Rethinking Conferences and PD Events

Council for Exceptional Children

July 7, 2019
Leadership Institute
Jennifer Bullock & Megan Shea

1

What's Your Story?
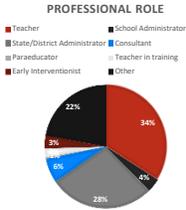
Offerings? Frequency? Successes? Challenges?

2

CEC's Professional Development Needs Assessment

- Conducted via third-party consultant, Dec. 8-22, 2017
- Sample audience included:
  - Administrator
  - Teachers
  - College/University students
  - Paraeducators
  - Higher Education personnel
  - Early Interventionist/related service providers
- Study sample comprised 49,784 records | 6.2% response rate
  - CEC members
  - Non-members
  - Lapsed members

3

Respondent Demographics

PROFESSIONAL ROLE

- Teacher
- School Administrator
- State/District Administrator
- Consultant
- Paraeducator
- Teacher in training
- Early Interventionist
- Other

Survey questions were unique to respondent demographic, and spanned topics from PD topic, delivery, format preferences to licensure/recertification requirements.

- Teachers made up the largest portion of respondents (34%), State/District Administrators a close second (28%), and "Other" (including college/university faculty, educational diagnosticians, and transition coordinators) third (22%).

4

Respondent Demographics

- The majority of teachers responding had been teaching for more than 20 years, with the average tenure just over 14 years
- Administrator respondents averaged about 11 years experience as administrators, with an average of 11 years of additional experience as teachers
- Almost 90% of survey respondents were female

5

Response Themes

Delivery Preferences

- Blended 37%
- Live, in-person 40%
- Online 23%
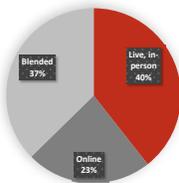
- Those who preferred "live" course cited that the interactivity inherent to live courses were the primary reason for this preference
- Those who preferred "online or blended" courses cited varied reasons (self-paced, decreased out-of-class time, etc.)

6

Response Themes

PD Topic Preferences: Top 5

- Developing Meaningful Behavior Intervention plans (58.3%)
- Specially Designed Instruction (52%)
- Developing and Documenting Student Plans (48%)
- Collaboration and Co-Teaching (43.6%)
- Supervising Paraprofessionals (42%)

* Most common "other" response was variations of "Family engagement/Working collaboratively with families"

7

Response Themes

Acquiring PD

- Nearly 9 in 10 respondents said their state, province or district allows them to obtain PD hours from outside agencies (like CEC or its Divisions/Units) to count toward annual recertification requirements
- School or district in-services/state conferences were the most common PD activities cited in the past 3 years.
- Who pays for PD costs (registration, travel, etc.)?
  - The school/district pays for all PD costs=34%
  - Respondent pays for all PD costs= 30%

8

Using the Assessment Data

As a *component* in PD/content planning
- Historical attendance data
- Indicators of interest in topic areas across CEC's products/services
- Association industry trends & best practices
- Emerging trends in Special Education

9

Scan of PD Strategies: Association

Report by the Association for Learning & Technology (2017) : 237 survey responses from professional associations on PD strategies

- 92.6% use technology for learning
  - Webinars: 91.4%
  - Asynchronous e-learning courses: 72.8%
- Emerging learning trends
  - Flipped classes, microlearning (highest adoption rate in 2017-2018) mobile learning, micro credentials (15%), and MOOCs (under 10%)
- Almost half (48%) have increased net revenue from PD offerings
  - 70% offer PD to support a credential
- Business models for PD divided: PD as a revenue stream or benefit of membership

10

What Does it All Mean?

How can we use this information in planning PD/Conferences?
  ◦ Marketing: communicating differently with different audiences
  ◦ Membership/Value: better understanding member needs and priorities
  ◦ PD/Convention: clear priorities of content and needs across our audiences

11

Making the most of this information

What is your Division/Unit doing that mirrors/differs from other Associations?

12

General PD Design

- Have a Program Concept, and make sure every component of the program contributes to your concept (know your brand)
- Communicate your program concept to potential attendees
- Relay your concept to your speakers/presenters from the CFP→ execution
  - Lay out expectations/concept in CFP
  - Reinforce concept in speaker prep efforts
  - Content & presentation reviews

  - Helpful checklist for selecting/planning sessions and program content:
    - Relevant?
    - Current?
    - Tailored?
    - Professional?
    - Engaging?

13

Tips for PD Planning

- Understand adult learning principles and prepare others to do the same
  - Adults need to know what's in it for them (relevancy)
  - Adults bring their unique personal and professional experience to learning (individualized)
  - Adults need solutions to real problems (actionable strategies and resources)
  - Adults retain best when knowledge is gained through experiential learning
    Adapted from Nappi, RJ, CAE & Vieder, DB, Education Programs, Professional Practices in Association Management, 2nd Edition, Association Management Press, 2007
- Motivate volunteers to lend *content* expertise, not conference/event planning or execution
- After session selection and prep, there's still more to do.
  Design evaluations that give planners the information they need most.

14

How to Best Deliver Your PD

Costs
  ◦ For the attendee
  ◦ For your Unit/Division (HR, design, travel, space, F&B, onsite execution, webinar platform fees, presenter honorariums, etc.)

Participants' availability

Time commitment for staff/volunteers
  ◦ CEC convention has approximately 125 volunteers, 6 temps, and 20 staff on-site, plus over 500 volunteers pre-convention
  ◦ Webinars possible with 1 staff manager, a presenter and marketing support

PDHs/CEUs
  ◦ Does your state/province (or the host state) allow attendees to claim PDHs?

Content
  ◦ Which delivery format best complements the content and learning goals?

15

Live vs. Online

Live	Online (Webinar)
Typically ½ or full day of learning	Typically one hour in length
Best for group learning & interaction	Best for individual learning & convenience
Best for deep-dive learning	Best for focused, actionable learning (or calls to action)
Typically higher investment for attendees & org (inflexible)	Typically lower investment for attendees & org (more flexible delivery option)

16

Webinar Planning

Business models

Content: What do your members need most? What content can be effective in a webinar format? What resources can you provide to continue the learning?

Selecting the right platform for your size/needs/purpose

Determine ONE person to manage the webinar process

Registration/communication management

Marketing plan

Speaker management

Customer service & troubleshooting

17

Selecting a Platform/Subscription Plan

Things to think about:

Attendee volume → Is the platform priced by "seats"?

Registration functionality → What do you need?

Pricing plan → Monthly/annually/by event

Time limits on events

Recording capabilities

In-webinar chat/attendee communication options

Evaluation capabilities

Analytics & reporting options → What do you need to know?

This list and comparisons of popular 2019 platforms on your handout

18

Tips & Notes: Registrations

How will registration be handled? Directly on platform or through another system?

CEC trends:

Marketing success: Emails 3 weeks and 1 week to a few days out

Week of = registration peaks

CEC average attendance rates:
◦ Free webinars: 35-40% of registrants
◦ Paid webinars: 80-85%

19

Running the Webinar

Determine ONE person to moderate/manage the webinar

Schedule a practice-run (iron out the plan with presenter—webcams, slide advancement, etc.)

Decide when slides/handouts are due

Determine how attendee questions will be handled (by whom, chat box only, etc.)

Have a back-up of slides & videos

Know if captioning (or other accommodations) are needed

Log in early (troubleshooting)

Evaluate program/Follow-up with attendees

20

Who's seen a "Bad Webinar?"

Tell us your horror stories…

21

Webinar Best Practices

DO:

Limit your presentation time (approximately 1 hour)

Test-drive your presentation

Remind participants to mute themselves

Close programs that have alerts

Have handouts available

Be prepared for technical questions

DON'T:

Speak too quickly/rush

Have too much text on slides

Expect too much interactivity

Forget accessibility needs

Forget about good adult learning practices

Neglect to evaluate all facets of the webinar

22

Resources

• Velvet Chainsaw Midcourse Corrections blog: https://velvetchainsaw.com/

• Velvet Chainsaw Conference Newsletters Archive: https://velvetchainsaw.com/brain-candy/newsletters/

• Bloom's Taxonomy of Action Verbs: https://www.apu.edu/live_data/files/333/blooms_taxonomy_action_verbs.pdf

Questions?

23