

Professional Development through IASL Content

One of the main missions of IASL is professional development, along a spectrum of school library functions and school library worker experience. To this end, IASL provides material resources, expert guidance, and training. The following document describes IASL resources and ways to provide professional development using them.

Resources

IASL's website is full of great resources that school library workers can read on their own, or can be used to train others. Each tab on <http://www.iasl-online.org> has useful information.

About:

IASL leadership includes regional directors who coordinate IASL efforts by locale; they help organize events and are a good first expert to contact for advice.

SIGs provide topic-specific leadership. Each SIG provides a forum for information sharing. They can provide information and expertise for training.

Advocacy:

International School Library Month provides a well-established venue for engaging students in school library promotions and publicizing school libraries to the wider community.

The GiggleIT program invites student to share their original work with other students around the world; GiggleIT leverages international connections, and helps library workers to gain expertise in programming.

Meetings:

IASL organizes regional and international conferences that showcase best practices and research that advance school librarianship. Some of the conferences produce proceedings that are accessible by the membership for their own development.

Publications:

The IASL newsletter keeps members current about association activities and the efforts of its personal and organizational members.

School Libraries Worldwide is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes current school librarianship research.

Resources:

IASL leaders, including SIGS, publish documents that link members to useful information, such as IASL-affiliated associations and PD venues, library

spaces, children's literacy, and information skills. These resources can serve as a means for personal PD, and as resources for training school library workers.

Types of Professional Development

There are several ways for school library workers to gain competency: professional reading – independently and in reading groups, informal and formal mentoring, online tutorials, webinars and other online discussions, on-site and local training, regional training and other events, national training, other professional conferences, formal coursework.

Instructional Design

The term "instructional design" refers to a systematic process to developing education programs, including professional development. The following instructional design approach has several characteristics that can help school library workers facilitate intellectual access to, and ways to practice, information that is learner-centered, goal-oriented, performance-focused, data-driven, self-correcting.

1. Analysis: What do students need to learn, and what is their present skill level? What is the nature of the learning environment, and what are its constraints?

2. Design: What strategies will help students meet identified SLOs? What content should be included? How will that content be organized and delivered? What learning activities should be conducted? What will be the timeframe? How will assessment be addressed?

3. Development: What resources are needed? What resources are available, and what resources need to be produced? How will the strategy be "packaged" and pilot-tested?

4. Implementation: How will the strategy be implemented? When and where will it occur? Who is responsible?

5. Evaluation: What learning occurred? How effective was the instructional design and implementation?

Learning outcomes define those goals, which are operationalized as curriculum (*what* is to be learned). From the outcomes, behavioral objectives that can be assessed through student outputs such as test

performance, research reports, or science lab work. With these outputs in mind, trainers can then determine what content and processing skills school library workers need in order to demonstrate competence. The instructional aspect focuses on *how* school library workers gain that knowledge and skills: through the input of activities that set information within a learning environment in which learners can actively engage with the material and make meaning from the experience. With these premises, the role of the trainer becomes more the role of a facilitator or change agent, guiding the process more than delivering the content.

Preparing for Training

Here are tips for preparing for conducting professional development:

Publicity: Announce the training through communications channels that the target audience uses. Provide all the information needed to attract attendees and enable them to register, well ahead of time.

Set-up: Evaluate and check -- the facilities including the room size, features, utilities, and resources; restrooms; access and parking; insurance and security; food set-up and services; supplies; and expenses.

Pre-training resources: Prepare agenda, handouts, training and learning aids; gather supplies.

Training strategies: formal presentations, demonstrations, question and answer sessions, small group discussions, case studies, simulations, buddy coaching.

Agenda: provide attendees with the agenda, which should include early bird activities, introductions, overview, content, learning activities, application, wrap-up, and evaluation.