

Professional Development Plan

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Introduction

In today's digital society, our school communities are required to prepare students for a world that is technologically advanced and constantly changing. As educational institutions, we must provide our students with the necessary skills to succeed and compete with students from all over the world, whether in higher education or the workforce. With new mandates and state initiatives, teachers are pressured to improve student achievement while engaging students and working with a student body that is more diverse than ever before. However, the time for meaningful professional development is limited as today's teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders already have their plates full.

For this assignment, we chose two professional development activities that adopt a blended format in which the participants learn about the topics on their own time before attending the workshop session. At the face-to-face session, participants can collaborate with each other by sharing their strengths and improving their weaknesses. In addition, experts or lead participants will be available to facilitate the sessions, share their knowledge, and foster growth. Finally, each professional development activity offers additional ongoing activities that allow participants to apply the topic on their own before networking with others and helping each other to solve any issues. This blended format allows participants to collaborate with one another and take some ownership in their professional development, is cost effective for the school district as it can use in-house specialists with current resources, and takes into account the busy schedules of all faculty and staff members as it uses both face-to-face and virtual sessions.

As teachers, we expect our students to communicate and positively collaborate with each other. This is a valuable tool that will be needed when they enter the real world. The first professional development activity uses different technologies to assist with communication and collaboration and allows the school community members to model such behaviors for students. Using Google Docs, teachers and staff members will learn how to collaborate on documents, group projects, presentations, and other media without constantly sending e-mails, meeting face-to-face, or wasting paper. Since staff members are often ignored during teacher in-service days, it was very important for us to include them in this session. Not only does this activity help with the general housekeeping duties of a school, but it also encourages the sharing of this activity with students so that they can use it with their classmates. Individual members of our team can bring this activity back to our own schools to share with the community in which members can collaborate with activities such as evaluations, department meetings, common planning, etc.

Currently, many of our school districts already have updated technology, but are lacking ideas on how to effectively use that technology to engage our students and improve their learning. The second professional development activity uses Nearpod, an interactive tool that engages students during lessons by allowing them to use their mobile devices and actively participate with their classmates during a presentation. A tool such as this motivates students to learn and allows teachers to instantly assess students while gauging what content has been absorbed and successfully applied. Individual members of our team can share this resource with our own schools and help our colleagues develop student-centered and interactive lessons.

First Technology Professional Development Offering—Google Docs

- **Professional Development Goal:** In an increasingly connected world it is very important for professionals and students to learn skills that allow them to be successful. We may utilize different technologies to help assist in the function of collaboration using Web 2.0 tools. Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides are great tools that can be used to promote collaboration using Internet connectivity. Professionals can collaborate on one document to create a more smooth transition between drafts. Students can complete group work utilizing these tools and not have to send e-mails back and forth to update the documents. This professional development activity will help facilitate online collaboration between professionals. It will also teach how to implement this tool in the classroom.
- **Alignment to standards NETS-T:** 1c. Promote student reflection using collaborative tools to reveal and clarify students' conceptual understanding and thinking, planning, and creative processes; 2a. Design or adapt relevant learning experiences that incorporate digital tools and resources to promote student learning and creativity; 3b. Collaborate with students, peers, parents, and community members using digital tools and resources to support student success and innovation.
- **Target Audience:** School professional staff and support staff
- **Professional development activities:**
 - **Virtual Preparation:** Participants will be asked to sign up for a free Google account before attending the session (if they do not already have one). They will also be asked to view this [google docs video](#). This will help give them the necessary background knowledge as to how the technology works. They will also

have to e-mail the session facilitator their Google user name so that the necessary Google Docs can be shared with them for the face-to-face session.

- **Face-to-Face Session(s):** The participants in the class will first learn how to access their Google accounts as well as how to access the documents, sheets, and slides section of Google. During the face-to-face session, the basic functions of the technology will be introduced, comparing the functionality of all three to Microsoft's Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Next, the participants will work on their own documents to add to the collaborative efforts of the class. They will have 3 brief assignments adding text and slides to three different documents. The Docs assignment will have participants write a collaborative mystery short story with all participants of the session. Each person will have to write one paragraph picking up where the last person left off and ensuring that the story flows. Next, using the Sheets portion of Google Docs, participants will encounter a form with each Google ID displayed and have to fill in the necessary information on the sheet. Finally, the Slides activity will have participants add a slide to a presentation in which they share basic biographical information. In this slide, participants will add how they became an educator/support staff member, what they feel is their biggest struggle with technology in the work environment, and what other workshops would be beneficial for them. Once these 3 activities are complete, participants will share a Google Doc, Sheet, or Slides by creating one of the documents that would be most beneficial for their current job. It could be a spreadsheet for clerical purposes, presentation for teaching, or flyer for a club.

After the document is created, the participant will share it with other members of the work session using Google Docs. Each participant will then view all documents that were shared and edit or comment on at least three of them. One point that will be addressed in this professional development is acknowledging that differentiation will need to be modeled and utilized during the sessions. It is too easy to just assume all participants would be understanding all information and applying the information at the same rate. According to the article, “we do not model differentiated teacher training and professional development. The challenge here parallels the same challenge in classrooms--one of quantity (of the sheer number of teacher training needs) and quality (of a suitable personalized learning framework).” Grouping participants into various groups based on the success of them knowing what to do with Google Docs and allowing the participants who have caught on faster to help those who are struggling will only help. Those who are struggling will then be able to receive extra instruction.

- **Social Learning:** After the document is shared, each participant must review the other participants’ documents and edit or comment on the documents of three colleagues. This will promote collaboration between participants and hopefully demonstrate the benefits of using technology like Google Docs. At a later session, participants can share how they have been using Google Docs in the school, seek help, offer advice to others, etc.

Second Technology Professional Development Offering—Nearpod

- **Professional Development Goal:** As technology advances, the ways in which our students learn best also change. Teachers must use instructional tools to engage students and motivate them to learn. Nearpod is one such way to leverage technology in a way that will engage students in their own learning. By taking something that all teachers are familiar with—PowerPoint—we can extend it to meet the world of web 2.0. Nearpod can help teachers engage in a 21st century learning style, increase student interaction, collect meaningful data to reflect on instruction, and “flip” the classroom experience.
- **Alignment to standards NETS-T:** 2c. Customize and personalize learning activities to address students’ diverse learning styles, working strategies, and abilities using digital tools and resources; 4b. Address the diverse needs of all learners by using learner-centered strategies providing equitable access to appropriate digital tools and resources.
- **Target Audience:** School teachers or anyone desiring to engage members of a presentation.
- **Professional development activities:**
 - **Virtual Preparation:** The Nearpod training will ask participants to take some time before the face-to-face meeting to watch [this video](#) which briefly introduces Nearpod. They will also be asked to sign up for the free account version and engage with Nearpod’s functionality. In addition, participants will also be asked to explore the library of available presentations to find one that is relevant to upcoming content they need to cover in the classrooms and download it to their library. Participants will be asked to share these resources in small groups

(learner-to-learner) discussions during the face-to-face meeting and bring a list of questions and issues they were having with navigating the site to the session.

- **Face-to-Face Session(s):** The professional development activity will begin with participants joining the Nearpod presentation, which will be posted in the room. We will experience the features of Nearpod as we engage in a Nearpod. Each of the steps is set up in a way that will allow participants to gain insight (teacher-to-learner), to engage in the modeled activity (teacher-to-learner), and to discuss implementation ideas in the small group (learner-to-learner) as well as in the large group. The Nearpod will begin with the question of the participant confidence level of their understanding of technology, which will be shared throughout the presentation. A short discussion will follow about the ease of use in the Nearpod application. The presentation will then engage participants in the delivery of content through the visuals of a slide, followed by assessing through open-ended questions. The feature of “sharing slides” will be shown in this step and discussion will focus on the potential of the sharing feature in the Nearpod presentation. Participants will see how videos and PDFs can be embedded within the presentation itself, which is followed by a slide of a brief 3 question multiple-choice assessment. Participants will discuss the potential of collecting data in real time and how that could affect their classroom. Participants will be shown the virtual field trip functionality as well as the draw it questions type and how it can be used as an annotative tool for checking for understanding and sharing explanations. Participants will engage in the drawing portion by creating

and sharing an illustration of how they view technology in the classroom. A few will be shared and explained which will lead into the discussion of using Nearpod to increase students' engagement through 21st century tools. Teachers will then work to create a short lesson on one of their upcoming lessons. They will make a short, 4 or more slide presentation that will use at least two content delivery/discussion slides and two assessment/sharing knowledge slides.

Participants will be shown how to then implement the lesson with their small group, which will allow them to actively participate in the practice of doing teaching and being the student with them.

- **Social Learning:** Participants will be asked to share at least one resource with the group by way of a social network, which will also allow for ongoing discussion. Participants will also have time for problem solving. At the beginning of the session a Twitter account can be utilized to post questions, ideas, and feedback from the specific session. At the end of the session, the Twitter account can be access and the conclusion of the session could be the answers to the questions that have been tweeted.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to remember that today's digital society is advancing and changing constantly and it is our job as educators and administrators to develop professional development plans with the goals in mind of better preparing our students to be ready for a world full of technology. These professional development plans have been designed with both blended

learning and flipped classroom formats. Technology is all around in our schools and it is important that we take advantage of these tools by engaging our students and improving their learning. The technology professional development offering for the interactive tool, Nearpod, is one that can be used to demonstrate how technology can be utilized in the classrooms to engage our students. The technology professional development offering for Google Docs is able to show the participants how easily teachers, students, staff, and administration can collaborate on projects.

This particular project was done utilizing Google Docs. It was simple to set up and for the group to access any time they wish. It was simple to leave notes to each other and ask questions or tell other group members ideas or what section they would be working on to finish the project.

Putting into action the flipped classroom format allowed the group to understand the various sections of setting up the flipped classroom. The flipped classroom allows the participants to have some ownership of the content before walking into a professional development day or classroom as a student with blinders on as to what is being taught/learned for the day. It creates greater learning for everyone involved.

References

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