

March 2016 - In This Issue:

Professional development reform

Learning to be and instructional coach

Upcoming Events

ICE leader you should know

Growth through coaching



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UPCOMING EVENTS

[ICE COLD Spring Mini-Con](#)

April 16, 8-12

[SLICE EdCamp](#)

April 16, 8-3

Professional development reform: 8 steps to make it happen

By Tom Murray, Director of Innovation for Future Ready Schools

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[Student Leadership Summit](#)

April 22

[EdCamp 217](#)

April 23, 8-12:30

[EdCamp DuPage](#)

April 30, 8-12:30



Tech & Learning is bringing Tech & Learning Live back to Chicago on Friday, May 6 featuring keynote speaker Chris Lehmann. This full day of workshops and discussions is specifically designed to "train the trainers" with shared best practices, workshops, and discussions that attendees can take back to their districts and put into action.

ICE members get a \$100 discount for T&LLive Chicago. Just click [here](#) and enter the code "CH16ICE."

Program details here:

<http://tinyurl.com/TLChicago16>

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Every year, school districts around the country waste a tremendous amount of time and money on ineffective professional development. The traditional model of "sit and get," where a one-size-fits-all approach is utilized, yields abhorrent results. Ask teachers from typical school districts in America their thoughts on traditional in-service time, and the feedback won't be pretty. Professional development in many districts must undergo radical reform, from a model that's outdated and ineffective to one that's differentiated, meaningful and engaging. How can school districts reform their professional development?

Clearly define and articulate the vision.

Do all stakeholders understand the end goal? How should instruction improve due to the time that's invested? How will students benefit? Can the vision be articulated by all staff members? Do staff help formulate that vision? Is the vision only one year or more long term?

Lead by example and model professional learning.

Administrators must take on the role of lead learner by modeling professional growth. Staff will rise to the level of the bar that is modeled for them. Learn alongside your staff members and model expectations for them. Utilize time in an efficient and meaningful manner. Invest the time in professional development, not managerial tasks. Model and share your learning throughout the process.

Balance district-wide initiatives with the need for differentiation.

Why is it that most districts preach a differentiated approach to learning for kids but then model the opposite when it comes to professional development for staff? With students, the expectation is to "meet them where they are" or "teach at the speed of learning," and yet professional development is often "hurry up and do it this way." Maintain a laser focus on the vision, while meeting the individual needs of staff members through a differentiated approach to learning.

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Learning to be an instructional coach

By [Steve Wick](#)

The roles of EdTech Coaches have evolved. The early generations of EdTech, Coaches primarily focused on finding and

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teaching the tools. This was a need since "educational technology" was not integrated into mainstream education. Our early goals and projects focused on finding a tool and showing teachers how to use it. Sometimes, we even took the easier path and did the work for the teachers instead of teaching them how to do it themselves. The questions we most often answered were "how" questions. "Why" questions were rarely part of our conversations.

In the past, effective pedagogy and best practices were almost always secondary to the shiny new web resources or devices. Many of us put the carriage before the horse and failed to bring real changes to how we teach and learn. A WebQuest, after all, is really little more than a digital worksheet. Using technology to provide students with worksheets on a computer screen is not listed as innovation in any book about educational innovation.

Times are changing. Technology has invaded the classrooms across the country. Even our job titles are changing. The word "technology" is missing from these titles. We are becoming Innovation Coordinators and Instructional Coaches. Our jobs are about instruction, enhanced by technology. Technology is too integrated into many classrooms for our focus to just be on the tools.

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ICE leader you should know: Judith Epcke



Judith Epcke has been passionate about education and technology since last century! She began her career as a 4th grade teacher and transitioned into a instructional technology coach role. She now proudly serves in an administrative role as the Director of Instructional Technology and Learning Spaces in Lake Forest District 67.

She credits her long and enjoyable career in education to surrounding herself with great people: both at work and online. "It is so amazing to know that I can tap into the collective intelligence of my PLN whenever it is needed." Judith also gives back through her work with the ICE organization, the SIT Conference, and local EdCamps.

Growth through coaching... What we do each and every day

By Amber Heffner, ICE Executive Director



At some point in each of our lives we have been motivated to improve ourselves through the support and experience of someone else. For many of us, we may have had this "experience" through an adult role model; a "coach." When I reflect on my own life and analyze those that left an impact on me, I realized that each and every one of them impacted me as a coach. Yes, I was on athletic teams and had what we commonly refer to as a coach. Years later, when I became a one myself, I was determined to model those "coaching techniques" that I had been so motivated by.

As I thought about the focus of this month's newsletter, it occurred to me that coaching is so much more than just an experience on an athletic field. Coaching is what we as educators do each and every day. For some it is a classroom of students, for others it is staff members we support, and for some it is an entire district. But for all of us, it is a community of learners. We build relationships, we motivate, we plan, we analyze, we reassess and come up with another plan. We adapt to the "players" we have and we strive to support them in their growth as individuals.

And at the end of the day, as we reflect on the impact that we have had, we realize that in order to assist others in growing, we, too, must grow. As educational "coaches," we are life-long learners. We grow each and every day. We determine how to build those relationships that are the foundation of successful learning. We also strive to be strong enough to unconditionally support our "players" on a daily basis, because we know, that those "players" (the ones who are learning from us) will take what they learn and make an impact on someone else. Keep striving for the best each and every day..."GO TEAM"!

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STAY CONNECTED



The ICE Newsletter is co-edited by [Amanda Pelsor](#) and [Michael Johnson](#)