

Why I Attend Professional Development Trainings

BY SUSAN MARIE SCHULHOF

“Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death.” ~Albert Einstein

As an educator in the field of Early Childhood Education, I feel called to continuous learning and growth, and the best way to invest in my professional development is through opportunities like Leadership Connections™. Many years ago, I became certified in an Adult Learning Program because while I could apply some of the methods that I used to teach children, other tactics are helpful for training adults. One tip that has stuck with me was the use of chunking or using acronyms. When I write a training or book, using acronyms is one technique I use when appropriate. I came up with a simple acronym for why I attend professional development trainings. It is GROW, which is self-explanatory simply as a word, but also in the details.

- G stands for goals. It is essential when choosing workshops to attend, articles and books to read, or videos to watch that I have concrete goals. Am I looking to learn a new skill, understand a new concept, or complete a new task?
- R stands for relationships. Building relationships with others, especially in my field, matters to me. It is how I can grow in my knowledge as well as simply grow and learn as a person about and from others, similar and different from me and my experiences.
- O stands for observation. Watching and listening are vital to my development and learning. I can see how others do things and decide if I agree or prefer to do something a different way. This is similar to how I started using acronyms once I learned that training tip. I decided that this helps me remember details long after leaving the training, so I have incorporated it into my toolbox of tips.
- W stands for wonder; it is the why, how, where, and when questions. Why do I need to know this? How can I use it in my work? Where and when is it applicable? Often I can see the answers to these questions even when I just read the description of the training, but sometimes it occurs during or afterward when I reflect on what I have learned and apply it to my role or position.

Ongoing professional development is required in education, but I view it as more than a task to complete. It is a way to learn about the Early Childhood Education field, and it is also how I reflect and grow as a person. Join me in learning from [Leadership Connections Virtual Conference 2022](#).

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