

Facilitating Teacher Learning and Sharing

One of the most powerful ways educational leaders can support the integration of ICT tools into the classroom is by facilitating teacher sharing and collaborative learning. Very often such teacher sharing takes place in informal settings and in a spontaneous manner. Celebrating and encouraging such collegial collaboration has proven to be quite valuable. In fact, developing a collaborative culture within educational settings has been shown to enhance teacher learning and the facilitation of educational change. At the same time, several formal methods to facilitate professional learning related to the integration of ICT tools into classroom teaching have proven to be quite effective. Let us consider some of those methods.

1. **Teacher Sharing During Staff Meetings:** One of the easiest ways to promote teacher sharing is to include the time to do so on the agenda of staff meetings. Allowing teachers to briefly share the challenges and success they had when using ICT tools in their classroom can encourage others to take risks and learn from each other. A key benefit of encouraging such sharing is that teachers become aware of the types of ICT tools that can be used and, most importantly, who among their colleagues may be willing to support them in the learning process.
2. **Create a Yellow Pages of Teacher Support:** Another rather simple way to facilitate teacher learning is to create a “Yellow Pages Directory” of the teachers who are willing to model the use of a particular ICT tool or support colleagues as they are trying to learn to use it. Very often, teachers have two or three ICT tools that they enjoy using and many of them are often willing to share their expertise with others. Simply developing a list of teachers that includes the ICT tools on which they are willing to provide support can be an effective way to enhance ICT-supported student learning.
3. **Voluntary Lunch-time ICT Sharing Sessions:** Scheduling time during lunch time on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis for interested teachers to get together with a focus on the use of a specific ICT tool or on discussions of related teaching-learning strategies has

proven to be another effective way to facilitate teacher sharing and learning.

4. **School-wide Professional Learning Sessions:** The use of school-wide professional development days has also been shown to be helpful in facilitating teacher learning. Very often, teacher leaders within the school or school board can effectively lead these sessions. One of the best ways to organize such days is to identify two or three teacher leaders who are willing to gather suggestions on the topics that might be discussed and then based on this input develop an agenda of relevant topics for the day. Our experience has shown that encouraging the input of such teacher leaders can be very beneficial both for those leading the sessions as well as for those participating in them.
5. **Teacher Learning Sessions based on the SHARE Process:** A more formal but very effective way to facilitate teacher learning is to use the SHARE Process..

The key steps in the acronym-based SHARE Process are outlined below:

Select a relevant ICT- learning activity

Highlight the key teaching-learning aspects of the experience

Ask clarifying questions

Reflect on the activity

Evaluate the lessons learned

A more complete explanation of the above process can be accessed by clicking on the following link: [The SHARE Process and ICT-supported Learning](#)

6. **Model the Use of ICT Tools:** A rather simple yet highly effective way to support ICT-supported learning is for educational leaders to model the use of ICT tools as often as possible. Using email, word processing, presentation software, LCD projectors and Smart Boards, and tablets sends a non-verbal message that ICT tools can enhance communication, collaboration and productivity.

References

- Bambino, D. (2002). Critical friends. *Educational Leadership*, March, pp. 25-27.
- Easton, L.B. (2002). How the tuning protocol works. *Educational Leadership*, March, pp. 28-30.
- Easton, L.B. (2008). From professional development to professional learning. *Phi Delta Kappan*, June, pp. 755-757.
- Killion, Joellen & Patricia Roy (2009). *Becoming a Learning School*, National Staff Development Council, Oxford, Ohio.
- Reeves, D. (2006). Of hubs, bridges and networks. *Educational Leadership*. June, pp. 32-37.
- Stoll, L., Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Wallace, M., & Thomas, S., (2006). Professional learning communities: a review of the literature, *Journal of Educational Change*, 7, 221-258.
- Wall, A. E., Breuleux, A., Heo, G., Bilodeau, P., Rye, K., Bennett, N., Foreman, T., Lemay, V., & M. Verreault (2012). *Promoting ICT-supported Learning: Lessons from the BCT Network*: Quebec: Cefrio.