Professional Development for K-12 Educators

Pam Dinan
Will Jefferson

- Quality courses take time to develop. Typical development times range from 15 to 18 weeks.
- Courses should be fully designed and implemented before being taught. Development “on the fly” is a bad idea.
- Formal training and ongoing support is critical for your teachers.
- Engage your support staff (technologists) and your librarians. Both groups have a role in online learning.
- Consider reduced courses caps for first time teachers. If possible, assign new online educators a co-teacher or mentor.
- Ensure there are adequate student supports in place. How will students get their course materials? Whom will they call with technical issues?
- Return students emails within 24 hours during the normal school week and first thing Monday for questions emailed during the weekend.
- Consider working from a course template. This template should be consistent from course to course so students that have taken one course will understand the general design of the next course without having to learn a completely new navigational scheme.
- Links to general school/district policies (attendance, online etiquette, etc.) should be provided in every course.

Teacher Union Concerns

Chris Roth
Andrea Harmer

- The group was most interested in learning how Quakertown S.D. handled teacher training, course design and development, scheduling, teacher assignments and compensation. Chris Roth willingly shared his online teaching contract language (which is embedded into the regular contract) with the other teachers so that they didn’t have to start from scratch.
- We also discussed capping classes at twenty-five students, several different pathways to online profession development and collaborating with other districts to share information and course load.
- Chris noted that Quakertown has a professional development path for teachers via Bridges, which could potentially become overloaded as this initiative intensifies.
2012 Kutztown University Online Learning Summit
Breakout Session Synopses

- Todd, in charge of technical support at Quakertown, shared stories of what worked and what didn’t work in terms of course design and delivery, ex. simply embedding PowerPoint slides does not work!

Role of the Librarian in Online Learning

Brenda Boyer
Stephanie Sweeney
Nancy Latanision

This session was well-attended by approximately 12-14 school librarians. Nancy Latanision facilitated with the discussion led by the expertise of Brenda Boyer and Stephanie Sweeney. The topic opened with all in agreement that there has been a shift in roles, library collections, and services that has transitioned with the growth of technology.

Other topics included:

- We are not working with as much print resources as virtual material. Discussion of print vs. online resources ensued. We need to teach our students all formats of information so that the “best” sources can fill information needs despite format. Print is still needed. We must teach students all formats.
- Budgets must shift in order to accommodate the need for digital resources.
- Develop online information literacy skills courses.
- Indoctrinate teachers in the use of valid resources.
- LibGuides can be used to imbed resources in teachers’ web pages –direct link.
- Librarians must market themselves as an instructional resource – a learning process specialist. Make your presence online.
- Use of Web 2.0 tools
- Establish an Information or Learning Commons in place of the traditional library.
- Communicate with parents to sell your program. Attend and speak to parents at Open House or PTA meetings.
- Promotional idea – QR codes on books to link to trailers.
Logistics Managing

Rich Kiker
Michelle Sims

Rich Kiker talked about his role and responsibilities within the district

- Bringing families back to the district

Discussion about what “blended” learning means

- Face-to-face and online learning within one course
- Face-to-face and online learning in a student’s schedule
- How is blended learning managed within a school – students coming into school and leaving school throughout the school day

Most of the discussion revolved around the issue of attendance

- How is attendance determined in online learning?
  - Through daily log-in?
  - Through completed assignments?
  - Are tools in place in LMS to help define attendance?
    - Amount of time spent in course?
  - How does attendance online compare to attendance f-2-f
- PDE does not yet have rules regarding online attendance

Effective Programs

Chris Harrington
Kelly Cockrum

The discussion covered a range of topics and themes. The highlights included:

- Chris Harrington gave an overview of Bridges and his current responsibilities
- When making change and implementing new programs, there is a definite need for a strong voice to make it happen (Can Dr. Andrejko be cloned?)
- There were a series of logistical questions, e.g.
  - What to do when one person is given the responsibility to make online learning happen?
  - What if a student wants to take an overload?
  - What are the roles of the various constituents?
- DE has a number of advantages and disadvantages for teachers, students and districts