shifting their instructional practices to more effectively align with current research and best practices for creating more effective synchronous and asynchronous blended learning experiences for students. Delivering effective blended and hybrid instruction for educators and distance learning for students and families present different challenges from face-to-face instruction, and drawing on the work of experts such as Jennifer Gonzalez, AJ Juliani, Melanie Kitchen, Dr. Caitlyn Tucker, and many more, this session will help members learn about and explore these shifting educational paradigms of instruction and will present attendees with immediately actionable information, tips, strategies, and a myriad of “take-away” tools and resources that educators can immediately actualize into their practice in either entirely virtual or hybrid/blended learning environments.