

**1.What do you see as the overall aims or purposes of professional development in a context that you identify?**

The purpose of professional development is to provide effective instruction that will improve the skills and knowledge of educators. It's training that will help to improve their effectiveness. When considering an effective implementation of a training program there is an array of strategies that will benefit the learner. The hierarchy of needs must first be met. Plan an opener that will get the learners excited to be there and anxious to learn. The next step is to make sure that the learning is intentional. Give the learners an agenda or a schedule. Then explain how this learning will benefit them and what new skill they will take away from the experience. Incorporate active learning. Use group work and collaboration so group members can learn from each other and discover new perspectives. Use surveys and polls to ask the learners questions about their needs and make sure instruction is authentic to the learning experience.

**2.What are the conceptual and philosophical assumptions that you believe should guide the planning and delivery of continuing professional development within your practice context?**

**a.**

**Beliefs about the learner**

One important step before beginning to learn is making sure the learners basic needs are met. This reflects a humanistic psychological perspective, as presented by Chalofsky et al (2014). Chalofsky acknowledges the person as a whole. It can do wonders for a group's overall experience at training if they start with a snack and drink. Then acknowledge they may be stressed, busy, and overworked by allowing them a few minutes to get their thoughts and feelings

out so it's easier for them to compartmentalize and focus on the meeting. One common strategy that I have seen at my district's new teacher meetings begins by forming a circle. A snack and drink is provided while the teachers take turns telling one or two things about how they are feeling. It's a really quick rundown about how their day is going or what's going on in their life. Each teacher finishes their turn by saying, "Ok, I'm ready, I'm here!" It's a really powerful strategy because it allows each teacher to share how they are feeling and then commit to being ready, on task, and willing to learn. It eliminates the need for chit chat and gets everyone committed to being on task. It's motivating to the learners because their feelings have been acknowledged and now they are ready to be part of a big learning circle.

**b.**

#### **Beliefs about the nature of knowledge**

In order for knowledge to be acquired there must be interest and motivation. In Chalofsky et al. (2014), the authors outlined the concept of workplace learning and how it exists and cannot be formalized by a supervisor, manager, or any other outside actor. Rather, it can be influenced by workplace training programs. However, the employees ultimately determine what learning takes place and cannot be forced. The learner must want to learn in order to acquire knowledge. The desire to learn is a catalyst that makes work learning practice effective.

**c.**

#### **Beliefs about how adults learn**

One overarching theme portrayed throughout the course is that adult learners are complex individuals that bring their own knowledge and experience to the table. There is an emphasis on veering away from traditional seminars and instead having a more interactive approach to training and professional development. Authors such as Chalofsky and Silberman share common

ideas about the importance of being part of a group and helping each other learn. Silberman is a strong advocate of active learning. I think his mention of hearing, seeing, questioning, discussing, doing and teaching are spot on. I agree with the importance of group learning and interaction. I find this increases both learning and motivation. Learners do best by doing and practicing, not just listening.

I also really like Branch's approach in the effect that he focuses more on intentional learning environments. There is extensive research on intentional learning and how it helps the learner to be more aware of the learning process. Branch's approach encompasses scaffolding, researching, active listening, and planning lessons based on the needs of the learners. Focusing on what learners need will make the learning more authentic and in return more beneficial to the learner.

Listening to the learner is important. Learners thrive when they feel in control of their learning and are allowed the freedom of choice. Each learner is unique, one person might excel in an online class while another may prefer in person. Offering a survey to get an idea of which platform the learners prefer would be beneficial to understanding how they feel. Learning online can be more convenient and allows learners to learn at their own pace, but team building and practicing concepts is often more effective in person. Offering a flexible learning schedule that incorporates both in person and online training can be a positive experience for learners. For example, I enjoy our biweekly staff meetings but it's also a welcome surprise when our principal decides our meeting material can be summed up in an email instead. A mix of both isn't a bad thing. It is also a good idea to compile a list of training topics and ask staff to identify which areas they would like to address. This will help to make the learning more intentional and authentic to their individual needs.

### **3. What model or conceptual framework will you use to guide your work in the design and planning of training and professional development?**

There was a video assigned to us in module two that is about four learning theories. One of the theories that I will use to guide my work is called Cognitivism and it's based on research by Piaget and Anderson. The students learn through mental processing. It's about helping learners to acquire strategies that will help them to better process information. The role of the facilitator is to attract and keep the learners' attention and model those strategies for the students through use of rehearsal, visual aids, repetition, review, summary, and mind mapping tools.

Another framework that I will use to guide my work is from the video mentioned above. It's the social constructivist theory, it is student centered and based on Vygotsky's work. It's a social type of learning where the facilitator gives guidelines for learning and places learners in groups where they can share their ideas and learn from each other. They will use group discussion, group tasks, and group reflection.

I will begin planning for training by using a backwards design method. I'll decide what I want the learning objective or outcome to be and then plan around that. I would like to incorporate ADDIE into the planning. ADDIE stands for analyze, design, develop, implement and evaluate. All steps are extremely important to the process but implementation is where most learning will take place. ADDIE will be an important template to follow when planning training. It's a structured framework that will help me keep the objective in mind.

### **4. Given your overall aims and purposes for continuing professional development and your practice context, what instructional or training strategies do you believe will be particularly effective?**

I'm a huge believer in active learning. Silberman's 'ten ways to obtain participation' showcased a wide range of methods used to enhance a training program (2015 p. 67). Group work and participation are huge assets to a training program. I find myself utilizing 'polling, subgroup discussions, and go-arounds' as opportunities to provide personal feedback to the training or to add context to the training topics. As participants engage in dialogue about a certain topic, the more personally invested they feel; it validates that the content is relevant to them and that they have a personal connection to the training program. Each group member has a unique perspective, life experience, and skill set to bring to the table. Through group work and discussion members will learn from each other. They will also form bonds which enhances the work culture.

Jigsaw learning is fun and highly effective. We use it at our new teacher meetings because we are often short on time. Each teacher is assigned a section of an article and we are responsible for reading it, then explaining it to the rest of the group. Some of the articles they choose are really tedious to read and it's more fun hearing it summed up from the mouth of a colleague.

I also like blended learning as Silberman suggests on page 191. I think that it's efficient for busy adults that work full time and have families to be allowed to learn on their own time, at their own pace. I also think that learning in person can be highly beneficial, motivating, and inspiring. Blended learning offers a perfect mix of both worlds.

I find Silberman's webinar warm up exercises to be a great start to any training (63). I often jump right into an introduction and then content but the warm up is a way to gauge a learner's prior experience, goals for the training, and other information that will help me to make the training pertain to their needs.

Consistent reflection is extremely important for the facilitator and the learner. A strategy from the text that I really like is having the learners reflect individually and then reflect as a group. It sort of goes along the lines of a think/pair/share. Bradbury et al. (2010) discusses reflective learning and group thinking or reflection. It would be valuable to self-reflect and then reflect as a group because the more learners hear from other people, they are opened up to new ideas and ways of thinking.

**5. Briefly describe your overall approach to evaluating training and professional development programs within your practice context, given the aims and purposes you specified in No. 1 above.**

The purpose of professional development is to provide effective instruction that will improve the skills and knowledge of educators. It's training that will help to improve their effectiveness. Learning must be intentional, active, and authentic. I will use Kirkpatrick's methods of evaluation when evaluating the program. Level one looks at how participants reacted to the training, whether they are satisfied with the take away. Level two looks at learning and whether they gained knowledge from the training. Level three looks at behavior and whether they are using what they have learned. Level four looks at results and whether the training has had a positive impact on the participants and place of employment. This is a highly successful method of evaluation that is used by many organizations (Serhat 2016).

### Work Cited

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 A Brief Overview of 4 Learning Theories