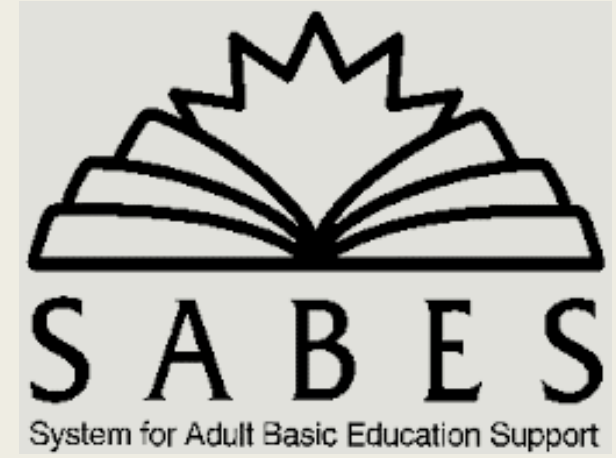# A BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
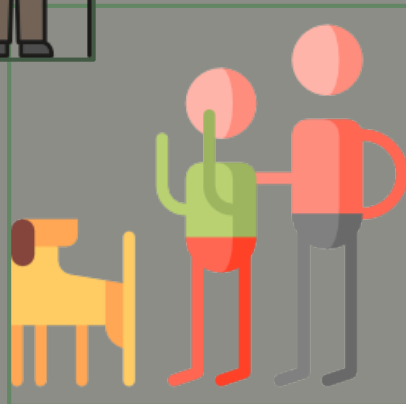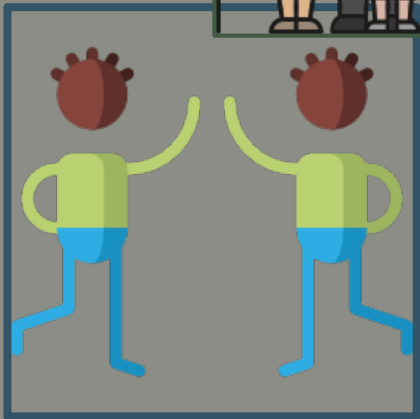
MATSOL CONFERENCE, 2018
FRAMINGHAM, MA
DORI MCCORMACK
KATE ANDERSON

SABES
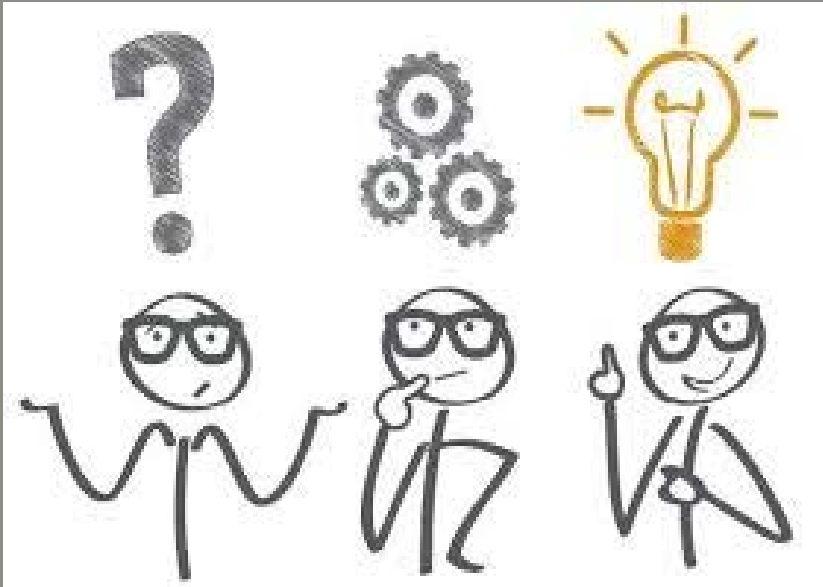System for Adult Basic Education Support

Who are we? And what are we doing here?

Objectives for session

1. Describe the components of a successful blending learning model for professional development

2. Explain the benefits of the specific features of the above model

3. Consider how you might apply this model to your work situation

The plan for today

Agenda

- Background- The problem

- Process – Tackling the problem

- Results – Solving the problem
  Evaluating the results

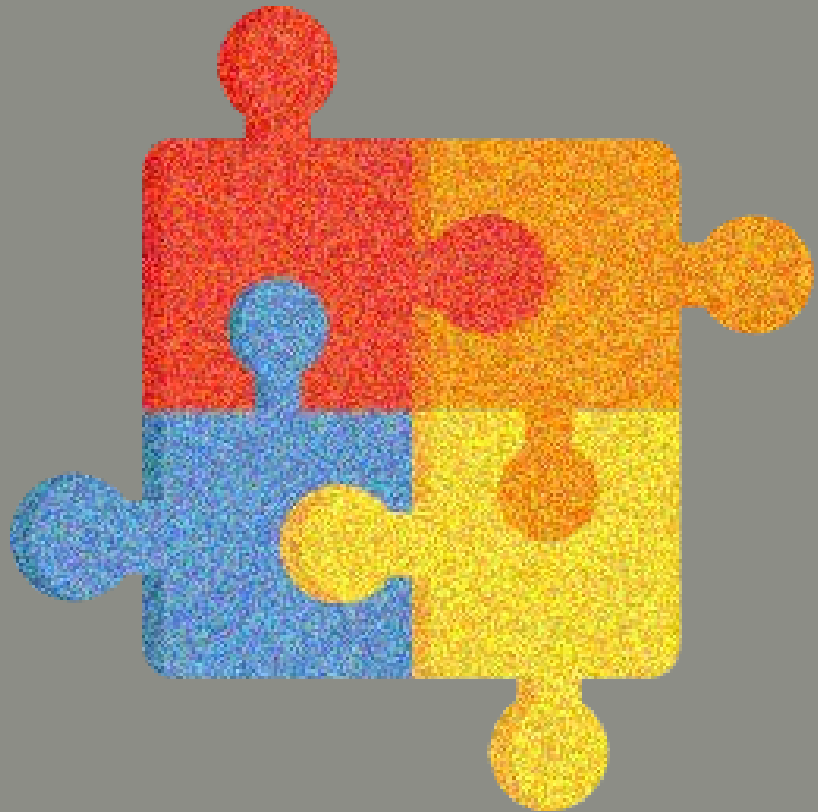- Next Steps – Continuous
  improvement

Let's Take a Look Back

From the beginning ...

- Pre-packaged workshops

- Only face-to-face delivery

- Loaded with information

- Presenters provided and trained by funder.

What Was Missing?

- Little Interactivity

- No emphasis on the application of learning and reflection

- No follow-up support / short duration

- Limited access for statewide participation / technology

- Limited opportunity to measure the impact of the PD on teacher practice
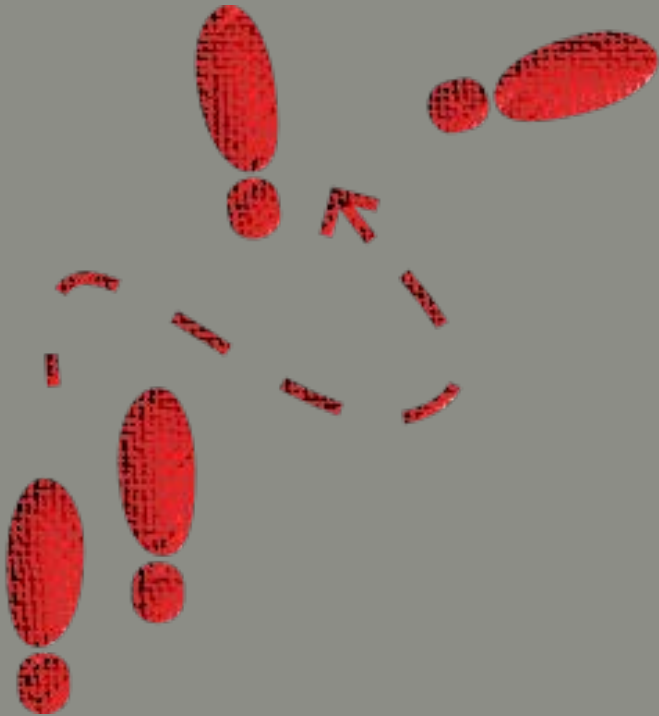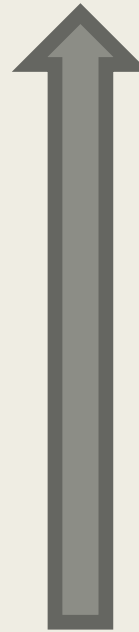
How Do We Fix IT?

- Increase duration

- Spread out the material

- Free up time for interaction

- Provide follow-up support for application and reflection

- Promote and model digital literacy

- By adding online components

Our Approach

Success!

Success?

What people think success looks like.

What success *actually* looks like.

Phase 1:

1

- Tried to revise F2F session to include more activities

- Emphasized application of learning:

  -Added learning objective

  -Included a Follow-up Plan as part of f2f session

- Added Blackboard Discussion Board

  -To continue the discussion from f2f

  -To encourage and model digital literacy

  -Trained team of presenters

Results?

- F2F sessions remained too "information heavy"

- Online content did not engage

- Minimal participation

- Redefined set of problems!

Phase 2:

2

1

- Continued and modified online discussions

- <u>Added webinars</u> – virtual sessions

- Contents of online components would come organically from f2f and Bb discussions

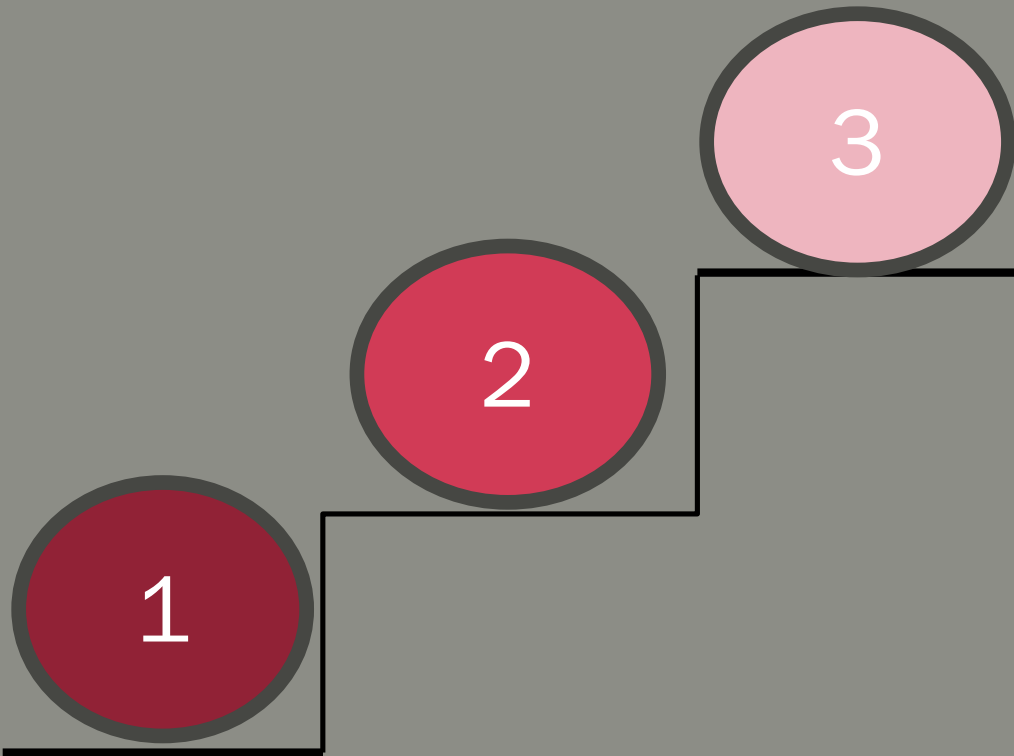- Continued with support and training for facilitators

Results?

- Participation increased, but still not optimal

- Online content still not robust enough

- Required a great deal from presenters to generate the content

Phase 3:

1 **2** **3**

Fully blended the PD

- Put resources (time, money, people) into the process which we lovingly call "Hybridization"
    - Furnished the online discussions with robust resources: videos, application examples, readings, and scheduled weekly assignments
    - Provided structure and materials for webinars
    - Connected the online components to f2f
- Gave presenters tools AND more ownership of discussions, webinars, announcements
- Brought team on board; got buy in
- Ongoing training and support of facilitators and practitioners

Results?

- Thinned out dense content in f2f session

- More interaction during f2f session

- Greater participation in all online activities

- Evidence of both application of learning and reflection

- Longer duration (from 5.5 to 8-10 hrs.); PDP eligible

- Happier, successful presenters

- Now the model for almost all PD through the ESOL PD Center

The Model

- Blended: F2F – Online discussion - Webinar

- All 3 components are equally robust and structured

- All 3 components are related and build on each other

- Online components are promoted positively

- Emphasis across the board is on <u>application</u> and <u>reflection</u>

- Online components provide follow-up support

- Ample tech support and training are provided

- Participation is tracked

How do we measure success?

- Demonstrated evidence of activity via Blackboard

- Tracking participant online involvement by presenters

- Evaluation responses

- Anecdotal evidence from participants and facilitators

Supporting Data

- **68%** participated in the online discussions within Blackboard.

- **81%** participated in the follow-up webinar.

- **80%** of respondents found the online components helpful in their efforts to apply their learning from the face-to-face session.

Comments From the Field:

Usefulness of online components ?

- *"I have always tried out at least one idea offered by the instructional component (online) of the workshops."*
- *"I am incorporating much of what I learned in the session into our tutor trainings."*
- *"(In the discussion board) there were many instances of teachers sharing what happened in their class ... when using a new strategy."*
- *"The Blackboard course for Cultural Awareness had a lot of great resources!"*

Comments From the Field:

What have you tried?

- *"Developing reachable objectives for students and being able to assess the class by more methods than just testing."*

- *"Backward design, think/pair/share, reducing teacher talk time ..."*

- *"Differentiated learning, application of SLA research principles, authentic communication activities, functional language lessons..."*

- *"I introduced grammar tenses I usually don't use with beginners and low-intermediate – it went quite well!"*

- *"The info I learned for SLA informs my lesson planning heavily!"*

Comments From the Field:

Other

- *"To me the webinars are much more useful than when each person has to post and we have to answer. Some of our colleagues agreed posting was less help. So yes, I think the webinars are very good."*

- *"The most helpful PD's for me are one that transferred information. I prefer those to group brainstorms and experience sharing."*

Where do we go from here?

- Increase participation in online discussions

- Refine impact evaluation process

- Increase director involvement

- Establish teacher cohorts

- Support individual programs directly

- Video instruction- for reflection and as models

Questions?

SABES: http://sabes.org/pd-center/esol