

Project 3 – Leadership Vision and E-Learning Plan

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Professional Development to Improve E-Learning Instruction

Introduction

The onset of the world health crisis forced schools around the globe to close to prevent the spread of the virus. The sudden shift to remote learning required teachers to adapt their lessons to the new digital format. As classes transitioned online, many schools adopted emergency use of promising e-learning platforms. The online tools acquired aimed to help teachers transition their physical lessons to a virtual environment. Many schools acquired emergency use of learning management systems, video conferencing software, and adaptive e-learning platforms. Although, the adoption of new online platforms was not matched by appropriate professional training to use the latest technology in the classroom.

The instructor's self-perceived confidence and comfort with new technology are critical components of successful technology integration in the classroom (Liu et al., 2016). A West Urban City school district staff survey indicated that teachers did not feel confident using the new technology and only used it two to four times a month during remote learning. This proposal aims to introduce a professional development plan to help teachers successfully navigate the new technologies and maximize the potential usage of advanced features.

Vision

Professional development for instructors is essential to the continued growth of the educational field. Currently, educational technology is evolving rapidly, and the shift to virtual learning has leapfrogged our national education system to embrace the use of digital devices. A study by Liu et al. (2016) on technology integration at the K-12 level indicates that a teachers' usage frequency and comfort level with new technology is crucial for its implementation. Sudden school closures forced administrators to employ emergency measures, including the adoption of

new platforms. The novelty of the platforms and the minimal training provided during remote learning increases the potential of unsuccessful technology implementation. Foreseeing the possibility of other health or climate crisis forcing schools to switch to virtual learning, administrators and officials should lead to improving the quantity and quality of teacher professional development.

Additionally, behind the support for an increase in personalized education by the U.S. Department of Education (2017), new ventures for adaptive e-learning (AL) platforms have emerged. Companies like IXL provide solutions to personalizing learning pathways for students in different content areas (IXL, 2021). Adaptive e-learning platforms personalize learning by providing instant feedback and delivering individualized content based on the learners' needs. Further, the AL platforms collect copious amounts of data as the learners work on their various tasks. Data points like learner patterns, skill mastery, and focus areas can be analyzed by the instructor to further individualize learning. It is necessary to help teachers understand the importance of analyzing student data from adaptive learning platforms during virtual learning settings to further personalize learning for student skill and knowledge gaps (Hamilton et al., 2009).

This vision of e-learning aims to improve teacher training and professional development to better prepare educators to use the innovative technological tools for successful technology integration and fluency (Plair, 2008). Professional training should follow the model of personalized learning, using learner and program formative assessments to personalize instruction and improve the instructional design of the professional training. Considering that learners develop at different rates, professional training should also adapt to the needs and skill level of the instructors. The integration of a community of practice would allow teachers to share

experiences and create ongoing, relatable learning that is collaborative in nature (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Increasing instructor comfort level with the new technology should promote the platform's usage in lessons, maximizing the benefits of technology to personalize student learning pathways further.

At the onset of the pandemic-related school closures, the West Urban City school district adopted an adaptive e-learning platform to soften the transition to online learning. The school district provided limited professional training on the use and basic features of the AL platform. School surveys showed that 68% of the staff did not feel comfortable using the platform, 84% of staff were not aware of the analytical features, and platform reports showed that 32% of instructors used the platform twice or more per week. The main goal of this vision is to train instructors to fully utilize the platform basics, implement them during instruction, and maximize the potential of the data reporting features. Supporting objectives will include:

- a. Teachers will be able to use the learner features of the adaptive e-learning platform by completing 80% of the learning modules in their respective subject areas.
- b. Teachers will be able to identify relevant data analytics in the platform and apply them to personalize learning plans for students.
- c. Teachers will explore best instructional practices for the platform and collaborate with other teachers to develop best practices for their respective populations.
- d. Administrators will collect teacher learning data and experiences and analyze the information to personalize teacher training and improve professional development instructional design.

Implementing this vision can improve e-Learning design and student academic achievement at the West Urban City school district. Successful implementation of this vision can

lead to sustained usage of the AL platform. Similarly, this vision has the potential to translate its benefits to future technology implementation in the district.

E-Learning Plan

The West Urban City school district employs 250 teachers across different subject areas. The adaptive learning platform is currently used in Math, English Language Arts (ELA), with the potential to expand to Science and Social Studies. Since school climate survey results showed that teachers did not feel prepared or comfortable using the AL technology, this proposal will address the issue by providing meaningful and beneficial professional development for staff. The initial target population of this plan will be all teachers of math and ELA in the district. The following e-learning plan will describe the implementation of the AL platform professional development strategy, online staff community of practice, and feedback-driven program improvement plan.

To fully employ the vision for professional development, there needs to be a restructuring of the traditional professional development provided when implementing new technology. As the technology director, a primary goal is to help teachers achieve their goals and their maximum potential. My transformational leadership style involves helping my followers achieve their full potential by influencing their attitudes and performance (Northouse, 2019). Implementing my vision of professional development will require collaboration with all stakeholders. The need to restructure the professional development in the district arises from the results of the school climate surveys. The surveys indicate that teachers struggle with the new technology and providing additional professional development and a community of practice will address the issues.

The restructuring of the district's delivery and management of professional development will be created using the ADDIE model. The ADDIE model includes the analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation phase to construct a new program. After successfully identifying professional development as the issue, this plan was designed to address the goals and objectives described in the previous section. The program will be developed and personalized by department supervisors and master teachers in the subject area. Supervisors will emphasize the potential of the AL technology, and together with master teachers, will create content and workshops tailored to their area of expertise.

This professional development will utilize a series of instructional and demonstration videos, virtual live workshops, and an online community of practice. The professional development workshop component of this plan will meet during monthly staff meetings. The school district holds a mandated staff meeting once a month during the school year; four out of ten staff meetings are reserved for subject area department meetings. Often the meetings are used to share department news and goals, which will be the time used for the online workshop sessions. The workshop session will be held through Google Meets using Google Classroom, which also hosts the community of practice discussion and supporting material. The workshops will allow teachers to practice new skills, create lesson plans, and explore relevant case studies.

The school professional development online platform will host the learning modules. Each learning module will have guides and best practices for teachers to learn more about the AL platform before attending the workshops. The PD platform can keep track of each teacher's progress, completion, and scores as they access each module. Teachers can complete the modules multiple times in the PD platform, improve their scores, and easily find the content they need.

The online community of practice will communicate and share resources through Google Classroom. An online classroom for each subject area will allow teachers to share subject-specific resources and discuss experiences. The classroom will also host workshop session recordings and direct links to other relevant learning modules. The online community of practice will allow teachers to interact and share personal experiences outside of the content and workshop time. A community of practice allows members to continuously learn from each other (Wenger et al., 2002). Table 1 below describes a proposed timeline for the implementation of the professional development.

Table 1

Proposed Implementation Timeline

Description	Dates
<p>Pre-Workshop</p> <p>Analyze goals and objectives for workshops.</p> <p>Create resources for workshops and video tutorials for help outside of the workshop.</p>	<p>August 2021</p>
<p>Workshop – Initial</p> <p>The basic functions and usage of the adaptive learning platform, best practices, instructional strategies.</p>	<p>September 2021</p>
<p>Workshop – Intermediate</p> <p>Extracting learner usage data, analyzing data, and potential uses of data.</p>	<p>October 2021</p>
<p>Assessments – Focus Groups</p> <p>Program assessment and learner assessment</p>	<p>December 2021</p>
<p>Workshop – Differentiated</p> <p>Basics & Best Practices; Analyzing data; personalizing student learning</p>	<p>January 2022</p>
<p>Workshop – Differentiated</p>	<p>March 2022</p>

Basics & Best Practices; Analyzing data; personalizing student learning

Assessment – Questionnaires & Interviews

Learner assessment and program assessment through anonymous questionnaires, platform usage, and voluntary interviews.

May 2022

Funding Proposal

Continuous teacher professional development is critical to implementing new technologies and to the overall growth of students. Additionally, school climate surveys show that teachers do not feel comfortable using the platform. The adaptive e-learning platform introduced in the previous school year can help improve student academic achievement. The e-learning plan outlined above will allow for the successful implementation of the AL platform. The professional development proposal will maximize the investment in the AL platform and utilize funds allocated from the budget.

The professional development plan will utilize the active online platforms and meet during mandated meeting days. The learning modules created by the supervisor and provided by the AL platform company will be hosted in the professional development platform already in use by all staff members in the district, not requiring any additional licenses. The workshops will be held by the department supervisor and facilitated by master teachers during mandated staff meeting days and will not disrupt any school schedule. Similarly, the online community of practice will meet virtually using the Google Classroom feature included in the Google Suite and already in use by all teachers.

The professional training plan aims to help teachers improve their practice. Increasing teacher comfort using new technology is critical to implementing technologies. As teachers learn

more about the basic and advanced features of the platform, their instructional practice will also improve. The AL platform can provide rich student learning analytics to help teachers individualize instruction and target trouble areas. The implementation of this proposal is valuable to teachers' instructional practice growth and student academic achievement.

Conclusion

Improving teacher skills and comfort with new technology is vital for the successful adoption of technology. The professional development e-learning plan aims to help teachers develop new skills for their instructional practice. Improving data analysis skills can help direct individualized learner plans and potentially increase student academic achievement. This proposal seeks to modify new technology professional development for teachers by creating learning modules, tailoring workshops, and creating a community of practice.

Implementing the professional development e-learning plan will help teachers improve their instructional practices and comfort. One critical component of this plan is the feedback and learner analysis embedded within the program. The administration will collect teacher usage data reports from the platform and administer effectiveness questionnaires to teachers twice during the year. Teacher usage and questionnaire responses about growth areas will help direct personalized workshops for the last two sessions. Optional focus groups will be conducted to share experiences, areas of improvement, and overall satisfaction with the professional development. The second program assessment will occur at the end of the year through anonymous questionnaires to rate growth during the program and the quality. The data will be available to analyze for areas of growth and improvement for future workshops.

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