

Clare Timblin

Professional Development On Google

The coordinator for after school care for two elementary schools contacted the EdTech team at The Boulder Valley School District to request training on Google Drive and Google tools for her employees. She wanted all of the after school care teachers to use Google tools/Drive for better workflow and collaboration. As an intern with the Boulder Valley EdTech Team I volunteered to present this professional development and was paired to do this training with another member of the EDTech Team.

The coordinator of the after school care indicated in her request that some of the after school teachers were already familiar with Google tools and Google Drive but wanted to know more tips and tricks when using these tools. She also mentioned that some of the teachers did not have any experience with Google tools or Google Drive and would need to be taught the very basics. After much discussion, we decided to split the teachers into two groups. One group we would brand, “walkers”, who would need the basics and a slower pace and the other group, “runners” who would learn more advanced tools at a faster rate. We are able to obtain two training rooms for this purpose.

My partner and I worked together to create an outline to reference during the presentation and slide shows of what we wanted each group to know and what we thought would be most useful. We decided that I would teach the “walkers” while the other team member would teach the “runners”.

The day of the presentation we explained the “walkers” and “runners” concept to the attendees, directing the teachers accordingly to the appointed rooms. We had twenty-five loaner Chromebooks for the teachers to use in case they did not bring their own computers. About fifteen teachers chose to be in the “walker” group and twenty chose to be in the “runner” group.

I began the “walker” session by introducing myself and explaining my position. I then directed the teachers to the slide presentation which was projected onto a large screen from my computer using a casting app. We provided a link for the teachers to access the presentation on their own computers in case they wanted to follow along or make a copy of the presentation. This link remains live for teachers to access at any time in the future for reference. Next, I needed to make sure they could log onto the loaner or their own Chromebook. This actually took quite a bit longer than I had expected. Some teachers did not know their employee number from memory and needed to look it up online. In the future, I will tell to the coordinator to tell her employees to bring it to the training.

The third slide involved a Google Form created for taking attendance and a link to the Google Sheet associated with it to show how the results of the attendance automatically generated a form in real time. I pointed out to the teachers that they could use Google Forms/Sheets in a similar way with parents or for student projects and asked them to turn to a partner and talk about the ways they could see using Google Forms. This exercise was deliberately conducted before the fourth slide about the objectives of the training in order to grab the attention of the attendees. We wanted to show the participants something useful and exciting at the beginning.

In the following few slides I spoke about the difference between Google Docs and Google Drive, as well as some of the other tools. In an effort to engage the participants, I had the teachers turn to each other and discuss how they could use Google Drive and then share out answers as a whole group. I wanted the teachers to feel inspired to use this tool on a personal level, as well as get ideas from each other since they all taught a similar position.

Next I showed the teachers how to open up their own Google Drive and different ways they could organize their files according to their preferences. Most of the teachers already had documents in their Drive that had been shared with them by other people in the district. I also showed them how they could upload documents created in other formats to Google Drive so that they could access them across multiple devices. I gave the teachers about 15 minutes to play in Drive and start to organize their files. Many of the teachers wanted help uploading and organizing their documents. At this point it would have been extremely helpful to have had some assistance from another EdTech Team member to answer questions. I often asked some of the teachers to help their colleagues if they could.

Soon after this I realized that my hour of training would be up and gave a quick explanation of how to use Google Docs, especially its collaborative options. I did not have time to touch upon everything in the slide presentation. I did offer links to the district website where more information could be found on these subjects and other resources.

Overall, I believe that this professional development session was a success. I liked that the teachers learned from each other and I made sure to link their learning to real world application. I would have made a few changes, such as informing the coordinator about the employee ID numbers and possibly leaving out a few of the slides. A few of the teachers seemed

a little overwhelmed, mostly because it was new technology to them, but many seemed excited and enthusiastic about having a new tool. As usual with presenting professional development there doesn't seem to be enough time for all the information I would like to impart. I definitely would like to do another couple of sessions with this same group to solidify their understanding and present some additional ways to use these tools.