

How I created my PDP

At the end of October, having completed 2 months of this job, I had an ‘aha’ moment. Three separate events occurred within one week that helped me put my needs into focus. The first event was when a fellow mentor committee member suggested I put one of my documents into a different format. I replied that I could use Excel to rewrite the document. She told me I could do it in Word, but since I didn’t know how, I thought that was something I should learn. The second event occurred the following day when I taught my workshop and was not happy at the end. I was disappointed that I had only used overheads rather than some other form of media that would be more exciting to display my information. The third event happened two days later when I attended a series of sessions on technology. I realized that if I knew more about a variety of technologies and how to use them, I could not only use them in my teaching of students but also in my teaching of teachers. Three days after that, I learned a whole new way to use Microsoft Word, and my goal was born.

The next day, I thought about all the ways I could learn about technology. I could read books, read printed resources, watch tutorials on line, attend workshops, and collaborate with technology teachers in the district. Since my goal doesn’t just involve learning about the technology but also using it to teach, I realized I would need to actually create ways to use it in my work with new teachers. Along with using technology as a method of instructing the new teachers about general pedagogical skills, I knew I wanted to be able to show the teachers how to use it themselves. Finally, I wanted the new teachers to take what they learned from me and use it in their classrooms to help students in their learning. I would see what they did through observations. These concepts became the objectives for how to reach my goal. These objectives represent the stepping stones from where I begin (learning how to use technology) to where it ends (increased student learning/ achievement).

Once I had the goal and the objectives clearly established, I sat down at the computer and began to type. Following the DPI guide, I summarized my reflections, filled in the standard district description that we have, and wrote about my current teaching position (mentoring). Next, I stated my goal in the “I will...so that...” format. Then, I wrote about how this goal related to my reflections, and how it attached to specific state standards. I had always thought that one would begin forming a goal by identifying a standard, then build from there, but I think it is easier to figure out your goal first, and then find the standards that would match.

As I wrote the plan, I worded the objectives in a way that demonstrated how they would lead to the goal. I then thought about what activities I could do to meet each objective and in what logical order they should be accomplished. Next, I considered how long each activity might take. This was a difficult step as I never know how hard it will be or how busy my life will be at a given time. Finally, I considered with whom I could collaborate.

When I had all of that information, I filled in the activities portion of the plan. I found that trying to spread things out over a period of several years was another tough concept. Fortunately, each year you reflect on your plan and make additions or revisions to those activities accordingly. So you only need to have a general idea of where you’d like to go by the end, but you don’t have to stick to the original path to get there.