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# SevenSTEPS<sup>to</sup>

Professional development generally follows a pattern of presentation and review, but flipping the sessions has garnered a positive response from staff members and prompted greater collaboration and engagement.

# Flipped

## Professional Development

Having just attended the ISTE (International Society of Technology in Education) conference, I was excited to schedule an all-day professional development session for my district. I wanted to share as much of what I learned as possible without overwhelming everyone. Instead of just handing everyone sheets of paper with some links printed on them—I knew where those papers would end up—I wanted to present the information in an engaging way by modeling the use of technology. With that in mind, I started working on a new professional development model that made sense to me and would hopefully make sense to others.

From previous experience, I knew that creating accounts and logins at the beginning of each professional development wasted time and allowed many participants to get off task and lose focus from the start. I was also very much aware that everyone was at a different place not only with the use of technology in their classroom but also with the acceptance of technology as a valuable learning resource. Those were factors I wanted to take into account while preparing for the professional development session.

I decided it would be good for everyone to have information about the training ahead of time so that they would know what to expect. Plus, everyone would be able to create accounts at their own pace and in a safe environment before the training began without feeling pressured or overwhelmed in front of their colleagues. I hoped it would also create a sense of ownership as we proceeded because everyone would be in the loop and in charge of their own training and learning.

To begin, I created what looked like a regular agenda with a few noticeable improvements. If a website was listed, I linked to it so that participants just had to click the link to go there. I also highlighted websites that participants needed to create accounts for so that everyone would know to set up accounts and passwords.

All of the preparation paid off. The response from the staff survey was overwhelmingly positive. Many agreed this was a good way to conduct a workshop. So began this journey of flipping our professional development to better meet the needs of all staff members.

### Seven Steps

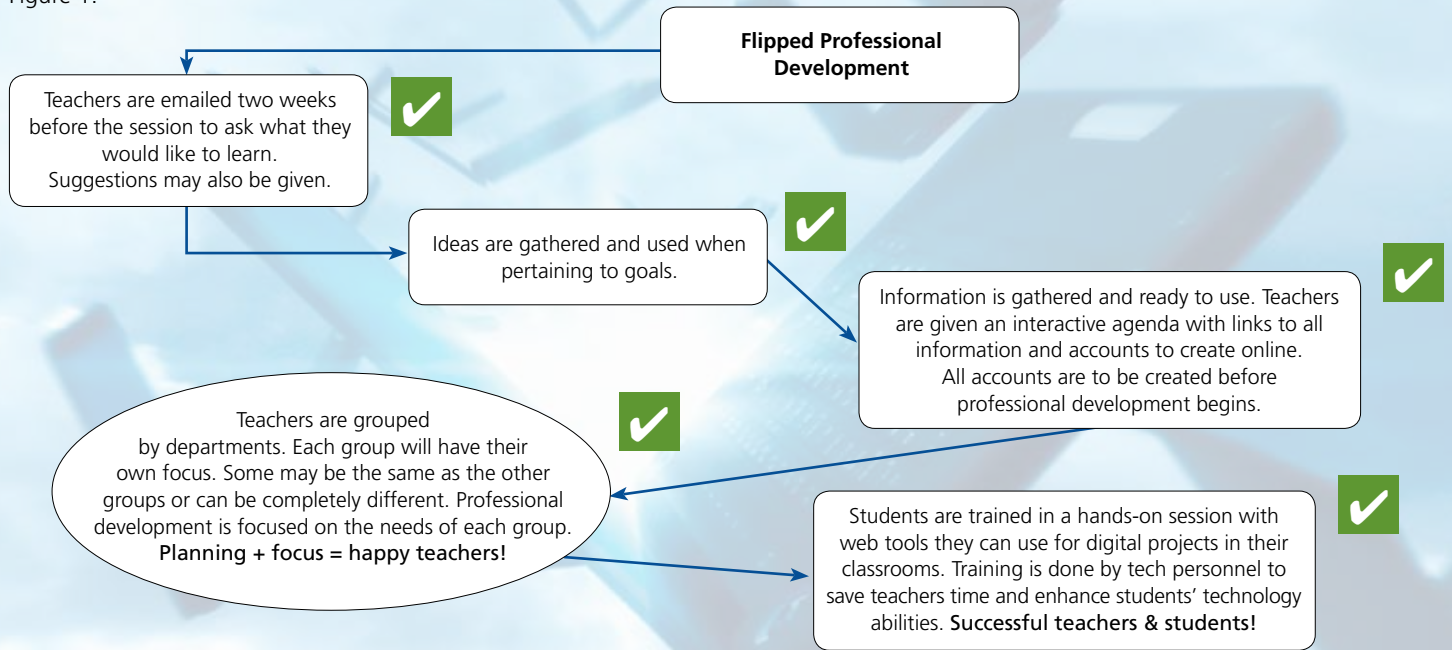
After reflecting on what worked well during the first attempt at flipping a meeting—and what didn't work as well—it was time to plan for the success of the next scheduled staff development.

#### 1. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

First, the principal, the assistant principal, and I grouped teachers by department to try to find the most common ground. We wanted each group to include only one department, but the time allotted and the availability of substitutes allowed us to create only three groups, which meant that each group had to comprise two departments. To complete the day of professional development in the time we had available, we would rotate groups in two-hour intervals.



Figure 1.



To create a specific agenda for each group, we sent individualized e-mail messages that asked the teachers what training they felt they needed for their classrooms and gave them a couple of suggestions to get them started (making sure that everyone knew they were only suggestions). Their input ensured that the professional development was completely about their needs.

We received a few responses from each group, which was perfect. Now we had some “needs” to work on.

## 2. CREATING THE AGENDA WITH THE GOAL OF MODELING

One of the goals I had was to create the agenda using digital tools because I wanted to be able to model the use of digital tools and maximize the time we had with each group.

The feedback from the e-mail messages convinced me that it was a good idea to create an infographic for each group and make it interactive by linking the items on the agenda to videos, websites, and other digital resources that were specific to each group’s training. The agendas were sent out a few days before the workshop so that everyone knew what to expect, could have questions ready, and had time to create their accounts. They could take a look at what they would be learning in their

workshop by simply clicking on the links in the agenda.

Only one person admitted to not creating accounts. He quickly sat down and created them before we were ready to start.

## 3. THE DIGITAL TOOLS

When it was time to begin the workshop, I asked teachers to pull up a copy of the agenda, and we spent a few minutes sharing ideas and brainstorming how the agenda format could be used in different ways in individual classrooms. The agenda contained many links to digital tools, but we focused on only three during the meeting. I wanted the teachers who might want more information or websites later on to be able to use the rest as “takeaways” that they could explore on their own.

I created the agenda ([www.thinglink.com/lconley86](http://www.thinglink.com/lconley86)) using two tools:

- I chose Piktochart for creating the agenda infographic because I find it that it is easy to use and learn and allows users to create quality work.
- ThingLink is a great free tool for making any image interactive. It is also extremely easy to learn, so users can use it successfully right away, which is an important factor in the beginning stages of integrating technology in the classroom. Once an

image is linked, the participants just mouse over it to uncover other resources.

#### 4. CONTENT

Each workshop had three main content areas that focused on areas of particular interest for each group. For example, the agenda for the first group (English language arts and history teachers) included Piktochart, Socrative, and Sophia:

- First, I walked everyone through Piktochart so that they would be familiar with the process of creating infographics using that tool. Participants began playing around with the Piktochart and creating their own infographics with me as the guide on the side (<http://piktochart.com>).
- Socrative, a student response system, was an immediate hit because of its ease of use. Participants liked using any mobile device to interact immediately by simply entering the class number (generated by Socrative) that was displayed on the interactive whiteboard ([www.socrative.com](http://www.socrative.com)).
- Sophia, a platform on which teachers can create multimedia tutorials or use the 32,000 existing teacher-created tutorials, did not get the attention it deserved. We had time for only a brief discussion of the website's free content and tools, but that's OK. I will demonstrate Sophia at another time ([www.sophia.org](http://www.sophia.org)).

#### 5. MONITOR AND ADJUST

Even the best-planned agenda may need to be adjusted to better meet the needs of each group. There's always a chance you will have "technical difficulties" or just run out of time. If you know in advance to monitor the group's progress and adjust the agenda accordingly, it's not so horrible.

We had difficulties with our Wi-Fi. We don't usually, but of course we did on training day. I used the minor fiasco as another teaching moment. We talked about how such problems are always possible when using technology. I also encouraged the teachers to not be afraid to learn from students. When they can help you, they become immediately engaged and interested in what is going on.

#### 6. QUICK EXIT SURVEY

Because of our emphasis on digital tools, we didn't want to use a paper survey. Instead we used a quick exit ticket-type survey that had been created ahead of time at Socrative. Teachers were able to take part in the survey while we were modeling the website's uses. By keeping the survey short and meaningful, we received the most relevant feedback to use during the follow-up phase.

Since our training, Socrative has added several new features, such as images and gradable short-answer quizzes, that could have multiple uses in any classroom.

#### 7. FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up is highly important to making professional development training a success. It completes the circle. It is positive, considerate, and shows stakeholders that the training and the participants' time is valued.

I used the information from the exit surveys, input from the administrators, and feedback from the teachers to begin the follow-up process. Follow-up can be different for each teacher or classroom. I try to do my part by listening, supporting, and being available to complete the professional development circle with timely, purposeful follow-up.

For example, I spent the day in a history classroom introducing the same digital tools we had worked with in the professional development training, but this time, I presented the tools from the students' perspective of using them in projects. It was great! I introduced the digital tools using some fun activities first. Once they had the basics down, the students began working on their first projects while I was available to help answer questions.

The teacher knew that everyone was on the same page. He would not have to spend additional time explaining the tools individually. He was confident that his students were ready to collaborate and continue working on their projects in the future.

#### Moving Forward

Next year, we plan to train students in specific web tools at the beginning of the school year, which will enable them to complete digital



### Clarksville High School

CLARKSVILLE, AR

**GRADES:** 10–12

**ENROLLMENT:** 540

**COMMUNITY:** Rural

**DEMOGRAPHICS:** 74.1% White, 20.1% Black, 3.2% Hispanic, 2.1% Asian, 0.4% American Indian; 55% free & reduced-price lunch

**ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM:**

1 principal &  
1 assistant principal



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projects in any classroom. This will include creating accounts for such websites as Socrative, Padlet, Evernote, and ThingLink and learning the basics of the tools available. We think this will help students and teachers be prepared for the new school year. The training will be conducted by members of the technology staff.

We are also working on a rubric that could be used throughout the school to allow a student to create a single project that could be graded in more than one class. For instance, the English teacher could grade the grammar content and the science teacher could look at content that pertains to science. We are also looking at allowing more time to complete a digital project and getting more than one grade for the same project. Our hope is that students will be able to do more extensive learning and create more in-depth projects.

Working closely with our district curriculum coordinator, Kara Chrisman, and literacy specialist, Laura Baskin, I tweak and adjust each agenda to meet the needs of our teachers. Our goal is to provide professional development that is meaningful and relevant each time we meet. Clarksville has an amazing group of talented teachers who support, encourage, and collaborate well together. The flipped professional development model is a good fit for staff development as we continue to be innovators and thinkers moving forward and trying to always meet the needs of our students. **PL**

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**Author's note:** For sample agendas and other information, visit [www.flipped-pd.com](http://www.flipped-pd.com).