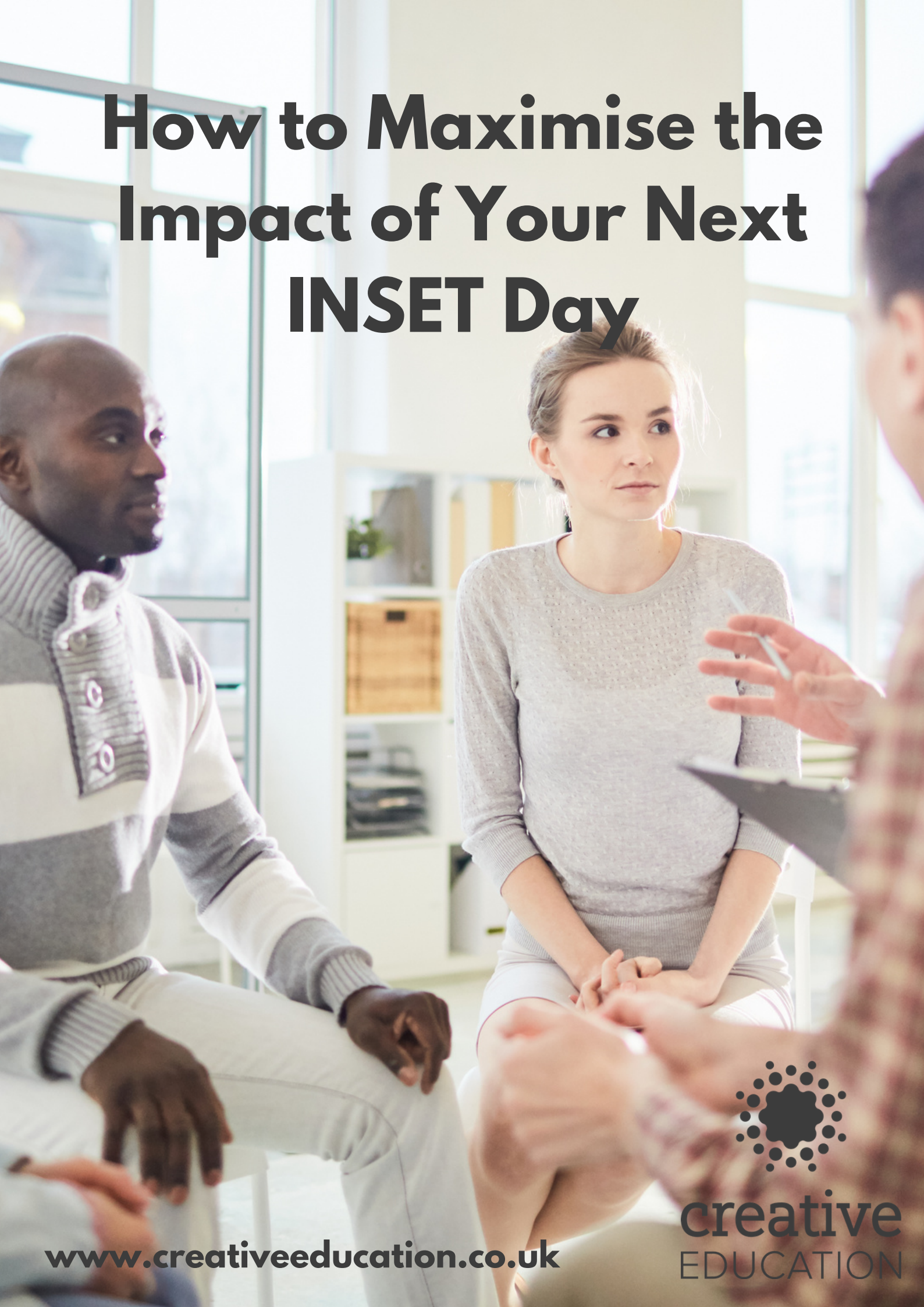
How to Maximise the Impact of Your Next INSET Day



www.creativeeducation.co.uk

creative EDUCATION

Introduction

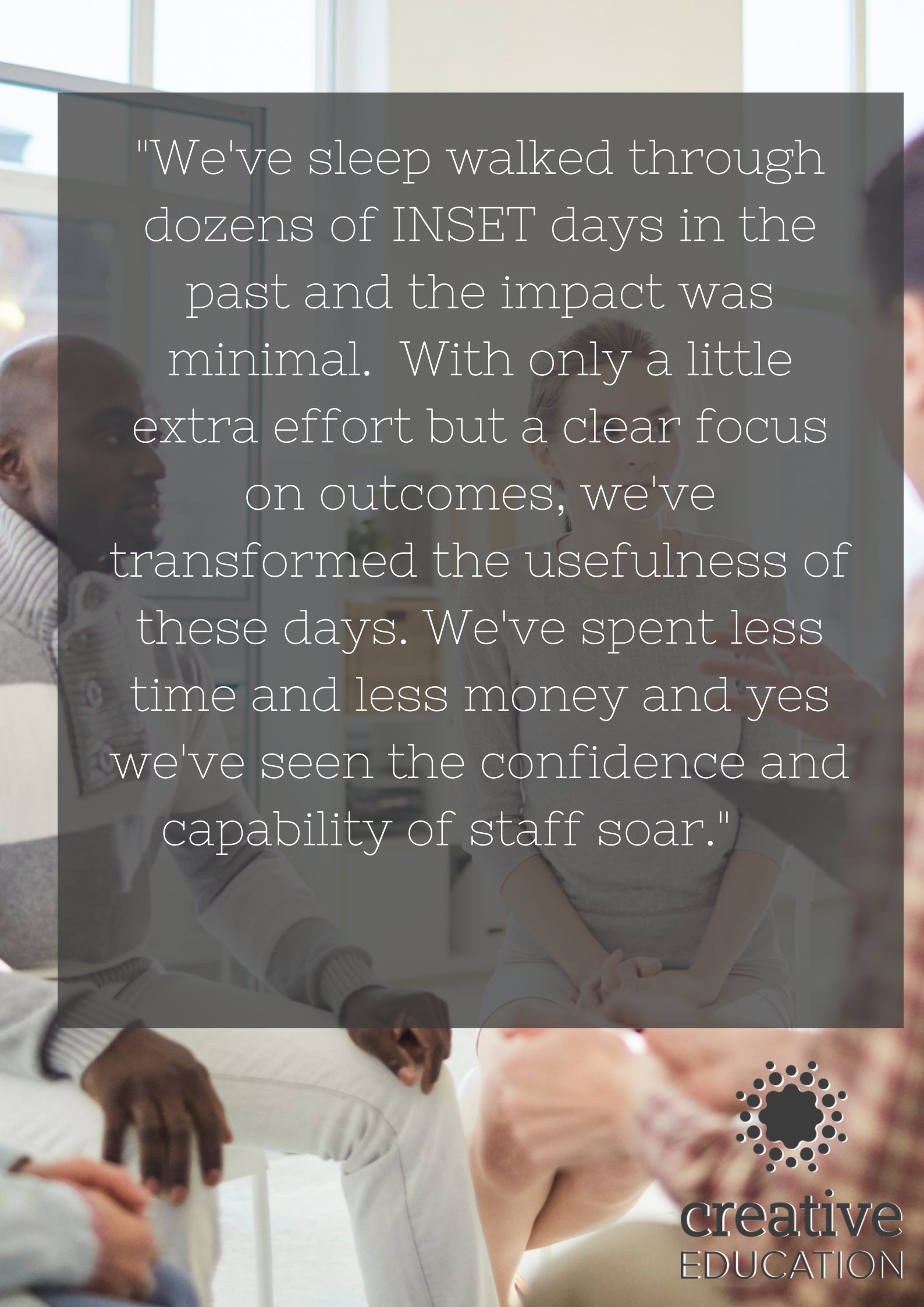
Within education, we are lucky to have regular opportunities for continuing professional development built into our work lives. Done well, INSET days, and twilight sessions are great opportunities to inspire, inform and impact on practice.

In this guide, I've shared some simple ideas to help you make the most of your next INSET day or training session based on what I've found works well when delivering or commissioning training. As with all of my ideas always, cherry pick what you think could work for you and do what you need to to make it your own.

Good Luck!

Pooky

Dr Pooky Knightsmith
Director
Creative Education



"We've sleep walked through dozens of INSET days in the past and the impact was minimal. With only a little extra effort but a clear focus on outcomes, we've transformed the usefulness of these days. We've spent less time and less money and yes we've seen the confidence and capability of staff soar."

creative
EDUCATION

Share existing skills

When you're planning your INSET day, one of the best places to start is by auditing the current skills and experience of your existing team. Within every school and college there are pockets of phenomenal practice that are not always widely shared.

Learning from one another is a powerful way to build capacity and confidence within teams and we can be sure that the ideas shared will be directly tailored to our setting when they are delivered by a colleague.

Ideas do not have to come from the top down, in fact I would actively encourage you to provide a platform for newer and more junior members of staff. When doing so, ensure that you support and scaffold appropriately so that self-doubting colleagues feel confident and heard when sharing their ideas.

Consider

What worked well last term? How could that be shared?

How can you find out about hidden skills and expertise within your teams?

What support might help less confident staff to share their ideas?

Time to talk

As well as the sharing of information and ideas, it's important that colleagues have a chance to consider how to take what they are learning and apply it to their specific situation. Therefore, it's hugely important that time for discussing and planning is built into every training session or day. Really put new ideas through their paces by considering exactly what this would look like in when used to support a specific child or class and give teams a chance to explore ideas together too.

Consider

Encourage colleagues to keep a child or class in mind and consider what these ideas mean for them

Build in regular breaks for directed discussion

When delivering a session it sometimes becomes obvious everyone is itching to break into discussion about a new idea... don't plough on, break for discussion and feedback

Not too much

I have found that it is far better to teach a few ideas well than to overwhelm colleagues with ideas and initiatives on an INSET day. Think carefully about a few key messages, ideas or skills you wish to share during your training and teach these really well. Reducing the amount of information shared and increasing the space around this information for consolidation, questions and real-world application will almost certainly have more impact and prove more enjoyable for everyone involved that information overload.

A helpful approach can be to reduce the length of taught sessions and provide time for team discussion or individual exploration and planning before re-convening at the end of the day for questions and reflections.

Reducing the teaching time and increasing the discussion or personal planning time

What are the headlines you hope to convey?

Consider

Editing the content of the day down to avoid diluting key messages

Cutting out time-filler activities unless they serve a specific purpose

Be flexible

We often plan our INSET days out months or years in advance. When planning for school and college improvement, it can be super helpful to have a roadmap for training and skills and this can mean planning well ahead but... if there's one thing that 2020 has taught us it is that things change.

In the weeks leading up to each INSET training day or session, stop and consider whether the plan you made some time ahead is still the right plan. Should it be tweaked, changed or completely scrapped to make way for the current priorities for understanding and support needed by staff now? CPD time is precious so please be brave enough to be flexible and respond to colleagues' changing needs and to adapt sessions to reflect your current situation, skills and knowledge.

Plan ahead but remain flexible

Consider

How can you find out from a range of colleagues if a pre-planned day is still fit for purpose?

Reflect and respond to 'what went well' and 'even better if' after every INSET day

Brief external trainers well and expect them to adapt and change sessions to meet your needs

Safe environment

Colleagues will learn more when they feel valued and safe during training sessions. Ideally we want to create an environment where everybody feels like a valued member of the team and it feels safe to explore ideas, share experiences and ask questions. When tackling difficult topics assume that there is someone in the room who has been directly affected by the topic in hand and for any topic you are exploring, remember there will be some people in the room who feel outside of their comfort zone. We are brilliant at building the confidence of our younger learners; we can use these same skills and ideas to build a positive environment for adult learners too.

Consider

How you can lead a question-asking culture at staff training

Gifting your mistakes as well as your successes as learning points

Establishing ground rules for training sessions, especially those on tricky topics

So what?

With so much time and energy invested into training, it's really important that something changes as a result of it. Be clear from the outset what your aims are.

Ensuring that practical ideas are shared that can be put into practice right away

Consider

Creating time for team or individual action planning

Following up with colleagues a day, week or even a term after training to assess impact

What would you like people to think, feel or do differently as a result of the session and what can you do to enable this to actually happen?


"I know a training session went well when there is excited chatter as colleagues leave the room and there's this feeling that they can't wait to put new ideas into practice."
creative
EDUCATION


Helpful?
Tweet us @CreativeEdu with what was helpful & what you would add
creative
EDUCATION