A Perspective on Tech-Enabled PD

We have a simple belief at Whetstone. Despite all the variables in education reform, one thing that will always remain constant is: effective teachers are imperative for student achievement. We also believe every person can grow and learn, and that an effective ‘observation > feedback > practice’ cycle can support and accelerate that process. However, our experience has been that -- in the competition for time and attention at a school or network -- all too often PD gets de-prioritized, under-planned, and poorly delivered.

How can we reimagine professional learning by applying lessons learned from the cutting edge of student instruction? How can we -- in a way that makes the most of school leaders’ valuable time in a structured and pre-determined way -- deliver effective professional development that is personalized, blended, and competency based?

A New Approach to PD

Schools -- or networks -- can create a series of badges aligned to their instructional priorities to drive personalized, blended, and competency based professional learning experiences. The graphic below generically illustrates this approach:

**Personalized**

Like all learners, teachers learn in different ways and are at different levels of mastery.

| Personalized goals | ● every learner is unique; the goals teachers work toward and the content they engage with should reflect this fundamental fact |

**Blended**

There is no replacement for face-to-face, teacher-to-coach interactions. Modules can structure these live meetings into the most high-leverage interactions possible, while giving teachers some flexibility over the time, place, and pace at which they engage with their content.

| In-person interactions | ● a diagnostic observation informs instructional growth plan  
● a final observation assesses mastery |
| Online interactions | ● on demand content consumption lets teachers drive the ‘when and where’ of development  
● ongoing feedback from a community of coaches & peers |
| Flex interactions (could happen on or off line) | ● (potentially virtual) purposeful practice & precise feedback from coaches & peers helps internalize key instructional knowledge and skills  
● (potentially virtual) formative observations & debriefs focus attention on key levers for growth  
● (potentially virtual) reflection conversations critically assess progress & define long-term goals |

**Competency-based**

Teachers should receive feedback on observable practice and performance as they progress toward mastery.

| Define Badges | ● badges can be aligned to any rubric’s language and corresponding instructional focuses |
| Mastery before progression | ● badge acquisition criteria is flexible, and should include a mix of performance tasks (e.g., student artifacts, observable instructional mastery) and data sources (e.g., student data, observation scores, survey scores) |

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