#sharetheawesome

by Ellen Zschunke and Brittany Tignor

With the push for personalized learning and student-centered classrooms, a shift to personalized professional development and teacher-centered learning is needed. For two years, we have been presenting a conference session entitled, "#sharetheawesome: PD under the Radar." We begin by inviting our audience members to explore what we've noticed as a disconnect between wants and needs in traditional professional development. Responses range from "boring day-long meetings that don't address concerns and issues" to "one and done; sit and get." Some common problems that educators report are time, communication, engagement, relevance, and a sense of ownership. Fortunately, school librarians have the tools to lead the way to a solution: we know how to share!

As a part of the Future Ready Librarian Framework, the librarian's role in professional development is to "lead and implement ongoing and sustained professional development for teachers and staff in all areas" (Alliance for Excellent Education 2016; Project Connect 2015). School librarians are perfectly positioned to encourage and implement professional development so teachers can learn what they want, how they want it, when it works for them.

We have collected and developed strategies that allow us to sneak in PD so everyone can #sharetheawesome. During our conference sessions, we have shared the ideas we started with, the ones that have cropped up along the way, and ideas shared from other conference participants just the night before. Following are a few of our favorites that we hope you can customize and implement in your school community.

PD While You PP

Post information in the bathroom stalls.

Rationale: For many teachers, the bathroom is the only place they sit down the entire day.

Consider placing multiple copies of articles in the stall. Posters can deliver content

or outline upcoming PD, newsletter style. For a newsletter, create a template instead of starting from scratch each time. Use Piktochart, Glogster, or Google Slides to create posters and incorporate QR codes, images, and text. Try including pull-tabs for reminders. Borrow as much as you can; @SylviaDuckworth has amazing Sketchnotes, including a recent book of her best 100 (https://sylviaduckworth.com/sketchnotes/).

TED Talks 4 Teachers

Use TED Talks to spark discussion and think outside the box.

Rationale: TED Talks are short and engaging, offered by experts in their field and designed to inspire.

Ellen has used TED Talks like "Kim Bevill: The Magic that Makes the Brain Learn" to explore Brain Breaks. Brittany has used "Reshma Saujani: Teach Girls Bravery, Not Perfection." Choose a common weekly time to view and discuss the talks. Ellen held her

meeting on Monday morning and sold them as a way to start their week off right. Try offering a flipped option to give flexibility. Allow teachers to suggest future topics to personalize PD even further. In Ellen's school, participants found the regular sessions to be a place to share struggles and seek support, solutions, and inspiration.

Teachers' Readers' Theater (TRT)

Teachers present readers' theater as an assembly or to a class.

Rationale: Sharing literature is often confined to reading teachers, so developing a culture of reading across the school can be challenging, especially when not everyone sees the relevance. TRT is fun and contagious, so a variety of teachers want to participate.

Teachers interact with books so they can connect with students who are also reading the same thing. Readers' theater scripts are available online. Write your own by finding an exciting text. For picture books, you can use the entire book; when using chapter books, find a section that leaves the viewers hanging.

Online Book Study

Choose a book for a group of teachers to read and discuss.

Rationale: By offering the book study discussion online, teachers are able to read and respond when convenient.

Choose a professional development book or a novel. *Teach Like a Pirate* and *The Book Whisperer* are engaging for beginners. *Fault in Our Stars* or *Thirteen Reasons Why* allow us to discuss topics and authors relevant to students. Use Google Classroom, OneNote, Blogger, or Edmodo for teachers to connect online. Develop a timeline and plan questions. To encourage participation, communicate which members of the staff are involved and highlight those who are using their knowledge in creative ways.

Web Presence

Curate information from any professional development so that it can be accessed in time of need.

Rationale: Just because a teacher doesn't see the relevance in a specific PD topic today doesn't mean they won't want it tomorrow.

By curating your information in one space on the web, teachers can access material when the time is right. Link presentations you have created and those publicly available. Make sure to organize by content topics. Post your information (TED Talks, relevant articles, Twitter feeds) when you present your PD. Leave the information up for access later.

Faculty Meeting Breakout Sessions

Offer breakout sessions "Edcamp-style" where faculty become presenters.

Rationale: Meetings are an engaging opportunity for collaboration. Presenting increases the ownership.

Topics can vary based on areas of expertise and needs of learners. Faculty who have tried this have found they have more to share than they realize. Administrator support is key; present to your administrator and let them take the lead. Tap teachers to start; encourage people to work together to present who aren't on the same teaching teams.

Conclusion

In Amy Krouse Rosenthal's TED Talk, "Seven Notes on Life," she advises us to "make the most of your time here." Don't lament the problems with professional development, do something about it. Be a part of the solution. Assert yourself and then insert yourself. When we survey teacher librarians, some feel they are an integral part of professional development in their district, while others feel they aren't a part of the planning process at all. The opportunity to advocate for school librarian involvement in professional development is timely within the construct of the Future Ready Librarians Framework. As librarians, we are positioned to collaborate with teachers in all subject areas, so take the lead to personalize teacher learning and squeeze in PD. Already sharing some awesome? Ready to get started? When you do, include @SLC_online, @ontheshelf4kids, and @SHMSMedia to let us know how you #sharetheawesome.

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