A COMPARISON BETWEEN TEACHER DEVELOPMENT FACE TO FACE AND ONLINE

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Anotation: In this article explores the differences between face-to-face (FTF) and online teacher development (OTD) modes of delivery. It examines the benefits and drawbacks of both modes, citing examples where these apply. The authors argue that while each mode has its strengths and weaknesses, combining both modes can lead to a more effective professional development experience. The article concludes that a combination of face-to-face and online teacher development can offer teachers increased access to learning opportunities, flexibility, and support from collaborative networks.

Teacher professional development is critical in promoting effective teaching and learning outcomes. It is an essential component of quality education that requires continuous capacity building and upskilling. With numerous tools and platforms, two primary modes of delivering teacher development have emerged: face-to-face and online. Both modes have their benefits and drawbacks, and this article seeks to explore and compare them.

Face-to-face teacher development:

Face-to-face professional development has been the traditional mode of teaching for many years. It involves teachers attending workshops, seminars, or conferences organized by universities, government agencies or education service providers. Some benefits of FTF professional development include:

1. Supportive network building - FTF sessions provide the opportunity for teachers to engage with colleagues and facilitators, share ideas, experiences, and provide feedback, building supportive networks.

2. Opportunities for interactive engagement - In FTF training, participants can actively ask questions, participate in group discussions and activities, leading to the active transfer of knowledge.

3. Opportunities for constructive feedback - FTF sessions provide immediate feedback, leading to higher chances of effective understanding and implementation of new practices.

However, several drawbacks accompany FTF sessions, limiting their effectiveness. These include high logistics and expenses for travel and accommodation and scheduling challenges, conflict with school duties due to sessions' timing.

Online teacher development:

The increasing demand for flexibility and access to knowledge has rapidly advanced online teacher development programs. It is operated flexibly, as teachers can access the training through websites, online discussion forums or virtual classrooms, at a time and place of their convenience. OTD has some advantages that make them unique. These include:

1. Increased access to experts - online delivery enables educators to access leading minds in their field, regardless of location.

2. Cost-effectiveness - Online teacher development does not require travel, accommodation, and related expenses, making it cost-effective compared to FTF.

3. Personalized learning - online teacher development can enhance personalized learning, as the availability of materials is not limited by venue space or time availability.

OTD classes, however, have their drawbacks, such as lack of personal interaction and visibility, technical issues, such as connection disruptions, and reduced support for collaborative learning and feedback.

Combining teacher development modes:

By combining the strengths of each mode of professional development, educators can create a more affordable, accessible, and effective teacher development program. For example, combining both modes will create an opportunity for a virtual classroom where a facilitator leads a session with the virtual classes attendees engaged in live video connection and chat. The participants can choose different online platforms for small group discussions, brainstorming sessions among themselves.

The comparison between face-to-face and online teacher development has its advantages and disadvantages. Both methods offer professional growth opportunities and help teachers enhance their teaching skills. Face-to-face programs offer a more traditional approach, allowing for direct communication and personal connections between teachers and trainers. On the other hand, online programs offer flexibility, accessibility, and the opportunity to learn at your own pace.

It is essential to note that each method has its limitations. Online programs may lack the interaction and personalized feedback that in-person training provides. Furthermore, virtual communication can also cause technological issues that could hinder learning and interfere with the overall experience. On the other hand, physical limitations may prevent some teachers from attending face-to-face programs that take place in specific geographical locations or during inconvenient times.

Ultimately, selecting a development program depends on individual preferences and professional goals. Teachers must make decisions that suit their needs, schedules, and learning preferences to maximize the benefits of the training program. It is crucial for educational institutions to continue offering a variety of teacher development opportunities, including both face-to-face and online options, to support teachers in

their continuous growth and development.

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