

Strategic Professional Development Planning

Planning effective professional development requires many skills by instructional leaders. Leaders have to consider the context, identify the need, and structure the professional development so that the learning is clear and implemented effectively. Here are steps to consider as you plan professional development.

Steps	Outline and Rationale	Questions to Ask Yourself
Consider the context.	There are many different contexts for professional development: new standards, new discipline-based pedagogy, teacher instructional needs, student learning needs, district and school initiatives. It's important to identify the context in order to clearly identify the purpose for teacher learning.	What is the context of the professional development? Why is this context important?
Identify the need.	It is important to clearly identify why the professional development is needed. If this is not done, the professional development will be unclear. Often, we identify needs too broadly: <i>"Teachers don't plan."</i> Instead, <i>"Teachers don't have unit outcomes that can be clearly measured."</i>	What are all of the things that teachers need right now? Which of those needs is the priority? What are all of the aspects of the need (task analysis)? What is the specific set of skills that teachers need right now to move their practice forward?
Articulate clear teacher and student outcomes.	Once the need is identified, it is possible to identify clear teacher outcomes for the professional development. If possible, tie the teacher learning outcomes to student learning outcomes. We expect teachers to have clear outcomes for their lessons and we need to have clear outcomes for professional development. Like the need, the outcomes should not be too broadly defined. They should be clear and measurable.	Based on the identified need, write one or two outcomes for the professional development. Also, connect the teacher learning to student learning. <i>Teachers will understand or know_____ and that will result in students achieving_____.</i>
Articulate expectations for implementation.	It is important to have clear expectations for the implementation. Teachers need to know exactly what they should be doing as a result of the professional development.	Exactly what do I expect teachers to do based on this professional development? How will I know that they are doing it?
Articulate the support plan.	Reciprocal accountability is essential when providing professional development. Essentially, if teachers are expected to implement, they need adequate support for implementation (for example, support from colleagues, coaches).	What support will teachers need in order to be successful with implementation? How will I structure and communicate the support plan?
Identify the structure and resources for the professional development opportunity.	Once you know the need, the expectations and the support that's required, you can consider how to structure the learning. This is the <i>who, what, where, when</i> and <i>how</i> part of the planning.	When should the learning happen? Who should lead it? Will it be more than one session? Which teachers should attend?