Introduction

A LOOK AT THE BOOK ■

This book is comprised of nine 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 leaner, "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 are two final yet compelling stops on the journey: the anatomy of a workshop and centers of pedagogy. 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. And, in the last part of this guide, there is a comprehensive discussion about sustaining professional learning through the concept of building communities of learners. Labeled "centers of pedagogy," the discussions thread through the foundational concepts of teacher-to-teacher support, with myriad mentoring and coaching models. The mentoring or coaching segments address various components of the process, including conferencing tools, reflection journals, and techniques for building relationships.

■ 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 staff development guide for designing, presenting, facilitating, and coaching the adult learner.

Enjoy!

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