Effective Technology Professional Development

THE SECRET SAUCE FOR SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM TRANSFORMATION

Despite decades of existing research, most professional development programs fail to adhere to established criteria for effectiveness. A 2013 report from the Center for Public Education found that while over 90% of teachers reported that they engaged in some type of professional development during the year, most found it to be completely ineffective. The 2015 Mirage report by TNTP, one of the largest empirical studies of teacher professional development, found that even though teachers reported spending 39-74 hours per year on professional development, only 30% demonstrated any measurable improvement in their classroom practice.

THREE CRITICAL GUIDELINES for professional learning that improves classroom practice

1
Focus on specific content areas

2
Provide opportunities to engage in hands-on learning

3
Directly connect experience to daily practice

FACTORS SCHOOL LEADERS MUST CONSIDER when planning for & evaluating professional learning opportunities

There is a direct correlation between the formation of dedicated learning communities and instructional improvements. Teaches need to be engaged in sustained social learning with mentors and peers. Professional learning should not be limited to prescribed workshops or independent activities.

Educators require a combination of focused instruction, opportunities to test out concepts, and a chance to gain meaningful feedback from colleagues.

When it comes to maximizing technology tools for learning, professional learning for all educators requires a focus not only on specific tools but also on impactful changes in pedagogy which support the sustained effective use of technology tools.

CoSN recognizes professional learning as a critical component to improving digital literacy and technology capacity for educators, administrators, and students. Viewing it as a necessary component for addressing digital equity and launching K-12 innovation, CoSN advocates that district leaders consider professional learning as a component of all technology initiatives.

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