

Teachers “Speak Up” about their professional development needs using emerging technologies



Teachers today have increased access to a wide variety of technology tools for use in their classroom. As part of Speak Up 2010, Project Tomorrow, the national education nonprofit organization, asked teachers about their needs for professional development around technology use. This snapshot highlights some of the teachers’ recommendations in the specific areas of **leveraging mobile devices for instruction, creating blended or online learning experiences** and **using digital content in the classroom**. Additionally, teachers shared insights into how they would like professional development personalized for their own needs. Here is a sampling of some of the responses:



Leveraging Mobile Devices within Instruction

“I would love to learn ways to incorporate cell phones into classroom instruction. Teachers are often fighting the battle about cell phones with students. We all know they are here to stay, and we might as well embrace them and seek their educational potential.”

High School Teacher, 4-10 years experience, North Carolina

“I would like extensive training on how to best incorporate more use of instant messaging and response from students- using things like the iPad or laptops at the elementary level and then making those tools accessible to everyone. In theory, it sounds great, but in reality, all kids don’t have those tools and there are an awful lot of hoops that have to be jumped through in order for every kid to be able to access them.”

Elementary School Teacher, 4-10 years experience, Texas

“I would like electronic books, iPads, and training to know that I am offering my students the BEST possible learning environment with all of the technology.”

Elementary School Teacher, 4-10 years experience, Wisconsin

“Definite ideas on classroom management with regard to smart phones and their role within the classroom. Additional tutorials on implementation of such techniques.”

Middle School Teacher, 16 plus years experience, Illinois



Creating Online and Blended Learning Opportunities

“I would love more training on wikis, virtual fieldtrips, skypeing and other specific ways to use technology in the classroom. I would also like the opportunity to hear other 2nd grade teachers share successful ways they have used technology in their own classrooms.”

Elementary School Teacher, 4-10 years experience, Alabama

“Number one would be to learn how to use tech tools to get discussions going on-line between myself and all the students I teach. I would love for them to be able to respond to each other and I think kids would be more likely to share their opinions on-line... especially if there were some way it could be anonymous to all except the teacher (me - for grading purposes). My second wish is to become a master of iMovie because I believe making movies would engage the kids I teach and then I could create a data-base where all the movies made are stored and future students would be able to access them as “tutorials”.”

High School Teacher, 4-10 years experience, Maine

“I would love training in: digital storytelling, podcasts, blogs, and wiki-environments. This training needs to be hands-on and practical, not theoretical or instructor-driven...much like what our students need!”

High School Teacher, 11-15 years experience, Texas

“The proper use of social networking sites.”

Middle School Teacher, 11-15 years experience, Alabama



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Using Digital Content in the Classroom

“I would love to have more access to online simulations for use in my science classroom, especially related to physics, and the training to know how to best facilitate the use of these online simulations. I need more training in how to incorporate case studies into my lesson planning that can be coupled with “Clickers” technology.”

Middle School Teacher, 4-10 years experience, Missouri

“To be trained to conduct a state of the art High School Biology classroom decked out for bioinformatics, virtual dissections, individual response units and the like.”

High School Teacher, 11-15 years experience, Alabama

“I would like examples of what would be considered quality online instruction in mathematics. So often math is limited to worksheets, drill and practice. How can we apply the fun stuff to upper level math such as Algebra II? Many math games are low level. How do we avoid doing math for the sake of doing math?”

High School Teacher, 11-15 years experience, Nevada

“How to use text messaging, podcasts, wikis and Twitter to teach educational concepts to my students while keeping their learning relevant in their lives through the use of technology. I would love ideas on how to use flip cameras and blogs to help my students collaborate in a learning community.”

Elementary School Teacher, 11-15 years experience, Florida

Professional Development – My Way!

“I’ve found that most of my PD needs have been met through using Twitter to connect with a large community of educators. Formal PD should echo what has made Twitter a valuable resource: teacher-driven, responsive to needs as they arise, gives time for discussion and playing with ideas or tools, and exposes participants to a wide variety of effective educators.”

High School Teacher, 4-10 years experience, Connecticut

“I need someone to “filter the fodder.” We have so many new and great tools, some of them effective, some of them just more of the same. I need for an expert to weed out what is useful to me as a language arts teacher so that I can get in front of useful 2.0 tools to employ with my students.”

High School Teacher, 11-15 years experience, Florida

“Online trainings versus classroom/seat or face time...access to movies/podcasts of the trainings to be done at my leisure instead of 2:30 each Tuesday. I would really like to see this modeled beginning to end. What does it look like in a classroom...not a gifted school/campus, a general education classroom that has typical students and students with IEPs in it.”

Middle School Teacher, 4-10 years experience, Arizona

“Continuous professional development that occurs before, during, and after technology has been introduced. This way, technology instruction can begin with the basics and then become more rigorous as the teacher gains comfort.”

Elementary School Teacher, 1-3 years experience, Maryland

“Working in a “technology-rich” school has afforded me many opportunities to strengthen my instructional practices using various tools. However, having a technology facilitator or tech team on-site would be very beneficial in providing additional training and modeling in the classroom. On-site professional development that is differentiated to meet the individual needs of teachers would be awesome. As a “techy” person, I don’t need to sit through an introductory session on interactive whiteboards...I need someone to show me how to “up my game” with the whiteboard...other teachers, however, are new to this kind of technology and need the basics. A tech team would be really great to have at the school.”

Elementary School Teacher, 4-10 years experience, Louisiana

“Online training; available when I want, where I want. Also the ability to “pre-test” so I can have the training relevant to my needs.”

High School Teacher, 11-15 years experience, California

“Time to become proficient with the use of newly adopted technologies. Classroom simulations that enable teachers to understand how to use the technology effectively.”

Elementary School Teacher, 11-15 years experience, Illinois

“Collaboration with other teachers at my school to learn what they do and how to incorporate into my lessons. The ability to observe another teacher’s classroom. Short - 1-2 hour - lessons every week or two to pick up all aspects of the technology given to us rather than an all day class, hoping we catch it all.”

Middle School Teacher, 11-15 years experience, New Mexico

About the Speak Up National Research Project

Speak Up is a national initiative of Project Tomorrow (www.tomorrow.org) and represents the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered voices regarding the use of technology for learning in and out of schools. Since 2003, over 2.2 million students, teachers, librarians, principals, technology leaders and district administrators have shared their insights through the annual Speak Up surveys and focus groups. Every K-12 school and district is eligible to participate in the annual surveys and the local data results are provided free-of-charge to all participating agencies. Speak Up makes it easy for you to collect feedback from your stakeholders and use it for your budgeting and planning purposes. To access the national Speak Up reports and learn how your school or district can participate in fall 2011, **please visit: www.tomorrow.org/speakup.**

