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ABSTRACT

The Principals' Technology Leadership Training Program (PTLT), a collaborative venture of the Center for School Improvement and Performance and the Indiana Principals Leadership Academy, was established by the Indiana Department of Education. Principals are given four days of professional staff development which includes instructional sessions on computers and an introduction to a variety of software programs and computer hardware. This report provides a description of the program; reactions of principals to the program, including why they came, what they gained, and how they have changed; and conclusions and recommendations of the program. The PTLT has provided a focus for issues not necessarily related to technology and has tied principals into a collegial network that enables them to share information, concerns, talents, and success. (JLB)

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A Program that Works: Indiana's Principals' Technology Leadership Training Program

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**A Program that Works:
Indiana's Principals'
Technology Leadership Training Program**

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June, 1993

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It's the best thing I've been to that the State Department's ever done.

A Program that Works: Indiana's Principals' Technology Leadership Training Program

Overview and Summary

Since its inception in 1990, the Principals' Technology Leadership Training Program, sponsored by the Indiana Department of Education, has served almost 400 Indiana principals. They are given four days of professional staff development over the course of a year, beginning with two-days of instruction on computers, and introduced to a variety of software programs and computer hardware in a context of collegiality. It has, by all reports, served them exceedingly well. In conversations with more than a third of the first two years' alumnae, evaluators heard over and over again that the PTLT program was one of the most personally rewarding and professionally productive programs principals had ever attended. One alumnus, now a mentor, said that he tells prospective participants that PTLT is, simply, "the best thing you'll ever go to." It appears to be a win-win for all concerned.

Principals gave "high marks" to the Indiana Department of Education and those under whose guidance PTLT was planned and implemented — the Center for School Improvement and Performance and the Indiana Principals Leadership Academy. Principals commended a design that took into account the daily pressures under which they work, and agreed that they must be given release time, away from those constant demands, to explore advances in technology. Although most principals said they would have attended without a stipend, all considered the \$500 for technology a welcome incentive.

According to principals, PTLT was a program that came at the right time and provided the right kind of training to the right group of educators. In praising the timeliness of the program, many said it was time to "stop dabbling" in technology, time to stop wasting precious resources on "piecemeal purchases," time to get out of the web of obsolescence and incompatibility — time, in other words, for coordinated long-range planning. Superintendents, one of whom had stopped all purchases to set system-wide standards, agreed, noting that the PTLT program has been "invaluable . . . highly, highly effective" in his corporation's efforts to develop a systematic technology plan.

Principals, superintendents, and also technology coordinators saw wisdom in the decision to target principals for the training. Principals, they said, must have a solid "base of knowledge" to draw on, whether they're setting budgets and standards for their schools, implementing system-wide technology plans — or, just trying to keep pace with staff and students.

Principals attributed much of the program's success to the INTEConsulting staff who conducted the sessions, Mike Rush and Nancy Miller. All agreed that it was no small accomplishment to train principals whose experience ranged from barely being able to turn a computer on to developing administrative software. By offering "something to please everyone's palate," the team made novices comfortable without boring the experts. In many cases, they turned "computer illiterates into proponents of technology."

For those skeptics who were confirmed in their belief they were not concrete, sequential thinkers, "had less aptitude than most of their students," and would never be techies, the INTEC team provided the "knowledge to delegate wisely" and the perspective to see in technology not what was "inevitable" but what was "possible." Principals reported they were "now aware of many more options." And one noted that his school "changed from having a computer program to having a technology program."

More than one principal called the PTLT experience "unique." As evaluators conducted more and more interviews it became clear that this was not a glib use of the term. Rush and Miller offered PTLT participants more than an extensive menu of new technologies. In an atmosphere that was open and creative, they

gave principals practical advice and moral support. They showed them how "to use and to choose," important skills in the world of accountability and dwindling budgets. While broadening the scope of technology for principals, Rush and Miller made sure that it was a vision well-grounded in the practical realities of school operations and tangled cables and jammed printers.

Principals got hands-on experience. They were allowed to be users, learners — with all that entails: they were insecure, frustrated, lost without creative, reassuring, solid instruction. For most principals, this was an unusual state of affairs. At conferences, they are occupied by policy issues that must, by definition, remain at abstract levels. In school, they are preoccupied by daily pressures and demands. Rarely do they have the freedom to experiment and engage in truly interactive learning. Here they did. The program "increased personal confidence," "took away the fear of ignorance." They could indulge themselves, play with Xapshot cameras, multimedia presentations, new software. PTLT enabled them to return to respective schools and teach what they had learned. Not only do principals not often get to be learners, they don't often get to be teachers.

All those interviewed stressed the importance of continuing PTLT: to inform those principals who have not yet had the opportunity, and to update the alumnae and keep them aware of innovations in school technology. For principals and superintendents it has become "an agent of change." It has provided a focus for issues not necessarily related to technology — relationships among school personnel, equity in school funding, shared decision-making in school systems, etc. PTLT ties principals into a collegial network that enables them to share information, concerns, talents and successes. All of these ideas become part of the discussion among participants at PTLT workshops.

Principals who don't go to something like this, don't know what's going on.

Background

The Principals' Technology Leadership Training Program was established by the Indiana Department of Education in a collaboration of the Center for School Improvement and Performance and the Indiana Principals Leadership Academy. Managed by the Center, the program was conducted, under contract, by INTEConsulting. It has served more than 400 principals over the past three years.

Principals are given four days of professional staff development, beginning with a two-day instructional session on computers, with everyone trying to learn the components of Microsoft Works, at a minimum. They are introduced to a variety of software programs and computer hardware in a context of collegiality, discussing the utility of each item with others in similar circumstances.

The program is run by professional workshop leaders who have a large collection of sophisticated equipment available for hands-on exploration. The time is spent going over the broad range of technology and software commonly purchased for classroom and office use. These include such items as the Xapshot digital camera (a wildly popular item, since it is easy to understand and immediately reinforcing), scanners, video systems, and portable computers. Software might include instructional programs for all levels of schooling, administrative packages, and specialized school programs. The extensive hands-on effort provides principals with a little bit of experience on a lot of different technologies, software, and applications. Furthermore, the training program is distributed over the course of the school year — sometimes in a second two-day block, sometimes as two individual days — so principals have the chance to go back to their schools to practice what they have learned, undertake visits to schools that might serve as models for emulation, and learn more of what they want, and need, to learn.

Reactions of principals to the program

What follows are observations and reports from principals about the specific impact of the Principals' Technology Leadership Training Program: Why they came, What they learned, and How they changed — directions, attitudes, managerial styles. Evaluators talked with almost one hundred principals, superintendents and school technology coordinators as part of the data collection process. These interviews constitute the primary data; we administered no quantitative measures, nor counted events. This report is a synthesis and interpretation of these interview data. Those interviewed came from most parts of the state, from small rural schools to large urban high schools, from rich school corporations with more technology than they could comfortably use in the classroom to poorer settings where bake sales are still used to acquire a few computers each year. Most started the program without computer skills, but almost all are currently using technology for professional and personal productivity. And they are justifiably proud of their accomplishments.

Not all the recent technology changes in Indiana schools whose principals attended the Principals' Technology Leadership Training Program can be attributed solely to PTLT: plans were underway, some ideas grew out of IPLA or other conferences principals took part in; others would have come about with or without PTLT. What PTLT provided, according to principals, was framework for choices and a focus for other issues.

Why they came

Credibility and Confidence

Principals attended PTLT to gain, in one fashion or another, credibility and confidence. Initially, the principals arrived with a wide range of interests and knowledge, but most were only moderately familiar with computer technology and not active technology users. Fundamentally, most attended because they wanted to and were offered the opportunity by their superintendent.

Many came to the program "out of fear." They were "intimidated" by technology itself— by the computers that had been sitting silent on their desks —

or by the fact that those around them were getting ahead. They felt that "to survive" they had to become computer literate. They wanted to "save face," either with their clerical staffs, their faculties, parents, students, superintendents or school boards. They were aware how little they knew about computers and that they needed to learn. "I wanted to be more knowledgeable when the teachers talked to me about technology," said one principal.

Even those who had served on technology committees admitted they had been "silent members." They did not feel "conversant" enough with technology to talk "sensibly" with teachers, with vendors, or with school boards. Some principals could see that technology would be valuable in restructuring efforts and "wanted to lead the parade."

Many principals had initiated the request to attend PTLT themselves. (In some cases superintendents had, without applying pressure, passed the DOE memo along, letting principals nominate themselves.) They felt "it was time to get up to speed" on technology. Some had modest goals — to use word-processing for memos, to use spreadsheets for budgeting, to understand what the front-office staff was doing, to trouble-shoot in computer labs when the coordinator was not available. They wanted, at the very least, to understand computer terminology, and beyond that to begin to build a "knowledge base" from which to make "wise decisions."

Other principals found themselves in the position of being selected by the superintendent, because the superintendent wanted to get the corporation to adopt technology for instruction and needed more information, more allies, and more supporters among the principals. Some said that the superintendent wanted them to gain some exposure and to find out what others were doing — sort of a "fact-finding mission."

Most of the principals also felt that the IPLA imprint would mean a quality workshop. And since the PTLT Program was offered under the nominal auspices of IPLA, as well as the CSIP, it was likely to be useful and also provide a little networking time for those who attended. "It was the only place for me to learn without pressure and to network at the same time. And it made me aware of how little I knew, even though I was using a computer."

Advice and Answers

Some school corporations were remodeling or designing new buildings, and principals knew that planning had to be done, literally, from the ground up. More than one principal saw that his school was in a state of arrested development. They had been an early adopter of technology and had several classroom computer and language labs in place. Yet, only a few teachers were skilled in using technology. What did they need to do to change? Was their old technology sufficient or should they acquire new hardware?

Some principals were comfortable with computers and other technologies, and wanted to answer specific questions — should they go with IBM or Macintosh systems, should they continue with computer labs or move computers into the classrooms, should they choose integrated learning systems, should they add CD-ROM and videodisc technology to their systems, etc.

A few principals came from very wealthy districts, districts whose students for the most part had computers at home. These principals were more interested in gadgets and software; they wanted to see what was new. One principal, from a school with ample technology, said he has relied on Rush and Miller to help him sort through catalogues, so that he can do the same for teachers. Staying ahead of the Jones was important for the individual principal and for the district itself. It has long been known that status is a common rationale for acquiring technology, and Indiana schools are not immune to this behavior; its presence should not be underestimated.

Equity and equal access

The issues were different for principals in less affluent districts. They attended PTLT with a concern that their students were not being fairly served. They were seeking ways to provide equal access to technology, for teachers as well as students— and they felt they were a long way from providing teachers with laptops as some of the richer corporations were planning.

There were also those principals concerned about equalizing access to technology in a different way. Frustrated by the "hodge-podge" approach their corporations were taking, they attended PTLT to "learn more about what other systems were doing" and help their systems "get the big picture." They felt their

own system should stop "dragging its heels," that individual schools should not be "doing their own thing" and "wasting funds." Others felt that technology had become too important and that curriculum and instruction could profit from something more than technology for technology's sake.

The need to equalize knowledge and funds was the driving force behind most superintendents' decision to consider principals for the program. Some principals were nominated because they were resisting change and feared technology; others because they had too narrow a focus (e.g., were enthralled with an integrated learning system) and needed to get a broader perspective.

What they gained

Personal growth

For many principals this was a chance for personal growth, an opportunity to learn something new. They said that PTLT had left them "revitalized" and "reinvigorated." They "stretched" their imaginations. Many "became motivated to continue to learn from other people's experience — enthusiastic and practical." It was "better than a graduate class, much more energizing." In fact, participating as a learner rather than a teacher or administrator, led one participant to remark that she "learned that you should become a lifelong learner, otherwise it's obsolete tomorrow." Another "learned to read the journals to find out new stuff and to know what you don't know."

Principals agreed that PTLT far exceeded expectations in building confidence and credibility. After the first session principals reached a "comfort level" with technology — "the fear just evaporated." They learned not just about computers, but about other technologies as well. They began to "speak the language." They "asked better questions to the technology committee." They report that they are "not at a loss anymore" in the linguistic universe of local area networks and hypertext. PTLT "gave them a voice" — they are "not mumbling anymore," they can "plead their cases." They can say "I don't agree."

There was also a professional side to this personal growth. As one principal reported about the efforts he had initiated in this school corporation, "I was

praised when I got something started and now I'm pleased that others [have picked it up and] are running it." Another noted that his participation in the PTLT program "bought me some recognition in the corporation, because no one else was doing it."

Professional Productivity

Training certainly improved management/administrative skills; principals describe themselves as more organized and efficient. Alumnae now use spread sheets for tracking enrollment and attendance data and for budgets. They rely on databases and file servers for record-keeping, sometimes just at the school level, but often with the central office. Many principals have e-mail and voice mail; the latter makes assignments available to students.

Several principals reported the success of keeping discipline files: having a record available helps principals and teachers, especially in conferences with parents. One principal noted that having the students themselves pull up and look at the discipline record often defuses the situation. Principals also like the privacy of keeping teacher evaluations on electronic files, rather than in folders that are accessible to many others.

Technology has improved communication with parents and teachers. Virtually all principals use word processing and/or desk-top publishing for newsletters, which are more attractive than before. Principals encourage students to publish as well; some have active publishing centers, and feel that polished work builds confidence among students and good will with parents.

Even with all the improvements in managerial duties, elementary school principals especially focus more on instruction and public relations than on administrative changes. Principals find they do more presentations, to school boards and to PTO's. The Xapshot camera, often purchased with the stipend, enhances presentations.

Principals also gained the skills and confidence to seek additional resources: they've found creative ways to use capital project funds, justify expenses to school boards and write grants. One principal who had successfully bid for a 4R's grant said he now "knows what words to use." Other principals have been awarded

4R's grants, and their schools have been designated as Indiana 2000 Schools or Modern Red Schoolhouse participants. These awards can't be attributed directly to PTLT, but principals feel they could not have sought them out or utilized them effectively without the knowledge and confidence they had gained from their participation.

Principals have also, since PTLT, found ways to use talent within the school and in their areas. As computer novices, several principals realized that they "could learn from teachers." And they, in turn, have encouraged various teachers to become specialists on certain software. They have encouraged teachers to develop integrated curricula, incorporating technology as part of the instructional package. They have sought out local university specialists.

PTLT participants, themselves, also conducted numerous staff development programs for their teachers. So impressed were many principals with Mike & Nancy that, short of cloning them, they modeled their own in-service sessions on their PTLT experience. Their in-service recognizes the importance of raising the comfort level, of teachers teaching teachers, of sessions for "beginning beginners." (Some likened sessions to sitting down with special needs parents and feeling you were not alone.)

Principals seemed to have gained a sense of realism from PTLT. As they talked about how technology has affected teaching and learning in their schools, several suggested that the "glitz has worn off" technology. They see it as a resource, among many. One principal said, "It's not what's happening, it lets things happen." Another noted that "technology can drive the curriculum, but the curriculum still determines what technology to employ." Still another helped change his school by "changing the program from computer literacy and computer programming to integrating applications in the curriculum for literacy, and started keyboarding in elementary school."

There are changes, clear evidence that educators are rethinking the ways teachers teach and children learn. Principals are, with their staffs, moving away from drill and remediation in search of ways technology can integrate and enhance learning, make resources available, and extend learning beyond the school walls. Many are moving away from computer labs to computers in

classrooms. There are no longer any fears that computers will replace teachers. One principal said that, in fact, the more teachers make technology part of their classrooms the less threatened they are by technology.

Perspective

Some principals gained perspectives on the technology activities that surrounded them, realizing that decisions of the past may have been misinformed or were not consistent with the directions of their schools. One reported that "technology started to become the driving force in our school." But, in the year since she had been part of the program, "it no longer is, curriculum is more important."

Another felt that the program was important because it "got the state to recognize that principals are leaders." "As a leader, it is important to keep moving. It's not the technology, but realizing how you meet community needs." Still another "realized that mistakes of the past could be fixed," and that labs could be taken apart and computers placed in individual classrooms and even taken home by teachers and students.

The participants in PTLT had time to talk with one another and to share experiences. The workshop had a collegial tone. One principal remarked that "confirmation of ideas was a powerful outcome of the networking we did at the meetings." Another principal reported that he "learned that there are relative levels of implementation and success. I didn't need to have everything or do it all. I needed to find a direction for what made sense for the children." By bringing educators together who were at different levels of integrating technology in their schools, people learned a great deal from one another. And the workshop encouraged that networking.

Many principals saw improvements in both the quantity and quality of technology applications in schools. Some principals aggressively pursued the introduction and incorporation of technology for instruction and management, others thoughtfully reconsidered what they had been doing and came up with the "important" issues for technology use in their schools." Some wanted to be leaders by status, others wanted to be personal instructional leaders in their own schools.

How they've changed

Reconsidering roles

PTLT and the exposure to new technology forced principals to reconsider their roles as school leaders. Many of those who came with little computer experience, especially those from smaller schools, noted that it was important that they be role models — if they expected teachers and students to become users, they had to be role models themselves. They felt staff and students alike had to see the front office enter the information age.

Many principals felt it was important for students to see principals actually “playing” with technology, and that they share the fun. (One principal allowed students to use his office during his lunch hour to work on Prodigy.) They considered it equally important that students saw principals “flummoxed once in a while.”

In some schools, most students, many teachers, and most front office staff had been using technology — only the principal and a few reluctant teachers were holding out. These principals felt it was particularly important that they be the ones, by their example, to break down the final resistance to change. Principals reported that, in all cases, their comfort with and knowledge of technology has improved relations with staff and students. There is also more collaboration, now, given a common interest in technology and a need to learn from one another.

Most importantly, they now see more of their roles as leaders — in their school and in their school corporation. For instance,

When I got back I talked to the other principals and got two people from each school to start a committee. We interviewed people to participate and we should have included more parents. We met once a month and established a philosophy and goals. We decided to spend our money on staff development and not on equipment for the first few years.

This would not have happened without PTLT and the experience gained by the principal's participation and exchanges with others around the state.

Expanding roles

Most principals reported that they have not so much redefined roles — many say they operate much as before — as enhanced and expanded their leadership roles. One principal said that PTLT “motivated me to become a leader . . . again.”

Principals say they are becoming more involved in “shared decisions.” One principal stated that he “started parent support group to raise funds for technology — it’s especially important since almost 50% of students have computers at home.” Several others remarked that a major change was that they “formed a committee with my teachers to do planning to obtain equipment” rather than “doing it alone.” PTLT “helped me to develop a strategy for developing the use of technology in our school, working with teachers to do it.”

The participants’ professional responsibilities within their school corporations also expanded with the experience of PTLT. Recognizing that the initial participants were among the “best” of the State’s school administrators, they still took what they learned and went back to make changes. Among the things we heard were: “I explored school management software, made it a corporation project, and sold it to the superintendent; so we are now all doing the same things.” “I started a planning committee for the corporation and am heading up the effort. Now I want a technology coordinator for the corporation, to help all the schools develop their plans.”

Many principals see themselves as role models — that’s their job as building leaders. “I have to know as much as my teachers and I want my students to see me doing the same thing as they are.” Their interest may have begun out of feelings of inadequacy — they couldn’t understand the vendors or even the technology-using teachers in their building. They want to start in the trenches; they open up their offices to students to use the school’s modem; they open the computer lab to parents in the evenings or become a support person for the staff, because they can now answer questions.

Many principals see themselves as facilitators. They are not experts on technology; they let it happen in their school, and make it work. They can respond to inservice proposals brought in by the staff or initiate an inservice program to help prepare staff. These principals see themselves as part of a larger

movement, and want to be part of it. Technology has become important for their corporation, parents, and the leadership of the school. "We have computerized the office and now see that it wasn't enough, or even wasn't right. We now want to move to technology for learning."

Some principals see themselves as "crusaders — making believers out of non-believers." Now, they are more willing to send (and actually are sending) teachers to ICE and to bring in workshops for staff. They referred to themselves as "cheerleaders, drum majors" — leading the technology parade in their school and becoming the leading schools in the district. They see it as exciting and want to be on the cutting edge.

Mike Rush, one of the two workshop leaders, likened asking principals to lead their schools into the world of technology to asking someone who has never flown to pilot a 747 across the ocean with his best friends aboard. Principals identified with this characterization of the extraordinary responsibility that bear, trying to steer teachers and students — a precious cargo — through the daunting course of technology. With their training, however, and with their contacts and their colleagues, they feel far more adequate to the task.

There is no question about the diversity of technology options — from on-line to video to computer to interactive multimedia. Principals see that they have substantial responsibility — and concomitant authority — to do a lot about it in their schools and their school system. Technology as technology is not an answer for those who attended PTLT. They recognize that it is not the *it*, but what you do with the *it* that makes the difference in classrooms.

If we are educational leaders, we need to stay abreast of innovations and ideas.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It's a winner

There is general satisfaction with and enthusiasm for the PTLT program as it is now run and the desire for more of the same. This is unquestionably a successful program from the participants' (principals) and their sponsors' (the superintendents) perspective. It appears to be highly respected in administrative circles, but probably could use some legislative visibility and support.

Recommendation: The Department of Education should continue to invest time, money, and other support for PTLT. Superintendents and principals recognize that the State put a lot of energy into PTLT and they value it.

Recommendation: Some costs of the program could be shifted to the participants so that the in-service days are more fully funded. Principals report that a cost of \$75-100 for a day's program is modest and within the building budget.

Recommendation: A stipend should be continued. Some principals liked the way it was handled, and purchased either a modem or Xapshot camera; others liked the idea of some sort of group buy to stretch the dollars further. But the amount of support could be reduced without diminishing interest or level of participation. A \$500 stipend could be reduced to \$400 or \$300 without harming participation. But in these difficult economic times, the stipend sends a message to local educators that the State thinks this is an important effort, and worth their consideration and time.

Principals as leaders

Principals, superintendents, and technology coordinators agreed that principals, the building level leaders, were the ones to send to PTLT. They are the building leaders and will increasingly take responsibility for technology and other innovations in schools. Superintendents insist that they don't have the time, adding that there's more turnover in superintendents jobs, far less in principals'.

Recommendation: The PTLT Program should continue update sessions/ reunions and consider them self-funding activities, charging enough to cover all of the direct costs. Annual updates are important and a valued addition to the program, according to most PTLT participants, including those who were unable to attend the first update session. These annual refresher programs could be held in different parts of the state if logistics will permit. Thus, principals would find it convenient to attend one closer to home, rather than missing it totally.

Recommendation: Several principals thought they would like to bring their technology directors and work together with them in the PTLT workshops. They felt it would save time because working together would build a link between the principal and his or her school technology person. Perhaps a second-year effort could be initiated that would bring pairs of educators from individual schools.

Recommendation: The people conducting the staff development program for PTLT, INTEConsulting, was a strong draw—and it would be worthwhile to continue their participation. Nevertheless, the development of a larger group of effective trainers and consultants would be beneficial in the long run. Principals asked for lists of additional consultants who could perform services locally.

The power of collegial learning

Reiterated often by participants was the value of the collegial program that permitted them the freedom to take risks, to get questions answered and to gather important information. Over the course of the annual program, a network was established, comprised of principals interested in technology — self-selected — and within that network there were subgroups: some of the leading districts on the lookout for cutting edge ideas, financially strapped corporations seeking inexpensive models to emulate without having to put in the development resources; principals looking for solutions to particular problems, etc.

Recommendation: The sponsoring office in the Indiana Department of Education should provide ongoing mailings with articles and reprints, identify newsletters of interest, provide bibliographies of topics of interest; provide notice of local, state, and national conferences and workshops, list productive consultants, etc. The need is to maintain contact among the participants, and to provide useful information so they can continue to develop their technology

programs. The direct costs of this mailing could be borne by the participants. The development costs, however, may exceed the Department of Education resources.

Recommendation: Several principals wanted a PTLT network newsletter, to share ideas that might be beneficial to others, such as:

- how to go about opening up the computer lab to the community, at night, so students can do homework while parents learn and use word processing.
- how to create "portfolios" by giving every students a disk at beginning of elementary school to record stories, etc., and continually updating it.
- a brief report from schools initiating interesting projects — share and brag.

In fact, one superintendent noted that PTLT should impress upon principals that they have "a professional responsibility to share information." While this participatory effort would be enthusiastically received by many principals, few would be likely to contribute to it. However, an annual report, developed by the attendees of a reunion/refresher, might be possible. Principals could spend ten minutes on a word processor, dump their contribution into a desktop publishing template, and leave with a publication by the end of the day. It could then be made available to those unable to attend.

Recommendation: The availability of a statewide electronic network would also permit the educators to share ideas, ask questions, establish a wider community, and exchange e-mail, as well. They will need some hand holding to get on-line, and a moderator to keep a bulletin board going.

Workshop design issues

For some participants, the sessions presented "too much too fast." But, most participants wanted "more, not less." The workshop accommodated all comers, with small group work, lots of reprints, large number of diverse products to review; but principals wanted more hands-on, more time to explore, and a hotline for additional help from qualified consultants, or even more information from Mike and Nancy. Some participants felt that the workshop designers could make changes in the strategy that accommodate different needs — differentiating sizes and levels of schools, relative wealth, technology experience, and amount of school technology. With more control over participant selection each session could accomplish more.

Transfer to local settings

For some participants, things that made sense at the workshop were confusing back home. They wanted to bring a disk or a problem to the session, and have the group (or a consultant) help them solve it. Others wanted a strengthening of the mentoring program, so that a nearby expert would be on call. Some principals thought some of this need for shared expertise could be made available by an alumnae list with specializations and expertise listed for their colleagues.

Recommendation: Mentoring was of limited success in the PTLT program. To be useful, mentors needed to be local and have the time for substantive assistance. This wasn't possible in the first two years of the program. Lists of volunteer mentors might provide sufficient assistance for the participating principals. In addition, an 800-number to call for help would be useful, and PTLT should promote the Indiana Clearinghouse for Educational Technology and its services. The Clearinghouse could also do much more to promote itself to principals.

Recommendation: Many principals took the PTLT workshop home and applied the staff development program at their own schools. However, they lacked the resources and materials to duplicate much of what they themselves experienced. At modest cost, it may be possible to provide a workshop handbook and templates to provide those principals who wish to do the training themselves.

More needs to be met

Some principals requested detailed information on such things as: how to measure benefits; how to convince school boards that technology is effective, and other accountability concerns; and specific information on integrated learning systems. They saw the program as a means of answering some of the specific questions they were faced with at home.

Recommendation: There's more work to be done, and further partnerships between the Center for School Improvement and Performance and the Indiana Principals' Leadership Academy would provide a needed and valued service.

In summary

PTLT was a program that came at the right time and provided the right kind of training to the right group of educators.