1. What is the learning objective or goal for the Professional Development and Leadership Scenario?

The learning objective for this scenario is to provide teachers with best practice information and resources about the use of iPads in the educational setting including information on how using iPads enhances learning. I chose to address the elementary school level.

1. In regard to the Scenario specifically, describe the steps required to accomplish the learning objective or goal.

The first step to creating any professional development is to research the current trends and information available. A Google search of “best practices of Ipad use in the classroom” brought up many relevant and helpful studies and anecdotal evidence. As with any search engine results care must be taken to evaluate the source of the information and their purpose for publishing. Another source of information would be peers working at other schools/districts that have successfully put this piece into place in their schools. Laconia has successfully implemented Ipad carts in their elementary schools, so I will be discussing with the Technology Integrator at Woodland Heights what has transpired in that journey. Remember to check in with staff at your own school as some may have attended outside training or have a keen interest that may provide strategies or insight directly related to your school. In addition to compiling the information, it is important to test software being recommended. While creating the presentation, you must be mindful of your audiences - realizing that the administration will have a different set of concerns than tech-friendly teachers whose concerns will differ from those of tech-phobic teachers. Typically, in staff professional development, you will also have a group of professionals that don’t quite fit such as specialists and support staff so it is important to find information that is relevant to them as well. After deciding on information to be presented, the next step is to cull the presentation and create a summary that can be handed out as a trigger for remembering pieces of the presentation. Having that summary available as a wikipage makes the information more readily usable (and findable!) as teachers can click on links rather than having to retype them and it is harder to lose a wikipage than a sheet of paper. Once the presentation is complete and the summary handout is given, it is important to be available as staff puts the information in to their everyday life. Just like we wouldn’t teach a concept and expect kids to do it all on their own from memory and notes, we can’t expect our staff to not need support in applying the new information. We can also be that pat on the back that helps keep folks going when things seem really rough. Since we are the experts of this piece, we need to serve as the liaison between the teachers and the administration helping the latter see the successes being brought about by the new technology.

1. In regard to the Scenario specifically, identify the points of collaboration with others that were required in order to meet the learning objective or goal?  How will you make those connections?

The first and foremost connection would be with your LMS/TI counterpart where you should share opinions, information, and resources while discussing the direction that the presentation should take. It would be helpful to speak with the principal and more fully clarify his/her stand on the issue to better address concerns during the presentation. Seeking out key persons who have substantial interest and/or training in the subject would bring their expertise under the umbrella of your collaboration and reaching out to “pick the brain” of colleagues in other schools/districts could add to the depth of expertise being provided. Assembling all the information becomes a task for you and your partner along with coming to an agreement about what type of presentation to do and who will present which information. The summary should be worked on together so that both of you are fully represented in the information provided. The presentation should provide opportunities for feedback that should be recorded and included as an addendum to the presentation. Once the presentation is completed, it becomes your responsibility to be the “knowledgeable other” helping staff when they have questions or problems. Paying careful attention will reveal areas where further professional development may be needed. You will also be a liaison between the users of the technology and the administration that oversees it through careful observation and data collection that is shared upwards.

1. How does the Handout reinforce or extend the learning provided by the workshop?

The most important thing about the handout is that it provides the URL to the wikipage I created that had extensive resources that I couldn’t possibly include on the Best Practices Handout. In Laconia School District, most professional development gets recorded on a wikipage that is accessible to staff. That comes in very handy when you can’t find the handout you are looking for but you can remember the training that you went to.

1. Reflect on your personal learning for this week.

This is a new concept for me. I’ve never written a Best Practices page before, so not only did I need to research using Ipads in classrooms but I had to lookup how to write a Best Practices article. Learning is in overload this week. Talking with the TI for Laconia School District I made the comment that I wasn’t sure how I would get all the important info on one page and she reminded me that she creates a wikipage with resources after professional development workshops. Another benefit of checking in with peers in other schools/districts! I find that the resource that works best for person A may not meet the needs of person B so I compiled many resources on my wikipage so that teachers could go through and find the ones that work for them whether it is finding apps for the classroom or justifying iPad use in particular content areas. While I may have more experience with the technology, I am by no means the final authority and feel it is my job to provide easy access to a variety of resources rather than dictate which resources should be used. Part of the sharing process will hopefully open a two-way street with colleagues sharing resources with me as well.

While doing the research for this project, I found lots of different, sometimes opposing, information out there. This is understandable given the speed with which iPad use in education has taken off. Whenever we are working with cutting edge technology, it is important to stay alert to new resources and information that may turn up over time rather than just washing our hands and putting the subject to bed so to speak. The benefit of adding the wikipage is that new information can be added and case studies from our own school can be constructed and added for others to find when they do a Google search of “best practices of Ipad use in the classroom” and are directed to our wikipage!