Professional Development Models

Peer Coaching

Peer coaching is a method where experienced teachers share their knowledge and expertise with newer teachers. These mentors provide confidential support, assistance, feedback, problem-solving skills, classroom management techniques, and training. This model helps the new teacher improve their techniques, teaching style, and classroom skills. The mentor teacher also benefits from this type of professional development by learning new techniques from the new teacher. There are four models of peer coaching that include technical, collegial, challenge, and team.

I have seen the peer coaching professional development model in action. This model works very well for new teachers who benefit from experienced coworkers. This model does not benefit the new teacher when the mentor is not on the same campus and only visits intermittently. Sharing knowledge and expertise can benefit both people to better the teaching field. This model helps new teachers not feel extremely overwhelmed or have burn-out issues early on. I have also seen peer coaching in the form of team teaching. Our school has blended classrooms and there are at least two teachers per blend so they are able to share, collaborate, build, plan, and more effectively meet the needs of all types of students. Two is always better than one.

Peer coaching, if constructed correctly, and if teachers are matched correctly, can be very beneficial to teachers. Teachers gain knowledge, help, collaboration, shared work, efficiency strategies, and camaraderie that can help all teachers involved.

Reference

Galbraith, P., & Anstrom, K. (1995). Peer Coaching: An Effective Staff Development Model for Educators of Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students.

Retrieved from
http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED394300

Content-Based Collaborative Inquiry (CBCI)

This model uses a reform effort called School For Thought. (SFT) This model shifts the focus from teachers having students simply memorize information to learning with understanding. This means students organize facts and ideas into conceptual frameworks that facilitate retrieval and application in new situations. (Zech, Gause-Vega, Bray, Secules, & Goldman, 2000, p.207) Content knowledge is developed through collaborative inquiry within a teacher's own classroom. Through scaffolding, critical thinking skills, engaging in dialogue, and developing knowledge of practice, teachers will create a community of learning for students. Facilitators visit a teachers classroom every month to help the teacher conduct inquiries in the classroom. Teachers inquire together by sharing inquiry they have experienced in the classroom. Facilitators then help the teachers reflect on the learning and norms. This helps teachers learn new ways of thinking. There

are two different phases to this model; the preimplementation and implementation.

I have never seen this model in action. However, to me it seems that a stranger comes into the classroom and tells the teacher how to change their thinking to better serve the students. In the reading it appears the teacher is asked to give a lot of extra time collaborating with the facilitator to see if their inquiry matches the facilitators. It seems there is a lot of criticism from the facilitator directed to the teacher until the teacher agrees. This model does not seem to account that teachers are professionals with the initial, necessary training to teach students in a classroom environment. Quotes such as, "These experiences prepare teachers to look at their classrooms as places to conduct inquiry about student thinking and to actually engage in doing this inquiry," and "through this process, teachers develop new ways of thinking and talking about their students' learning" (p. 209) make me question this models intent. This model also takes years to fully implement, which can be counterproductive when new teachers enter the picture.

The article states there are still a lot of challenges and problems to work through in this model. It seems that it is continually evolving, not necessarily for improvement, but rather for the authors to try and make this model work and become used by teachers. It seems this model works at making teachers feeling inept rather than facilitating an educational model for teachers to use for growth. This model also does not account for, or allow, different teaching styles to be used, but focuses on uniformity, which is not always beneficial.

Reference

Zech, L., Gause-Vega, C., Bray, M., Secules, T., & Goldman, S. (2000). Content-based collaborative inquiry: A professional development model for sustaining educational reform. *Educational Psychologist*, *35*(3), 207-217. Retrieved from Professional Development Collection database.

PLATE: Plan for Learning And Teaching with Educational Technology

The PLATE model suggests that participants form a collegial network, have opportunity for observation and practice, and connect approach with assessment. This model believes that for professional development to be effective it needs to be ongoing. Knowledgeable professionals support and monitor teachers throughout the entire school year. They work closely with teachers to provide support for planning, development, and implementation of technology within their classroom and field of instruction. There are four components, which are a wish list of desired initiatives to enact, those that you plan to enact, a list of available and unavailable resources that relate to the initiatives, a running summary of how these initiatives are being put into practice and reflections on the effectiveness.

Creating a model that is comprehensive and personal, accounts for multiple learning levels, seeks to maintain balance between needs and characteristics, and provides ongoing support, it is sure to be successful. Providing teachers technology implementation that they can use within their specialized teaching area will ensure that teachers continually use it. Data supports this model and its effectiveness in the classroom. With professional help implementing, planning, ongoing, and monitoring outlined with obtainable goals make this model outstanding.

This model would be effective in the classroom because it supports teachers within the classroom, provides support from experts, and states clear goals for success. This model reminds me a lot of the educational technology program we are in now.

Reference

Slavit, D., Sawyer, R., & Curley, J. (2003). Filling your PLATE: A professional development model for teaching with technology. *TechTrends: Linking Research & Practice to Improve Learning*, *47*(4), 35.