

There's too much tech
and I don't know where
to start!

Peer Sharing as
Professional Development

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Outline

- Check-in
 - Background
 - Project details
 - Q & A
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Image source: Pet Heaven (2017)

On a scale of dog, how do you feel when you hear about a new digital tool for teaching and learning, or hear your institution/ peers are adopting use of a new digital tool?

Why and how this project started

- **$d = d(x, i, t)$**

- d = digital literacy
- x = current skill level or proficiency
- i = interest
- t = time available

- **$t = t(w, s, r)$**

- w = hours worked
- s = hours spent on schoolwork (classes + homework + readings)
- r = hours spent on other adult responsibilities

Working full-time + going to school full-time + adult responsibilities =
very little time for anything other than w, s, r



Why and how this project started [2]

- Too many options for professional development but also not enough opportunities for what we wanted to learn
- Some professional development sessions are cost prohibitive, or the cost to usefulness ratio doesn't make it worthwhile to attend the training
- Are we the only ones who don't know about this tool?

**If writing groups help with accountability and motivation in writing,
what about improving digital literacy?**



Details about the project

- Casual, *modified* book club approach to learning
 - Regularly scheduled meetings with rotating peer "leader" for each meeting
 - Peer leader would initiate discussion but no obligation to lead entire session – focus on collaboration (“**peer sharing collective**”)
 - Discussion involved understanding the topic or tool, how we could apply it in our work, and time for practice
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Sample schedule

- **Week 1:** Peer leader selects topic, notes the topic on shared group document and provides at least one short source as a reference
- **Weeks 2 – 3:** Group members review reference provided by peer leader, and/ or find one additional source
- **Week 4:** Group convenes to discuss topic

Group members end up with a short reference list for each topic discussed



What the literature reveals

Communities of Practice (CoP)

- Beneficial for faculty development within discipline specific professional development (Blanton & Stylianou, 2009)
 - Virtual asynchronous learning environments for CoPs can enhance learning through collaborative sharing of knowledge (Fontainha & Gannon-Leary, 2008) and can meet lifelong learning needs of teachers (Chalmers, L., & Keown, 2006)
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What the literature reveals [2]

Non-formal peer learning

- Peer-to-peer learning as professional learning in grey literature
 - Focus is on employees in the same workplace setting
 - Reasons for why it should or could be implemented
 - Non-formal learning promotes multiple levels of learning (Eraut, 2000)
 - Non-formal digital learning events supports digital literacy in older adults (Pihlainen et al., 2021)
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What the literature reveals [3]

Book Clubs

- Book clubs in teacher candidate programs shown to have success as professional development (Burbank et al., 2010; Gardiner et al., 2013; White, 2016)
 - Book clubs are effective forms of professional development in various organizational settings (Grenier et al., 2022)
 - Book clubs offer a less judgmental way of learning (Grenier et al., 2022)
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Results

Benefits

- Accountability
- Allowed for more in-depth discussion on what was important to us
- Focused on how the tool applied to each of our specific work examples
- No judgement re: skills and proficiency

Issues for consideration

- Complicated process
- More time consuming than anticipated
- Too much time spent on one topic (AI and LLM)
- Fluctuating attendance due to other commitments

Project was a novel approach to professional development



Recommendations

- Using a current repository for digital literacy might be beneficial
 - Meetings should be spaced out so that group members have time to read and reflect on the topic
 - Allow for time to share what worked well and what didn't from a previous tool or topic that has been discussed
 - Summaries of sessions can provide an additional resource to refer to
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Thank you for your participation!

Questions?

Randeep Nota



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