Creating a PD Learning Rave for the Common Core State Standards

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Challenge. Although political and educational leaders, researchers, and corporations develop new standards such as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and look for ways to help teachers implement them, they overlook an obvious one --

Today's online learning communities make it possible to connect the individual and collective intelligence of people uniquely qualified to match their expertise with the needs and problems of individuals and organizations implementing the standards.

For example, integrated social media and professional development tools help online learning community members and teams to learn, develop, co-create, remix, and share resources on-demand -- thereby moving beyond a conventional "schedule of district or school PD days" to a dynamic venue for advancing professional development.

Solution. Focus on starting a "Learning Rave" for professional development rather than designing a "new system." Over the decades, school reform in the United States has seen numerous "new systems" get co-opted by the status quo. In today's world, if we want ideas to flourish and spread, using an online learning community strategy with integrated social media and professional development tools will scale-up dramatically and lead to the following types of scenarios to support CCSS:

- **Elementary Schools:** Teachers in a low performing elementary school plan, teach, assess, analyze, and share WikiTasks of their promising data-driven lessons aligned with CCSS to demonstrate progress toward meeting AYP targets and seek ideas for improvement through a global learning community.

- **Middle Schools:** A middle school sixth grade team collaborates with a feeder elementary school fifth grade team on planning data-driven lessons aligned with CCSS and, then, posts their results as prototype WikiTasks for other learning community members in their district and worldwide.

- **High Schools:** A high school department chairperson identifies priority CCSS for an instructional unit, supports teachers to co-create lessons to achieve the standards, and, then, makes WikiTask lessons with results available for learning community application and feedback.

- **Charter Schools:** A charter school teacher forms a team with other charter school teachers throughout the nation to co-create and share teaching strategies that increased student performance for grade three mathematics on classroom and standardized assessments.

- **Virtual Schools:** Virtual classroom teachers clone CCSS lessons to parents to support their children in the home, seek their ideas for home-based activities, and post the lessons as WikiTasks for parents throughout a local school district.

- **Beginning Teachers:** First-year teachers develop CCSS-based lessons for their classes and "message" them to a staff developer for feedback. Then, the staff developer returns coaching tips without the need for meetings or email trails.

- **Principals:** A principal creates a team of other principals to exchange messages about the month-to-month tasks needed to implement an instructional improvement strategy to increase student achievement for CCSS. Then, they clone best practices and effective lessons from their teachers to each other to act as prototypes for instructional improvement.

- **Parents:** A parent/guardian develops a lesson for teaching his or her children how to save and invest their allowances and sends messages to colleagues to encourage their children to try the lesson and share results.

- **Teacher Evaluation:** A team of principals and teachers develops, applies, and shares WikiTask

templates for demonstrating results of lessons aligned with CCSS for their school's teacher evaluation system that requires evidence of student learning.

- **Teacher Education:** Student teachers develop CCSS-based lessons for their classes and clone them to their supervising teachers and teacher education coordinators prior to their observation of the lessons for insights and improvements. Then, the supervisors clone their coaching tips back to the student teachers.

- **State Departments of Education:** A state department curriculum specialist develops and posts samples of Common Core State Standards and sample assessments for local school district counterparts to co-develop and posts their improvements on a moderated WikiTask for broader input and insights from other state or international curriculum specialists.

- **Research and Development Organizations:** A NASA scientist collaborates with a high school team to make CCSS-based lessons challenging for their students engaged in advanced technology.

- **Learning Layouts:** Online professional development moves from conventional "course-based" models to Learning Layouts -- new ways of combining people, teaching, and technology to improve student learning and teacher professional development through customized on-demand delivery.

- **21st Century PD:** Learning community members contribute to a "smart" professional development database that learns from the members' ideas, products, and performances.

Learning Rave. All learning community members in each scenario above use instant messages, send and receive colleague and team messages, invite friends and associates to join a team, form a network of colleagues, and locate colleagues with similar backgrounds and passions for teaching and learning. And these types of social media are connected to online PD tools that members use to complete the tasks of teaching. These examples demonstrate how global learning communities break down content, communication, time, and location barriers as colleagues collaborate, co-create, and share in blended face-to-face and online venues.

Action. Want to join a learning community that supports these types of scenarios with integrated social media and professional development tools? *I invite you to join LearningFront, become a colleague, and contribute your ideas and content to create a PD learning rave for the Common Core and other initiatives!*

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http://www.learningfront.com

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