Part Five: JIT • JIC • JBC (from Chapter 8 of Summercore Primer)
Just In Time • Just In Case • Just Because

Overview? Kevin McAllister (formerly from Loomis Chaffee School) worked for Summercore in 1993. He writes frequently on the listservs about JIT vs JIC. My purpose in including this to you is to share my own philosophy (different from his) in that JBC is an important, valid third type of training!

Kevin J. McAllister, President, inResonance (www.inresonance.com)

First, here is Kevin's post on a listserv. He usually shares this perspective once a year!

Friday, June 22, 2001 From: Kevin re JIT

I am looking for some innovative ways to attract faculty to computer training classes. Does anyone have a particular approach that has been successful? What classes are you offering for you faculty? Currently I offer a monthly list of courses as well as individual meetings and the participation rate varies. This is a key issue in technology integration for schools ... how to get faculty to the training that they need.

Here is the pattern that we see with multiple schools.
1. Based on support calls to IT it is clear that faculty need training on applications as well as OS and networking.
2. IT scrambles to find time and offers classes on a variety of topics after school or weekends or nights.
3. Despite lots of conversations few faculty attend, and even after some initial success with some classes, attendance is minimal overall.
4. IT sends out a questionnaire asking people what they want.
5. Based on the questionnaire IT schedules more training.
6. The attendance pattern is the same.
7. IT gets frustrated and stops offering classes and gets surly when people ask for support on things that would have been covered in training.

Each school thinks this pattern is unique to its faculty. I think that this pattern does NOT indicate that:
1. Faculty do not need training.
2. Faculty do not know that they need training.
3. Faculty do not want to be trained.
It indicates that this kind of training overall will not work for most independent schools. So ... what are the options? I suggest that this underlines the difference between JIT (Just in Time) training vs. JIC (Just in Case)training.

JIT (Just in time) - focused relevant quick tutorials about a specific topic that they need at that moment to complete a project in progress.
Examples:
-- A 30 minute tutorial on scanning and resizing images for a class that is in the middle of making

family history iMovies for an oral history class.
-- A 30 minute tutorial on using iMovie for a class making iMovie oral history projects.
-- A 30 minute tutorial on folder and conference sub-administration for teachers who are going to use FirstClass to empower discussions in English class.
-- A 30 minute tutorial on using Palms and Vernier probes for collecting water quality data given to a class about to go out and gather that data.
-- A 30 minute tutorial on turning Excel(AppleWorks) data into charts for a science class that is working to present field study data just recorded on their Palms.

JIC (Just in Case) - Generalized training about a particular software package focuses on features of the package. Examples: Intro to Dreamweaver, Intro to Excel, Intermediate Excel, Advanced FileMaker, Office for Beginners, Windows 2000, Intro to the Palm

For example, just because 85-90% of all computer users do not really understand how to correctly use a word processor does not mean that they will attend a session on the correct use of tabs, margins, tables and formatting as done with a word processor. They will use the word processor like a typewriter, find that "sometimes things look screwy no matter how many spaces and tabs I enter" and "these things just won't line up" ... but they will not sit through a class that explains what they are doing wrong.

Even with the best of intentions most prep school teachers simply cannot block out time to learn something "just in case". They teach from 9-3, coach from 3:30-6, and have dorm duties from 7-9 ... and then have to say hello to their family and then correct papers and plan the next day's lesson. To ask them to carve out a block of time to listen to a generic lesson about Excel or Word or Dreamweaver or whatever is simply not high enough on the priority list for most individuals. With the best of intentions they will skip the classes ... because there was a last minute committee meeting, a coaches meeting, a family dentist appt or something.

During the school year and class day it may not be possible, given time constraints, for effective JIC training to take place. More productively, JIT training can be focused on exactly what the teachers are doing at that moment and is relevant to them immediately. More importantly, ad hoc JIT training may encourage timid teachers to try something new with their students if they know that they can count on the academic technology coordinator to come in an give a tutorial or support the software WHILE THE STUDENTS AND THEY NEED IT.

During the brief JIT tutorials both students and teachers will realize how little they actually know about the software and may actually ask for AND schedule their own JIC classes. That is the turning point ... when the teachers schedule their own JIC classes.
I think the key for faculty training is that the training has to be short, immediately relevant, and flexible to their needs and schedules. I think this is why the academic technology coordinator has to be mostly free of teaching responsibilities so that they can visit classes and help as needed where needed.

When training is a "vacation" thing or a "faculty day" thing it is usually not enough for most people to feel well trained or supported.

There are times of course in the opening days when schools effectively teach new faculty the basic log on procedures and such. There are also good summer programs where teachers can get a goodly amount of time to practice and try away from the time pressures of the academic year. The best of those are done in the context of curriculum needs.

During the academic year however I think that JIT training is the only truly effective way to approach supporting the faculty needs.

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My response (as shared at a Tech meeting) Steve Bergen --

There is at least one more JI type of training beyond Just In Case and Just In Time. Over the years I have built computer growth with the Pioneer Program and the Personal Trainer Program which might be called Just Required Training. When faculty laptops are tied to a curriculum for faculty or when the head of a school includes technology growth as part of the annual contract, then teachers are growing as professionals just Required. This is not to say that I disagree at all with the distinctions between JIT and JIC faculty training. But it is crucial to not get caught up in either/or approaches. The key to humanware in growth in schools is flexibility. Tech coordinators and administrators need to provide as many approaches to technology growth as possible. Some teachers will grow via JIC courses while others will grow via summer courses. And if the support is there from the administration, then teachers will grow from mandated programs

Over and over again, we see reports in the Globe or the NY Times that publicize the point of view that "Computers in schools: a revolution that has yet to happen." A Boston Globe articles (11/25/01) provided recommendations very much in-sync with what Lynne and I do both as personal trainers and at Summercore: "develop a corps of teachers -- not external consultants -- to teach colleagues how to integrate technology into their classrooms."

The problem with Kevin's two pronged analysis of JIC vs JIT is that it is too narrow. With support from the administration (both financial and philosophical), teachers need to also be engaged in Just Required training programs. This is the secret ingredient which builds upon the postulate that teachers are professionals and have professional commitments. River flows from the head and leadership flows from the head in terms of both pushing and pulling. In fact, since thinking of "teachers as professionals" is an important theme of education in general, I have always had the romantic notion that it will be because of technology that the educational world will change in general!

And training needs to go on for administrators and staff as well