Standards for Effective Professional Learning

Instructions

- Visit **learningforward.org/standards-for-professional-learning** and review the 7 key standards for effective professional learning from Learning Forward.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have. (hint: capture the 7 standards!)

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *How many of these are present when my school, region, or district does professional development?*
    - *Why aren't more of these present when my school, region, or district does professional development?*
    - *How can we as school leaders ensure that these are present more often when we engage in professional learning?*

Prerequisites for Effective Professional Learning

- Visit **bit.ly/learningforwardprereqs**. On page 3, review the 4 prerequisites for effective professional learning from Learning Forward.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have. (hint: capture the 4 prerequisites!)

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *How many of these are present when my school, region, or district does professional development?*
    - *Why aren't more of these present when my school, region, or district does professional development?*
    - *How can we as school leaders ensure that these are present more often when we engage in professional learning?*

Unconferences

At an unconference, no topics have been predetermined, no keynote speakers have been invited, no panels have been arranged. Instead, the event lives and dies by the participation of its attendees.They decide what topics will be discussed and they convene the individual breakout sessions. In other words, an unconference has no agenda until the participants create it.

There are only two rules at an unconference:

1. Nobody is giving a presentation - unconferences are all about conversations;
2. If a session doesn't inspire attendees and they are not contributing, they should get up and find a different one. (It's called the Law of Two Feet.)

The premise behind the unconference idea is that, as entrepreneur Dave Winer put it, "the sum of the expertise of the people in the audience is greater than the sum of the expertise of the people on stage."

Unconferences are about empowering attendees to share their expertise. They give participants the opportunity to have an unfiltered exchange of innovative ideas.

Instructions

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *What could an unconference look like in our school, region, or district that was focused on solving local community challenges? (and could we get students, parents, and community members there?)*
    - *What might an unconference accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

EdCamps

- Visit **edcamp.org** and watch the explanatory video [3:41] on the home page. Explore other resources on the website.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have.

- Key questions to ponder include
  - *What could an EdCamp look like in our school, region, or district? (and could we get students, parents, and community members there?)*
  - *What might an EdCamp accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

Pecha Kucha Nights

Instructions

- Visit **pechakucha.com/faq** and read over the information on the web page (note: although it references architects, these are done in a variety of local / professional communities). Explore other resources on the website.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have.

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *What could a Pecha Kucha Night look like in our school, district, or community? (and could we get students, parents, and community members there?)*
    - *What might a Pecha Kucha Night accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*
    - *How do you pronounce pecha kucha?* :)

Ignite / TEDx Talks

- Visit **ignitetalks.io** and **ted.com/about/programs-initiatives/tedx-program**. Be sure you understand both kinds of events. Explore other resources on the websites.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have.

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *What could an internal Ignite or TEDx event look like in our school, district, or community? (and could we get students, parents, and community members there?)*
    - *What might an internal Ignite or TEDx event accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

Flipped Staff Meetings

Instructions

- Visit **flippedstaffmeetings.weebly.com** and explore flipped staff meeting resources at the website. Also visit **bit.ly/teachthoughtflipped**.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have.

- Key questions to ponder include
  - *If staff meetings tend to be ineffective, boring, and repetitive, why do we continue to run them the way they have always been run?*
  - *What if teachers could go to staff meetings and be actively collaborating?*
  - *What if teachers looked forward to going to staff meetings?*
  - *What if teachers could leave a staff meeting having been fully engaged for its entire duration?*
  - *What if staff meetings were the place to learn, innovate, and transform teaching practices?*
  - *What could flipped staff meetings look like in our school, region, or district?*
  - *What might flipped staff meetings accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

Best Practice Groups

Many teachers share a common complaint: Professional development doesn't actually treat them like professionals.

"Teachers are the ones that are in the muck with students the most. They know the most about what's happening and what should be happening in their classrooms," said Mandy Flora, a fellow at Teaching Lab, a nonprofit that supports teacher-led PD. But when it comes to school- and district-level decision-making, including around PD, teachers "often have the least amount of power in making decisions," she said.

Some school leaders are trying to change this, offering teachers options that give them ownership over their own PD - from in-house professional learning communities to un-conferences, in which teachers set the PD agenda and learn from each other. But providing teachers with more choice can clash with another objective: ensuring that PD addresses school and district instructional goals.

Realizing that teachers were disengaged, Nicole Donato (an instructional coach at Big Spring High School in Newville, PA) worked with her school's principal to develop a new system with what she calls "best practice groups." Each semester, teachers choose to work on one area of the school's instructional framework - literacy strategies, for example, or scaffolding and differentiation. They also pick the format for their twice-monthly professional learning. Cross-curricular planning, one-on-one coaching, and group lesson study are some of the options.

Instructions

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
  - *When it comes to professional learning, how do we balance school and district needs with the needs of teachers and other staff?*
  - *What might best practice groups (and other mechanisms described above) accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

Digital Badges

- Visit **bit.ly/digitalbadgeslidedeck** and review the slide deck. See also **microcredentials.digitalpromise.org**.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *What could digital badges for teacher and staff learning look like in our school, region, or district? For what learning or skill development?*
    - *What might digital badges for teacher and staff learning accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

Surprise and Delight

- Visit **bit.ly/surpriseanddelightpd** and skim the article.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *What do we think about this 'surprise and delight' approach to educator professional development? Advantages and disadvantages?*
    - *Should we be trying to get more 'surprise and delight' into our traditional professional development activities? If so, what ideas do we have?*

Unlearning

Instructions

- Visit **bit.ly/unlearningpd** and skim the article.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *What might the educators in our school, region, or district need to 'unlearn?'*
    - *As school leaders, how can we structure effective 'unlearning' for our teachers and staff?*

Disrespectful PD

Instructions

- Visit **bit.ly/disrespectfulpd** and skim the article.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
  - *Which of these 'disrespectful' professional development practices do we manifest in our own school, region, or district? (and why? don't we know better?)*
  - *As school leaders, what are some solutions we can work on that help address these concerns around 'disrespectful' professional development?*

PD 'Blind Spots'

Instructions

- Visit **bit.ly/pdblindspots** and peruse the list of professional development 'blind spots' articulated by the educators in the article.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *What 'blind spots' might we have in our own school, region, or district professional development?*
    - *What are some ways we might solicit educators' ideas about professional development 'blind spots' (and how to potentially address them)?*

From PD to Practice

Imagine going to the finest basketball camp in the world and being explained the perfect technique for the jump shot. You will receive instruction from an expert coach on how to complete every element of the jump shot; however, you will not be in a gym. Not only will you be outside of a gym, but you will have no ball to practice with and there will not be a hoop in sight. The hope is that you take the techniques you learned in isolation and then, on your own time, incorporate them into your regular practice. Tough sell!

If I advertised this as a basketball camp, literally nobody would sign up. It simply does not make sense to expect this type of complex work to translate from the theoretical to the practical after a few short hours of instruction. Yet, this is our traditional professional development model.

Instructions

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *How often do we see this professional development scenario in our own school, region, or district? (and why? don't we know better?)*
    - *As school leaders, what are some solutions we can work on that help address this 'professional development to practice' mismatch?*

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Reading

Source: bit.ly/datadriventeachers

The traditional concept of professional learning communities, or PLCs, is something like this:

Data-driven schools have a good sense of where their students are at the beginning of the year and have measurable goals for where they want their students to be at the end of the year. The next step for educators is to implement a system of frequent formative assessments in order to benchmark the progress of their students during the school year toward those year-end goals. Simply using baseline data to set measurable year-end goals, without also implementing a system that allows for frequent analysis and adjustment of instructional and organizational practice, is not likely to result in significant improvements in student learning.

To realize the instructional power of formative assessment practices, educators also need the opportunity to meet regularly and frequently to have collaborative, data-based discussions about student progress. During these meetings, educators identify emergent patterns from the formative data and discuss what the data tell them about students' progress toward year-end learning goals. Teachers can then collaboratively identify appropriate instructional interventions that can be implemented during the next instructional cycle and collectively commit to implementing those interventions. These types of *professional learning communities (PLCs)* have been shown to have major impacts on student achievement and teacher satisfaction.

Instructions

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *What are the advantages and disadvantages of professional learning communities (PLCs)?*
    - *Are the educators in our professional learning communities (PLCs) really learning, growing, improving, and changing practice? How do we know?*
    - *What might PLCs for teacher and staff learning accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

Professional Learning Networks (PLNs)

- Visit **bit.ly/socialmediaobligations**. Scroll down to the paragraph that begins *Although there is a lot of noise out there...* and read the rest of the article.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *What are the advantages and disadvantages of global communities of practice (as opposed to local communities of practice)?*
    - *When will (should) we start incorporating the use of social media learning channels (aka professional learning networks, or PLNs) into the broader definition of what it means to be an education professional?*
    - *When will (should) we renorm the education profession to include the expectation that teachers and administrators will use these tools to advance their own practice?*
    - *When will (should) we view educators that opt out of the use of social media for professional learning as an aberration rather than the norm?*
    - *What could online and digital PLNs for teacher and staff learning look like in our school, region, or district?*
    - *How might we give professional development 'credit' for learning in PLNs?*
    - *What might PLNs for teacher and staff learning accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

Pineapple Charts

- Visit **cultofpedagogy.com/pineapple-charts** and scroll down to the *What is a Pineapple Chart?* section. Read the next few paragraphs and accompanying chart.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
  - *What successes and challenges have we seen in our own school, region, or district when teachers visit each other's classrooms?*
  - *What might pineapple charts and other nonjudgmental, peer-to-peer classroom visitation strategies accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

Give Weak Teachers Good Lesson Plans, Not PD

- Visit **bit.ly/lessonplansnotpd** and skim the article.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *What do we think about this approach to professional learning? What are the advantages and disadvantages?*
    - *Can we even agree on what high-quality lesson plans look like? If so, how do we know and what mechanisms might we implement to accomplish the creation of such lesson plans?*
    - *Is there a danger here of reducing teachers to interchangeable content deliverers when we give them strong lessons to implement?*
    - *What might this approach accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

Teacher Video

Reading

Source: gettingsmart.com/2018/12/video-coaching-for-professional-learning

Jim Knight, an expert in instructional coaching, has leveraged the technology of video in his Impact Cycle. It is a structured way for teachers and coaches to partner for effective instructional coaching using video as one of the primary tools. It breaks down into three phases. In the "Identify" phase teachers use video to gain a picture of the instructional reality in the classroom. Teacher video a 10- to 20-minute section of a lesson, and then the coach and teacher watch the video separately and take notes. A follow up coaching conversation occurs where the coach helps the teacher set a goal and select a teaching strategy to focus on. In the "Learn" phase, the teacher engages in professional learning supported by a coach through providing resources and modeling. Finally, in the "Improve" phase, the teacher implements what has been learned and uses video to collect data and continue to reflect and improve in partnership with a coach. Teachers at my school have found it not only helpful, but a time efficient way to learn professionally. The whole experience took approximately 1 to 2 hours of time over the course of a two to three weeks. It's also important to note that we only did this cycle once during a year or semester as one of select core coaching practices in our menu of options. One teacher recently noted, "I found this to be a very positive learning experience. It's always great to have an extra set of eyes observing parts of your lesson and provide constructive feedback, and the video allowed me to almost give feedback to myself."

Instructions

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach to professional development?*
    - *How might we leverage teacher video to improve professional learning?*
    - *What might teacher video accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

The Teaching Channel

- Visit **teachingchannel.org/videos** and review the resources there.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
  - *What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach to professional development?*
  - *Are these better or worse than the self-paced software modules that we use with students in blended learning content delivery systems?*
  - *As school leaders, how might we better leverage the Teaching Channel and other video repositories for professional learning in our school, region, or district?*
  - *What might the Teaching Channel and other video repositories accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

Evaluating PD

Instructions

- Visit **bit.ly/evaluatingpd** and skim the article.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *How do we evaluate professional development in our own school, region, or district?*
    - *Do our professional development activities result in observable changes in teacher and staff behaviors? Why or why not?*
    - *Do our professional development activities result in observable changes in student success outcomes? Why or why not?*
    - *As school leaders, what are some solutions we can work on that help improve the evaluation of our professional learning efforts?*

What Can $500 Buy?

- Visit **bit.ly/500dollarpd** and skim the article.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
  - *What is the current professional development budget of your school, region, or district? How are those funds spent?*
  - *What are the advantages and disadvantages of this $500 approach?*
  - *How would you make this $500 professional development process manageable?*
  - *How would you evaluate the impact of everyone's learning under this $500 approach?*
  - *As school leaders, how could / should we re-evaluate how we are spending our professional development funds?*
  - *What might this approach accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

Personalized PD

- Visit **bit.ly/longbeachpd**. Scroll down to the paragraph that begins *Think of it a bit like a personalized fitness plan…* (6th paragraph under the Building a Platform section). Read the next few paragraphs.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
    - *What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach to professional development?*
    - *Are these analogous to the self-paced software modules that we use with students in blended learning content delivery systems?*
    - *As school leaders, how might we better leverage online learning modules, courses, and other digital resources for professional learning in our school, region, or district?*
    - *What might this approach accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

#PubPD

- Visit **bit.ly/educatorpubpd** and skim the article.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
  - *What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach to professional development?*
  - *How could we entice educators to attend informal professional learning meetups?*
  - *As school leaders, how might we better leverage #PubPD and other informal learning mechanisms for professional learning in our school, region, or district?*
  - *What might this #PubPD approach accomplish for us that traditional professional development does not?*

Perceived Characteristics of Innovations

- Visit **bit.ly/rogersstages** and read the article.

- Have a conversation with your travel partner. In your shared notes document, capture whatever notes, ideas, and reactions you have to the reading above.

- Key questions to ponder include
  - *As school leaders, how can we adjust the relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability of the professional learning work in our school, region, or district?*
  - *How might thinking about these perceived characteristics of innovations help us enhance the movement of teachers and staff from awareness to adoption?*