



A Guide to New Models for Personalized Professional Learning Research & Practice

Collaborative Learning with Innovative Educators
Anytime, Anywhere





Personalized, Professional Learning — Anytime, Anywhere

"When you have administrators, teachers, and people in my position who are planning PD do so in a way that is meaningful to each and every teacher, in any content area – it's really exciting. edWeb has been instrumental in helping us achieve this, because it's easy to get to, easy to maneuver, and there's something for everyone. To me those are absolutely immeasurable qualities."

*Rachel Langenhorst,
Instructional Coach and Tech
Integrationist, Rock Valley
School District (IA)*

edWeb.net was founded 10 years ago, and in that time we've grown into an award-winning professional learning network that helps engaged and innovative educators share their best ideas and practices — anytime, anywhere — with educators around the country and the world.

It's been 10 years since the dawn of the "connected educator" movement. In 2010 the U. S. Department of Education issued a National Education Technology Plan. The plan included the first statement officially endorsing the use of social networks for professional learning in education. "Social networks can be used to provide educators with career-long personal learning tools and resources that make professional learning timely and relevant as well as an ongoing activity that continually improves practice and evolves their skills over time." That statement remains as relevant as ever today, but equally relevant is the need for a space dedicated specifically for professional collaboration in education.

edWeb has realized the dream of personalized professional learning at scale. edWeb is a community of over 600,000 educators from preK through higher education who are committed to lifelong learning for themselves and to help their students learn more, achieve more, be more creative, and be better prepared for life. We are able to provide these professional learning programs for free thanks to our sponsors and partners.

edWeb has accumulated a body of research and practice to help educators get the most value from our free professional networking platform and our award-winning edWebinar programs. We hope this guide gives you inspiration and ideas to expand the ways you can offer personalized professional learning for educators, and make the learning more relevant, more immediate, and more fun.

The edWeb Team



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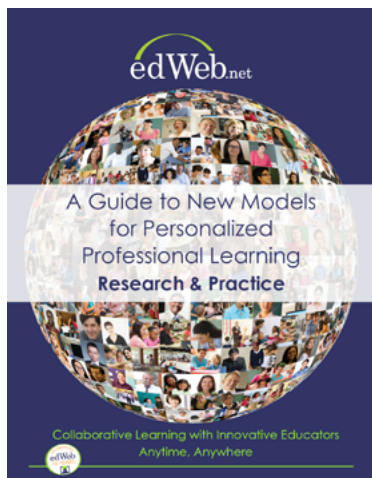
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Best Professional Learning
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edWeb.net Tools and Resources

edWeb.net is a free professional learning network where educators can join online communities on innovative ideas and practices in education, attend live or recorded edWebinars, complete personal learning plans, and earn CE certificates towards PD hours. edWeb gives teachers, librarians, and administrators from preK-12 the widest choice of professional learning topics – so there is something for every educator.

Here are some of the ways you can explore edWeb individually or as a group and expand your professional learning horizons with engaging edWebinars and a supportive professional community.

- edWeb hosts 300 live edWebinars a year on a wide range of topics. Educators can live chat with educators all around the world for a real-time, collaborative learning experience.
- edWebinars are recorded and there are [over 1,400 available on-demand](#), for viewing anytime, anywhere.
- [edWeb professional learning communities](#) provide online networking with peers on topics of particular interest on a wide range of subjects. edWeb professional learning communities include archived edWebinars and resources and discussion forums.
- [Create your own private community](#) on edWeb for your school, district, or state. Your teachers can access all of edWeb's professional learning programs for free, and you can add your own.
- Educators earn valuable CE certificates when they attend or view and edWebinars. edWeb certificates are widely accepted for flexible PD requirements, and also by an increasing number of states including New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Texas.



edWeb fulfills the need for a professional social and learning network that is focused on the needs of educators. We've received wonderful awards and recognition for our work. We are happiest when edWebbers tell us every day how much they love edWeb. This guide includes the some of the many ways educators are using edWeb.

Please explore all edWeb has to offer!

Helpful Links:

edWeb Calendar: home.edweb.net/webinars

edWebinar Recordings: home.edweb.net/browsewebinars

Professional Learning Communities:
home.edweb.net/professional-learning-communities-with-free-webinars

Create your own private community: home.edweb.net/edwebpro



edWeb Research

The edWeb community helps us connect directly with educators at all levels to find out what kind of professional learning is needed and how to deliver it in a way that teachers, administrators, librarians, and all educators find convenient, collaborative, valuable, worthwhile, and effective.

Through surveys and case studies we also learn more. These surveys provide compelling evidence of the effectiveness of edWeb.

K – 12: Professional Learning Survey 2018

edWeb conducted a survey of edWeb members in March 2018 on teacher and administrator attitudes about professional learning. The top reasons reported why teachers engage in professional learning is to improve learning for their students, to help improve their own teaching, and because they enjoy learning new ideas and

practices from peers and experts in their field. Both teachers and administrators who are members of edWeb said that webinars were the most helpful type of professional learning. Over 90% of teachers and administrators said the most important quality of professional learning is that it be available anytime, anywhere. Our members also made it clear in their responses the importance of having free professional learning.

Download the K-12 Professional Learning Survey at
home.edweb.net/pd2018

Early Childhood: Professional Learning Survey 2018

edWeb released a survey of edWeb members who are early childhood educators in July 2018. Early learning educators are 25% of edWeb members, we wanted to see if there were any differences in their attitudes about professional learning, and about edWeb's model for free personalized professional learning, in comparison to educators working in higher grade levels. There are many similarities in responses with our K-12 survey. If anything, we found that early learning educators are even more positive about the value of edWeb as a professional network and resource.

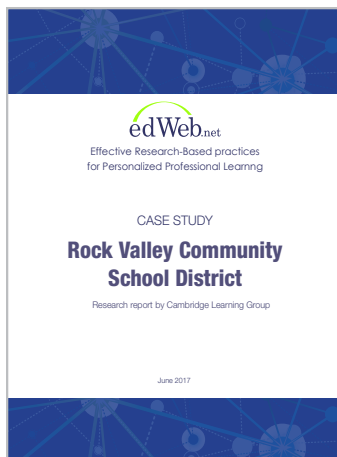
Download the Early Childhood Professional Learning Survey at
home.edweb.net/elpd2018



"Keep providing diverse, quality webinars which enable educators to do professional development after school in their classrooms without having to take a day off. Participating in these webinars allows teachers to connect with teachers from around the country and around the world. THANK YOU!!!"

"I told all my friends and co-workers about how useful and important these webinars are, and I gave them the website edWeb.net. We love edWeb.net and thank everyone who makes this kind of presentation possible."





edWeb.net has made it possible for Rock Valley Community School District to put a professional development program into place that embodies many of the features most important for improving instruction.



New Models for Professional Learning Practice

The following professional learning case studies and practices provide inspiration and models for how innovative educators use edWeb.

edWeb Case Study: Rock Valley Community School District

Prepared by Cambridge Learning Group

Rock Valley Community School District in Iowa relies on edWeb.net to support its professional development program for teachers. Their program embodies four of the key features identified by educational researchers as characterizing both high quality professional learning experiences, the effective design of online communities for teachers, and best practices for integrating informal online professional learning with formal district professional development. In each case, edWeb.net provides critical support that empowers Rock Valley leaders to implement research-based practices:

- Content-based professional development through edWeb.net resources applied to instruction
- Active learning through structured online activities and classroom application
- Collaboration that builds knowledge and makes collective decisions

This case study explains each of these key practices and shows how they align with the research base. Information about the Rock Valley professional development program comes from review of Rock Valley's edWeb.net community content and interviews with the district leader responsible for it and with two elementary school teachers who have participated in it, one in her second year in the classroom and a second with more than two decades of experience. The characteristics of effective professional development described are from a recent synthesis of research to date performed by the Learning Policy Institute (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner, 2017). The characteristics of effective online communities and effective integration of informal and formal professional learning draw on research conducted and synthesized by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology (Cambridge, 2014; Cambridge & Nussbaum-Beach, 2014).

Sustained development through personal learning plans linked to activities in edWeb.net has made it possible for Rock Valley Community School District to put a professional development program into place that embodies many of the features most important for improving instruction. Rachel Langenhorst, a district leader responsible for developing the professional development programs the district uses, acknowledges that some of the activities could have been supported using general-purpose tools, such as Google Docs, and some do incorporate such tools. However, she says that she uses edWeb.net because it provides a central hub through which to link together a "hot mess" of free tools. It offers an intuitive interface, keeps everything in one place, and offers extensive community administration options.

Download the case study to read the full report and the alignment to best practice and relevant research.

<https://home.edweb.net/edwebs-research-based-practices-personalized-professional-learning>



"When you have administrators, teachers, and people in my position who are planning PD do so in a way that is meaningful to each and every teacher, in any content area – it's really exciting..."

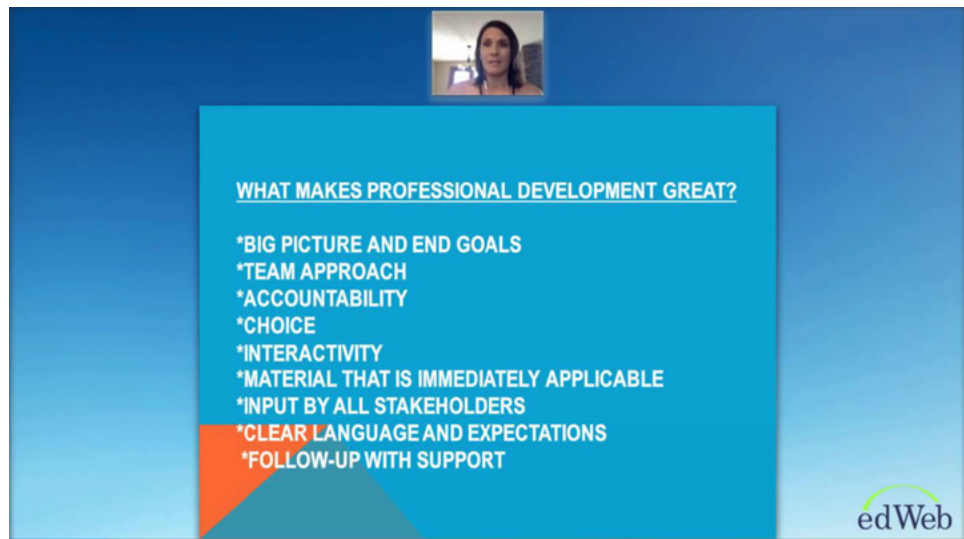
—Rachel Langenhorst
K-12 Technology Integrationist
and Instructional Coach,
Rock Valley, Iowa

Implementing a Personalized PD Program in Your District

Rachel Langenhorst, K-12 Technology Integrationist and Instructional Coach in Rock Valley, Iowa, presented an edWeb.net webinar on "Implementing a Personalized PD Program in Your District" where she provided a guide for how educators can use edWeb in school districts as a tool to implement relevant and collaborative PD.

In a system where people learn in a variety of ways, one size does not fit all for PD programs. Districts must provide choice, allowing teachers to select what they want to learn while keeping in mind district goals. For teacher-selected PD, teachers should be provided with a plan for the time of day to work on PD, expectations for their learning, and a venue for sharing their learning. Rachel explained that Rock Valley uses their edWeb community page to have teachers post their learning reflections and feedback to others. Schools and districts can create their own community page on edWeb.net, and use the community to easily connect with others, facilitate discussion in the discussion forum or blog, post resources to share, and more.

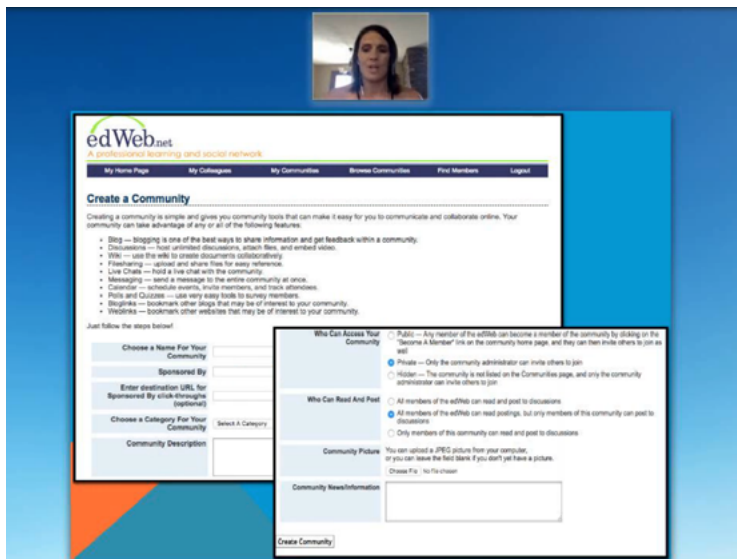
If teachers need any direction, Rachel provides help through the blog on Rock Valley's community page. Her favorite feature of the blog is being able to easily spot any new posts, which will automatically appear on the community page. This feature works with discussion posts too. Along with joining a community for your school's network, she recommended using edWeb to connect with others to build your own personal professional learning network.



View an edWebinar demonstrating how Rachel Langenhorst uses edWeb.net to implement a personalized professional learning program in her district

What Makes PD Great? Schools and districts can also use edWeb as an online meeting place. When introducing new topics or making announcements to groups of people, it can be difficult to gather everyone in person, especially in larger districts. An online venue proves valuable in these situations. edWeb community pages can be used to make announcements, post updates, and gather input.





When making any PD changes, schools should collaborate with district leaders and teachers, and get the input of all stakeholders, including parents. Schools should also have a plan worked out so that everyone is on this same page; what are you going to accomplish this year and when? People will want to participate if they know the school has put thought into developing a great PD program.

Rachel first came across edWeb as part of her graduate program, and found that it has helped her with her own personal learning and has allowed her to guide the educators in her district through their own professional development. She now uses edWeb in the graduate-level courses she teaches at Northwestern College, too.

“(edWeb) has really been much more of a great home for all of the different things we want to do...edWeb really allowed us to personalize (our PD platform)”

“When you have administrators, teachers, and people in my position who are planning PD do so in a way that is meaningful to each and every teacher, in any content area – it’s really exciting. edWeb has been instrumental in helping us achieve this, because it’s easy to get to, easy to maneuver, and there’s something for everyone. To me those are absolutely immeasurable qualities,” Rachel said.

For more tips on implementing a personalized PD program in your district, watch Rachel Langenhorst’s edWebinar at home.edweb.net/webinar/implementing-personalized-pd-program





"We did a half day PD session with edWeb and it was amazing. My teachers said they got more out of that half day than they had in the past 5 – 6 years of PD."

— Dr. Robert Furman
Principal, South Park
Elementary School, PA

How a Principal Uses edWeb for Personalized PD

Dr. Robert Furman, elementary principal at Southpark Elementary School in PA, is a best-selling author, and a national keynote speaker. He talked with Lisa Schmucki, founder and CEO of edWeb.net, about how he uses edWeb.net to provide personalized PD that gets his teachers really motivated and excited about their professional learning.

Rob describes how successful it was the first time he asked his teachers to try using edWeb for PD. "We did a half day PD session with edWeb and it was amazing. My teachers said they got more out of that half day than they had in the past 5 – 6 years of PD. I made friends because they loved this PD so much. If they're not interested they're not going to put their heart and soul into it. But if you ask them to pick something that interests them, all of a sudden it's meaningful, they WANT to do it.

Rob has continued to use edWeb to provide personalized PD, and his teachers absolutely love it. It's personalized professional development. Just like we should be personalizing instruction for our kids, administrators should be personalizing instruction for their teachers.

Rob explained how their PD program works. At the beginning of the year, the teachers pick a topic they each want to work on individually, and they find 8 – 10 resources on the topic on edWeb – and there are so many topics. The teachers love it because edWeb is a one-stop shop for great resources on all kinds of specific topics. It's created a personalized PD system for the school and has made a huge impact with the teachers. So many times teachers ask "Is this professional development going to relate to me? Am I going to have to sit here for 4 hours and listen to garbage?" Well, that's all gone by the wayside because now they do what they're interested in, and they look forward to it.

When you look at student learning, we no longer have one class of 30 students. We should have 30 classes of 1 student because it all should be personalized. The same applies to professional development. Principals and administrators should be doing the exact same best practices for their teachers because they are in effect their students. "edWeb gives you a tool to make a very easy jump into personalized professional development."

Listen to Dr. Furman's interview on Education Talk Radio

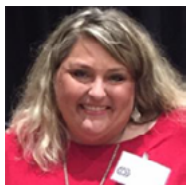
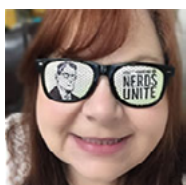
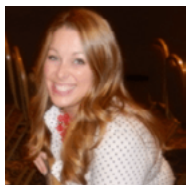
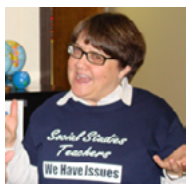
[Take the Risk, Take the Extra Step: Advice for School Leaders](#)

Dr. Robert Furman, Principal of South Park Elementary, was interviewed by edWeb to gain an administrator's perspective on providing quality professional development for teachers and the social aspect of learning. While Robert first discovered edWeb as a webinar presenter, he quickly realized the site's potential as a best-practices research platform, an affordable source of teacher PD, and an opportunity for growth-focused evaluation.

Read more and listen to the interview at
home.edweb.net/take-risk-take-extra-step



The Georgia DOE Social Studies Department and three of their virtual specialists presented an edWebinar on their three-year journey growing virtual learning communities.



A State-Wide Model for Online Professional Learning

Faced with implementing new standards and inquiry-based instruction for over 180 school districts and over 30,000 social studies teachers with a department of two people, the social studies team at the Georgia Department of Education turned to virtual learning communities on edWeb.net to reach Georgia teachers and leaders.

The GaDOE Social Studies Department and three of their virtual specialists presented an edWebinar on their three-year journey in creating and maintaining virtual learning communities for social studies for every grade level and course from K through 12. In their presentation, they shared:

- Why they set up virtual communities the way they did
- Who is involved in their success
- How they did it
- The results
- The impact on student learning
- What they've learned over the past two years as they start year three

The presentation featured:

- Joy Hatcher, Social Studies Program Manager, Georgia Department of Education
- JoAnn Wood, Social Studies Program Specialist, Georgia Department of Education

Who were joined by three virtual specialists:

- Heather MacKenzie, Instructional Coordinator for Social Studies, Henry County Schools, GA
- Angie Battle, Fourth Grade Teacher, Warner Robins, GA
- Jennifer Zoumberis, First Grade Teacher, Perry, GA

When Georgia implemented new standards Joy and JoAnn, in charge of the social studies program for the GaDOE, had to find a way to make professional development timely and relevant across a large state. It was a challenge for a department of two

“Our goal was to find a way to provide professional learning for content and instructional support throughout the state of Georgia. I’ve always been a proponent of building community. We’re better together; we’re stronger together.”

— Joy Hatcher
Social Studies Program
Manager, GaDOE

people to do this for 159 counties with 181 schools districts, and only 29 social studies supervisors in the state. They built an online professional learning program that uses the edWeb.net platform in combination with webinars and 14 virtual specialists in social studies at all grade levels. This model provides a blueprint and guidance that can be adapted for any state-wide content area.

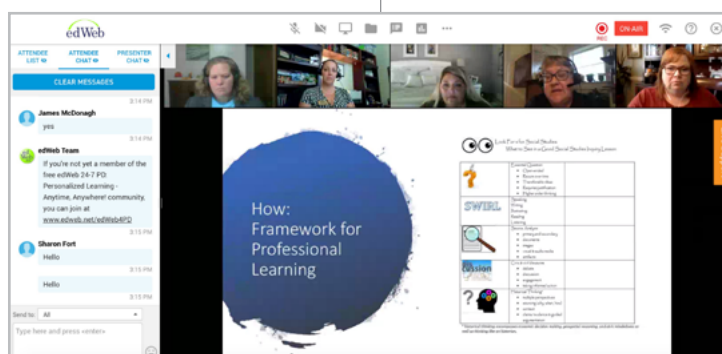
Joy talked about their goals for the program.

“Our goal was to find a way to provide professional learning for content and instructional support throughout the state of Georgia. I’ve always been a proponent of building community. We’re better together; we’re stronger together. I thought if there was some way we could connect teachers in districts that have only one school with other teachers in the state, we could expand our reach and be much more productive together. It’s important to provide a consistent message and highlight good resources. We needed an outlet for educators to come together and talk about those things.

We decided to go with edWeb to host virtual learning communities, and we decided to create one virtual learning community for each grade from K-12, plus a virtual learning community for leadership across the state for anyone who was tasked with supporting social studies at the school or district level.

We were able to call on a cadre of talented teachers to help us with moderating and facilitating the communities. The virtual specialist team is amazing and continues to serve as teachers or directors while also serving as virtual specialists for their thriving communities.”

In talking about the importance of the moderation and the virtual specialists, Joy said, “The who is the heart of what we do.”



In the next part of the presentation, Joy led the discussion about how they set the program up.

“We created a framework for professional learning for every grade level for inquiry in the social studies classroom. We use edWeb as a platform for every grade level. The virtual specialist is in charge of facilitating discussion in the discussion forums, emailing members when there’s a new resource they’re posting or if there is a particular opportunity that’s coming up.

Once a month, the virtual specialists are trained via a webinar by Joy and JoAnn on a topic from the framework document, and they record the webinar, put it on YouTube and host the link in the in the edWeb community, so it’s accessible to teachers at any time. New teachers are joining all the time. All of the information and resources are archived in the edWeb communities so teachers can go back and choose things that are relevant for them. Social studies departments use this as a resource as well, and play webinars at department meetings, talk about the particular focus, and how they can use the information in their classrooms.”





The edWeb PLC communities and the webinars work together. They've presented 23 webinars so far in just over 2 years. The webinars provide an opportunity to see inside the classrooms and how the resources work.

To reach teachers across the state to get participation in the program and to encourage engagement, they use every communication channel they can think of:

- Word of mouth
- Announcements in the GaDOE newsletter

- Emails to teachers in the state
- Emails to department chairs to ask their teachers to sign up
- Social media messages daily
- Attending as many Georgia state conferences as possible

To get participation and engagement, they make PLCs on edWeb and webinars as condensed and informative and relevant as possible. They always try to make the program easy and accessible.

- Teachers are busy, so the webinar recordings make it convenient. It provides pajama PD. Teachers can watch webinars on the weekend while they have their coffee. The viewership of the recordings after the fact is enormous.
- In the edWeb communities, they are constantly adding resources, asking questions, and starting conversations. A virtual specialist can start a community discussion, but members can, too. The community is a great forum for teachers to ask questions and get answers.
- The leadership community has been invaluable. Heather, who leads that community said, "I'm not an expert so it's been so helpful to reach other experts. A lot of the administrators in the state may not have a social studies background, so I can provide support for them."

"The feedback comes in and they say 'I love how you're doing this' and they're taking the information back to their classrooms and you realize you really are making a difference."

— Jennifer Zoumberis
Virtual Learning Specialist,
GaDOE

The virtual specialists receive a little bit of compensation, but it was clear from the presentation and the joy they all had in talking about the success of the program, that it's a true labor of love. As one virtual specialist said, "We love our jobs and the chance to connect with teachers." Joy and JoAnn are always looking for special opportunities for their virtual specialists, like presenting at conferences.

The virtual specialists provided their reflections on lessons learned and the benefits from their online professional learning program, now in its third year.

Heather: The lesson I've learned about being a virtual specialist is to be meaningfully informed and connected.

Jennifer: It was new and you're nervous so it's challenging, but then the feedback comes in and they say "I love how you're doing this" and they're taking the information back to their classrooms and you realize you really are making a difference. Their feedback helps tweak the webinars to provide what teachers want and need.



“The reason I chose edWeb is not just because we can create communities, but also manage who joins the community...When we get our teachers on edWeb, edWeb gives them access to hundreds of other communities about things they’re interested in...It puts them into our communities for Georgia, but it also offers them communities for professional development on their own, which is particularly valuable for smaller districts that don’t have access to this kind of PD.”

— Joy Hatcher

Angie: It is a true professional learning community. It’s not just us picking out of the air what we’re going to talk about or being told what to present. We’re having conversations with teachers and administrators in the field. It’s a common ground and very beneficial. I can get teachers answers to questions they have about the standards, and I’m learning and sharpening my knowledge, and that benefits my students in my classroom, so that’s a win-win.

Heather: It’s been a great leveler, and I love the equity of support it provides.

Joy: There’s a connection. Before we had these professional learning communities, if a teacher had a question and is in a district without a social studies administrator, who would they go to for clarification? Most teachers don’t know how to contact the Georgia DOE or are hesitant to ask their questions. It’s created this community of support in Georgia where it’s not top down, it’s all of us together, all in the same direction, and a consistent message which is important. Like Heather said, it’s an equalizer. We’re connecting teachers with vast content knowledge with teachers who are tech savvy. How do we know that people are paying attention? How do we know it’s making a difference? Many are lurkers but we get feedback, we see the webinar clicks, they come up to us at conferences.

JoAnn: We’re very much a community, a family.

Joy: For webinars there can be obstacles with connectivity, or you’re on a webinar at school and they are making an announcement, or you have to go home because there’s no quiet place at school, and then there are dogs barking.

Heather: It’s important to have a moderator. Bandwidth can be tricky. So a moderator is crucial to help with tech issues.

Do they recommend edWeb as a platform for this kind of program?

Joy responded, “Yes! The reason I chose edWeb is not just because we can create communities, but also manage who joins the community. We can’t pay a virtual specialist to manage a community with hundreds of thousands of people all around the world. With edWeb, we can control who joins. When we get our teachers on edWeb,

edWeb gives them access to hundreds of other communities about things they’re interested in like gamification, 21st century learning, differentiation, and much more. It puts them into our communities for Georgia, but it also offers them communities for professional development on their own, which is particularly valuable for smaller districts that don’t have access to this kind of PD.”

The presentation concluded with a summary of results. The program started in 2016 and grew to over 4,800 members in the first year. The leadership community grew

to 700 in the first year, and considering there are only 28 designated social studies administrators in the state, that is outstanding. In year two, the program grew to over 8,000 members.



How do you know it's impacting student learning?

"Engagement equals achievement. I heard one of my reluctant learners say the other day, 'I just love social studies,' and my heart went boom!"

— Angie Battle
Virtual Learning Specialist,
GaDOE

How do you know it's impacting student learning?

Joy: The amount of leadership we're seeing from social studies teachers, the level of the questions that teachers have for us, shows us how they're changing their daily lessons and giving over control of their classrooms to students with the inquiry model. We're seeing a much larger percentage of teachers do that.

Heather: Joy and JoAnn have re-ignited and re-energized the teachers, and enthusiasm is contagious. Teachers are growing in their confidence, in their content knowledge, their pedagogy, and in their excitement. They feel they are not alone, and they have a place to go for resources. They get excited and there's no doubt that's translated into measurable achievement in the classroom.

Angie: Engagement equals achievement. I heard one of my reluctant learners say the other day, "I just love social studies," and my heart went boom!

Jennifer: The love for social studies! The biggest reward I see is that my kids are loving social studies and giving each other fist bumps.

Watch the edWebinar at home.edweb.net/webinar/edweb4pd20181001

edWeb 24-7 PD is a free professional learning community on edWeb.net that provides online coaching and ideas on how to use edWeb as a free platform and resource for personalized PD. Join the community at edweb.net/edweb4pd.





"One reason why seven years ago I joined edWeb.net [is] because it's very important for us to continue our learning process. I have to make sure I stay connected to make sure I am on top of the most current way of doing things. That's why it's important to have your 24/7 professional development."

—Dr. Monte Tatom
Associate Professor of
Education, Freed-Hardeman
University (TN)



Using edWeb.net to Connect with Pre-Service Teachers

Tech4TeacherEd is an edWeb.net community for pre-service teachers, college of education faculty, and inservice educators can share resources and ideas for integrating digital tools into the classroom.

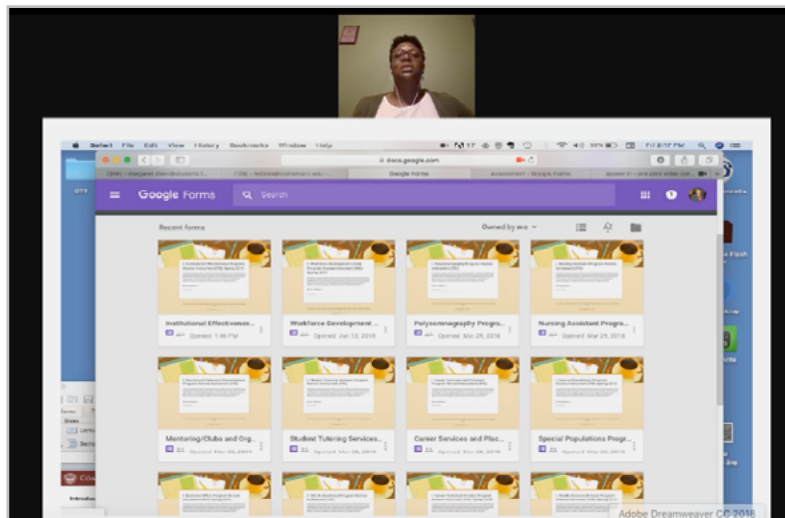
The goal of Tech4TeacherEd is to provide a free professional learning community where undergraduate and graduate pre-service candidates can discover information about integrating technology into teaching and learning, a wide range of resources for educators, and the ISTE Standards for Students, Educators, Education Leaders and Tech Coaches. The community hosts edWebinars presented by teacher ed candidates, giving them an unprecedented opportunity to share their learning and perspectives on the issues impacting education with the global education community. It helps them engage as a professional in lifelong learning right from the start in their pre-service years.

The community was founded and is hosted and moderated by Dr. Monte Tatom, Associate Professor of Education at Freed-Hardeman University (TN) who believes pre-service teachers need to engage with the large education community as early as possible on their path to becoming teachers, administrators, and educators in any role.

"One reason why seven years ago I joined edWeb.net [is] because it's very important for us to continue our learning process," commented Dr. Tatom in a recent edWebinar. "I have to make sure I stay connected to make sure I am on top of the most current way of doing things. That's why it's important to have your 24/7 professional development."

Tech4TeacherEd is a wonderful community for pre-service teachers and any educator who wants to mentor students who have made the wonderful decision to choose education as a career.

The following edWebinar recordings are available to view on-demand, and more will be added as the program continues:



Surviving and Thriving in a Teacher Education Program

Taylor Warren, a candidate in the M.Ed. in Instructional Technology program at Freed-Hardeman University in Tennessee, presented helpful tips and tricks for not just surviving, but thriving in teacher education courses. Taylor discussed: planning, priorities, organization, communication, engagement, seeking help when needed, asking questions, participating, and relieving stress.

Watch the edWebinar at home.edweb.net/webinar/tech4teachered20181016

How to Survive an Online Class

Hear from Dr. Monte Tatom, who has been teaching online classes since 2009, on ways in which participants in online learning can survive in that environment. Dr. Tatom discussed: devoting time, communication, engagement, getting involved early, how online classes vary greatly, taking it seriously, time management, contributing and participating, taking advantage of tech tutorials, and seeking assistance if needed.

Watch the edWebinar at home.edweb.net/webinar/tech4teachered20180925

Introducing Tech4TeacherEd on edWeb

Dr. Monte Tatom, Associate Professor of Education at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, TN, talked with Margaret Dixon, Director of Research, Assessment and Strategic Initiatives at Coahoma Community College, and Instructional Technologist Candidate; Brittany Fowler, Instructional Technologist Candidate; and Ashley McCrory, Kindergarten Teacher, Instructional Technologist Candidate who are candidates in the online M.Ed. in Instructional Technology program at Freed-Hardeman University. They are in their capstone course and shared technologies that they have used while candidates in the program. They also discussed suggested technologies for both teacher ed candidates and professors.

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Using edWeb for Collaboration in Higher Education

Holbrook Mahn, Professor in the department of Language, Literacy, & Sociocultural Studies at the University of New Mexico, presented in the edWeb.net webinar, “Using edWeb for Collaboration in Higher Education Courses.” Holbrook discussed how he uses edWeb in his higher education seminars.

Since he began teaching in 1997, Holbrook has been interested in the use of technology to facilitate learning in the classroom. Unimpressed with the online platforms provided by the university, Holbrook found out about edWeb through a colleague and was immediately pleased with the wealth of opportunity for collaboration and discussion. edWeb makes collaboration outside the classroom simple for Holbrook’s busy doctoral students, many of whom also balance families and full time jobs.



Using this platform, Holbrook creates community pages for both his doctoral seminar and his seminar on the work of Vygotsky. The main feature he uses in the community pages is the resource library. Here, he uploads audio files for podcasts, presentations, course readings, syllabi, and more. The resource library can even be used to post the “really important things,” Holbrook joked, “like the snack list for the course.”

Holbrook also pointed out the ease with which his students can review each other’s work. Students can review a piece of literature from the resource library and post their responses on their own edWeb member home pages, easily allowing others to read their reviews. To foster even deeper conversation, Holbrook uses edWeb to divide the doctoral seminar into interest groups, creating community pages for each point of interest. Students can participate in deeper discussion and post reviews of articles in the discussion forum of each community.

The community for his seminar on the work of Vygotsky is particularly helpful to international students, as it allows for collaboration with his American students. Although there were some initial challenges with the international students using some of these online platforms, edWeb was able to assist. “I was very thankful because I had a number of students in China, and at first they weren’t able to (use some of the online





networks) but with (edWeb's) help they were," said Holbrook. To provide the international students with extra support, he posts recordings from the seminars and summaries of class discussions in the community.

Holbrook concluded the webinar with some of his favorite edWeb features. First, flexibility when customizing the community page has been a great benefit, along with the interactivity and simplicity of the site. edWeb also provides Holbrook with quick and reliable support when needed, and is always open to suggestions. "I would make suggestions to the edWeb team, and they were happy to implement them for ease of use," said Holbrook. edWeb responded, "We can be better because of all the suggestions you make." Last, Holbrook mentioned the number one selling point: edWeb.net is free.

By engaging in these groups, members can have access to contacts all around the world that they normally wouldn't be in contact with through their doctoral programs alone, which can be invaluable for these students. Since members will not lose access to communities, edWeb provides a mentorship program that can continue to grow even after graduation.

Holbrook Mahn is a Professor in the department of Language, Literacy, & Sociocultural Studies at the University of New Mexico, where he has been teaching for 20 years. Prior to that, he was a high school English as a Second Language teacher in Los Angeles. His main teaching responsibilities have focused on helping to prepare teachers to educate culturally and linguistically diverse students, particularly in second language literacy. For the last two decades he has written extensively about the work of Vygotsky.

To learn more about using edWeb for higher education, watch Holbrook Mahn's webinar at home.edweb.net/webinar/edweb-collaboration-higher-education-courses

