



## National Staff Development Council Focus Group Notes

Date: 12/6/03 & 12/7/03

Location: New Orleans, LA

P21 moderators: Jennifer Himmelstein and Susan Saltrick

These were both terrific groups – very engaged and very informative. Our thanks to Stephanie Hirsch of NDSC who provided the participants and the use of two wonderful rooms at the top of the New Orleans Marriott.

### **12/6/03 (Saturday):**

Participants: 14 NDSC board members – (See participant list attached)

We followed our usual format of a very brief overview, then group discussion, then breakout discussion groups (with flipcharts), ending with a review of breakout work in the large group.

Here's what we learned:

- ICT literacy, even among these savvy folks, was an unfamiliar term with about 25% to 30% of participants. IT (for either Info Tech or Instructional Tech) and LOTI (Levels of Tech Instruction – new one on me!) were more common terms. They recommended that clearly show the linkage to ISTE NETS as this is what most of their schools are familiar with
- On preferred methods of Professional Development
  - Site based -- situate it where folks work
  - Job embedded – make sure it relates to what folks do
  - Collaborative models
  - Mentoring/coaching models
  - For ICT prof dev in particular they seen success with:
    - Technical person per school to work in classrooms with teachers
    - Co-teacher working side-by-side to integrate tech
    - Model classrooms with classroom based tech projects
    - No one method fits all situations
- Access/equity
  - still very much an issue in many areas
  - not necessarily a rich/poor school issue, many other factors play into this, but leadership was one frequently cited. Connecticut, for instance, a wealthy state, is poorly equipped.
  - Even well-equipped districts will have some schools that are lagging in access to technology, and well-equipped schools generally have classrooms that lag in their use
  - This inconsistency of access is very frustrating to those educators who are eager and knowledgeable but lack hardware. Group noted that young teachers often fall victim to this, as they are frequently assigned to less-than-leading schools
- How to support Professional Development?

- Tech support is essential, but in these days of strapped budgets, these folks are getting cut.
- Administrators need to have 21<sup>st</sup> c tools and skills, too
- Access to data needs to be brought down to teacher level
- Again, newer teachers coming into the profession would love to use tech, but quickly acclimate to a school without it, and then fall behind in their skills as tech advances quickly
- Electronic portfolios for teachers
  - See GROW network (NY) for a good model
- Make sure to connect PD to what's familiar to teachers already
  - If too new, they just don't have time for it
  - See Bill and Melinda Gates foundation work with supers and principals – good correlation to the what they already do
- Leadership
  - Roles need to be defined – important to work as a team with teachers – see ICT as a systemic issue
  - IT staff need to work with teachers on lesson plans, etc.
  - Awareness needed of physical infrastructure – portables, for instance, are rarely wired for tech

### Break Out Questions

Although we had about 25-30 minutes for this, groups didn't make it much past the first part of the question. However, their responses were still very enlightening.

- What do educational leaders and teachers need to know to help them move their schools from good examples to good practice of ICT literacy?
  - What examples of practice can be highlighted?
  - What tools can the Partnership build to help with this process?

Their responses:

- Access is key
- Use examples of AUTHENTIC practice (don't make the process seem too clean and neat, help teachers see the "messiness" of the creative process of working with ICT so they won't get frustrated and surprised by the messiness of their own efforts)
- Model use of ICT by embedding in actual teaching tasks (Integrate – don't pull out PD)
- Take a systematic, not one shot, approach
- Provide tech support AND instructional support
- Make sure there is adequate funding
  - Promote state/fed policy
- Tools we could build
  - Make them affordable (i.e, free) and user friendly
  - Useful in the context of their current work
  - Specific tools:
    - Data access tools
    - Data decision making tools (to help teachers make good instructional choices)
    - Assessment of the use of technology
    - Resource searching tools
    - Tools to connect with parents
    - Community connection (youth orgs)
- What leaders need to know
  - The purpose of technology ("it's more than Powerpoint!)

- Understanding of the change process
- How adults learn
- Highlighted success stories and models of programs, e.g, good examples of purposeful use of technology
  - Can tech help us do more, do it better, do it cheaper?
  - Can we increase our efficiency?
  - Can we do things more quickly, easier, more accessibly?
  - (EMINTS cited as good model program)
  - Good examples → changed practice → which produces more good examples
- What we (P21) need to know
  - What is “drop dead” critical
  - General consensus around common terms and language
  - Shadow principals/teachers/students in a variety of schools
    - Urban/rural
    - Elem/middle/high

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### 12/7/03, Sunday

Participants: 18 NDSC academy members – (See participant list attached)

We followed much the same format as in the previous focus group but asked more direct questions about the 9 Steps.

#### Group Discussion:

- Many school districts still in the first column of our ICT literacy framework
- Access still an issue – many physical limitations still
- Lunch bites – teachers work with IT support staff on lesson planning in 30 minute bursts during school day
- Over the shoulder coaching models
- Some highlighted PD examples from around the room
  - OK ACTS – tech training and assessment for administrators and teachers, emphasizes authentic examples
  - KAL Tech (Kansas) – through B&M Gates foundation
  - Mankato State school district’s tech assessment
  - Utah Ed Network – builds tech capacity
    - Site tech specialists (STS) provide both tech and PD support
    - Area coaches work with STSs
    - Wireless min-labs make tech portable
  - Utah (also) 2 yr process of developing materials on learning skills, uses NSSE rubrics
  - SmartViewer – Prince Georges County, MD
  - Indianapolis Public schools – principals work with Apple trainer to access data, then go back and teach their teachers to do same
  - Florida Learning Alliance
    - T1 lines at all schools
    - 326 Reading First grants, provide data 4 x year
  - Lawrence Township (we know this one!)
  - Look at what Wyoming is doing in its systemic approach to ICT literacy

- Article “Digital Immigrants” – available from Edwin McConnell Foundation – would be excellent way to frame conversation on ICT Literacy
- Policy Issues that need further consideration
  - Schools still stuck in old economy model
  - Microsoft doesn’t allow s/w to transfer with PCs (if this would change old pc could be used for more purposes)
  - Teacher work conditions need to change
  - Teacher need better tools for self-assessment of ICT skills – maybe some expansion of the ISTE model
  - Make ICT part of the NAEP National Scorecard
  - State laws that require spending ed funds on textbooks should be changed to allow spending on technology
  - Economic development starts with knowledge – promote this view more widely

Breakout Question: How can the 9 Steps be used to promote ICT Literacy?

- Questions in response from one group: Do the 9 Steps speak to the real issues of ICT in our schools? What evidence do we have that the capacity for implementation exists?
- First, focus on building capacity for ICT, then move to tools and assessment
  - Identify elements of successful implementation and capacity building with teachers in the classroom
  - PD model must include authentic work for teachers in order to transfer their learning to students
  - What sort of external support for our model exists? (Don’t just dump it back on the schools to do without support)
  - Need a common understanding of the vocabulary and concept outlined now in the 9 steps
  - Priorities for development of 21 century skills much be based on business needs and research vs. education driven models which are outdated.
  - See teacher as facilitator vs. holder of knowledge
  - Do we want to create a model of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills or 21<sup>st</sup> century schools?
  - Models of PD to consider
    - Systems thinking models
    - Coaching and mentoring of tech assistance
    - School-based infrastructure which is differentiated acc to school needs, uses coaching, and provides incentives/rewards for participation
    - Establish baseline levels
    - Tech specialists serve also as instructional specialists and model best practices in teaching
    - Collaborative teams
    - Students teaching and coaching other teachers

Before the steps begin:

- need to light a fire -- build sense of urgency
- provide incentives for taking a new approach to old ways of doing things
- highlight paradigm shift from old learning to new ways of authentic problem solving

- shine spotlight on schools, leaders, teachers who are succeeding
- Note systemic barriers
  - Teacher salary depends on achievement gains on state tests (if ICT is not part of this...)
  - Need to prove you can get better results on those tests with ICT
- Note that the 9 steps haven't been done that well in their 20<sup>th</sup> century version!
- Have to be intentional if you want good results
  - Training → follow up → collaboration and sharing → implement in classroom
  - “make this the work we have to do” -- show continuous commitment

For Steps 2, 5, and 8: use a systemic approach in using student and teacher data to design targeted assistance to address student learning needs

For Steps 10 and 2: provide access for all to the information on the web

Step 1: provide models of assessment items that link ICT skills to learning skills

Step 8 and 5: build a database of templates for instructional strategies that teachers can adapt for their own purposes

<b>NSDC/P21 Focus Group Participant List Trustees: 12/06/03 Affiliate Leaders: 12/07/03</b>		
<b>Participants Attended</b>		
<b>Partnership Staff</b>		
<b>NAME</b>	<b>STATE</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
Susan Saltrick	NY	Consultant
Jennifer Himmelstein	AZ	Project Manager
<b>Focus Group Participants</b>		
<b>NAME</b>	<b>STATE</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
<b>Trustees/12/06/03</b>		
Cindy Harrison	CO	Director of Staff Development, Adams 12
Lenore Cohen	MD	Graduate Div of Educ/John Hopkins University
Marti Richardson	TN	Staff Dev/ Supervisor, Knox County Schools
Mark Bower	NY	Dir of Staff Dev. Hilton Central School District
Albert Bertani	IL	Chief Officer/Professional Dev./Office of Teacher Recertification DOE/Chicago BOE
Mike Ford	NY	Superintendent, PhelpsClifton Springs Central Schools, Clifton Springs, NY
Rosie Vojtek	CT	Principal Ivy Drive School, Bristol, CT
Carole Schmidt	MI	Superintendent Comstock PS
Bill Sommers	MN	Principal of Eden Prairie High School, MN
Karen Hayes	NE	Assistant Prof. Educ Admin& Superv
Gayle Moller	WA	Asst Professor, College of Educ and Allied Professions, Western Carolina University
Gale Hulme	GA	Program Dir. GA Leadership Institute
Sue McAdanus	MO	Coordinator of Staff Development Administrative Center
Kathy Kee	TX	Coaching for Results, Inc/ Teacher Coach
<b>Affiliate Leaders 12/07/03</b>		
Sara Laughlin	IN	IN Staff Development Council
Harold M. Brewer	NC	Sr. VP for Programs ExplorNet
Maggie Sander	OK	SDCO of OK Pres/Principal Highland Park Elem
Debbie Brown	MD	MD Staff Developer
Jane Granger	FL	Pres-elect FASD
Anneliese Waggoner	WI	Treasurer WSDC
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Kay Karr	TX	TX President Quality Learning
Barbara Maughmer	KS	KS President KSDC
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Christine Huley	UT	President USDC
Sandra Hemmert	UT	CTE, Utah
Betty Ayers	IN	ISDC Board/SDLC Chair
Kristi Orcutt	KS	KS/ Staff Developer
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