Diving Deep(LY)
Into Professional Learning

Florida Association of Staff Development Leadership Conference

Monday & Tuesday, September 21 & 22, 2010

Lois Brown Easton

Sponsored by

[Logo] Florida and the Islands Regional Comprehensive Center
**Description:**

Training, professional/staff development, and professional learning: These are all names for how educators engage in learning in the learning profession. They have different connotations. At this session, participants will learn the differences and create scenarios for each, based on the same outcomes for educators. They will also consider – as visual dialogue – the system changes that are needed when a district or school institutes professional learning.

**Essential Question:**

How can educators do the deep work of learning in order to help all students succeed?

**Outcomes:**

Participants will (KUD):

**Know**

- The differences among the styles/models for educator learning.
- What makes professional learning so powerful.

**Understand**

- How the same objective can be addressed through training, professional development, and professional learning.
- How the system needs to change in order to provide for professional learning.

**Do** (Participants will . . . )

- Create mini-plans for achieving a specific objective/outcome for adults using the strategies of training, professional development and professional learning.
- Apply the criteria for the three models to their own planning.
- Create a map of aspects of a district that need to be altered when professional learning is the goal of a school or the whole district.
Apply system changes to current conditions in their own districts and schools.

**Agenda**

- Opening activity
- Models of adult learning approaches
- Application of models to fictional and “real” learner objectives/outcomes
- The system: How it needs to adjust to provide professional learning: Visual dialogue
- Gallery tours of the visual dialogue templates
- Application to their own systems

**About Your Facilitator:**

Lois Easton works as a consultant, coach, and author. She is particularly interested in learning designs – for adults and for students. She recently retired as Director of Professional Development at Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center, Estes Park, Colorado. A middle school English teacher for 15 years, Easton earned her Ph.D. at the University of Arizona.


She can be reached at [leastoners@aol.com](mailto:leastoners@aol.com). Her mailing address is 4643 Burgundy Lane, Boulder, CO 80301. Her phone number is 303-527-2733. She encourages comments and questions – by email, especially – and is willing to send a variety of materials to participants at no charge.

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*Please email me if you would like a list of resources related to professional learning, a complete packet on PLCs or anything else: leastoners@aol.com.*
Make professional learning a joyful experience
August 09 2010 by Hayes Mizell’s blog

When educators talk about professional learning, they never seem to use the word *joy*. They sometimes describe a professional development experience as *fun*, but that is a much more superficial concept (amusement or pleasure) than *joy* (intense or elated happiness). There are many forces that draw educators into learning experiences that can potentially increase their effectiveness, but joy is not usually one of them. Teachers and administrators regard professional development as an obligation and sometimes an opportunity, but rarely a joy. If someone used the term "joyful professional development," most educators would consider it a laughable oxymoron.

Certainly, quality professional development requires learning that is often hard work, a process that most people do not associate with joy. It can be very difficult to master new knowledge, skills, and behaviors. It can be even more challenging to translate that learning into day-to-day practice. Perhaps teachers only experience joy when they realize that because of professional development they have become more effective instructors and, as a result, there is evidence of their students’ increased learning.

But there should always be the possibility that professional development itself can be joyful. That depends, in part, on attitude. If a person does not acknowledge their personal need for new learning, they will regard professional development as an unnecessary chore. If they bring to the experience emotions of dread, hostility, or resistance, there will never be space for joy.

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Opening Activity: Joy in 30, 60, and 90 Seconds!
Think about professional development or professional learning experiences that you have been a part of. What has given you joy in terms of those experiences? Write down a couple of ideas, take 30 seconds to find someone you don’t know, introduce yourselves, share your joys, thank each other, and then repeat for 60 seconds and 90 seconds. Then return to your table.
Much also depends on how educators experience professional development. With good reason, they may perceive it as an indictment of their performance, or a requirement unrelated to their learning needs or those of their students. And even though everyone now recognizes that poorly organized and implemented learning experiences are ineffective, they occur too frequently. The serial killers of joyful professional development are still on the loose, and they continue to reap rewards.

Joy should be an input as well as an outcome of professional learning. The conditions that make joyful professional development possible are well known: (a) deep understanding of and respect for educators' work environments and challenges, (b) engagement of educators in small, collegial learning teams led by skillful facilitators, (c) educator teams' identification of their most pressing learning needs as informed by student performance data, (d) sustained opportunities for educator teams to learn, use, and master manageable chunks of new knowledge, skills, and behaviors, (e) appropriate on-site support for implementation of new learning, and (f) assessment environments and processes that foster trust, honest dialogue, accountability, and continuous improvement of professional practice.

Joyful professional development is not a fanciful concept. There are very practical reasons for making professional development joyful. Teachers and administrators will engage in professional learning more enthusiastically. Their commitment and energy levels will increase. They will seek new learning more frequently and they will use it more effectively. These potential results make it important to include joy in the equation that yields more effective professional development. Educators who are responsible for organizing professional learning should consider what it means for professional development to be joyful and proceed to make it a reality.

*Hayes Mizell is NSDC's distinguished senior fellow.*

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**The Three T Protocol**
(also known and the Four A or the 5 C or ..Protocol)

As you skim this article, think about it in terms of these words that begin with the letter “T”: *Total, Tuba,* and *Trim.* Be prepared to contribute your ideas related to the article and the three randomly chosen words.
**Models of Professional Development and Learning**

**Model One: Models of Professional Development**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting the Individual</td>
<td>Individual inquiry: stipends; professional development plans; university courses; personal action research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal &amp; professional service</td>
<td>District-wide courses and workshops; school mentoring and/or coaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social construction of knowledge and action</td>
<td>Schoolwide collaborative action research – small groups or whole school; study groups; PLCs; CFGs; districtwide variations</td>
<td>Collective synergy, open-ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular and instructional initiatives</td>
<td>Success for All, Reading Recovery, Biology Sciences Curriculum Study, training; research</td>
<td>Demonstrations, presentations, fidelity of implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>Menu for PD days – districtwide usually</td>
<td>Organizational needs; transfer to classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Model Two: Educators and Their Professional Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Rough Percent of Educators</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gourmet Omnivores</td>
<td>10-15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Consumers</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Consumers</td>
<td>More than 50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reticent Consumers</td>
<td>5 – 10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Model Three: Comparison of Professional Learning and Professional Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Learning</th>
<th>Professional Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on needs in a school, as identified by those within the school</td>
<td>Often focuses on topics of educational interest generally; may focus on a state or district initiative; may focus on learning a particular strategy (such as differentiated instruction) whether or not the school has identified needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is driven by school-based data (not just test scores, however)</td>
<td>May not be data-driven (or the data may be district- or state-level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application/implementation is expected and provided for</td>
<td>May be “one-shot”; that is, without a process for application/implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing – learning related to one need generates new questions, and professional learning continues</td>
<td>May be “one-shot” or a day of workshops twice a year;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Led from within – by teachers and for teachers – with the principal as a learning peer</td>
<td>Led from the top (state, district, school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is usually active, with educators involved in looking at student work or artifacts of their practice using protocols or strategies</td>
<td>Is usually passive as educators listen to speakers or witness PowerPoints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involves research, such as action research; also educators may survey the research to discover strategies that</td>
<td>May be research-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address needs</td>
<td>May be presented in an auditorium to an entire district</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually occurs in small learning groups – 4 to 6 people</td>
<td>May occur during the school day – on an established professional development day at the start or in the middle of the school year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually occurs during the school day</td>
<td>Does not usually involve teachers in “deprivatizing” their practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involves educators in sharing their work and the work of their students; involves them in visiting other classrooms and welcoming others into their own classrooms</td>
<td>Can be somewhat “not-threatening” since change is not usually required or provided for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be challenging to individuals and culture changing.</td>
<td>Honors the experiences, skills and knowledge of the presenter/speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors the experiences, skills and knowledge of those within a school</td>
<td>Is usually individual (each person listening to a speaker)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is collaborative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Your Work:**

Using this adult learner outcome, create with a partner a professional development/learning scenario and be ready to share it with your colleagues:

*The adult learner will successfully use strategies related to teaching fractions in the classroom to help all students learn.*
Directions for Visual Dialogue & Gallery Tours

**Visual Dialogue**


2. Have someone “draw” the template on the butcher paper (if not already provided).

3. Discuss norms and agree to them or revise them. Agree on what to do if people violate norms.

4. Work together to co-create parts of the template, listening to each other, building on each other’s ideas, capturing the outliers while writing the consensus points.

5. No one person is automatically “the leader” with higher status. Anyone can facilitate, write/draw on the chart, keep time.

6. What’s written/drawn on the chart represents consensus.

7. Make sure each person in the group has participated and knows enough about the template to discuss it during a Gallery Tour.

8. Have fun. Get colorful! Be imaginative! Use icons, arrows, lines, etc.

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**Some Good Norms:**

*Work together to co-create parts of the template rather than divvying them up for individuals to do; do not figure out any part of the template on your own;*

*Listen first to understand; build on each other’s ideas;*

*Look for commonalities but treat each idea with respect and look for its fit;*

*Ensure that everybody has “air time;” and*

*“Park” ideas that are not yet fully developed or haven’t been agreed upon on a separate piece of chart paper, making sure to go back to them during the process.*
**Gallery Tours**

1. In your *Visual Dialogue Group*, count off by ___.

2. Leave your visual dialogue group and join those who have the same number you have.

3. In each NEW group there should be at least one representative from each Visual Dialogue group. You are now in a *Tour Group*.

4. As the tour reaches your chart, serve as *Docent* and highlight what you did. Answer questions.

5. As you are touring the visual dialogue posters, pose clarifying and probing questions. Make comments that the *Docent* writes down to share with the rest of his/her *Visual Dialogue Group*.

6. Take notes on the commonalities & anomalies.

7. When all Tour Groups have finished the tour, Visual Dialogue Groups should reconvene and share what they heard about their own work and what they noticed about other Visual Dialogue Groups’ work.

8. Look for consensus (agreement/commonalities) among the Visual Dialogue Charts. Also look for anomalies (outliers, items that are not common) that should be considered.

**Types of Questions**

*Clarifying questions focus on facts – who, what, when, where.*

*Probing questions are how & why questions:*

“What would happen if . . .?”
“How would X be different if . . . ?”
“What’s another way. . .?”
“What are the assumptions?”
Your Template:

**How the System Supports Effective Professional Learning**

For more on how a system supports PL, consult the June 2010 (volume 31, no. 3) edition of *The Journal for Staff Development* which features articles on “The NEW Central Office.” Also, email me to receive an unpublished manuscript “Help Wanted: How Educators Who Are Not School-Based Can Support Professional Learning” – leastoners@aol.com