

Professional Development → Grant Writing in KWCPS

James Madison University

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Introduction→

Let's first begin by back tracking to January. On a cold Wednesday night I met Dr. Karen Richardson for the first time. I had heard of the organization VISTE and colleagues of mine had sat in on a few of her sessions but little did I know that over the course of four months she would teach me so much. That very first Wednesday evening she explained the concept of this course. She informed us that we would need locate our counties Educational Technology plan and begin looking over it. I will be honest, I only signed up for this class originally because it was the last class I needed for my core graduation requirements but these past few months have been amazing. I really learned how to take an idea and form it into something great; how to find an area of weakness and turn it into strength simply by going out on a limb and taking a few risks. The focus of this paper will be on a professional development plan for King William County Public Schools.

Background→

Our first assignment for the semester was to critique our counties Educational Technology plan. I was fortunate because my county updated their plan just last year, making it one of the most recent plans to evaluate. Below you will find the strengths and weaknesses I located in the plan.

Strengths found within the plan

I will admit I am very impressed with the plan set forth by King William County Public Schools. I was fortunate to find many strengths within the plan. The first strength is that each goal is clearly stated and measureable. We are all guilty of dreaming big and setting goals that simply can't be reached. This plan sets forth obtainable goals. In addition to these goals there are also reasoning and rationales for how these goals will be reached. It

helps decrease the chances for errors and oversights.

A second strength would be the attached appendixes. It is much easier to understand what you are reading when you can see first hand what is being described. Lastly, the plan is organized in such a way that it flows in a sequence. This helps the reader and committee members sort through the plan with little to no difficulty.

Weaknesses found within the plan

In addition to these great strengths the plan also has a few weaknesses. One weakness would be the lack of a timeline. As mentioned each goal is clearly stated, and the plan is current for the next six years, however there is no specific timeline as to when these goals will be implemented. Obviously before the end of six years but specific dates would help keep the committee on track and held accountable.

The plan also spoke of professional development and the survey asked for specific topics but no additional details were mentioned regarding PD. Lastly, some of the goals seemed mixed up-the plan could benefit from being organized by each goal as well as each school within our small county.

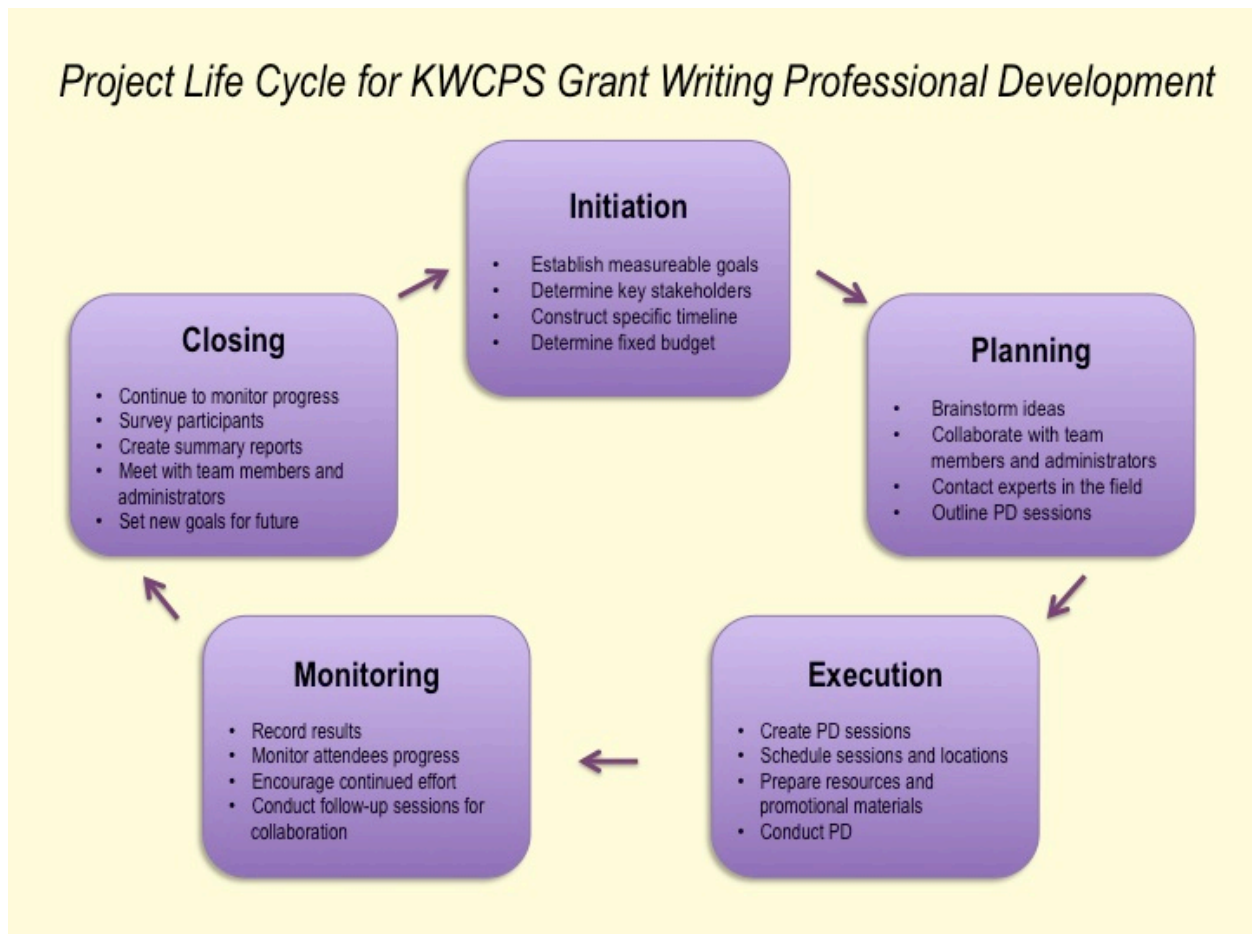
Checklist: Are the following found within KWCPs Educational Technology Plan?

| Are the objectives: | Yes | No | Rationale |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------|---|
| Specific | X | | Each goal and objective are clearly found within the plan. Each objective also correlates with a specific goal making the connection clearly visible. |
| Measureable | X | | Each objective also has a clear rationale for achievement. This helps the objectives to remain measureable. |
| Achievable | X | X | All objectives can easily be achieved if funds and effort remain high. Some objectives will remain on the fence until funds are available. |

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|--|
| Realistic/Reasonable | X | | For the most part the goals seem realistic. However our technology department isn't overflowing with staff and therefore some objectives will take extra hands and forces. |
| Timebound | | X | This is the area that appears lacking. No specific timeframes are given. This would certainly help with accountability. |

After taking the time to identify the weaknesses the next task was to decide on one specific weakness and begin to brainstorm ideas for professional development for that specific weakness. After discussing these weaknesses with both my classmates and Dr. Richardson it was decided that King William spoke often in their plan about using grants to fund their technologies however nothing was done to prepare the faculty and staff for such grant writing opportunities. This was now the focus of my professional development plan.

Project Life Cycle→



After submitting my project life cycle some additional suggestions were made concerning timeframes and tools used for the PD.

Main Goal→

The main goal of this professional development plan is to equip the faculty and staff of King William County Public Schools with the necessary tools and capability to apply for and be awarded grants for monies to be used in the areas of technology.

Necessary Tools→

KW's plan focuses heavily on implementing these technologies into our classrooms but as we all know funds are exceptionally low. If teachers were made aware of grant options as well as trained in how to prepare and write grants the opportunities would hopefully increase and these technologies could be implemented into our classrooms. This semester I have found some neat web 2.0 tools that could help collect and organize the data and information however, for my teachers in KW some of these tools might simply be too much! I need simple to use and easy to understand. I really feel like I need a tool that can help me organize data and provide grant opportunities for my teachers. For this professional development project I think it would be best to create a Diigo page where resources/links can be shared for only those on our staff to see and a wiki/blog for me to update about our progress as well as our successes and new implementations. In addition to these options Google Docs would be the best place for us to store our grant proposals as well as work collaboratively together.

People Involved→

Below you will find a list of those people involved in my professional development plan,

this list is comprised of only people involved at my specific building however the list should be similar for each building in King William.

1. Myself-Leader/Facilitator
2. VDOE facilitator who would be familiar with grant writing
3. Faculty and Staff @ AES
4. Administration-Both @ AES and Central Office
5. Grade Level Leaders-who will facilitate small group work during our PD
6. Technology Team for KW
7. Parents from within the county

Time→

Since this professional development does not relate to beginning of the year meetings and the craziness that accompanies the first few weeks of school I have decided that this professional development could take place either during one full day of PD or possibly four 90 minutes sessions. This could take place one day a week after school for a month or on a full day devoted to PD. Regardless the PD would be broken into 4 sessions. As for a timeline prior to the PD here is what I am thinking:

- 2-3 months prior to PD- contact VDOE for guidance and support
- 1 month prior to PD-establish a small team of grade level leaders and meet about the expectations of the PD, invited VDOE consultant to join.
- 1 month prior to PD-Plan and implement your four sessions
- During the 1 month leading up to the PD-create, design and develop your PD
- The week prior to PD-really get your faculty and staff excited about the possibilities these grants will offer

- Don't forget to follow up, keep the teachers excited about their grant writing
- Constantly brag on their accomplishments

Money→

Below you will find an *estimated* budget:

1. \$1000 to pay for VDOE or expert in the field (hoping this service would be free)
2. \$200 for continental breakfast and lunch for staff
3. \$100 for supplies
4. \$200 extra for additional expenses (prizes, snacks, items for follow up meetings, etc)

Total: \$1500

Risks→

Any time you are responsible for a large project the list of risks seem to go on forever.

However I felt as though the long list could be condensed.

- Lack of funds
- Lack of enthusiasm from veteran teachers (seems to always be an issue in my building)
- Burn out rate
- No grants available
- No grants awarded after effort
- No help from VDOE
- Lack of support from administration
- Technical issues-always!!

Interviews→

Below you will find my blog entry concerning my interview with Mr. Mike Embrey and Mr. Gerrit VanVoorhees, please excuse the conversational tone.

When the semester started and I had to locate KW's Ed. Tech plan I started with the two most interesting people I could find. Mr. Gerrit VanVoorhees (Director of Technology for KW) and Mike Embrey (ITRT for KW). Of course I felt like my email was very well written and I even asked politely where I could located the Ed. Tech plan. Well! These two goonies made me feel like sludge. They both responded to me that the Ed. Tech plan was MANDATORY but the state of VA and of course KW had on! Well after I smarted off to both of them they emailed me the plan and I began dissecting it-of course hoping to find TONS of flaws so I could put them back in their place! haha! Sadly the plan was very well written. Since the plan is good for a number of years I lucked out but having a fairly recent plan to review. KW just revised their plan last year. Both VanVoorhees and Embrey (once they got off their high horse) took time to review the plan with me and help me feel much better about it's true purpose. The area that I identified as a weakness would be the area of grant writing. We have all these big ideas and concepts that we want to implement into our classrooms however we don't have the funds to make these things happen. Grant writing seemed to be an EXCELLENT way to make these ideas come to life. I was able to catch up with both Mike and Gerrit one afternoon in Gerrit's office. I asked them their take on the idea of grant writing PD and some possible ways to get the teachers excited about these things and they both were sorta at a loss for words. They said no one had every really brought up the idea and that most time the administrators spend their funds on Language Arts PD and not much time or monies are left over for PD related to technology and grant

writing. In jest they both said if I created it they would have no problem helping to put it on. They both said they understand the need for such PD and that if it was to really happen we might be amazed at how much money we save when grants were awarded and those monies could be used for other things. Then I popped their bubble and told them it was all hypothetical. They also agreed with my proposed plan for one long day or a couple afternoons each week, etc. They too thought that VDOE would be an EXCELLENT place to start!! During this time we also briefly looked over the plan and identified some areas that they are currently working toward accomplishing as well as those in the near future. I do whatever I can to keep my foot in the door and keep these two goonies happy so that when that ITRT position becomes available they will remember this fabulous face!!!

Assessments→

The assessment piece for this professional development will actually not be that difficult. The teachers participating in these workshops won't be taking a summative assessment at the completion of the PD. They will however be formatively assessed through this whole process. We will all be assessing each other and giving feedback before grant proposals ever leave the building.

Questions to Focus on→

1. What areas show need of development as seen in the various plans?
 - Funding for technology resources
 - Professional Development in Language Arts
2. Who is the target audience? Will it be used for kindergarten teachers? Will it be used for all school faculties? Is this something students are in need of?
 - Faculty and Staff at all four schools in King William County

3. Is this training you can conduct? Or will you need to bring in outside trainers?
 - Led by myself, grade level leaders and VDOE consultant
4. Is there a budget? Can you develop a training that uses materials that will be purchased?
 - A small hypothetical budget
5. What is the timeline? How soon will this staff development be needed? Does it need to be developed and implemented by next month? Does it need to be developed for next year?
 - The quicker this staff development is created and implemented the better.
6. How do you want this training delivered? Do they want you to make this an online training where teachers can just access your PowerPoint? Do they intend to have a staff development or training meeting where it is essential to have a presenter? Can this training be delivered via video broadcasting?
 - Staff Development
 - One full day, or
 - Four 90 minute sessions after school