

LOST IN THE CLOUD: ATTEMPTING TO IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES

by

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Project Overview

This professional development program was designed after researching the question “*how can teachers improve the efficacy of digital content for an equitable class?*” The design was foundationally conceived via a constructivist worldview due to the open-ended research question and the inductive nature of data collection. This project was meant to take place within a professional development context where teachers and administrators work together to hone skills, learn from each other, and initialize worthwhile projects that assist each student in their goals. In an attempt at consistency for the student body, a suggestion would be to have grade-level teams work together. For classes that have multiple grade levels, it might be best to work together as a department or split into the other grade-level teams to regroup later and share what they’ve learned as a department.

The timeline for this project could vary depending on need or interest. For best results, it is intended for part of one day at the beginning of the school year with at least two more shorter sessions throughout the school year. This project was to start during the fall of 2020 and completed in the spring of 2021.

The Project

This section was to describe the project’s actual planned events backed by research on adult education to suit the needs of the participants. The first of three sessions began with an introduction to the topic by asking participants to list all of the logins they have to manage as a household. The second step had them identify the logins they need professionally. This was

meant to get people thinking about how they manage their digital world and reflect on how confusing it could be as a younger student with a background different from their own.

Participants were then asked to reflect on their own experiences with technology changes over the course of their lives and to define their rationale for using technology in their class. The rationale for these types of activity was rooted in Knowles' foundational principle in adult learning that calls for the learners to be "active participants in a process of inquiry, rather than passively receive transmitted content" (1992, p. 11). This activity was meant to serve as a segue into identifying the need for these sessions and eventually work toward establishing a goal for the year.

Due to the perplexing nature of the essential question in this project, the rationale for improving technology in the community were explicitly outlined. The information provided was backed by the research discussed in the literature review section of this paper. The reasons included the inevitability of technology in education, the need for consistency, simplicity, transformative learning, and equitable education through culturally responsive and personalized pedagogy.

Suggested areas of improvement for technology use were defined to the purpose of having teams reflect on those areas through different lenses of users. Participants were provided with a table that outlined four areas to analyze: navigation & organization, communication, content & curriculum, support and accessibility. In each area, participants noted technology use that was working and areas that needed improvement for each group of users; students, families, and coworkers. The last parts of the first session were centered on collaborative sharing and problem-solving. Effective professional development supports opportunities for collaboration

through which adult learners can “positively change the culture and instruction of their entire grade level, department, school and/or district” (Darling-Hammond et. al., v). Teams were asked to identify at least one area of technology they could improve for at least one group of users for the year. They were also asked to describe an action plan to accomplish their goal as a team.

Winter and spring sessions were focused on reflection and adaptation to meet the needs of the students and teachers as the project continued throughout the year. It was noted that “effective PD programs leveraged feedback and opportunities for reflection to create richer environments for teacher learning” (Darling-Hammond et. al., 15). The winter session provided time for teams to review their work and hear about other teams’ progress. Teams were allowed to revise their goals and begin collecting information for a presentation in the spring. This project was designed to minimally span the course of a year because it had been shown that meaningful, transformative professional development requires sustained timelines rather than single-instance workshops (Darling-Hammond et. al., 15-16).

Participant Learning Objectives: Through effective planning and implementation of this project participants would be able to work toward achieving the learning objectives listed below.

- Participants will be able to reflect on the impact of technology in their classrooms.
- Participants will be able to identify the specific needs of students, families, or coworkers related to technology and learning.
- Participants will be able to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan to improve the use of technology for a user group.

Links to project artifacts are listed below:

- [Project Slides](#) (see speaker notes for details/script)

- https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1qGmWX2oIYuOnvr7_gkiuxe1Vd2A6M
[QDg4jfwrPMeXow/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1qGmWX2oIYuOnvr7_gkiuxe1Vd2A6M/QDg4jfwrPMeXow/edit?usp=sharing)
- [Digital Arenas Handout](#)
- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rKvvuNTEdbsE8G8twRT3i1B9qjVobXFV>
[HP5pGOp_PK8/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rKvvuNTEdbsE8G8twRT3i1B9qjVobXFV/HP5pGOp_PK8/edit?usp=sharing)

REFERENCES

- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Gardner, M., Hyler, M. E. (2017). *Effective Teacher Professional Development*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.
- Top Ten Slide Tips. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.garreynolds.com/preso-tips/design/>