

Introduction

A LOOK AT THE BOOK ■

Originally, this book grew out of a notebook we provided to those attending our “So, You Want to Be a Consultant” Conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This four-day event was for those who wanted to take their skills beyond the school, the district, or the state level and become nationally known educational consultants. Frankly, the turnout for this initial conference was slim because potential attendees had a hard time getting the district to pay for them to come to a conference that sounded like they were going to move on to greener pastures. The next year we changed the name to “So, You Want to Be a Staff Developer,” and it made all the difference in the world. Plus, it coincided with the growth of the role of instructional coach, site-based staff developer, and principal as instructional leader. These are the reasons the book has been consistently popular over these last ten years.

In this second edition we have made four primary changes: (1) In Chapter 2, the discussion about the adult learner includes research on the importance of understanding how the different generations represented on school staffs impact the role of the staff developer. (2) In Chapter 3, the discussion of the varieties of professional development models now includes more emphasis on the professional learning community, which in the last ten years has become common throughout the United States. (3) In Chapter 4, we have eliminated content related to contacting and contracting with clients. (4) Throughout the book, we have integrated strategies that reflect the impact technology has had on all aspects of our lives, in this case particularly in the staff room and subsequently in the classroom.

When discussing the use of technology, specific programs and applications are mentioned throughout, but in the discussion the focus is on the pertinent aspects of the technology tool. In other words, mention of a specific product should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the product, as many products have features that overlap; instead, the key thing to consider is how the technology serves the goal of the instructional or

assessment strategy. For example, if the staff developer wants to survey the participants so that the data can be used from the survey to facilitate a discussion at the next professional development event, any tech tool that could accomplish this goal will work, whether it's Survey Monkey, Poll Everywhere, Zoomerang, SurveyGizmo, Poll Daddy, or a program not listed here or one that has not been invented yet.

This book is comprised of eight chapters that take the reader on a journey with key stops along the way. The first stop offers an introductory look at the *concept of change and the theory of how change happens* through professional development initiatives. The journey continues with a pause to examine the *wants and needs of the adult learner*, "a neglected species" according to early proponents such as Malcolm Knowles. Moving along the path, another highlight is a compendium of *best practices in professional development* and key elements of effective training models.

Four consecutive points of interest during the reader's travels place the spotlight on the essence of sound practices in working with the adult learner. The narrative guides the reader through the details of effective designing, with the acute understanding that the most critical element in professional development lies in the *design* format. Subsequently, the reader happens on the golden nuggets of knowledge about *presentation* skills, the high-profile role of the contemporary staff developer.

With added momentum, the reader glides into the realm of *facilitation* skills, with additional information on how to become a master at giving up the stage and assuming the elusive role of guide on the side. As the journey proceeds, gingerly, by these crystallized roles of the staff developer, a timely visit to the fourth role, that of *mediator or coach*, is on the horizon. Working with emerging knowledge and understanding about this most pressing role, the reader gains deeper insights into the skillfulness necessary to genuinely support adult learners in the throes of meaningful, purposeful change.

There is one final yet compelling stop on the journey: the anatomy of a workshop. Joyce and Showers's (1995) research reveals that the most important element of training is the design. This discussion uncovers the anatomy of a workshop, delineating four essential elements of sound training.

■ A PEEK AT THE CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

Each chapter begins with a telling vignette that sets the stage for the targeted input for that chapter. This vignette is followed by a substantive discussion of the topic under examination. The discussions are laced with theoretical underpinnings to the target concept from the key researchers in

the various areas. In addition, the practical part is woven into text, as well as set apart from the text, in the form of tools, templates, and tips. Tools include interactive strategies that guarantee a collaborative and active learning component for readers who are putting the ideas into immediate practice. The templates provide the means and measures to engage the adult learners in thoughtful, meaningful, and purposeful ways, as the reader applies the ideas to appropriate professional learning situations. The tips provide dearly held insights into the structures and processes revealed in this guide to professional learning for all who strive to design and deliver powerful professional development.

AN INVITATION ■

Complete in its scope, this edition offers a practical approach to change for those who choose to work with the adult learner in our schools. Peruse the book, selecting a focus of intense interest or ideas that evoke a sense of urgency for your current role, or simply follow the guide from beginning to end, savoring the diversity of elements assembled in this professional development guide for designing, presenting, facilitating, and coaching the adult learner.

Enjoy!

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