PD Module Journal

Journal Entry 1: Needs Survey
Topic 1: Reflect on the process of creating and administering your needs survey by addressing the following topics:

1. A brief summary of your audience including instructional setting

- *Instructional levels*
  There are a wide variety of instructional levels in the people who will be taking my PD course, but they are generally educators of deaf/hard of hearing children and/or children with language-based learning disabilities under the age of 8.

- *Existing technology integration*
  Technology department is rolling out iPad carts for educator/classroom use, but no official PD sessions are planned to date.

- *Current district or school initiatives*
  More and more tablets and personal devices for students

- *Other interesting demographic/methodological information*
  Basically, since I no longer work at a school, I'm asking some of my old coworkers to take a look at my PD course. I do know that they now have access to iPads, but from what my co-workers tell me the individual departments are sort of, in theory, holding their own PD sessions of iPad use, so I wanted to create something a bit more cohesive that could be expanded depending on what the different departments need.

 2. How you arrived at your final questions and a brief comment on why you asked each specific question
  1. *I am looking forward to using the iPads in my classroom.*
     I'm using this question to measure attitude. I'm guessing those who are looking forward to using them might be more interested in the PD.
  2. *I think the iPads will positively impact my instruction.*
     This is again a measure of attitude, but I think it's a little different than the first question. I'm guessing that questions 1 and 2 will be linked (high ratings on one will correspond to high ratings on the other, and vice versa) but it will be interesting if they aren't.
  3. *I learn how to use technology as quickly as my peers.*
     I'm using this question to determine attitude and steer me in creating my PD. If I get several low responses on this one I will know to make my PD more basic, more step-by-step.
  4. *Online professional development is a good use of my time.*
     Again, an attitude question, but also one I will use in development. If I receive a lot of low scores I will work even harder to make this a fun experience.

5. *I have access to an iPad for personal use.*
   I'm interested to see if there are any differences in attitudes towards using iPads in people who use an iPad or other tablet at home. I hypothesize that owners of iPads/tablets will be more enthusiastic about using them in the classroom.
6. *Please select the top 3 topics you would like to see covered in this professional development session.*
   This is the main question I am using to determine which topic(s) I should cover in my PD session. What I think is important for the teachers to know may not be what they think is important for them to know, so I need to tailor the PD to their needs.

3. Your selected platform for administration and why you selected that platform
I'm going to try LiveBinders. I've made googlesites, I've made wikis – I want to try something new, and based on the LiveBinders I looked at, it seems like a good platform to support what I want to do.

4. Problems that you encountered and how you overcame them
The only real problem I foresee at this point is getting feedback/data that would be truly representative of the issues faced when developing PD for a larger group of people. The people who will be using my PD are my old co-workers, but also my friends, which will probably influence their decision, and the fact that they are choosing to take this PD on their own time (not an official work requirement) probably means they are more excited about technology than the average teacher. I'm not sure there is a way to overcome this, except to ask for truly honest feedback and maybe solicit a few more people to take the survey and the course.

5. Were you satisfied that you were able to get the information that you needed to make a solid decision on training development? Which areas would you identify for future improvement to your survey?
Yes, I believe I got the information I needed. It was not exactly what I was expecting, and I'm not sure if I'm going to be able to deliver on one of the suggestions, but I'm going to try. If I were to give this survey again, I would delete question 1 or 2 and substitute it with a question asking people to select things they like in a professional development course (videos, step by step instructions, discussion boards, etc.). I'd also expand the topic "content areas" and actually list different content areas, because I got a few votes for that and I'm now realizing that to cover that adequately will result in a monstrously large/long PD.

Journal Reflection 2: Selecting a Topic

Describe and reflect on the process that you used to identify your top three needs based on your survey results?
While it may not be "fair," I pretty much designed my survey to easily give me my top three needs by having teachers select the top three topics they would like to be covered. Out of the topics I listed, I got no votes for general iPad usage and classroom management. I got a few votes for content areas, several votes for Blooms, everyone voted for special needs (makes sense, they all work at a school for kids with special

needs), and I got some interesting write in votes. One was "how to tell if an app is good", which is interesting, but I've gotten nowhere in my research. I got a few write in votes for "apps for toddlers/babies/really young kids". Several of the teachers do work in the toddler program, so that makes sense, but I also wonder if some want recommendations for apps to use with their kids. Not that that bothers me, just curious.

After reviewing existing tutorials, what process did you use to determine your final PD Workshop topic?
Looking at the top two topics chosen via my survey – special needs and Blooms, I started looking at apps for those areas. I was really interested in the Blooms, and was looking at Kathy Schrock's site for inspiration, but honestly, she's chosen great apps and I didn't want to basically copy her site. So I'm including her for additional resources and focusing on special needs. I've looked at several different special needs sites, and for the most part each site goes in-depth for one particular area, but not many cover multiple, multiple areas. So I'm going with special needs apps.

Do you feel like your previously identified platform will support your needs?
Nope, not a chance, switching to a wiki. I thought I could finagle LiveBinder to do what I want, but things will just look too, too cluttered and I want to be able to caption my images without having a side text bar. A wiki will give me more freedom.

Journal Reflection 3: Selecting a Topic

Describe and reflect on the process that you used to identify your top three training needs based on your survey results.
Since I'm going with special needs, and the teachers appear pretty tech savvy and eager to learn, I feel like my top training need is to collect a variety of apps in one place so teachers don't have to go searching everywhere for them. I also want to expose them to apps that they might not look at. For example, the teachers in the Wardlaw school, which focuses on language-based learning disorders, might never look for apps for the deaf/hard of hearing, but it's still good to know what is out there. There are several different areas of special needs with apps, but I'm going with Language, Speech, and Hearing, since those will appeal to my teachers.

What did you learn from your survey that you can use going forward?
Based on my survey results, I'm dealing with a group of tech-savvy individuals who are excited to be using iPads and like online learning. While this is great, again, based on my pool of people to use, I was sort of expecting this (see *Problems that you encountered and how you overcame them* question). I was surprised by how few people had personal iPads (maybe because mine is glued to my hand and I can't imagine life without it), but what I found most interesting was that even the people without personal iPads did not select the topic "general iPad usage" as something they would like to be covered. Honestly, this was a topic that I had started gathering material for early on because I was sure it would be a top three choice, and not a single person selected it.

After reviewing existing tutorials and survey results, what is your final PD module going to look like and why?

This PD is going to be weird for me, because almost all of my previous PD experiences involve me teaching someone how to physically use something (like Word or PhotoStory or IWB or the mixing board in the auditorium). I'm good at step by step instructions. However, with this PD, no one selected general iPad usage, which can include some step by step information, or classroom management, which would include some step by step instructions on how to connect, etc. However, if the people are tech-savvy enough not to need those and just want to learn about apps, it's going to be a struggle not to have a PD that is just a collection of links. I had hoped to make some of the materials myself, but I can't afford to buy every app just so I can create a walk-though of it, so I'm either going to have to come up with something that will require me to make some material OR accept the fact that the PD is going mostly consist of links.

Do you feel like your previously identified platform will still support your needs?
Yes, now that I've switched to the wiki, everything is going much smoother. I'm not sure if I'm going to keep the discussion tab visible or not.

What concerns you going forward? How will you overcome any obstacles?
My biggest concern is that I'm not an expert in these areas. I'm not a speech language pathologist and I can't afford to buy every app, so I'm afraid of recommending an app that actually isn't that useful to someone in the field. The only way I can think to overcome this is just copious amounts of research, looking at sites made by SLPs (or teachers for the deaf/HOH or teachers of learning disabilities, etc.) to get an idea of what is out there and what several sites recommend. I still think that's a good service and worthy of a PD.

Journal Reflection: Project 3 Final Thoughts

Looking back at your professional development creation and deployment, what worked and what did not?
Be specific and include all parts of the project from registration methods, advertising, to actual development and execution of the workshop.

What semi-didn't work:
- The fact that I no longer work in a school and had to rely on old co-workers/ friends to take the course, despite the fact that the only incentive I had to offer was "my undying love and affection and maybe cookies". I was starting from a pretty limited pool of about 12-15 educators who were "interested", got 10 responses to my needs assessment survey, and ended up with 6 responses to the feedback survey, and two of those people are not educators. I didn't have any registration, and my advertising was emails and Facebook posts.
- Not being able to link my needs assessment survey with the feedback survey. I think people respond more honestly when it's anonymous, but I think I could interpret what little data I have better if I knew what 4 needs surveys matched the 4 feedback surveys (I'm not counting the non-educators, since they are family members, and I know which feedback surveys are theirs due to comments.) Since the responses on the feedback survey are all positive, it would be interesting to

know if the two people who were iffy about "online professional development is a good use of my time" even took the course.

What didn't work:
- The time I spent trying to make Livebinder work. I should have made a physical sketch of how I wanted my course to look like and then I would have realized in 10 seconds that Livebinder wasn't the way to go.
- The time I spent trying to duplicate Kathy Schrock's work. I spent **so** much time downloading and testing apps that were similar to the ones she recommended for Blooms, but not identical because I didn't want to copy her work. After I don't know how many hours I had to accept that she really did make awesome picks, and I wasn't going to find better apps.

What did work:
- Having a focused needs assessment survey. If I had been too general and basically asked "what sort of technology would you like to learn about?" I'm assuming I would have pulled my hair out. By keeping it focused to iPad apps I got the information I needed right off the bat and was able to narrow it down to what I wanted to cover.
- The time I spent trying to duplicate Kathy Schrock's work. It helped in two ways: 1. I wouldn't split my time between Blooms and special needs, and would just focus on special needs, and 2. There's no shame in linking to a great, well-researched site.
- The ending design of the wiki. I think it would be easy to expand to include other types of apps, and I love things that don't have to be redesigned from scratch in order to grow.

Did you conduct a post-training evaluation of your participants? If so, were they what you expected? What did you learn?
No, I was not able to do that. With this sort of PD, I'm not sure what post-training evaluation I could do, since the module was more about exposing people to resources and less on how to use the resources.

How will you follow up on your participants learning? How do you plan to track your participants growth and development? Are they actually using what you taught them? What else did you take away from this project?
Again, in the semi-didn't work arena, I no longer work at the school so there's not much I can do to track them. I could ask my friends which ones of them actually took the course and then follow up with them via email, but I don't want to make anyone feel guilty for not doing something that was essentially a personal favor. If I were still working at the school, I would like to follow-up occasionally and use their success (or lack thereof) to modify the course. If there is a great app that is missing, or an app that is just not up to snuff, I'd want to edit the course.

What else did I take away from this project? That despite the low turn-out (which quite possibly would have still been the case even if I were still working in the school), I still really like mini, self-contained, work-at-your-own-page PD modules. There are a million

technology topics to be covered. Even though I love PD and have done my fair share of technology PD, I still have this knee-jerk reaction to make things be huge and cover everything, which can be intimidating to me as the designer and to the user. However, if I keep things small (yet expandable!), it's much more doable. Also, while it caused a lot of stress at the beginning, I'm glad that I DIDN'T end up having to make a lot of step-by-step guides, because sometimes in an effort to reach everyone I underestimate teachers' technology knowledge. I'm glad I didn't include a mini-tutorial on how to load and delete an app, because 1. People probably already know this and 2. There are already instructions on how to do this (linked in the Resources section) so why waste my time trying to reinvent the wheel?