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Passion and Professional Development: Four Philosophies For Lead Learners

A passionate student is a learning student¹, and the same is true for teachers. If you are leading a professional development event, be sure to engage participants on an emotional level—aim to unleash their passions. These four philosophies can help.

The Lead Learner Philosophy: Don't think of yourself as a trainer or instructor. Think of yourself as a Lead Learner. After all, the best leaders are also learners. Be passionate about what you are learning (and the session you are leading). Enthusiasm is contagious.

The Face-to-Face Philosophy: In today's world of blogs and podcasts, information transmission is no longer an excuse for a face-to-face meeting. It's a terrible waste. Respect the participants in your session by tapping into their experience, their passions, and their creative energy. Include many opportunities for interaction in your agenda, and provide links where they can access "how-to" details after the session.

The "and Life" Philosophy: Pets and babies help more teachers learn about technology than any trainer. Don't hesitate to connect with participants' lives outside of school. Invite them to share ways they can use what they are learning for personal goals. Also, remember they need to care about whatever they are learning—it needs to be relevant to their work, and ultimately, their life.

The Kindergarten Philosophy: Each positive experience a student has in kindergarten is a \$1 deposit in their "love of learning" bank, but every negative experience is a \$10 withdrawal. Be sure your participants enjoy your session, even if it means moving slowly. Also, be sure participants "practice with a purpose." Remember, your job is still to help them be the best people they can be.²

Notes:

1. Thanks to Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach. This hook came out of a collaborative brainstorming session with her.
2. Thanks to Eva Wagner, kindergarten teacher, professional developer, and frequent inspiration to the author. (She's also his wife.)



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