Find out how we used Canvas (c) to deliver professional learning to over 500 members of our K-12 school district staff for free.

- Listen our story about why went online PD and how it worked
- Discuss our findings trying to integrate new online PD
- Connect with others trying to integrate online PD
- Evaluate our experience and use as a foundation to build their own opinions and belief

Outline

Why we tried online PD?

Good teachers always strive to improve their teaching. Strong leaders set and keep goals. Normally you would find a professional development full day of technology training. These sessions might include trainings about a new tech tool, teachers sharing an idea about technology and discussions about technology integration in the classroom. The sessions would take up most of the day. In hopes to provide more personalized instruction and differentiate based on level of readiness we decided to create online PD. Online PD provides learners to work at their own pace and when convenient for them. The learning can take place when learners need and/or want to learn.

While there were many outcomes we hoped to see by creating online PD, these are a few we desired:

- model integrating technology into teaching and learning
- provoke innovation through modeling
- provide relevant training material in a timely manner

Our Superintendent, Dr. Andrew Underwood, describes learning today best: “Many current teachers have never taken online courses, but we know many younger teachers have, and students of the future will. I hope they turn around and model this in their classrooms.” While our school district is still very traditional in our school day, we want to start incorporating some of the powerful and available technology tools to support 21st century teaching and learning.
We have around 600 district employees, and most are required to take part in forms of professional development. Normally they take part in one full day but with online PD we can spread this out throughout the entire year.

Basing our content on the NET-T from ISTE, we were able to design and develop three different tracks of seven module courses. Using a free learning management system, Canvas by Instructure, we were able to create these courses and facilitate our staff as learners.

As Dr. Underwood stated, this “was an opportunity to try a new way to allow teachers an opportunity to learn, but also model a new way of learning for some.” Later he said, “Our staff as a whole was willing and they benefited by being exposed to learning opportunities, they would have not otherwise received.” These learning modules were just the beginning but they show that our staff are willing to learn. Dr. Rhonda Hardee, the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development, shares, “I believe the online PD represents the district's commitment to embrace change as a progressive district or community of learners who model what we expect of students.”

While not everything went as planned or everyone loved the new form, we felt this was a great success and look forward to providing future online PD through Canvas and our newly created iBSDpd.

Thoughts from our Superintendents

Dr. Andrew Underwood
“I felt this was an opportunity to try a new way to allow teachers an opportunity to learn, but also model a new way of learning for some. Many current teachers have never taken online courses, but we know many younger teachers have and students of the future will. I hope they turn around and model this in their classrooms.

Our staff as a whole was willing and they benefited by being exposed to learning opportunities, they would have not otherwise received. They needed this! Plus, I learned I have two outstanding tech integration specialists who most importantly provided a high quality learning opportunity to all staff, which exceeded my expectations.”

Dr. Rhonda Hardee
“I believe the online PD represents the district's commitment to embrace change as a progressive district or community of learners who model what we expect of students. The face of PD is evolving just as education is for our students. True learning occurs when learners are engaged and challenged – within a collaborative process that requires active participation. Technology just gives us so many new avenues to engage in that collaborative learning process!

We found truth in that old adage that "change is hard". Clearly, as staff became engaged in the modules, growth occurred for most and stress decreased as they became more comfortable
and confident. Some of the most difficult parts were the excuses some staff made about having to learn – inconvenient timing, etc, - when these are some of the same excuses they have little tolerance for when they hear it from students.

We believe great strides were made and our next steps need to include application in classroom instruction with an accountability component for that effort. Finally – affirmation of what we already knew – we have an incredible tech integration team!”

How we did it (the nuts and bolts)?
4 steps to online PD for staff
1. Determine content and goals
2. Set up a Canvas course with assignments, discussions and more
3. Invite staff with sign-in invitation
4. Provide feedback using a variety of means through Canvas (video, audio, annotations…)

With 600 staff members becoming students it was important to have a learning management system that we could add all these “student” and keep track of their progress. Canvas was selected for its simple interface and easy to follow navigation. It also provides a variety of digital feedback tools for communication and learning.

We used the Free for teacher version which included, home pages, syllabus, assignments drop box, discussion forums, announcements, rubrics, outcomes and more. The Canvas worked very well as our learning management system (LMS). For only two teachers to grade all the work for each staff member, we needed a tool that would accommodate timely feedback. Canvas has built-in communication tools to provide dialogue with students (our teachers/staff, in this case) and multimedia functions for additional specialized feedback. Another great part about Canvas that we relied upon was the assignment due date changes feature. We started with what we anticipated the due dates being and then needed to update them throughout. In Canvas to change an assignment due date, it’s as simple as opening calendar and dragging the assignment to another date. Great feature for teachers constantly adapting to their class needs.

The curriculum was created in a collaborative Google document. After identifying the NET-T we wanted to focus on and establishing our goals we were able to break down the goals into seven modules. These learning modules became the backbone of the course. By using the formatting we had seen used in our own online course, we decided each module needed to be consistent by including the following: objective and intro page, discussion board, assignment, and quiz. Each item had a specific purpose, as described below.

Objective page - was used to introduce the module topic and provide some background and references.

Discussion board - provided staff with the opportunity to share and discuss with other staff members who they might not normally converse.
**Assignment** - Each module we wanted staff to demonstrate their learning. We set up tasks that incorporated technology to show competency. Of course there are varying levels of teachers and so we were prompt to provide feedback for our staff.

**Quiz** - concluded the module. It was short and was used mainly to show that the staff member had completed the module. The staff gets immediate feedback once they clicked submit.

**Our Process**
- Determined professional development needs
- Set goals and outcomes and syllabus
  - **Syllabus**
- Coordinate content with NET-T
- Using Google Doc create learning goals and outlines collaboratively
- Instructional Template
  - **Modules**
    - Overview
      - Watch video or read articles
    - Discussion
      - Respond to video or article
      - Reply to other responses
    - Assignment
      - Learn and do
      - Submit artifact documenting evidence of learning
    - Quiz
      - Multiple Attempts
      - Used for completion
- Set Up Master Courses in Canvas
  - Add multiple course designers
  - Copy learning activities into Canvas
  - Set due dates
  - Determine availability of Modules
- Enroll staff into Canvas
  - Copying and pasting staff emails in bulk was pretty easy
- Email iBSD announcement with directions
- Publish Courses
  - Email is sent out for staff to accept invitation. This is done automatically once the course is published through Canvas.
- Follow up with teachers not accepting invitation
- Grade Assignments
  - Canvas has the SpeedGrader which has many features for grading all submitted content digitally. There is even an app for that.
  - Feedback can be given in the form of text, annotation, audio or video.
- Report completion to HR
What we learned?
It was truly amazing to see the Belton School District staff come together to complete the online PD modules. Administrators, teachers and support staff set the tone for the learning environment in school. Our staff had the opportunity to show their students how to be a lifetime learner.

➔ Adults are like students
  ◆ Turn things in on-time
  ◆ Motivation needed
  ◆ Innovative when given the opportunity
  ◆ Can do new things
➔ Need a powerful and easy to use LMS - Canvas
➔ Have more communication up-front
  ◆ Emails with written expectation
  ◆ Better marketing plan
➔ Allow for more self pacing of work
  ◆ Teachers want to be able to sit down and complete the entire module in one setting.
➔ Device consistency
  ◆ Need to determine what devices all staff can complete their modules on.
  ◆ Canvas provided the means for staff to use any device, but some assignments required certain devices and staff might only have access while at school.
➔ Other Questions
  ◆ How can we instill life long learning or year long learning modules?
  ◆ What projects can we create that promotes collaboration and creativity?

Will it work for others?
We learned many things along the way to creating our first online PD for our staff. After completing this first year of modules, we plan to continue next year. Instead of having one certified course with seven modules, we are hoping to create secondary and elementary certified modules. We are also going to attempt to provide more open modules for asynchronous learning.

Many want to know if this form of PD will work for them. Here are a few questions we encourage you to think about answering before diving more into creating online PD for your staff:

Questions to ask:
1. Do you have a need for training or instruction for staff and not enough time in a day?
2. Does your staff have access to the internet?
3. Do you have someone who can design the courses into Canvas?
4. Do you have someone who can facilitate the live course and perform the grading feedback?
5. Do you want to create your own collection of online courses?
6. Are you looking to model instructional strategies for your teachers?
Check out our **certified modules**

**Teacher Highlights**
- **Keynote**
- **Flipped**

**Non-certified Highlights**
Smore - [https://www.smore.com/py908](https://www.smore.com/py908), [https://www.smore.com/uycw0](https://www.smore.com/uycw0), [https://www.smore.com/v3ci](https://www.smore.com/v3ci), [https://www.smore.com/hncf](https://www.smore.com/hncf), [https://www.smore.com/nsyx](https://www.smore.com/nsyx)

Internet Safety - [https://www.smore.com/v140g](https://www.smore.com/v140g), [https://www.smore.com/cfp0](https://www.smore.com/cfp0)

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