Chapter 12
Professional Development for Classroom Teachers

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ABSTRACT
The professional development of teachers in instructional technology is of paramount importance. This chapter provides an overview of the topic, beginning with adult learning as a foundation. Teachers are adults, and any type of professional development, whether related to technology or not, should meet the needs of adult learners. The chapter subsequently provides a review of professional learning communities (PLCs), which may provide a venue for impactful, sustainable technology professional development. Next, teacher-led technology professional development and peer coaching are addressed, followed by a discussion of the use of the community, corporate, and university partnerships that may enhance professional development through symbiotic relationships. The chapter concludes with a discussion of virtual professional development, which may serve a dual purpose of enhancing professional development sustainability as well as modeling technology use for instructional purposes.

INTRODUCTION
Fundamentally, the quality of education reflects the interaction between a learner and a teacher, and therefore a primary focus of the organization should be enhancing the ability of teachers to positively influence learners. Educational organizations have witnessed significant growth in the availability of instructional technologies, both hardware and software, over the past few decades. However, if teachers are not prepared to effectively use these technologies to enhance the interaction with learners then the full potential of this investment in hardware and software may be less than fully realized.

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TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS ADULT LEARNING

Ultimately, professional development is about learning, and professional development of teachers (generally and for technology integration specifically) is connected to adult learning. Awareness of adult learning theory and andragogy may enhance the professional development experience for teachers.

Adult Learning Theory

Adult learning theory encompasses a variety of theories intended to explain and predict the processes in which adults learn. It is debatable whether or not andragogy, the pedagogy of adults (Knowles, 1980) is in and of itself an adult learning theory. Regardless, andragogy is a fundamental component of Adult Learning Theory and is worthy of discussion and summary. Prior to the twentieth century, learning theories were centered around how children learn; not until the early decades of the twentieth century that adult learning began to be studied professionally. Initially, inquiry about adult learning focused on whether or not adults could learn. In 1928, Thorndike, Bregman, Tilton, and Woodyard published Adult Learning (Merriam, 2001, p. 3), cited as the first book that provided research about adult learning. Most of the research conducted involved psychological and behavioral perspectives that did little to differentiate between adult learners and young learners. It wasn’t until the mid-twentieth century that adult learning research took a new approach. The inquiry shifted from “can adults learn?” to “how do adults learn and what is different about adult learning versus childhood learning?” This shift, occurring in 1968, is when andragogy emerged.

Knowles, the pioneer of andragogy, defines five assumptions of adult learners (Knowles, 1980). These assumptions help researchers to understand adults as learners to better educate them. The five assumptions someone who (1) has an independent self-concept and who can direct his or her own learning, (2) has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning, (3) has learning needs closely related to changing social roles, (4) is problem-centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge, and (5) is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors (Knowles, 1980). These assumptions spurred further thinking and research into how adults learn and the ever-emerging field of adult learning theory. Adults who have a self-concept that is developed, are better able to self-direct their own learning and engage in learning without being dependent on a teacher. Adults also have the ability to draw from numerous life experiences which may help them learn. According to assumption (4), adult learners may not focus on content-based learning as much as children, but instead, strive to learn in order to solve a problem and apply their knowledge to the issue that needs resolving.

Additionally, assumptions (3) and (5) indicate that adults have internal motivations to learn and they need to be involved in the learning process themselves instead of being told what they will be learning and how they will learn it. Since adults learn for their own self-awareness, they must be more involved in the learning process than children are in their learning process. If adults are not involved in what they
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