

Using the Professional Development Activity Flowchart

Professional Development includes activities that contribute to student success. Ultimately, the local program administrator is responsible for deciding what qualifies as Professional Development as referred to in the local program's program improvement plan and its RFP. The attached flowchart provides some guidelines for deciding whether an activity qualifies as a "Professional Development Activity".

① Documentation

First, the flowchart asks, "Can the activity be documented?" Programs are responsible for maintaining records of instructor participation in "Professional Development Activities". Each program determines what constitutes acceptable documentation. For instance, depending upon the type of activity, some programs may require a copy of the agenda or handouts (when available). Other programs may require a short written report of the concepts covered in the activity. If the activity cannot be documented, more information is needed before the local program director accepts the activity as a "Professional Development Activity".

② Personal Enrichment

The next question is, "Can the activity be considered personal enrichment?" Workshops and other trainings are available regarding a variety of topics. "Professional Development Activities" do not usually include those regarding topics such as crafting, stress management, exercise, investing, etc. There may be instances, however, when it does. Therefore, if an activity falls in one of these categories, more information is needed before the local program director accepts the activity as a "Professional Development Activity".

③ Service Center Activities

Next, the flowchart asks, "Is the activity delivered by the Service Center Network?" Illinois Service Centers deliver "Professional Development Activities". If the activity is delivered by a Service Center, no additional information is necessary.

④ Teaching

Next, the flowchart asks, "Is the activity applicable to what you do as a teacher?" A "Professional Development Activity" should be directly applicable to **what an instructor does in the classroom to promote student success**. A workshop on Reading Strategies would be applicable for an ABE/GED teacher. It may or may not be applicable to an ESL teacher. Likewise, a workshop on Spanish grammar may be applicable to an ESL teacher, but may or may not be applicable to a GED teacher. If there is not a direct link from the activity to the classroom, more information is needed before the local program director accepts the activity as a "Professional Development Activity".

⑤ & ⑥ Local Program Personnel, Policy, and Paperwork

The next two questions, "Is the activity presented by local program personnel?" and "Does the activity pertain specifically to your local program's recordkeeping?" are intended to address staff meetings and other local events. Many of those activities (such as a new teacher orientation covering adult learning theory, reading strategies, and group work) have a direct link to **what an instructor does in the classroom to promote student success**. Those activities regarding specific programmatic issues (such as office procedures and logistics) require more information before the local program director accepts the activity as a "Professional Development Activity".

⑦ Adult Education and Family Literacy Grant

The last question, "Is the activity aligned with the goals of your local program's funding sources provided through ICCB?" is a final reminder that the "Professional Development" includes only those activities that contribute to student success via the instructional services agreed upon in the RFP. For instance, a teacher may attend a workshop regarding the recruitment and retention of CNA students. This workshop may have a direct link to what the instructor does in the classroom to promote student success, however, if the program is not funded to provide this vocational training, the activity is not aligned with the goals of the local program's funding sources through ICCB and more information is necessary before the local program director accepts the activity as a "Professional Development Activity".

Flowchart Examples

University Class

Taking a university class is one option that instructional staff may choose as a professional development activity. Since the over-arching goal of professional development for instructional staff is to improve teaching effectiveness and thereby contribute to improved student success, any class that is attempted must be geared to that goal.

As an example, consider an instructor who enrolls at the local university in an Art History course. Using the flow chart, consider the questions in each of the seven numbered boxes:

- ① *Can the activity be documented?* Yes.
- ② *Can the activity be considered personal enrichment?* Perhaps. Art History, for example, may be of personal interest to the instructor and may be part of a transfer plan that the instructor is considering for class use. In that case, more information is needed in order to determine if this is a “professional development activity”. If the activity is not for personal enrichment, then the next question is:
- ③ *Is the activity delivered by the Service Center Network?* No. Go to Step 4.
- ④ *Is the activity related to other adult educator in similar adult education programs?* Answer is probably no. Again, more information is needed.

Regional Workshop

Adult Educators have a variety of workshops available from which to choose. A variety of individuals, organizations, and institutions deliver these workshops. For example, a Regional Office of Education may hold an Institute that would include a session on improving student test scores and another on meth labs. Using the flowchart, the session on meth labs would not qualify, while the one on improving test scores might.

- ① *Can this activity be documented?* Yes, there is a sign-in sheet and various handouts.
- ② *Can the activity be considered personal enrichment?* No.
- ③ *Is the activity delivered by the Service Center Network?* No.
- ④ *Is the activity applicable to what you do as a teacher?* Probably not for the session on meth labs. More information is necessary. Regarding the session on test scores, continue to question ⑤.
- ⑤ *Is the activity presented by local program personnel?* No. Continue to question ⑦.
- ⑦ *Is the activity aligned with the goals of your local program’s funding sources provided through ICCB?* Probably. Thus, the session on improving test scores could be considered a “Professional Development Activity”.

Staff Meeting

Staff meetings are common. Some of these meetings may qualify as a “Professional Development Activity”. However, some may not. Consider the following example:

The teachers of a program participate in a 3-hour staff meeting led by the local program administrator. The agenda for the meeting includes a 2-hour review of record keeping – forms, procedures, etc. for things like travel, grading, and attendance. One hour of the agenda is devoted to a discussion of classroom strategies. A teacher has submitted this meeting for credit as a “Professional Development Activity”.

- ① *Can this activity be documented?* Yes, there are handouts, forms, and a sign-in sheet.
- ② *Can the activity be considered personal enrichment?* No.
- ③ *Is the activity delivered by the Service Center Network?* No.
- ④ *Is the activity applicable to what you do as a teacher?* Yes.
- ⑤ *Is the activity presented by local program personnel?* Yes. Stop. More information is needed. For example, if the review was specific to local programmatic issues, this activity probably does not count. However, since part of the meeting included a discussion of classroom strategies, the administrator may decide that the discussion portion of the meeting can be considered a “Professional Development Activity”.

Action Research

Participating in action research is another activity an instructor may choose for professional development.

For example, perhaps a program plans to have teachers use reading instruction strategies with ABE students to determine if student outcomes can be improved. First, teachers set a personal professional development goal to improve his or her reading instruction. Then, an in-service introduces a few strategies. Next, teachers use these strategies in the classroom and keep a log of his or her reflections. The teachers forward the logs to a coordinator who provides feedback and support as necessary. Finally, the program compares student learning gains with those of the previous fiscal year.

- ① *Can the activity be documented?* Yes. There will be attendance at trainings, written personal professional development plans, teachers' logs and a report at the end documenting the learner gains and comparisons.
- ② *Can the activity be considered personal enrichment?* No
- ③ *Is the activity delivered by the Service Center Network?* No
- ④ *Is the activity applicable to what you do as a teacher?* Yes. The activity is directly connected to classroom instruction.
- ⑤ *Is the activity presented by local program personnel?* Yes. The in-services were given by the program coordinator, and all of the other work of the project is being done by program staff.
- ⑥ *Does the activity pertain specifically to your local program's recordkeeping?* No
- ⑦ *Is the activity aligned with the goals of your local program's funding sources provided through ICCB?* Yes. The program planned for this activity and budgeted for it using ICCB funds allocated for professional development.