

keeping learning going...

how can we run awesome staff learning remotely?

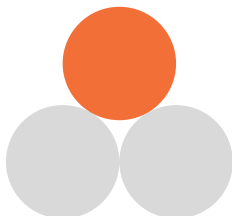


why is this important?

During a global pandemic staff need access to quality professional learning, perhaps even more acutely! We're faced with the challenge of delivering quality training remotely rather than face-to-face, and this requires purposeful new design. We can't just take the in-person experience and try to deliver it through a remote media. We need to consider the technology we can use, the structure of the session, the tools we'll use to engage and motivate, and, most importantly, the application of the learning beyond the remote learning experience. Is this sounding as similar as designing student learning to you as it is to us?!

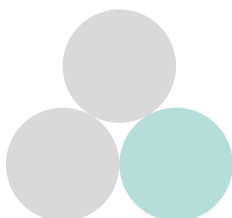
We're in a great position because we're becoming good at delivering remote lessons, so now we just need to apply our knowledge of good learning for kids, along with an understanding of the Adult Learning Principles, to design meaningful and engaging staff professional development. Providing high quality training promotes the message that we value teachers as professionals and, even when faced with challenge, we will continually invest in their growth.

key ideas in this kit



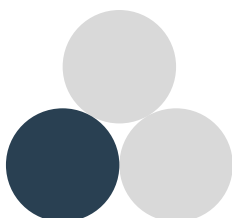
the structure of the learning

Leading staff professional learning that is engaging and purposeful hinges on a great structure.



creating engaging and motivating learning

We need to design really carefully for engagement and motivation when it comes to remote professional learning.



applying the learning

Making sure the learning translates into improved learning outcomes for students.

the structure of the learning

reflection

Designing remote learning is different to designing face-to-face interactions. It is tempting to just try and take our structure from a regular staff day and try to put it online or deliver it through a remote media, but the research tells us this doesn't work. We need to consider new structures that are designed specifically for delivering the learning remotely.

Take a moment to reflect on these questions with your professional learning design team: What technology best suits the type of learning we need to deliver? How much of the learning needs to be delivered to the whole staff at the same time? Can we have smaller groups for shorter periods of time? How much time needs to be spent delivering learning and how much time needs to be given to staff to apply the learning?

tools

There are many things that you can do to create a great structure for your remote learning. Here are our top tips;

- **Short and sharp is better:** What we know for sure is that it is harder to hold the attention of people when talking online or remotely. 45 minute monologues will rarely get the learning impact that you are hoping for! The longer you talk, the harder it is going to be to keep staff focused on the learning. Keep your inputs during remote learning to 5-10 minute bursts (pulse teaching). It doesn't matter if it is you speaking or an input from a media like a video. This also goes for limiting the time individual participants have to speak. Have clear protocols for both you and the learners to ensure that one person is not taking the lion's share of the time. Don't try to run a whole day on Zoom; plan instead for hour-long blocks over a number of weeks, with plenty of time for application.

the structure of the learning

- **Flip the learning where possible:** This is not a new idea, but is certainly one that is very pertinent to remote professional learning delivery. One of the best forms of learning is targeted group conversations around something specific that we have just learnt (like a good old book club!). When structuring your session, why not think about giving staff a self-guided learning task to complete independently, followed by structured group discussions on the task to embed and further the learning with their colleagues later. It is refreshing for staff to flip their learning and to be given quality time during the school day to immerse themselves in self-directed learning.
- **Time for technology:** Learning remotely will involve using different technology and learning platforms. Some staff may have already been avid users of technology, but try not to assume that everyone knows how to use it and don't assume the technology will always work. Build in an activity that will both build the capacity of your staff to use the technology and that identifies people who may need a little extra assistance. If you don't do this you run the risk of having some disengaged staff because they haven't been able to jump the first hurdle of using the technology!

action

Look at your next scheduled staff development session. Use the tips above to tweak it to ensure you have all the right elements to make it a great experience!

creating engaging and motivating learning

reflection

It is easy to engage and motivate learners in a face to face environment; this becomes more challenging for remote and online adult learning. Here are a couple of questions to consider as you look at creating a remote professional learning experience that is engaging.

Do you know how your staff prefer to learn? What type of learning gets their attention? Who do your staff prefer to learn from and with? What are the current learning needs of your staff at this point in time given the current state of play?

tools

You will already have some great ideas about how to engage and motivate your staff in professional learning. Here are some of the top tips and tricks we have learnt over the last 9 years to increase both motivation and engagement:

- **Use different voices:** Using different people and voices gives your staff a variety of people to learn from. While someone may have particular expertise in a field, it doesn't mean that they need to deliver all the learning content. Upskill other people on the team to deliver different parts of your remote professional learning experience. People are more likely to be motivated and engaged in learning when they are receiving information in short bursts from different people. We rarely want to hear from just one person all day! In all the remote learning that you design and deliver, ask yourself, 'Who can we get to deliver this in our team or outside of our team that will be the most credible and engaging?'. If one or two people are doing all of the delivery, rethink your strategy.

creating engaging and motivating learning

- **Utilise different media:** We all have different learning styles. Some people love to listen and learn from podcasts, others love to watch short videos like TED talks, some people like to read blog posts and others just love to have someone talking to them and engaging them in discussions. The great thing about remote learning is that there are so many different types of media you can utilise in the design and delivery of your professional learning. Use as many as you can to keep your staff focused.
- **Find the balance between fun and rigour:** Rigour and fun are not mutually exclusive. You can have a rigorous professional learning experience that is also extremely fun and engaging! In fact there is a lot of evidence to show that we learn better when we are enjoying ourselves. Design fun activities to keep people engaged. You can gamify the learning by setting people timed challenges and tasks to complete. Include some humour in the design that is relevant to the content of the PL experience. Give out some fun prizes for the challenges you set to keep people focused on the learning.

action

Create a quick online survey for your staff to get an idea of what type of remote professional learning is most engaging for them. Use their responses in the design of the engaging and motivating elements of your next professional development experience.

applying the learning

reflection

The purpose of most learning is to apply it to our lives or work to improve things. When we design and deliver remote professional learning we want to make sure our staff can apply it to improve the outcomes for their students. Take a moment to reflect on the last remote professional learning experience that you engaged in.

Ask yourself these three questions: What did you learn? How did you apply the learning? What impact did it have?

tools

One of the things that we are most passionate about at EC is ensuring that whatever people learn, they can apply. We love to look at how to apply the learning in all that we do. Here are some practical tips to ensure the remote professional learning experiences you create are applied in your school.

- **Have key take aways with actions:** Have a few key take away points that are linked to clear actions. Give the participants some time to develop clear and simple actions that they are going to do in the next week that makes the learning real and relevant. It can be as simple as trial a new behaviour management technique and reflect on its effectiveness, or test a new feature of an online learning platform and get feedback from the students. Make the actions few and the execution of those actions clear to all the staff, with some check-ins scheduled to make sure they become reality!

applying the learning

- **Activate Professional Learning Communities:** You probably already have active formal or informal professional learning communities in your school, so link the learning in a tangible way to these communities. Give the PLC's a task to do that keeps the learning you have done at the front and centre. You might provide discussion questions they can use, or an opportunity to showcase what they have applied and the impact that it has had in their online classroom. Alternatively, buddy people up, or foster a mentor network and set times for them to discuss their progress on the specific actions that they have taken as a result of the learning.
- **Have clear metrics and measure success:** You'll never know if the time you have spent delivering new content or skills has been worthwhile unless you are able to clearly measure the impact it has. In the design of your remote professional learning experience, ensure that you make time to clearly articulate what success will look like if the learning is applied effectively (and perhaps what it looks like if it is not!). Give people tools to measure success and find ways to clearly communicate and celebrate when it has been implemented successfully.

action

Once you have designed your remote professional learning experience review the final plan with these questions;

Do we have a clear way of measuring whether the learning will be applied?

Do we have a way of measuring the impact beyond the learning experience?

Do we have a way of receiving feedback into the future which will help us improve the design and delivery of our next remote learning experience?

thank you for all you do to educate our children

the EC crew



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