

# Professional Learning: If Not a Workshop, Then What?

One of our missions at Teaching and Learning Consulting Network is to help you plan and deliver effective professional learning for your staff to improve teaching and learning.

Begin with questions:



*Why do we need professional learning?*

*Why is this change important?*

*Who is affected or impacted by the desired change(s)?*

*How will we provide these learning experiences?*

*Who will be involved?*

*How will personnel be involved?*

*How will we acquire and utilize necessary resources?*

*How do we deliver it?*

*How do we support teachers in the implementation process?*

*What will be the result of successful implementation?*

**Professional Learning Plans:** These plans should be based on data driven decisions with regard to what the student and educator performance data says, and the new learning or support that teachers need to fully implement the desired change(s).

## Shifting Our Thinking:

**GOING FROM THIS .....**Knowing

**...TO THAT:** Doing



**GOING FROM THIS .....**Professional Learning in a whole group session in the auditorium (despite the fact we may have always done it that way).

**...TO THAT:** Whole group learning should be confined to those topics that provide general information to all staff to establish common background knowledge. *To affect change in the most positive way, we recommend small, targeted groups to create the opportunity for personalized, focused learning.*

**GOING FROM THIS .....**One topic workshops for all staff (K-12)

**...TO THAT:** **Differentiating teacher learning is just as important as differentiating student learning.** Educators have different needs based on who and what they teach. They also bring a wide variety of skills and experiences to the table, so schools must learn to utilize the talents they have on their staff as well as help educators grow with new learning.

**GOING FROM THIS .....**Send teachers to the classroom, on their own, with some new knowledge/skill or a mandate to teach in a certain way with limited or no training/learning.

**...TO THAT:** **Provide resources, targeted collaboration and support** to encourage *reflection, revision, and planning* for content/grade level specific instruction that positively impacts the quality of instruction and student understanding.

**GOING FROM THIS .....**Administration selected and led professional learning opportunities.

**...TO THAT:** **Educator (self) directed learning** based on data, individual needs, content, skill levels, timing, and opportunities. Letting teachers have a voice in their own professional learning increases buy-in, meaningfulness, and engagement, and increases the chances the new learning will be implemented with fidelity.

**GOING FROM THIS .....**Traditional, workshop based professional learning led by a single presenter on a specific topic (learning and teaching in silos).

**...TO THAT:** **Targeted individual or small group learning opportunities;** choice of learning opportunities with follow up support during implementation; technology based learning: webinars, podcasts, interactive videos, etc.

**GOING FROM THIS .....**Sit and get; one and done learning sessions

**...TO THAT:** **Interactive, engaging, and collaborative learning sessions** where processing time is significant, and application (transferability) is expected; multiple learning and practice opportunities.

## **IF NOT A WORKSHOP THEN WHAT?**

- Book study
- Collaboration between content areas, grade levels, vertical teams, alike teams, topic driven groups, etc.
- Instructional Coaching sessions
- Modeling (through video, walkthroughs, observations...)
- Online communities
- Podcast
- Professional Learning Communities
- Professional Reading Circles (discussion groups)
- Webinar



## **IF A WORKSHOP, THEN WHAT?**

- *Differentiated/educator choice/targeted group*
- *Engaging; Processing & collaborative opportunities*
- *Content/Grade Level appropriate topic(s)*
- *Expectation: What will they do with new learning?*
- *Product: What will they take away?*
- *What will the school provide: Follow up, feedback, and support*