

EDT 6480: Designing Staff Development for Educational Technology (Fall 2007)

P3: Planning/Follow-Up and Support of Educational Technology Staff Development Activities

Michael VanPutten

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to evaluate professional development programs currently in use at Western Michigan University. The results may indicate directions for development of new programs and strategies for improving the quality and effectiveness of professional development programs.

Importance and Justification

The current plans for staff development at Western Michigan University (WMU) include contractual support for teaching and learning in the form of workshops and seminars led or coordinated by Academic Technology and Instructional Services (ATIS) and other university units (WMUAAUP, 2005). In addition, professional development support at WMU is provided in the form of an \$80,000 budget line to fund individual instructional development proposals submitted by faculty (WMUAAUP, 2005). WMU employs nearly 900 full-time faculty (Western Michigan University, 2007). If each WMU faculty member were to receive a share of the \$80,000 in funds for instructional development it would amount to \$88.88 each. Academic technology support is provided by ATIS and includes a laptop replacement program, classroom technology upgrades, and an eTeaching Endorsement Program (WMUAAUP, 2005; Western Michigan University, 2007). A Web publication containing details regarding professional development in the utilization of academic technology, general staff development follow-up, and support were not available at the time of this writing.

Workshops are considered to be the most common format for professional development delivery (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Yoon, 2001). Yet research findings indicate that workshops are highly ineffective in establishing and providing sufficient scaffolding and resources for participants to gain conceptual knowledge, enhance their abilities, and implement sustained or effective change in their professional environments (Garet et al, 2001).

Theoretical Framework

A successful professional development program must provide a contextual framework that relates activities to the day-to-day activities of the participants' professional environment (Yi, 2005). Sufficient time within a professional development activity must be provided for participants to discuss content and methods (Garet et al, 2001). In addition, the activities should include a strong focus on content, be coherent, and promote active learning if the training coordinators hope to increase knowledge and skill development. (Garet et al, 2001). Lane, Mahdavi, & Borthwick-Duffy; Lane, Pierson, Robertson, & Little; Stichter, Shellady, Sealander, & Eigenberger's works (as cited in Lane et al., 2007) indicate that in order to sustain knowledge acquisition and application it is also necessary to provide participants ongoing support and assistance. Peer based professional development should also be considered as it has been found to be valued by participants, increases openness to and awareness of

new knowledge, and has resulted in change in the workplace (Wenghofer, Way, Shaw Moxam, Wu, Faulkner & Klass, 2006).

For a staff development model to be successful in promotion of the use of technology it is essential to: identify early adopters, to support the said early adopters, communicate overall value of the technology, and increase exposure and repetitive use of new technologies (Sahin & Thompson, 2006). The early majority, late adopters, and laggards will be influenced extensively by the experience had by the early adopters (Sahin & Thompson, 2006). Increased use of an innovation (or new technology) was found to build knowledge and experience, which in turn would yield increased usage in the classroom as well as collaboration with colleagues (Sahin & Thompson, 2006).

Methodology

Proposed Educational Standards, Tool, and Resources

- **National Educational Technology Standards 2007**
http://www.iste.org/inhouse/nets/cnets/students/pdf/NETS_for_Students_2007.pdf
This tool provides faculty with an understanding of what educational technology standards should be taught and demonstrated to students during instruction. The tool includes details regarding 1) creativity and innovation, 2) communication and collaboration, 3) research and information fluency, 4) critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making, 5) digital citizenship, and 6) technology operations and concepts.
- **Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for All Teachers**
http://cnets.iste.org/teachers/t_stands.html
As described on the ISTENETS web site, this tool provides “six standards areas with performance indicators designed to be general enough to be customized to fit state, university, or district guidelines and yet specific enough to define the scope of the topic. Performance indicators for each standard provide specific outcomes to be measured when developing a set of assessment tools. The standards and the performance indicators also provide guidelines for teachers currently in the classroom .”
- **Factors that Affect the Effective Use of Technology for Teaching and Learning**
<http://www.serve.org/seir-tec/publications/lessondoc.html>
The intent with this tool would be to utilize the information presented to open a community driven dialog with faculty professional development stakeholders (administration, deans, chairs, faculty, staff) at Western Michigan University.
- **Critical Issue: Promoting Technology Use in Schools**
<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/methods/technlgy/te200.htm>
Utilize strategies regarding faculty incentives for utilization of technology that are presented in this article.

Proposed Evaluation Tools

- Seven Dimensions for Gauging Progress of Technology in the Schools**
http://www.mff.org/edtech/projects.taf?_function=detail&Content_uid1=152
 This could be utilized as an introductory assessment and evaluation tool to measure WMU's progress in deploying and supporting academic technology
- Critical Issue: Evaluating Professional Growth and Development**
<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/profdevl/pd500.htm>
 Utilize tools and strategies described in this article to evaluate staff development including formation of a team, utilization of standardized tools, examine current attitudes towards technology and methods held by the faculty.

Proposed Timeline and Plan of Action for Support of Educational Technology and Staff Development Activities at Western Michigan University

The proposed timeline and plan of action for support of educational technology and staff development activities will utilize Western Michigan University's current academic calendar year which began September 2007 and concludes August 2008 (Western Michigan University, 2007).

	Fall 07				Spring 08				Summer I 08		Summer II 08	
	09/07	10/07	11/07	12/07	01/08	02/08	03/08	04/08	05/08	06/08	07/08	08/08
Form committee with representation from the faculty												
Conduct needs assessment												
Draft plan based on assessment												
Develop pilot offering												
Deliver initial pilot												
Conduct evaluation of pilot												
Revise plan												
Cycle of development, delivery, eval, revision of offerings												
Follow-up on participant success, provide support as needed												
Host conference with seminars, sessions, posters, etc held by facilitators and participants												

References

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