

Effective Instructional Staff Meetings

Sept 2013 SWPRSC

20 Ways To Make Professional Development More Effective

By [Julie Adams](#) on March 26, 2013 @ [@adamsteaching](#)

<http://www.edudemic.com/make-professional-development-more-effective/>

“One goal of a staff meeting is to get teachers excited about teaching the next day.” Todd Whitaker



As we near the Common Core implementation and more focus is placed on critical thinking and content literacy comprehension, administrators often ask how to best utilize their staff meeting time to promote best instructional practices.

In years past, staff meetings have notoriously been used to collectively discuss the school fundraiser or to subject colleagues to “death by bullet point” presentations.

Experience has taught us that spending precious staff meeting time reading what could have been sent out in a memo is a detrimental and wasteful practice that must end.

How To Increase Collaboration, Focus on Best Practices, and Get Teachers Excited About Teaching

- Establish the idea that there is **no room for negativity** at a staff meeting—too much is at stake for negativity to hijack the group. If there is a complaint/concern, meet privately with those who can make a change to remedy the situation and bring at least one solution to the private meeting.
- Start with a **focus on the positive**—have teachers share 1-2 positive student outcomes or experiences with each other to start the meeting off on the right foot and to remind each other why we chose this sometimes crazy, exhausting, frustrating, but wonderful profession.
- Devote a chunk of time in each meeting to **best instructional practices** by having 1-2 teachers share a strategy that has made a difference in their instruction. Then provide teachers time to discuss the practice/s and how to utilize them in their own classes.
- **Blog study**—have teachers choose an educational blog to read and then share/debate with a partner some of the topics.
- Identify an **outcome/objective for the meeting**—stay focused and direct conversations to meet the objective.
- Share child **neuroscience ideas**—the young brain is fascinating and very different from the adult brain. Have each educator research and share 1

neuroscience fact and put all facts on a chart in the staff room as a reminder of the intricacies of the young brain and the implications for classroom instruction.

- Utilize **Twitter**-educators should be on Twitter! Devote 10-15 minutes at meetings for everyone to read a few educational articles on Twitter and then share them with others. Also, create a hashtag for your staff meeting time for teachers to post their (positive) ideas to throughout the discussion.
- Provide time for teachers to fill out **positive postcards to send home** to parents and then collect them and mail home.
- **"Flip" your meetings**—provide teachers with 3-4 educational videos to choose from before the meeting, utilizing a site such as Teaching Channel (full of Common Core classroom videos and reflection questions), then have teachers get into groups based on which video they chose, and analyze ideas from the video.
- **Reflection**—the best educators are reflective educators. Ask teachers to video 3 short segments of their instruction and then analyze their lessons with a partner at the meeting using these questions as a guide (the partner does not need to view the videos):

- *What was the content objective of the lesson? (What info did the students need to learn?)*
- *What was the skills objective? (What critical thinking skills were the students' using/developing?)*
- *What did the students do to meet both objectives? (What strategies/tasks were completed by the students?)*
- *What is one change you would make to the lesson if you retaught it?*

- **Research**-have teachers choose one educational area to research, complete a 3-2-1 (3 facts learned, 2 comments/connections, 1 question) and have them bring in 2-3 articles about their chosen topic to discuss/share with others.
- **Book Club**—have staff choose a book to conduct a book study around-one chapter for each month.
- Have **departments or grade levels take charge** of a meeting to share the great things they are doing to reach & teach kids.
- Determine an **instructional focus** such as note-taking or engagement and have teachers bring ideas to share with others.
- **Share student work**-bring in a few student writing samples (a high, medium and low student example works best), etc. and the scoring rubric and share with a partner to determine if the rubric has inter-rater reliability and brainstorm the types of feedback that would benefit each student.
- Have students share Project Based Learning (PBLs) examples and their outcomes.
- **Watch and discuss a TED talk.**
- **Have an "appy" hour** or "tech-talk" devoted to sharing and practicing a few of the effective tech tools on campus.
- Have teachers bring in their **favorite educational joke/story** to share-humor cures many ailments!
- **End meetings with "appreciations."** Volunteers share 1-2 things they appreciate about someone else on staff (someone who volunteered at the fundraiser, a coach who always encourages kids, a teacher who hosts after-school tutorial, etc.)

Let's Demand Curiosity.

It has been said that once teachers start teaching, we become the most uneducated of professionals about our own profession, failing to research and implement the cutting-edge best practices that make the difference in student engagement and learning. We can't use 20th century practices with our 21st century students.

In order to encourage and even demand curiosity, creativity, learning, sharing and growing in our students, we must model those traits within our own profession; a staff meeting is the perfect time to cultivate these skills within and among our colleagues.

Staff meetings are precious and help to establish the culture of the school. There is a time and place for a short PowerPoint or collective discussion about the upcoming fundraiser, but consider using a Google Doc to get input ahead of time so an hour is not devoted to brainstorming such time-consuming topics. Staff meeting time should be focused on the school's mission: how to best prepare and support students (and teachers) for the demands of the 21st century.



Julie Adams is a Nationally Board Certified Teacher and Educator of the Year who has taught kindergarten through graduate school. She partners with the California League of Schools and Total School Solutions to provide content literacy/critical thinking and Common Core training to schools around the world.

© International Center for Leadership in Education
Instructional Leadership — Quadrant D Leadership Practices

Management practices include.....

Staff meetings: Staff meetings are more productive and have a greater impact on school success when agendas focus on instructional issues rather than on administrative ones.

Monitor what you value. Staff are very conscious of what you are monitoring. If you talk at staff meetings or in memos to staff about the importance of being in the hallways during the transition of classes more than you talk about what kind of instructional activities are taking place in those classrooms, then staff will assume you are more interested in managing students' behaviors than in managing students' instruction. This is not to minimize the need to have good management skills but rather to remind you that staff will believe you value most what you pay most attention to. The same is true of what you recognize or showcase at staff meetings or newsletters. Staff will only believe you value instruction if you recognize and showcase good instruction.

<http://mdk12.org/process/leading/tips.html>

ASCD Book: Leading Effective Meetings, Teams, and Work Groups in Districts and Schools

by Matthew Jennings

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/107088/chapters/Planning-and-Preparing-for-Faculty-Meetings.aspx>