



Summary of Key Findings:

What do educators preK-12 want in online professional development?

How do teachers enter into professional development?

There are typically three types of professional development educators are experiencing today.

1. Assigned (professional development that is provided for educators, often chosen by leaders, advisors, or directors)
2. Self-directed (professional development that is selected, participated in, and complete at the will of the individual educator)
3. Random Selection (professional development that is stumbled upon, often participated in for short periods or time with no official start/stop or outcome)
4. Goals (professional development that is related to course completion, licensure, or career advancement)
5. Challenge-based (professional development that uses challenges as the impetus for participation, these are challenges that matter to them on a very individual level, and are couched in solving local problems or creating new/novel solutions or opportunities)

What's innovative?

Digital professional development is in need of innovation. While there are some promising uses of game-based learning, in preK-12 education there is still focus on reading, listening, and watching. Professional learning is still mostly a passive experience, that relies heavily on reflection as the primary agent to learning.

What is the E-M-F of Professional Development?

There has always been face-to-face (F) professional development. These can be facilitated in different ways (some sit and get, some group work, some based on instructional models, etc.). Since 1998 preK-12 education has accessed increasing amounts of e-learning (E), these are typically structured courses/modules that focus in on developing specific knowledge and skills in teachers. Since 2010 there has been a focus on Mobile learning (M) which allows preK-12 educators to learn new material, reflect, digest, and learn through small chunks of information that is available in multiple modalities and delivered 100% through mobile devices.



What does the research say?

Research on professional development conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics suggests that nearly 100% of educators participate in some form of professional development. 85% of professional development is grounded in content specific knowledge and skill. An estimated 67% of professional development has been focused on the use of digital tools to support instruction. We know that educators are not spending more than eight hours engaging in professional development in any one specific area. Digital professional development continues to be focused on the individual engagement, and not that of a group. However, there are increasing elements of opportunity for educators to work in groups, professional learning communities, or other types of teams to apply learning and continue to development new skills and understanding.¹ Less than 30% of educators are monetarily supported for completing professional development outside of contract time. The use of micro-credentials and other new forms of badging and credentialing can be used to support and celebrate the participation of educators in self-directed professional development.

What do preK-12 educators want?

More than anything educators want relevance from their professional learning. They want to be able to walk away and instantly use strategies and ideas in their classroom. They are most interested in small chunks of easily digestible new information and examples. Video isn't necessary but helps in specific instances where demonstrations and modeling are important.

¹ See the full report online at <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017200.pdf>