

CHAPTER 4

Using the Professional Development Series

The eight training modules are truly the heart of the *EDJJ Professional Development series*. Each module is designed to assist facilitators in bringing professionals up to date on essential components of special education services in the juvenile justice system. Facilitators who have been involved in the piloting of these modules have found them to be a tremendous asset. The series provides the necessary foundation and updated information to empower these professionals to better serve the youth in the juvenile justice system. Each module both serves as a building block and stands on its own. It is important to remember that the purpose of the *EDJJ Professional Development Series* is to help professionals develop and apply problem-solving skills using the content presented in the modules.

To provide a uniform and easy to follow style, all modules have a similar format. There are activities embedded in the content for each topic and transparencies are included at the end of each module. Each begins with a table of contents showing the areas of focus and details for each topic. The Facilitator's Manual provides additional information, resources, and application activities for facilitators. Steps to coordinate workshop activities have been delineated where facilitators can use as many activities as needed and add their own activities to complement them. Whenever facilitators determine new ways of presenting ideas or improving the content or delivery of the *EDJJ Professional Development Series*, they are encouraged to implement, inform, and share these modifications with the EDJJ

team. The EDJJ team is constantly updating materials to meet current needs. The *EDJJ Professional Development Series* activities encourage innovative ideas and approaches, ingenuity in producing effective strategies, and welcome serendipity in the process of implementation.

Getting Started

Although there is no specific way that a site must implement the *EDJJ Professional Development Series*, nor is there a specific timeframe in which one has to complete all eight modules, each facilitator must develop a framework for the topic to be covered. Some sites may prefer to pick and choose a topic/module; others may prefer to use a few modules or the whole series. Facilitators may have to develop a process for implementation for each individual site and ensure that all EDJJ professional development experiences are tracked and monitored.

Administering the PD program

After the sites have indicated their interest in *the EDJJ Professional Development Series*, facilitators in collaboration with the EDJJ professional development team, may ask the relevant staff from these sites to complete the EDJJ professional development planning guide presented at the end of this chapter. After completion of the planning guide, each site should provide a summarized statement on the following three objectives:

1. Student learning outcome(s) to be accomplished with this professional development experience;

2. Skills and knowledge participants (teachers, administrators, and other staff) will accomplish to produce the student learning outcome(s); and
3. A system-wide accountability system to support the student learning outcome(s) related to this professional development experience.

The rationale for developing the three objectives is based upon Bandura's Theory (1971) what we think, hope, or anticipate influences what we do (in actions) and what we produce (in outcomes). Therefore, we need to inquire about anticipated outcomes from these professional development experiences in order to make better predictions for learner success. In addition, we need to measure progress toward these goals with a reasonable degree of precision. After the projected outcomes are identified, the facilitator may begin workshop activities. They should inform their learners what they are expected to gain these experiences. Each module provides a list of objectives that can be adapted or modified as needed.

General Instructions

Facilitators should begin the process by maintaining a Facilitator's Log for themselves. They should also encourage participants to develop an EDJJ Professional Development Plan for themselves. It is important that professional development activities relate to the participants' experiences and turn out to be self-enhancing, engaging, and exciting for learners. Facilitators are encouraged to preview the modules, related literature, and the site goals and practices. Participants should set goals, monitor progress, and assess results in relation to the goals. The facilitation

process should empower the participants to think independently, as well as to reflect on the quality of their own thinking.

Collaborations

A National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE, 1997) report indicates that administrators frequently pay more attention to resources, supports, and materials, than to establishing collaborative relationships with partners. Administrators often assume that their staff knows how to form professional relationships and forget that these relationships often rely on leadership, support, and a plan of action. The EDJJ professional development process is a comprehensive program and not simply an in-service workshop experience; we strongly recommend that the professional development experiences at the sites nurture partnerships. Facilitators should encourage teams to establish these relationships for they will provide huge returns, not just in the professional development experience but also in their day-to-day professional relationships with each other.

Parent Involvement

Parents are valuable assets to any EDJJ professional development experience. Facilitators should encourage sites to include parents in these experiences and view them as supports and resources. Facilitators are encouraged to share resources on effective practices for parents involved with the juvenile justice system. One of the resources is the EDJJ website that provides continually updated information on how to improve interactions with parents, develop positive attitudes toward them, and increase positive communication with them.

Ongoing Tracking

The only way we will know that the experiences of the *EDJJ Professional Development Series* experiences are working is continual by monitoring of the three preestablished outcomes. We must improve the capacity of the sites and the participants in each professional development experience in terms of outcomes for students. The focus must be on facilitation as it fuels learning, and every facilitator should attend to the use of reliable and effective methods of instruction.

Professional development goes beyond the term *training*, with its implications of learning skills and encompasses a definition that includes formal and informal means of helping educators, not only to learn or expand upon skills, but also to develop opportunities for application for new learning. Our definition of professional development includes continual support for educators as they encounter the challenges of teaching within the juvenile justice system. We recommend empirically validated best practices to meet these challenges on a daily basis.

Professional development is different from traditional in-service training (Bellanca, 1995). In-service training implies scheduling speakers to introduce a topic for one or two workshops or days whereas professional development is an ongoing, planned, collaborative, and systemic process geared to produce accountable, goal directed changes for all stakeholders. There is some evidence that educators who receive productive, sustained, coordinated, and outcome-based professional development experiences geared toward higher-order thinking skills and hands-on

learning activities are more likely to engage in effective classroom practices
(Wenglinsky, 2000).