

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With an increased need for building digital fluency in instruction because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) Professional and Digital Learning (PDL) Department is committed to facilitating and providing useful resources and professional development (PD) opportunities to district staff members to support their use of technology. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23, 2020 until the end of the 2019-20 school year. To help district students and families access the internet during at-home learning, the Dallas ISD launched "Operation Connectivity" in May 2020, which provided 23,000 hotspots to families by October 2020. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities.

The purpose of this report was to provide context and process information pertaining to two selected Instructional Technology workscopes, Academic Technology and Instructional Effectiveness. Context information included information obtained from interviews with the program directors and a review of program documentation. Process information include analyses of available PD survey data.¹

The Academic Technology program focuses on designing, creating, and managing robust digital learning resources and providing online trainings and individualized supports to district staff members as needed. The Instructional Effectiveness program works to build the capacity of Teaching and Learning and campus staff members to leverage technology for teaching and learning by providing content-specific supports. Both programs also offered PD sessions throughout the year over diverse technology-related topics.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the source and amount of funding for the selected Instructional Technology programs?

The Academic Technology program was funded through Title IV, Part A at \$215,000. The Instructional Effectiveness program was funded at \$782,317 through Title II, Part A funds.²

How were the selected Instructional Technology programs implemented in 2020-21?

Context of the Programs

During the 2020-21 school year, the PDL Department aimed to provide ongoing digital learning resources about utilization and integration of technology in instruction. Within the PDL Department, both the Academic Technology and Instructional Effectiveness programs implemented various projects throughout the school year to support and meet the needs of the district campus and central staff members with the use of technology. The projects included online resources, self-paced learning opportunities, and PD sessions.³

Academic Technology

The Academic Technology program supported teachers with instructional resources including digital integration training and digital applications. The two largest foci of the program were learning management systems resources and individualized trainings based on the needs and interests of partner departments' key stakeholders. The program was implemented by one program director, one coordinator, and two academic technology specialists.⁴ They created and managed the instructional technology curriculum and instructional websites and delivered PD sessions.

Learning Management Systems Resources

The program specialists created easy to access materials, such as tutorial websites and videos to support technology initiatives in the district. Online resources on learning management systems were either added from outside sources or created and managed on the district website

¹ Detailed methodology is available in the full report.

² Provided by Special Revenue Funds Management on 02/28/21. Title IV funded two specialists and Title II funded two coordinators who all reported to program directors in the PDL Department.

³ The PDL department staff members also assisted with providing trainings to district personnel in support of other departments including trainings

about Title IX Compliance, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)*, pregnancy-related services, and Cultural Intelligence.

⁴ Toward the end of the school year, the PDL Department went through a reorganization and the coordinator and specialists reported directly to the Executive Director.

throughout the school year to support teachers, instructional staff members, and administrators. The resources allowed staff members to effectively utilize the systems and included quick guides with visual aids on how to operate or troubleshoot specific technology tools used for instruction. The specialists also provided PD sessions on these resources, which are discussed in more detail in the next section.

Partner Departments Key Stakeholders Training

The program specialists provided partner departments with key stakeholder trainings, which were provided to 343 staff members across 65 sessions.⁵ District staff members from various departments including Teaching and Learning, Information Technology, and Evaluation and Assessment received training and support on the use of technology. Trainings were provided mainly on a one-on-one basis or in small groups as requested and covered an array of topics including how to develop and improve virtual training materials, online courses or webinars, and digital assets that build the capacity of teaching and learning staff members.

Instructional Effectiveness

The Instructional Effectiveness program was implemented by one program director, one program manager, and one coordinator.⁶ The program primarily focused on supporting campus staff members with content-specific digital materials and integrating technology in both classroom and at-home learning environments by introducing new digital tools and resources continuously throughout the year. Also, the program staff members developed and managed resources to support new teachers in the district.

Content-Specific Supports

Each program staff member supported teachers of specific content areas and principals in individual, group, or virtual settings. Most commonly, the supports were provided to help campus staff members use digital resources in each subject area and effectively adapt and integrate technology into the content to maximize student learning and achievement. A total of 19 content areas were supported (most commonly Career and Technical Education, Reading Language Arts, Mathematics, and School Leadership) over 59 sessions supporting 2,209 participants.⁷

Support for New Teachers

The New Teacher Academy was offered virtually from August 21 through August 25, 2020 to teachers who were new to the district. The Instructional Effectiveness program staff members provided training covering diverse topics including teaching in a virtual space, district policies and procedures, introductory summaries of each department in

the district, and racial equity. A total of 1,172 teachers participated in the event. Additionally, the trainings remained available through the district website for new teachers who were unable to attend the event.⁸

What professional development opportunities were offered through the selected Instructional Technology programs in 2020-21 and what were participant perceptions?

Professional Development Sessions

The Instructional Technology programs (i.e., Academic Technology and Instructional Effectiveness) provided PD opportunities as a team to support effective technology use in instruction and learning management from June 8, 2020 to April 30, 2021. The programs publicized available PD sessions each month through an online catalog published on the district website and in Weekly Administrative Information Packets. The topics of PD sessions for each month were selected based on the reported needs of teachers and staff members.

In 2020-21, a total of 81 PD sessions over a variety of technology-related topics were provided to 51,295 participants including teachers, instructional staff members, administrators, and central staff members.⁹ Because of the increased utilization of technology in instruction for both in-person and at-home learning, all PD sessions focused on how to effectively integrate technology into instruction.

The Academic Technology staff members focused on providing trainings on education technology applications and learning management systems such as Google Meet, Google Classroom, and Microsoft Teams. The applications allowed teachers and staff members to implement effective delivery and management of instruction. Of the 20 topics and 47 total sessions provided, the most frequently provided sessions covered Nearpod (8 sessions) and Google Classroom (6 sessions). The PD sessions on Google Classroom (22%) and Google Basics (21%) had the highest attendance rates of all Academic Technology sessions. Attendance ranged from 1 to 4,244 participants across the sessions and median number of attendees ranged from 1 to 1,485.

The Instructional Effectiveness program staff members offered PD sessions on various topics including different tools to use for instruction, promoting student engagement, and digital citizenship. Some session topics on instructional tools overlapped with the PD session topics provided by Academic Technology because of increased user needs and demands. Of the 20 topics and 34 total sessions provided, the staff members most frequently provided sessions on Zoom (7 sessions) and Nearpod (4 sessions).

⁵ This information was provided by the program coordinator on 06/04/21.

⁶ Toward the end of the school year, the PDL Department went through a reorganization and these positions were restructured.

⁷ In addition, the program assisted with providing trainings on other areas including Title IX and Core 4 Ambassador training in support of other

departments. A total of 73,672 staff members received supports. This information was provided by program coordinator on 06/11/21.

⁸ This information was provided by program director on 12/15/20.

⁹ Some participants attended multiple sessions. This information was provided by program coordinator on 06/11/21.

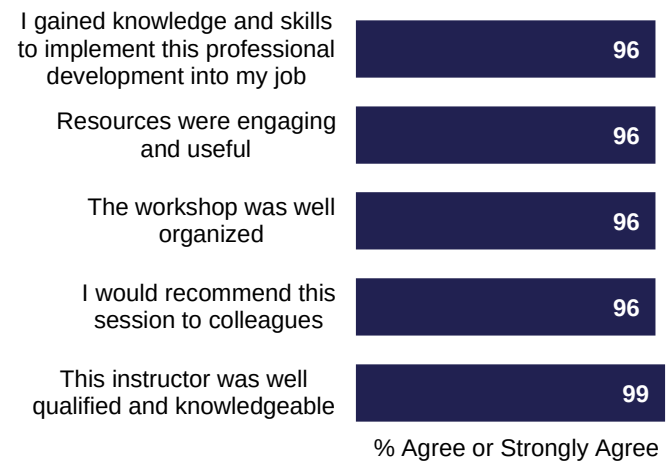
The PD sessions on digital citizenship (24%) and Zoom (23%) had the highest attendance rates of all Instructional Effectiveness sessions. Attendance ranged from 2 to 6,835 across the sessions and median number of attendees ranged from 3 to 1,865.

Participant Perceptions

All PD attendees were asked to complete a satisfaction survey at the end of the session. A total of 2,209 unique attendees responded to the surveys across PD sessions. When examining respondent roles, teachers accounted for the highest percentage of respondents across the trainings as the PD session topics were often directly related to teaching and learning (*n* = 2,001; 91%). The same participant could have attended PD sessions across programs; when the surveys were examined by program, a total of 1,053 unique participants responded to the Academic Technology PD surveys and 1,625 unique participants responded to the Instructional Effectiveness PD surveys. Some PD participants attended multiple sessions within each program. Thus, they may have completed the survey and been included in satisfaction and open-ended response analyses more than once. When reviewed by program (Academic Technology or Instructional Effectiveness), a total of 1,325 surveys were completed for the Academic Technology PD sessions and 2,320 surveys were completed for the Instructional Effectiveness PD sessions.

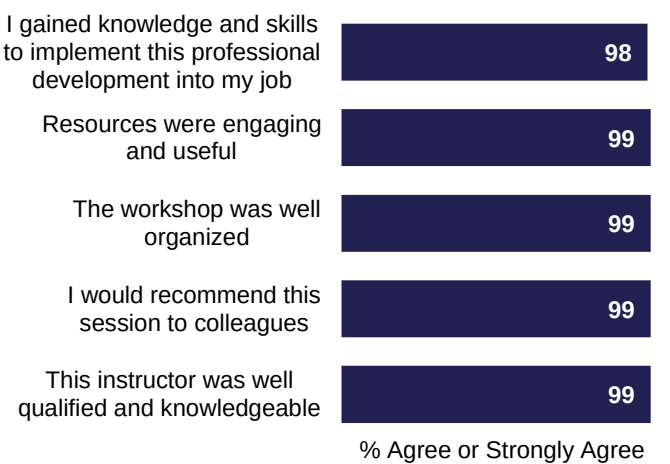
Because of the large number of various sessions, all PD perception responses are reported in aggregate by program. Overall, both programs received high satisfaction ratings (87% or more agreed or strongly agreed across questions). A slightly higher percentage of participants reported satisfaction with the sessions provided by the Instructional Effectiveness program (range: 92% to 99%) than with the sessions provided by the Academic Technology program (range: 87% to 99%). More than 96 percent of the survey respondents for both programs agreed or strongly agreed that they gained knowledge and skills to implement what they learned in their job, resources were engaging and useful, the session was well organized and offered a positive atmosphere, they would recommend the session to their colleagues, and their instructor was well qualified and knowledgeable. Across programs, slightly lower percentages of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had enough time in the training (Academic Technology: 87%; Instructional Effectiveness: 92%) and that the training was appropriate for participants with different skill levels (Academic Technology: 90%; Instructional Effectiveness: 95%). Figures 1 and 2 show key participant perceptions of the PD sessions provided by each program. Full survey details with response rates are provided in the full report.

Figure 1: 2020-21 Selected Instructional Technology Programs Professional Development Feedback Survey – Satisfaction with Academic Technology PD Sessions



Source: PD Feedback Survey data provided by the PDL Department on 06/01/21.
Note: *N* = 1,325. Complete questions and response rates are available in Appendix A of the full report. Participants may have attended multiple sessions; thus, they may have completed the survey more than once. All sessions were provided online from 06/08/20 to 04/30/21.

Figure 2: 2020-21 Selected Instructional Technology Programs Professional Development Feedback Survey – Satisfaction with Instructional Effectiveness PD Sessions



Source: PD Feedback Survey data provided by the PDL Department on 06/01/21.
Note: *N* = 2,320. Complete questions and response rates are available in Appendix A of the full report. Participants may have attended multiple sessions; thus, they may have completed the survey more than once. All sessions were provided online from 06/08/20 to 04/30/21.

Participants also shared open-ended feedback. Complete open-ended questions and number of responses are available in the full report. When asked about recommendations for improvement, participants most frequently made comments that were either neutral or

positive about the session or their trainer but did not provide actionable recommendations (Academic Technology $n = 263$; Instructional Effectiveness $n = 531$). The most commonly articulated suggestions for improvement of PD sessions were to extend the time of the training session (Academic Technology $n = 123$; Instructional Effectiveness $n = 235$), cover fewer topics within a training (Academic Technology $n = 46$; Instructional Effectiveness $n = 67$), and allow time for practice during the session (Academic Technology $n = 31$; Instructional Effectiveness $n = 51$).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue the supports that meet the needs of staff members. PDL department staff members have been responsive to the needs and demands of the district campus and central staff members with the increased amount of technology usage as evidenced by the positive feedback

provided by PD participants. Stakeholders should stay attentive to staff member training and resource needs and continue to provide adequate supports for the use of instructional technology.

Extend the time, or decrease the content, of each PD session. Survey respondents wanted more time in the sessions (Academic Technology $n = 123$; Instructional Effectiveness $n = 235$), and also wanted more time to practice (Academic Technology $n = 31$; Instructional Effectiveness $n = 51$). Providing longer trainings or following the third most common recommendation and covering fewer topics within a training (Academic Technology $n = 46$; Instructional Effectiveness $n = 67$), could provide more time for depth and practice. Stakeholders are encouraged to ensure participants have enough time to learn and practice their new skills by increasing the session time or decreasing the amount of information that is covered.

EA21-637-4

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