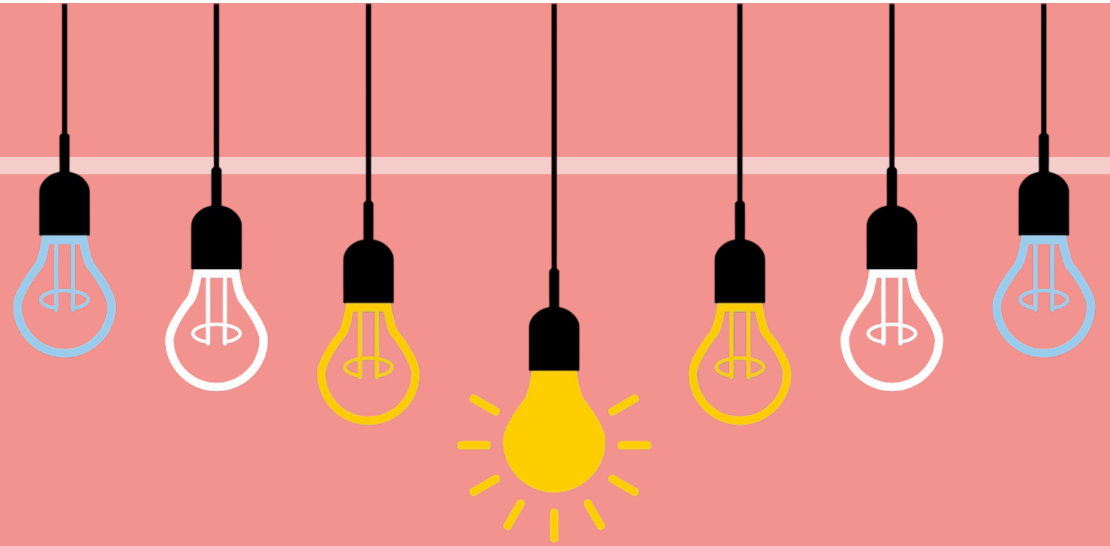




Leading by Example:

Cultivating Professional Engagement in Veterinary Technician Education

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01

Introduction



About Me

- LVT, LATG, CVJ (25+ years in the field)
- Senior Manager CE with VETgirl
- Board member CACVT (past)
- AVTE board member and conference committee co-chair (current)
- Taskforce Member NAVTA (past)
- Work Group Member PrideVMC (past)
- Committee Member BPride (current)
- Otter enthusiast



Objectives

- Describe how PE advances educator and leadership careers
- Identify ways educators and leaders can model PE for students and teams
- Develop and action plan to intentionally build PE into veterinary technician education





02

What it is



“

Professional engagement is a combination of commitment and enthusiasm for one's career, encompassing proactive participation in professional activities, collaboration, and continuous development.

”

Beyond the Job

- Continuing education
- Educating others
- Professional communities and groups
- Leadership
- Advocacy



Professional Engagement Involves:

Active
involvement

Commitment

Collaboration

Professional
development

Contribution

How intentionally do you discuss professional engagement with your students or team?

Frequently

Occasionally

Never





03

Why it matters



Professional Engagement

- Strengthens your career
- Shapes the future of the profession through those you influence
- Students rarely become what you tell them to become - They become what they see us modeling



Professional Engagement

- PE is not just something we engage in, but it becomes something we teach
- Students are watching

Organizations we belong to
Conferences we attend
Whether we volunteer
Whether we publish
Whether we present
Whether we continue learning



**Long before students
graduate, they are learning
what a “professional” looks
like.**

Professional Identity Begins Before Graduation

- Students don't accidentally become engaged professionals
- PE is learned
- Students imitate faculty far more than they imitate textbooks



Missed Opportunities

- If instructors never discuss PE students often assume it is optional or unnecessary
- Talking about these things in our classrooms is imperative:

National organizations

State associations

Conferences

CE

Specialization

Advocacy



Benefits for YOU

Career advancement

Moving up – whether where you are or where you want to be

Leadership & Recognition

Develops leadership skills, enhances the reputation of your program, & establishes credibility as subject matter expert

Networking

Networking and mentorship opportunities

Purpose

Prevents burnout via through purpose & connection

Benefits for your STUDENTS

Professional identity

See themselves as a professional,
not just a learner

Networking earlier

Builds meaningful professional
relationships before graduation

Career Confidence

Builds confidence through
participation

Greater retention

Creates stronger commitment to
the profession

Benefits for your STUDENTS

Understanding opportunities

Expands awareness of career paths

Leadership development

Gaining leadership skills and experience before graduation

Impact on the Veterinary Profession

Recognition

Elevating visibility of the profession

Influence

Bringing new perspective to the profession

We build a profession!

Creating a culture of community and belonging



04

Pathways



Professional Organizations

How many graduating students understand:

- Their national organization
- Their state organization
- Legislative advocacy
- Credential portability
- Technician utilization



Specialization

- How do educators expose their students to specialists?
- Invite VTS speakers
- Highlight specialty careers
- Normalize specialization as one possible career path

Students can't aspire to something they don't know exists.



VTS

Veterinary
Technician
Specialist®

Networking

- Students graduate into jobs
- Professionals graduate into networks
- One of the greatest gifts we can give our students in introductions and connections



Networking

- Encourage:
 - Conference attendance
 - Committee work
 - Volunteer opportunities
 - Introduce students to speakers



From Mentor to Multiplier

- Every educator IS a mentor
- You need to be very intentional in your mentoring



Advocate & Educate

- Education and advocacy outside of the classroom can normalize PE for your students
- Students should be seeing faculty:
 - Speaking
 - Writing
 - Volunteering
 - Serving on committees
 - Presenting research
 - participating in associations



Contribute to Educational Leadership

- Lead curriculum innovation
- Start student leadership committees
- Develop peer mentors
- Encourage conference attendance
- Create in-service learning opportunities
- Invite alumni back
- Build leadership projects into coursework



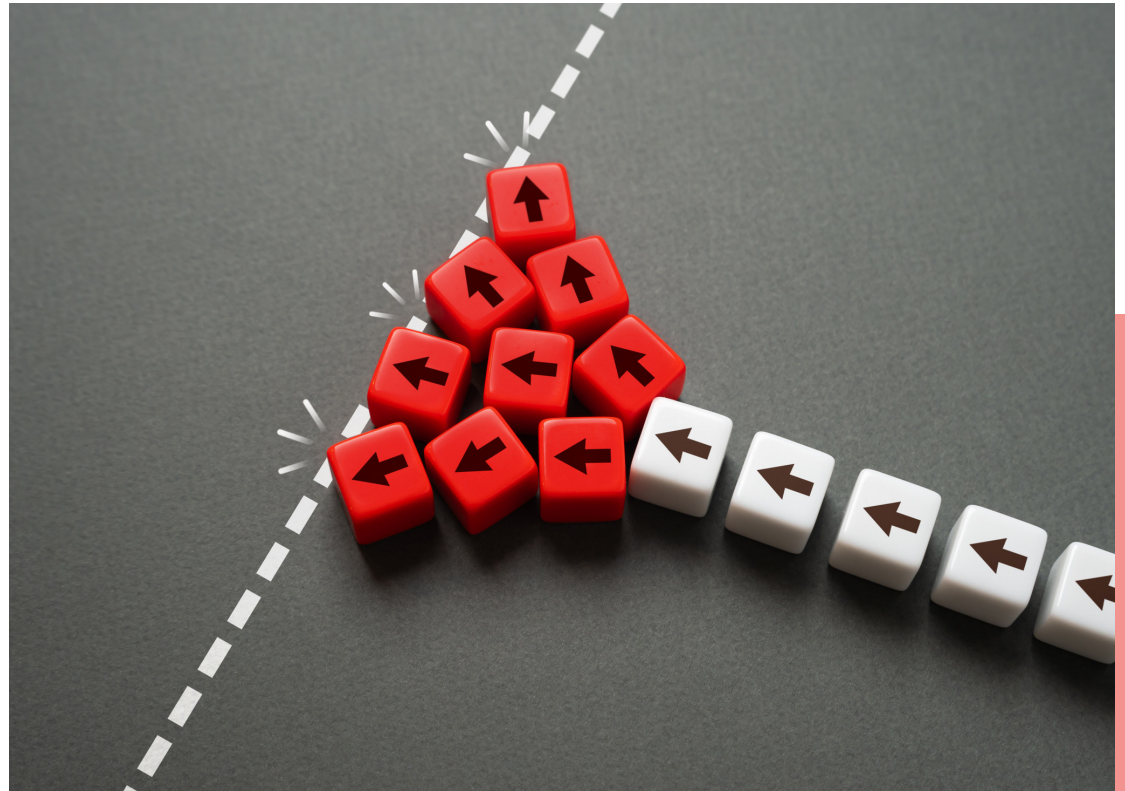
Embedding PE Into Curriculum

- Require students to:
 - Attend a conference
 - Attend association meetings
 - Interview a VTS
 - Write a legislative reflection
 - Volunteer at a community event
 - Attend a committee meeting
 - Create a professional development plan
 - Build a LinkedIn profile
 - Join the state technician association



Help them Overcome Barriers

- Cost
- Time commitment
- Finding opportunities
- Providing instruction and mentorship





05

Call to Action



Next Steps

1. Choose one new PE activity for yourself
2. Choose one intentional way to model or teach PE in your classroom



Key Takeaways

- PE is not simply advancing your own career – but advancing our profession
- All PE you do teaches the next generation what it means to be a veterinary professional
- Our students are watching let them see professionals who stay curious, involved, and engaged
- When educators model PE, students don't just graduate with technical skills – they graduate with a vision for a lifelong career



Professional engagement isn't just about joining an association or attending a conference. It's about choosing to invest in something bigger than yourself. Every instructor who mentors, every leader who advocates, and every student who gets involved helps build a profession that is more respected, more influential, and ultimately one that veterinary technicians are proud to spend a career in.

Thank You!



Questions?

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