

PD that innovates.

There's been a surge of interest around professional development (PD) in every industry.

LinkedIn's 2018 Workforce Learning Report stated that 93% of employees would stay at a company longer if it invested in their careers. Education is no exception, and teachers have long had the advantage of having PD built into their calendars. But they also know - perhaps better than most - about the potential pitfalls of one-size-fits-all PD. Here are a few common pitfalls, as well as how to avoid them.



Don't:

Hold a "one-and-done" workshop

Studies from the 1980s to the present have shown over and over that teachers who receive PD through one-time workshops don't implement what they learn, and their students don't improve their performance. Just as problematically, the single-workshop model is unsuited to accountability: it usually leaves implementation up to individual teachers.

Do:

Allow for flexible session formats

Allow teachers to work through materials at their own pace and access them on their own time, returning to the material as often as they need to. Structuring PD sessions around discussion and teacher contributions can also be more effective than a top-down approach, giving high fliers a chance to mentor teachers who are new or struggling.

Don't:

Miss chances to iterate and improve

PD sessions can be prone to top-down implementation, and as such, can miss out on an important component: teacher voice! Without teacher voice, PD content and approaches can remain static. This, combined with lack of follow-up, makes it even less likely that any learnings will be implemented in the classroom.

Do:

Get input from teachers in real time

Teachers have the best understanding of the challenges they face in the classroom and where they most need support. Soliciting input by survey - or even better, at the end of PD sessions - ensures that a school's PD curriculum will be responsive to all its educators, not just the most vocal ones.



Don't:

Forget to set clear goals

Another challenge with "sit and get" style PD? Without a plan for follow-up and accountability, one is left guessing whether teachers actually gained anything from the session. A lack of goal-setting leads to a lack of accountability - both on the part of teachers in terms of implementation, and administrators who need to improve offerings.

Do:

Provide support and accountability

Sustained, multi-session PD programs give educators the opportunity to practice and adjust their use of the new techniques, and then receive the support and feedback they need to keep improving. Teachers can play an active role in this, encouraging each other through collaboration and mentorship.

Don't:

Separate the tool from the application

Edtech tool usage tends to be taught in standalone "technology training" that overlooks instructional best practices or is not segmented by subject - even though many of edtech's most powerful applications are subject-specific. Implementing tech tools and maximizing their effectiveness requires skill, practice, and ongoing support, while keeping the application of the tool in focus.

Do:

Integrate the "how" and the "why" for edtech

Many schools teach edtech solutions in "technology PD" sessions that focus on the tools' mechanics rather than their applications, leaving teachers to figure out how to apply them in the classroom on their own. Instead, try teaching technology resources in subject-, skill-, or grade-specific breakout groups, where teachers can focus on the ways the tool can enrich their specific standards and curricula.



Numbers to know

90%+

of teachers participate in single training sessions during a school year

14

Number of states asking teachers to craft personalized plans for improving their instruction

\$18B

per year spent on professional development for U.S. teachers

19

Average number of school days that teachers spend in PD annually

95%

of teachers can transfer the skill when provided with coaching beyond the initial implementation phase

What educators are saying about Newsela PD

"This has been the most relevant training in all my years of teaching.

Thank you so much!"

Michelle Parisi,
Gainesville High School

"I am a Newsela certified educator, but never cease to learn more every time I

attend another session!"

Tanya Kidd,
Vineland City Schools

"This was a very insightful training. I learned a lot and Lauren was very knowledgeable and had answers to all of our questions. Newsela is going to be helpful for my students.

Secondary Teacher,
Alverta B Gray Schultz Middle School

At Newsela, we provide effective teacher PD trainings—virtual and in-person—that aligns with your instructional priorities and students' needs.

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