

# Models of Professional Development

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## **Training**

Involves a presenter or team that share ideas and expertise through a variety of group-based activities. (i.e.) large group presentation and discussion, workshops, seminars, colloquia, demonstrations. Effective training includes an exploration of theory, demonstrations or modeling of skills, simulated practice, feedback about performance and coaching in the workplace (Joyce & Showers, 1995). *\*Cost effective and provides most efficient way to create a shared knowledge base and common vocabulary.*

## **Observation/Assessment**

Uses collegial observation to provide educators with feedback on their performance. May focus on lesson design, instructional practices, classroom management, or other issues. *\*Provides important benefits to both the observer and the one being observed.*

## **Involvement in a Development/Improvement Process**

Educators are brought together to develop or review a curriculum, design a new program, plan strategies to improve instruction, or solve a particular problem. To be effective, participants in a development/improvement process must have ready access to appropriate information and expertise so that they can make knowledgeable and well-reasoned decisions (Gusky & Peterson, 1996). *\* The advantage is that participants not only increase their specific knowledge and skills, they enhance their ability to work collaboratively and share in decision-making.*

## **Study Groups**

Involves the entire staff of a school in finding solutions to common problems. Members are generally divided into groups of 4 to 6 each and investigate an issue of focus on an area for improvement. Opportunities are then provided for groups to share their findings and recommendations. *\* Study groups bring focus and coherence to improvement efforts, especially if groups are carefully structured, well trained and well supervised. By involving all staff members they can break down the isolation that many educators experience.*

## **Inquiry/Action Research**

This can take many forms but most include the following phases: 1) selection of a problem or question of collective interest 2) collecting and organizing information related to the problem 3) studying the relevant professional literature and research 4) determining the possible actions that are likely to achieve commonly valued goals and 5) taking action and documenting results. *\*Helps educators become more reflective practitioners, more systematic problem solvers and more thoughtful decision makers.*

## **Individually Guided Activities**

Individuals determine their own professional development goals and then select the activities that they believe will result in the achievement of those goals. Steps or phases include 1) identification of a need or interest 2) development of a plan to meet the need or interest 3) learning activities 4) assessment of whether the learning meets the need or interest. *\*Flexible and they this model offers a choice for individualization.*

## **Mentoring**

Typically involves pairing an experienced and highly successful educator with a less experienced colleague who have regular opportunities to discuss professional goals, share ideas and strategies on effective practice and reflect on current methods. Then there is opportunity provided for on-the-job observations and the sharing of tactics for improvement. *\*Mentoring offers a highly individualized approach to professional development that can benefit both individuals involved and can foster lifelong, highly productive professional relationships.*