Needs Assessment, Adult Learning & Evaluation
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<center>Needs Assessment</center>

A need is defined as "the gap between the actual and desired state of affairs (Johnson & Dick [of Evaluation in Instructional Design: A Comparison of Evaluation Models], 2012, 98). In this situation, the administration needs to outline the desired outcome. A survey of the teachers needs to be completed in order to verify that the outcomes are not being met due to the concentrated nature of the professional development programs. Surveys would ask questions to obtain information about the teacher's perceptions of previous year's professional development. Information would also be collected in regards to the effectiveness of the prior year's professional development efforts.

Successful needs assessments and strategic planning efforts require clear learning outcomes (Bassoppo-Moyo 2008). Teachers feel hurried to learn new skills as well as complete planning for the upcoming year to the extent that they're unable to properly utilize the new skills. Confirmation that the goals of the professional development programs were not being met would justify a change in format.

I would suggest that the full day of professional development be broken into at least three smaller segments throughout the three days. This allows the teachers to integrate new strategies into their upcoming lessons. This format is further supported by practices in Adult Learning Theory.

<center>Adult Learning Theory</center>

The district provides three days at the start of the year prior to the students' return for teachers to complete both professional development workshops and classroom

preparation. One can assume that additional in-service days are also provided throughout

the school year. In the past, all of the professional development was completed all in one

day. This leaves only two days for active preparation time for the incoming teachers at the

start of the year.

I would change the format and the strategies to better utilize the available time to

meet the stated goals in the strategic plan developed as part of the needs assessment

process. Based on constructivist theories (Ruey 2010) and purpose-based learning

(Emerick-Brown), I would develop short interactive workshops on technology integration

with assignments requiring the teachers to take their new skills and knowledge and apply

them to their first quarter lesson plans.

The first workshop would introduce a concept for integrating technology in the

classroom. Students would return to the second session, likely on the next day, with their

initial lesson plans that integrate the technology skills. The application to their actual

classes allows the teachers to construct meaning (Ruey 2010) and purpose (Emerick-

Brown 2008) to the teacher's new learning. This strategy also allows for the teachers to

make legitimate headway on their lesson plans for the upcoming year.

Teachers can continue to develop meaning from their new learning and skills

throughout the year by engaging in discussion using a social learning platform. Teacher

can discuss what has worked, what hasn't and seek advice from their peers. Other

professional development opportunities throughout the school year can be used to build

new technology skills. Ideally, teacher will take ownership of their learning and begin to

present their progress at later professional development programs.

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Example Agenda

Day One
8:00 AM – 10 AM:          Workshop: Online Learning Communities
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM:     Lesson Planning Breakout Groups
12:00 AM – 1:00 PM:      Lunch
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM:       Online Learning Communities Re-Cap/Group Discussion
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM:       Solo Preparation Time
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Program Evaluation

Program evaluation would be done through two basic means. A follow up questionnaires and post-tests would be completed to compare to those done prior to the start of the program. This would allow for immediate feedback after the initial three-day return to the school year. The second means of evaluation would be done through professional development portfolios.

Portfolio evaluations build on adult learning theories of purpose-based learning. Trainees can view their own progress and engage in meta-learning. They become aware of their own learning process (Klenowski, Askew and Carnell 2006). Portfolios can be completed online through Google sites or similar programs. The components of the portfolio can include technology integrated lesson plans, analysis and reflection of work completed during the professional development exercises and throughout the year.

The portfolio meets a constructivist approach by allowing the learner to take control of their own learning, internalize it and make it applicable to their work. This type of evaluation has been successful for analyzing the effectiveness of professional development programs (Klenowski, Askew and Carnell 2006). Each portfolio is an opportunity to assess the individual learning and the overall effectiveness of the new professional development format.

References

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