

# Problem

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## Inservice Training at Your Fingertips: How You Can Join the Digital Professional Development Revolution Includes Free Sample Online Mini-Courses

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What do well-dressed teachers wear to professional development training? Anything they want-- even pajamas. No, it's not an ultra casual Friday, it's the new wired world of teacher professional development. Today's teachers can upgrade their skills while wearing a bathrobe, commuting to work, or running on a treadmill. Every educator with a smart phone, laptop, tablet, computer, DVD player, or PDA, now has access to a universe of affordable, high quality, 24/7 professional development training.

There are many types of new distance learning options that can solve classroom problems while offering educators the college credit and clock hours they need. The tuition for virtual training is often the same or less than live courses, but cyber-training saves you travel costs and time, and can fit any schedule. In these tight economic times, digital training may be the perfect fit. You don't need a sub in your classroom for any of these new distance learning options. Even better, cyber courses deliver the immediate answers you need right now. Many online courses include generous workbooks and resources since these items are delivered digitally, without the expense of paper or printing. You can then choose which items to save to your computer or print on your own printer. Items are typically provided as PDF, the most common format used to share documents on the internet. Most educators are very familiar with this format, but even if you're not, opening a PDF document is usually as easy as a single mouse click.

Here's the layout of contemporary educator professional development in our wired world:

### **1. Pre-Recorded Online Courses**

More and more professional development offerings are moving online. Some are PowerPoint slide presentations, some are recordings of live classes, and some are videos created specifically for viewing online. It's especially easy to find online courses that focus on technology but a broader range of topics is rapidly being added. You usually can't save online courses to your own computer but must rely on a link. Access can be time-limited and will require pre-payment online. These links shouldn't be shared with others without permission, but online courses can be successfully used by groups when permission or a license is arranged.

### **2. Live Webinars**

Webinars are live workshops held at a specific time via the internet. You watch the presentation on any device with internet access, as do other participants. There is often some opportunity for interaction with the presenter, to ask questions, or chat with other viewers. Often, the archived webinar is made available online. The big downside to live webinars is that all participants must attend at the exact same time. Webinar access is through a link, and online pre-payment is generally required. The links are usually not to be shared with others. Webinars can work as professional development for both individuals and groups but permission or a license will be required for groups.

### 3. Pre-Recorded Courses That Don't Require Internet or Computer Access

Some professional development distance learning courses are offered on DVD. These courses are usually videos of live classes, or creations made specifically for DVD. The advantage of this option is that no internet connection is needed, and these classes can be viewed on televisions and DVD players, as well as computers and devices that play DVDs. For educators with slow internet connections or sluggish computers, this option is best. DVDs may give the ultimate flexibility, making them perfect for nearly any place and time. DVD classes may be shared by passing the disks to others, but the disks are normally protected by copyright and can't be copied. DVD courses work for groups and individuals; no license or permission is normally required for groups to view DVD classes together.

### Sample Pre-Recorded Online Professional Development Free

Digital professional development can seem confusing or complicated, but you don't need to be a geek to participate. Even if you have very basic technology skills, you can find an option that fits. Techno-phobes can rely on DVDs, but anyone with basic computer skills will be easily able to take online classes. In fact, it's so easy, that we have three sample ultra-mini courses for you to try, so you can see that if you can click a mouse, you can take classes online. We've posted snippets from three of our most popular courses for you to try free: Motivate Your Most Unmotivated Students; School and Classroom Discipline Solutions That Work with Contemporary Students; and Stop Student Cyberbullying and Online Self-Harm. View the sample courses here: <http://www.youthchg.com/strategies.html>.



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