Chapter 36
Designing a Professional Development Program

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ABSTRACT

Professional development is an essential aspect of any career. Many professions have minimum standards or requirements of training each year to maintain a license and/or job. This chapter outlines the necessary components for effective professional development training in terms of technology use, and examines some reasons why certain professional development programs may be ineffective. The chapter also discusses ways to assess the overall efficiency of a professional development program and highlight some outstanding professional development programs/practices in existence. A comparison between professional development practices performed in the United States with other countries around the world is provided to offer an understanding how professional development can vary depending upon culture.

INTRODUCTION

Do you find yourself in one of these categories:

1. Always looking for ways to enhance courses through the use of technology as a lifelong learner, or
2. Dreading to attend professional development training and finding difficulty in becoming motivated?

Chances that you are reading this book, you fall into the first category of enjoying technology integration and learning new technology tools. Nonetheless, you may know of someone that fall into the latter category of finding professional development to be a nuisance or an ineffective means to learn something new. To be an effective technology leader, learning is a lifelong process and technology is continuously changing. Thus, professional development in the area of technology is becoming increasingly more important by the day.

In relation to technology leadership in education some questions can be asked. First, how could a technology leader find resources that are new and innovative that could be integrated into the educational institution he/she works. Also, would that technology leader consider his/her school to be one that is "cutting edge" with state-of-the-art professional development learning communities, and seeing teachers blog about all of the innovative lessons they are doing in their classes. If the leader is not at a location in which cutting-edge technologies exist, how could he/she arrive there successfully?

"Technology use in the classroom has been and is often viewed as an *add on* or as a methodology teachers are encouraged to implement due to national and state standards and objectives set forth by accrediting bodies" (Wright, 2010, p. 139) is a task that schools need to adhere. Additionally, it is becoming increasingly more apparent that becoming familiar with technology or being familiar with how something works does not ensure effective technology teaching. Most researchers and teachers agree that professional development for teachers in the area of technology integration must continue to evolve from the two hour "this is the technology and here is how to use it" workshop to a sustainable model from which teachers can "systemically change instruction and learn from other educator's failures and successes over a period of time" (Wright, 2010, p. 139).

There are many different types of professional development models available, and designing the right model to fit the school's needs can be an overwhelming task. This chapter will take the reader through how to design an effective professional development program at their school or college. Within this chapter, the reader will not only find ways to design a successful program, but how to make this accessible to the teachers and faculty. In addition, using different methods that allow teachers and faculty to offer input into what types of training is offered, along with how to make them effective and relevant to classroom instruction are offered. When all of these factors mentioned are considered, successful professional development and learning communities will result. Teachers will not just be focused on checking off that they have completed their training for license renewal. Instead, they will want to grow, share, learn, and mentor with fellow teachers.

DESIGN A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Some of the reasons found to prevent teachers from adopting the student-centered approaches for integrating technology are that they face a number of limitations that may stand in their way. Some of these limitations are planning or making time for professional development training. Upon extensively researching the topic of professional development thorough a compilation of scholarly journals and research articles for writing this chapter, one can conclude that time seems to be an enormous factor and a consistent limitation for the implementation of a successful professional development program. Another limitation is making the professional development relevant to the needs of the teacher. Many times teachers attend training when the content is not always applicable to their classroom instructional needs. This can result in negative views towards professional development and opinions that the training is a waste of their valuable time. Teachers also mentioned that upon leaving a professional development session, they would be excited to implement what they had learned in the classroom. But, once they encountered obstacles such as acquiring technology access or troubleshooting defunct technology, they did not have anyone to ask for help. This in turn, leads to frustration and lack of enthusiasm to integrate technology into the classroom, thus negate the purpose of professional development.

After reviewing numerous successful professional development programs such as *Empowering the 21st Century Superintendent*, *eMints* (enhanc-

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