

14. Предусмотреть при разработке содержания образовательных программ повышения квалификации общих для учителей и преподавателей проведение части занятий по подгруппам для более полного учета профессиональных интересов.

Таким образом, содержание образовательных программ повышения квалификации должно быть максимально приближено к содержанию работы учителей и преподавателей иностранных языков, ориентировано на достижение результата, что позволит педагогическим кадрам по-новому оценить свой профессиональный опыт и по-новому обучать иностранным языкам.

## **Ch. Hahn**

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Every school district understands how important professional development is for their growth as a teacher. Therefore, school districts do a lot to ensure that their teachers have plenty of opportunities for professional development and also set a minimum number of hours that their teachers must do every year, usually 25-40. There are several ways that teachers in the United States can fulfill their professional development requirements. Peer to Peer Observations, In-Service Days, Webinars, Online Courses, and Podcasts are just a few of the professional development techniques used.

#### Peer to Peer Observations

One effective way of professional development practiced in the United States is Peer-to-Peer Observations. The general idea is that 2 teachers who do not teach at the same time are paired with each other so that they could observe each other's classrooms give feedback to each other, and learn from each other. This can be done a number of different ways. Teachers can be paired to do a one-time, or multiple observations, or teachers can be assigned several different teachers to observe. One example of a school that does this is Concourse Village Elementary School in Bronx, New York ("Pairing Teachers to Drive Professional Development"). They have structured their peer observation system so that two teachers are paired with each other based on their strengths, personalities, and learning needs. Each teacher will coordinate a time to go into the other class and observe for 15 minutes. Beforehand, they will talk to the teacher about specific areas they will focus on during their observation (example- classroom management, a new teaching method, etc). Then, during their observation, they will take notes on 3 things: 1. Something they liked and will use in their own classrooms, 2. A question to better understand the lesson and 3. Suggestion for improvement ("Pairing Teachers to Drive Professional Development").

They will then fill out a feedback form which they will review with their partner and give their partner a chance to respond to the feedback. The form will then be e-mailed to partner, and their principal (headmaster). They will then return to the teacher's class the following week to repeat the process. The idea is that the teacher should use the previous feedback he/she received as a foundation for their next observation. This will go on for 6 weeks. Concourse Village Elementary School does several 6 week cycles every year ("Pairing Teachers to Drive Professional Development").

One advantage of this method of professional development is that teachers can learn from their colleagues, who understand their curriculum, understand their school, and know the challenges they face. Also, teachers do not have to leave their campus for this. Finally, if there are several observations, then the teacher has the opportunity to build on the feedback they receive and get feedback on their improvements.

There are several disadvantages, however. The first disadvantage is the scheduling. It might be difficult to schedule a time when the observer is free. The second disadvantage is that the observer might not have the teaching experience needed to give effective feedback, or might let personal biases get in the way of giving fair feedback. Several ways to rectify this problem is to pair an experienced teacher with a new teacher, and have each teacher be observed by 2 teachers so that the teacher will receive a balanced view of their teaching.

#### In-Service

Most schools also have in-service, where classes are cancelled for the day and the teachers spend a day receiving workshops on various topics, such as classroom management, differentiated instruction, educational technology, and new methods of teaching. The workshop can also consist of training in district policies regarding issues of safety such as violence on campus, or on sexual harassment. The day is also spent conferring with colleagues about the school's current curriculum and giving feedback on any changes that need to be made.

It has been my experience that these in-service days usually happen about one or two times a semester, take place within the school, and last the whole school day. Usually, my in-service days began with professional development workshops for everyone in the department. These workshops were usually given by colleagues within my department, but specialists were also sometimes brought in to do a workshop on their area of expertise. For example, a specialist in reading, or a specialist in writing was brought in. However, the majority of workshops were done by colleagues. During the second part of the day, we would break out into groups based the level we were teaching. For example, all the year nine teachers gathered together all the year 10 teachers gathered together, and so on and so forth. We would then discuss our curriculum and give feedback on what was working

and what was not. We would also make decisions on any changes that needed to be made, and what needed to be brought to the attention of the head of the department. At the end of the day, we did not receive a certificate, but the school made note of the hours in our files so that we could get credit for our time.

I found that the advantage of having in-service days was that our colleagues had the opportunity to share ideas with each other. Also, teachers did not have to travel to other locations to receive their professional development. The disadvantage was that classes had to be cancelled, and that the opportunity to bring specialists in was rare. To do this effectively, one suggestion would be make it a requirement that each teacher do a workshop for in-service at least once during the school year.

### Online Courses and Webinars

Schools also offer credit for online courses and webinars. Online courses are video courses that last from 6-19 hours with quizzes and assignments designed by universities across the world that cover various subjects related to teaching. They can be done at your own pace and most offer a certificate at the end. Two such websites are <https://alison.com/> and [www.coursera.com](http://www.coursera.com). Alison.com offers course on topics such as Effective Communication Techniques for Teachers, Instructional Planning for Successful Teaching, Introduction to the Learning Process for Teachers and Trainers, Motivating Students to Learn, Understanding Student Development and Diversity, Working with Students with Special Educational Needs. Coursera offers topics such as Engaging Students with Art, Inspiring Leadership with Emotional Intelligence, Blended Learning, Get Organized: How to be a Together Teacher, Teaching Character, and Classroom Culture (“Free Online Professional Development for Teachers”).

There are several sites that also offer webinars, which are online workshops that last from 1-2 hours. Webinars are usually done live but are recorded so that you can go back and watch them later if you missed it. The topics are similar to the ones listed above and certificates are also offered at the end (“Free Online Professional Development for Teachers”). Two websites that offer webinars are <https://americanenglish.state.gov/ae-webinars> and <https://www.edweek.org>. American English’s webinars are often advertised on the US Embassy’s facebook page and website, and edweek has a list of upcoming webinars on their website. The advantage of online courses and webinars are that they can be done from the comfort of one’s own home. The disadvantage is that some sites, such as coursera, might allow you to take their course, but charge you for a certificate. Another problem, in the case of webinars, is that the live-streaming might not be done at a convenient time, especially if the host is in a different country (“Free Online Professional Development for Teachers”). One solution might be for the school to allow their teachers to take a course without paying for a certificate but create their

own assessment that their teachers must pass in order to receive credit for the course. This solution would also work for teachers who are not able to view a webinar live, but can go back and view it afterwards. Another solution would also be find a website like Alison.com, which offers courses with free certificates.

In the case of Belarus, online webinars and courses would be the best solution, as it would be difficult for teachers to take time off work to receive in-person professional training. I would also recommend at least 1 in-service day every semester. As for the peer-to-peer observation, doing several 6-week cycles might be difficult, but one 2-week cycle every semester, or a one-time observation every semester might be possible. That being said, I believe that with the dedication of the teachers, and the support of the government and school administrators, the Belarusian education system has the potential to become strong, and I look forward to seeing it develop in the future.