

EDLD 5389

Professional Learning Strategy

Week 5 Final Assignment

By

Juan Marquez

EDLD 5389

Professional Learning Strategy

Week 5 Final Assignment

By

Juan Marquez

**MY Professional Learning Strategy.
A place where everybody will grow and learn.**

When I started this Apple-Lamar-Alief cohort-project, I never imagined where I would be standing today. This whole process has been a game changer and a huge eye opener for my professional and personal life, and it has been just amazing.

At the beginning of this quest, it was clear to me what to do: teach in a unique and original way by using technology in a very specific manner: use coding and Apple's creativity apps. From the beginning, my heart and mind had been into this project. Every step I had taken has taken me into new horizons, into new learning experiences. It has been an unbelievable and marvelous experience.

Until now, my project consisted on developing different approaches on how to improve myself and my teaching. Then, I arrived to Dr. Meeuwse class: Developing Effective Professional Learning at Lamar University.

I can share, that one passion of mine is to help others. If I learn something helpful and fabulous, I get excited and share it with anyone. From my wife, my sons, to my students and my peers. I really enjoy helping others. That is why, one current goal I had been working on, was to try to create a professional learning process where I could extend my knowledge to others in my campus and district. I say was, because it is no longer in the past, it is not in the present. Being in Dr. Meeuwse's class was an unexpected and pleasant surprise, because the whole course was about understanding professional learning and develop our own PL. Something I just loved and truly enjoyed.

Allow me to share my project and my plan for my campus Professional Learning plan.

Start from the beginning.

PL Objective: develop a learning community with bilingual SIOP-trained teachers. This community, from now on called team, will participate in a continuous 3 month learning process to learn an app called [Flipgrid](#) and implement it with the use of SIOP strategies. This will address the students' ELPS and increase their language knowledge. As a consequence, students will be successful in their learning and comprehension.

Background

In our campus, there are many bilingual teachers that had been SIOP trained. My current project consists on inviting these teachers to participate in this learning process to use the online app called Flipgrid. Flipgrid is an app that, as I can see it, it's the grandfather of Tik Tok, educational speaking. Before Tik Tok was a trend and a super boom, Flipgrid was already available for free to all teachers and students worldwide to create self-created videos and answer different teacher's prompts. This app is an amazing and original way of addressing the academic language areas of writing, speaking, listening and talking. All of these skills need to happen when creating a video. Students need to **write** what they want to say, **read** what they wrote to themselves or a peer for feedback. Also, they have to **listen** what they recorded, and they need to **speak** to create the video. As well, they develop and practice other skills like **organization, collaboration** and **communication**. These last skills occur when the teacher adds as part of the assignment to give feedback to their peers' videos.

The reason I chose to use technology was not only based on my current master's teaching project or my passion for technology. I also chose this, because digital learning is no longer the future, it is ALREADY HERE. I believe this is the best opportunity to close the gap between teachers and technology and embrace all the benefits of teaching and the digital ground.

That is why I am designing this project. I want to create an in-house PL that will help my whole campus, all our teachers and most importantly our students. I want to throw this idea to my principal and implement it on my campus and after she sees our success, we can do much more! [Where is my 2 minute pitch video.](#)

During my PL's walkthrough we will go over many aspects of it. As you go through it, you will be able to see how I am addressing several aspects of a meaningful professional learning, like collaboration and self-directed learning, among other areas. I invite you to my PL.

My Professional Learning's walkthrough

For my project I used Gulamhussein's(2013) principles to create a meaningful and effective professional learning project. In her book Teaching The Teachers. Effective Professional Development in an Era of High Stakes Accountability, Allison Gulamhussein guides us over how current professional learning is not being successful as expected. Also, she shares 5 basic principles of Effective Professional Development, which are really great and so direct and simple! In my project, I used the 5 of them, and I feel really happy and comfortable how my PL looks like. I invite you to enjoy my Professional Learning project and how it will looked like.

Joe's Case:

Case attended an amazing training. From the beginning, he knew it was for him. He wanted more and asked a lot of questions and took plenty of notes. Unfortunately, the training came to an end and Joe had still a lot of questions and wanted to bounce ideas. He wished the training was longer. When Joe came back to his classroom, he tried to implement his new learning, but he encountered some differences from the training and couldn't keep the pace. At the end of a few days, he dropped it and forgot about it.

***Principle I. "The duration of professional development must be significant and ongoing to allow time for teachers to learn a new strategy and grapple with the implementation problem."
(Gulamhussein,2013)***

Joe's case helps us understand how the duration of a PL affects learning. Learning should be long enough to guarantee the new strategy sticks and embeds into the learner's mind. Also, it should be continuous and ongoing to check for understanding, bounce ideas, observe, adapt and improve. A long duration of a PL also guarantees that there is enough time for team members to

bounce ideas, learn from mistakes and go over things as many times as needed to manage proficiency and true adoption of the new learning.

Based on this principle, my estimated project duration is for three months. This timeframe is long enough to allow all team members to acquire and absorb all the learning required to be skillful on Flipgrid and incorporating their SIOP skills within the app and their classroom. As stated before, we will have the opportunity to implement and try different ideas in our classrooms. Then we will be able to share our experiences, and give and receive feedback, so everybody can grow and benefit from each other. Sharing and receiving feedback is our cue for the second principle.

Principle II. Ongoing specific coaching and support for the learner.

Going again over Joe's case, we can see that he had two major issues: the training or PL **was too short**; and he **didn't have anyone around to ask for help**, guidance or bounce his ideas.

We teachers, just as any other learner, need guidance, a coach, feedback, someone to rely on and tell us if we are in the right path or not. I remember once said: "A true friend is not only the one that supports you, but it also helps you grow by giving feedback." I like this quote, because it encompasses that every person needs help to become better. We always need a voice outside us that can give us a different point of view of what we are doing and saying.

Earlier I mentioned that we will be creating a cohort or a team. This is because in order to have a truthful growth by receiving and giving feedback, there should be trust and a safe environment. Our team will be that. As a facilitator, I will do what I do in my classroom: foster a safe and positive environment. My objective is to create a team where everybody feels comfortable. Where distrust and non-positive thinking evolves into trust and a mindset of **YES, WE CAN**. During our time, we will be working on this environment. We will become a team where each of our ideas will be heard and analyzed. We will be sharing ideas, thoughts, strategies, new and old knowledge. No one knows everything and we all need from everybody. We will be building meaningful relations so we can grow independently and as a team.

We will manage to grow when we realize and see that we are in this project to learn and part of learning is to analyze our strengths and areas of growth. Therefore, in our sessions there will be always a moment to share and reflect our successes and not successes. There will be also specific sessions to showcase what we have learned and implemented in the classroom. This also supports the growth of our team members.

With these practices, we ensure we are working to support each other. To help in the path of personal and professional grow. By coaching as a team, we become part of each member's successes and not successes. Fostering in this environment helps all of us to feel accompanied int his path and that we can rely on our team.

Additionally, there will be also observation sessions, where team members will be observing other team members and can give precise and immediate feedback. And, not only feedback will help the observed teacher to adjust and adapt her/his class, but also gives the observer the huge opportunity to learn from the observed teacher. Let us not forget that modeling is a great tool to learn, and we teachers use it constantly with our learners. In my project, modeling will also take place and an authentic and different way. These last lines help me to talk about Principle III and Principle IV.

Principle III. Teachers should participate in their own learning. Passive learning is a no-no.

Principle IV. Modeling is key for the teacher's successful learning.

Just as we do with our learners, modeling is key for them to learn and understand a new concept. In my project, this will be happening as well, but there will be a difference. In the early sessions, I will be modeling the lessons. I will be sharing my experiences and go over success and unsuccessful experiences, but this will only be happening at the beginning. As I mentioned before that I will be a facilitator. At the beginning, I will be the teacher modeling (Principle III), but then, each member of the team will be modeling for us as well. The same thing I did at the beginning, all of us will be doing it.

With these actions, members of our team become part of an amazing process. A process where their mindset moves to a continuous growth mindset. This will allow them to become owners of their learning, of their ideas and of their team.

With my project, I am looking to create a powerful growth mindset team where support and learning is an endless process, where we will be building an amazing energy. An energy that will overflow our whole campus with enthusiasm and passion, and it will disseminate all around us.

As a person that likes helping people, I want to be part of a process that changes people's minds, but more importantly a process where teacher can become better. Where they can improve their learning in their specific classroom and environment.

Here is where the self-directed learning happens within our team. Once all members feel comfortable with the team, with the new concepts and the dynamics of the learning process, all of us will become facilitators, leaders and will be able to self-learn. As I had mentioned, we will be working towards a growth mindset. Towards an environment of growth and learning. During this process, each one of us will lead and model to the rest. We will be participating and encouraging each of us to share ideas and thoughts. To make different efforts and make mistakes. We will look to support by learning from everything; successes and failures will help us succeed and become better.

Saying this, we can go over Principle V.

Principle V: Professional learning should not be generic, has to be specific to the discipline.

I can share that for me, addressing this principle in my project was a little bit tricky. My PL can be seen as not specific or being generic. I can understand that, but actually, it is specific to each teacher. Maybe not to a subject, but it is specific to a teacher's instruction and classroom, because each teacher will be able to implement all his/her learning, make it their own learning and use it specifically into their classroom, regardless the subject or discipline.

How am I achieve this? What I am doing is taking advantage of SIOP¹ training. A training that teachers already have. Teachers already know how and when to use. Some use it differently, others have new ideas, but each teacher has its own way. Here, my PL is specific. My training will provide the skills and new learning

¹ SIOP strategies focuses on Texas ELPS (English Language Proficiency Skills) to develop and practice academic English for students at school. SIOP stands for Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol.

to implement and improve technology to a skill that each one of us already have. This is what it can be understood as generic, but going deeply into PD, it will address a specific area of a teacher. Adding to this, all the feedback, observation and our great team, the PL can be and will be tailored to each one of our members. With this, an effective, engaging, meaningful and positive learning will be happening and will be embedded into its participants.

Resources and Blueprint.

When looking into my [PL's blueprint](#), it can be seen that it is a PL where all members will be sharing and bouncing ideas. My PL idea is that. It is the objective to first become proficient in the use of Flipgrid app. But once all of us have a good hold of how it works, we will focus on designing and developing our ideas, on how to implement them in our classrooms and give and receive feedback.

Soul and passion

As it can be seen, my project not only follows Gulamhussein's(2013) principles, it also fosters communication, teamwork, a safe environment, ownership of learning, and growing mindset. I feel passionate about my project, because I designed it with the mindset of: *"This is the kind of PL I would want to have. I want to have a training where the use of my time is truly beneficial. I want to feel that I am investing time and not just warming a chair."*

My PL is not only about investing time to be proficient in one specific area, it is about creating a community where learning and mistakes are fostered. It is about growing professionally and personally, it is about being successful for our students with a team that is behind us. It is a project where a growing mindset and continuous learning happens automatically.

I like to think that my project is ambitious, but at the same time I feel I am taking baby steps. I am piggy backing on a skill that is already there and adapt it and shape it to our current events. I have always been an advocate of "why to reinvent the wheel, where we can improve it" idea. This is what is currently happening around us. We see how an idea is taken and then make it better with outstanding results. This is what I am searching for. I want to make things easier to every teacher, so all of us can be successful, but overall, our students. Let us not forget: IT IS ALL ABOUT THE STUDENTS.

RESOURCES:

Gulamhussein, A. (2013). Teaching the Teachers Effective Professional Development in an Era of High Stakes Accountability. Center for Public Education. Retrieved from http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/system/files/2013-176_ProfessionalDevelopment.pdf