

“Providing Effective and Efficient Professional Learning Experiences on a Budget:

How School Divisions Can Maximize Resources to Support Teacher Growth.”

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**PL Hack # 1**: **Adopt a professional *learning* mentality** – No more “sit and get”…“one off”…“flavor of the month”...“fall feature” – on-going, sustained, job-embedded – professional responsibility shared equally between employer and employee

**“You cannot be a master teacher until you are a master learner.”**

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**PL Hack # 2**: **Plan the work and work the plan** – Develop a well-articulated, multi-year, scaffolded Professional Learning Plan at every level of your organization (division, school, department/grade level, individual) – remember to differentiate, not everyone at same experience level or skill - ensure you have established necessary background knowledge and skills – get everyone pulling in the same direction

**“If you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there.”**

**PL Hack # 3**: **Know and respect the needs of the adult learner** – adult learners are looking for solutions tocurrent problems – they want to be able to use immediately - by nature are cautious and conservative - fear failure - have multiple and competing demands on their time – are your leaders aware and respectful of these needs?????

**“Change is hard for adult learners because it implies they must be doing something wrong.”**

“.”



**PL Hack # 4: Leaders must lead** – sustained instructional improvement cannot be farmed out - building administrators must be at the forefront leading professional learning – has to become important part of school culture, not just at PD time – need to attend same training as faculty and staff

**“Leaders must continually talk the talk AND walk the walk.”**

**PL Hack # 5: Make time for professional learning** – If you value it, you have to make time for it as part of the regular work day - can’t just do after school when teachers are distracted and tired or before school when teachers are trying to get their day started - what does your school calendar say about how you value professional learning in your organization?

**“The way you spend your time defines who you are.”**



**PL Hack # 6**: **Develop internal capacity** – cannot be solely top down or central office driven – teacher-leaders are critical to providing support for implementation and encouraging risk-taking – critical to show can be done in your organization – important to not just measure success by the high flyers and early adapters

**“People may doubt what you say, but they will believe what you do.”**



**PL Hack # 7:**  **Ensure teachers understand WIIFM** – if you can’t explain how the new learning will help the learner be more effective in their job, then don’t do it - goal should always be to help learners work smarter, not harder – keep focus on the critical mission of a school division…to improve student achievement

**“We cannot expect student excellence if the instruction we provide is only average.”**

**PL Hack # 8**: **Seek input -** ask folks what they are interested in knowing or getting better at – will get greater buy-in, participation and application if participants feel their needs are being met – don’t be afraid to help create “need” by clearly defining expectations and setting reasonable timelines for implementation

**“Even eagles need a push.”**



**PL Hack # 9: Get gritty** – create a culture that supports risk taking – understands unlikely to get right on the first attempt – views failure as a learning/growing experience – encourages reflection and perseverance – provides on-going coaching and specific feedback

**“Grit is perseverance and passion for long-term goals.”**

**PL Hack # 10**: **There is no silver bullet** – remember there is no one solution that will solve all of your problems – most important determinant of student success is the teacher in the classroom – focus on improving their skills and providing support for innovation – more things and more programs will not guarantee success

**“There are no quick solutions to hard problems.”**



**Budget Friendly Professional Learning Ideas**

**Repurpose what you already have** - compile and share articles from professional publications, websites, blogs etc… with teachers and leaders in your building/division - - create an “Admin Anthology” or “Compendium” to provide professional brainfood and create a shared vision/understanding – use for table top discussion groups - way to spark discussion - also share with individual teachers once you know their interest/need

**Involve teachers in planning professional learning** – create PL steering committees (division & buildings) – share leadership and responsibility - make sure they get credit – can’t put a price on teachers advocating for value of professional learning – better connected with what will “sell” – provide voice and choice

**Capitalize on internal expertise** - the experts are often among us, but often over looked or de-valued – find out what folks consider to be their expertise and what they may be willing to share with others – help folks realize they may have expertise/experience that could be valuable to others – use, but don’t abuse

**Any time is professional learning time** - continually reinforce professional learning in multiple venues, not just at times designated for professional learning – faculty meetings, at the lunch table, weekly bulletins, websites, personal notes, article sharing, committee meetings, school board presentations

**TedTalks and YouTube** – can’t afford a top-tier presenter, they are literally at your fingertips – use as much or as little as you need – flip PL and have attendees view before they come so more time for discussion – try blended learning – use as motivational tools (Rita Pierson goes a long way!) or thought provokers – how about a virtual keynote speaker (Sir Ken Robinson is awesome!)

**Use book studies** – invest in books that are topical and pertinent to your initiatives – everyone likes to feel current and knowledgeable of best practices – not everyone has to be reading the same book, provide choice – have teacher-leaders run book study groups - provide reading guides to help focus on main points

**PLCS** - expand the professional learning community model to focus on instructional knowledge and skills, not just analyzing student data – provide choice in selecting topic – use PL survey to choose topic or topics for PLC study – provides collaboration, support and feedback opportunities – serves as catalyst for change

**Create expectation to see it happen** – tie into both formal and informal observations – expect to see happening – praise what you see and showcase – make part of evaluation cycle – have teachers create mini portfolios to showcase implementation of PL goals – chance to show off and discuss – close feedback loop