Badges? We Don’t Need No Stinkin’ Badges!

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ICE Conference: 2017
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Purpose

- Share my experiences (successes and failures) with instructional technology professional development and how the “Badge system” got started.
- Explain how to structure badges so they focus on student learning, as opposed to technical skill acquisition.
- Provide a template and examples for you to begin incorporating this in your own school district.
The transformation of educational technology PD in my district

2014-2015 (Three grades 1:1)
- Tech PD in isolation from curriculum
- Grade-level meetings, before/after school, PLCs
- Focused on “how to use tools,” GAFE, introducing apps/websites
- Introduce & teach → hope they apply it, check-in with staff as they go. Celebrate those that do!

2015-2016 (Five grades 1:1)
- Tech PD in isolation from curriculum
- Increased differences in teacher needs
- Introduce & teach → Hope they apply it → Those that do, allow them to share with others!
- **Success!** Found more ways for teachers to share with others (online, teacher-led PD, collaborative learning)
- **Failure!** Integration feedback document as an attempt to individualize PD
Do any of these challenges sound familiar?

- A significant amount of teachers didn’t outwardly resist change, but found ways to avoid it and default to traditional methods because they were easier.
- Lots of initial success and progress-- but transformation limited to “early adopters”
- Hard to develop “one-size fits all” sessions for everyone in district-wide PD
- Time!
- “So many apps/websites/tools, but how does using them help me teach to the standards?”

How do I reach teachers who resist, avoid, or struggle with change?
Changing Professional Development to meet staff needs

- Moving from teaching “how to use an app/website” to “how to use an app/website to ENHANCE learning”
- Personalize PD so that it fits the needs of that teacher and support them at their ability level
- Less structured so that teachers are more welcoming of change
Goals heading into the 2016-17 school year

Develop a Professional Development system that...

- Is focused on student learning, not the tools
- Is differentiated for teachers of all skills/abilities/mindsets
- Is integrated within the curriculum, rather than in isolation
- Doesn’t make teachers uncomfortable or under pressure so that teachers that might have resisted or avoided tech integration in the past, might actually reach out to me rather than me having to always reach out to them.
Making “badges” work for me and my staff: Focus on student learning

- Structuring badges: NOT on specific tools (apps, websites, etc.). INSTEAD, focused on learning components within a tech-integrated lesson.
- List of Badges that I created (based off of the failed tech integration document)
Making “badges” work for me and my staff: Differentiated for teachers

- Focused on PROGRESS. Celebrate success no matter where you fall on the tech-integration spectrum.
- The Badge System explained to staff
- Requires staff to reach out to the tech coaches to set up a plan and determine goals.
Making tech integration with the curriculum work!

- Meetings with teachers allowed me to collaborate and focus on learning outcomes and standards.
- After learning about what their goals were, I would prepare ideas on how to work towards a badge: Example
- Continuous support as they go; modeling lessons, set up, staying “in the loop”
Getting teachers to reach out to me by adding real incentives

- Each badge earned entered that staff member into a raffle to win real prizes; a Chromebook, iPad, speakers, stylus pens, etc.
- Celebrate the staff that earn badges (shout outs, physical badges, encouragement from Principals)
- Friendly competition
Getting the idea into action

- Before implementing with staff, get administration on board to support it top-down.
- Run it by some teachers too (union leaders, veteran teachers) to get input.
- Adjust/implement based on suggestions.
Successes

- Two and a half months in... (December-end of Feb), 68 badges earned! 24 more in progress!
- Several staff members that avoided integration in the past are reaching out
- Increased confidence in teachers, more positive attitude towards tech integration
Examples

● Differentiation in an 8th grade ELA class: Using GoFormative to structure writing assignments and making the writing process more efficient.

● **Flipped Lessons** in a 6th grade Math class: Students watch videos at home for homework, work through practice problems/extension activities in class based on their abilities.

● Student Agency and Data in a PE class: Assigning Google Sheets assignments within Google Classroom to allow students to record their own data after exercises.
Reflection

What Worked:

● Reached several staff members who we otherwise wouldn’t have
● PD was much more individualized, and focused on specific standards/learning outcomes for that class
● Conversations with staff focused on instructional strategies rather than “this is broken, fix it”
● Made tech integration much more fun and less formal. Enhanced relationships with staff.

Challenges to Still Address:

● Finding ways to get ALL staff on board (getting there!)
● Adapting badges to allow staff to go even further, especially for early-adopters
● Get administration to push and support it even more
Questions/Comments?

Please take 2 minutes to fill out the form so I can get some feedback!
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