

Title of Session: Teaching Teachers
Moderator: Dianne Allen
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DianneA: what is in my mind is the other aspect of value adding by having some additional professional inputs to the process

BjB: I agree with you about the reflection

DianneA: Though in the end it the self-directed work on the material captured that delivers the real learning

GordonP joined the room.

DianneA: we were wondering

JeffC waves to Gordon.

DianneA: Hi Gordon

GordonP: Hi everyone

DianneA: welcome to Teaching Teachers

GordonP: thank you everyone

DianneA: Gordon, what is your interest in today's discussion?

GordonP: are you all going to teach me about Tapped In?

DianneA: that was not quite our objective, but we can shift focus

GordonP: OK what was the focus?

DianneA: this is a session for discussing professional development issues for teachers

DianneA: and my interests are with developing reflective work

GordonP: great, that is always an area for improvement

DianneA: but we are open to discussing any concerns teachers might have that constitute professional development

DianneA: and to that end this group meets monthly for these kinds of discussions

DianneA: you might like to join this group

DianneA: and therefore see how to join other groups

GordonP: Professional development is of utmost concern with adult ed as many of our teachers are not from the public arena, but are all part time employees

DianneA: tell me some more of your focus Gordon

GordonP: adult ed teachers work with 3 areas: ESL, GED and literacy

DianneA nods

DianneA: and are you a 'deliverer' of services to these three groups?

DianneA . o O (I am not sure what GED is)

GordonP: Yes, at this time I am the coordinator for ESL

DianneA: or a deliverer to teachers of adult ed?

GordonP: GED is the alternative for the high school diploma

DianneA nods from her Australian position

GordonP: I now understand

DianneA: and how do you seek to use reflection with these teachers of these areas?

GordonP: too often, we offer professional development, but shortly after the session is over, the teachers do not remember the lesson

DianneA nods

DianneA: have you tried to use any explicitly reflective techniques during the PD sessions?

GordonP: greater transferring of the knowledge to the teachers is very important

GordonP: As I have only begun the direction of professional development instruction, this is an area I want to pursue

DianneA nods

DianneA: OK let me slowly give you some of my background ...

DianneA: a quicker route is to highlight my name under the HERE tab

DianneA: and to click then on the green I icon

BjB . o O (HERE is to the left of this chat window)

DianneA: for more of my profile details

DianneA: while I type out what I am currently up to

DianneA: I am a currently involved in conducting a unit of study for pre-service teachers of K-6

GordonP: found your info

DianneA: the unit of study is in fact an inquiry in to practice exercise, a mini research report

GordonP: I have just received my masters in ed with emphasis in adult ed and distance learning

DianneA: and for some of these students they elect to do a reflective self-study, and given the group of students and where they are up to, often on classroom management

DianneA: more and more connections Gordon!

DianneA: in doing that study they are required to 1) choose their own focus; 2) collect data via regular journal or diary entries

DianneA: and then analyse the data collected, and compare and contrast with other practitioners work

GordonP: can this be done via the Internet?

DianneA: either reported in the literature, or gathered by interview or mentoring or critical friend exchanges

DianneA: that is one of the things that I have been trying to determine

DianneA: Others tell me yes, and point to communities of practice associating via mail lists

DianneA: others point to the potential of blogs

DianneA: Here at Tapped In, I am trying to build such a community

GordonP: I have just installed Moodle and see great opportunity there

DianneA: I can't say I have a great success with something that becomes self-supporting

GordonP: at the local level

DianneA: or sustainable

GordonP: that is a worry

DianneA: As the first exercise in this semester's round with the present batch of students

DianneA: I involved them in a structured interviewing process

DianneA: which included the element of 1) getting to know you, for the students

GordonP: intros

DianneA: and 2) engaging in multiple interactions with others, and considering revising the interview question

DianneA: it was again some structured action research - did their interview question get the information they were after

DianneA: and then as they moved from pairs, to quartets, and from quartets to octets, what differences were they noticing

DianneA: in how they 'felt' about others introducing them, about the differences between sharing at the pair/ quartet / and octet level

GordonP: extroverts taking over the larger groups

DianneA: I had a group of about 32, with a fair number of both introverts and extroverts

GordonP: OK, reflections on the large group...

DianneA: and I sought to collect reflections at the individual level as well as the group level, and at the end asked the individuals to 'gather' up their learning from the whole process and hand in to me their written individual material, after I had gathered the octet information in a plenary session

DianneA: What we found was 1) next week when we ran group activity, the groups were the quartets formed arbitrarily in this exercise

DianneA: and 2) it seems that the time spent in the exercise on relationship building contributed to that

GordonP: Conclusion- 4 is the best group size?

DianneA: probably yes. One of the findings coming through the individual reflections was about lack of clarity in the purpose of the interviewing task that started the exercise off

DianneA: that was me continuing to fail to effectively scaffold the session

DianneA: but what was probably more valuable was for some students to therefore find that given the same exercise, the same initial inputs, different students read the task differently and went about it differently

GordonP: the students shared no responsibility in scaffolding?

DianneA: I would say the students did share that responsibility in scaffolding so that was why we got those different results

DianneA: I can't make any one else think the way I think

DianneA: and I need to be open to how others interpret a task

DianneA: and when I am, I also and surprised by others' different foci

GordonP: I agree, but when will educators in mass figure that out?

DianneA: do educators in the mass need to figure that out? sufficient that educators individually find it out and seek to use it pedagogically rather than assuming it is disobedience

DianneA: now, does any of that seem to speak to what you are doing with your adult ed folk?

GordonP: yes, I did mean educators individually

GordonP: yes, very much so. I do think keeping professional development in smaller groups would help results

DianneA: anything else?

GordonP: use a facilitator to push the envelope

GordonP: I unfortunately see teacher resistance to professional development

DianneA: I use lots of things to try and push my envelop .. the literature, observing others in action ...

DianneA: trying to see 'education' in lots of less formal situations

BjB . o O (perhaps not resistance to pd, as much as the pd is not sustainable?)

GordonP: good

GordonP: pd not sustainable, good question

DianneA: BJ, all of us, me included resist change, and sometimes for very good reasons

DianneA: sometimes the material in prof ed lacks the ecological validity for me to feel comfortable with trying it

DianneA: these days, I am more aware of the fact that to change it is me that decides to change

BjB: Dianne, teachers are fed up with being forced to go to sporadic conferences, in-service days, that don't provide information that allows them to carry that information to the next step...to explore, to experiment with the new knowledge

DianneA: and what I decide to change about has been fairly thoroughly tested against my understanding of myself

GordonP: This is following the theory of andragogy?

DianneA: well Gordon, I am an adult ...

BjB looks up andragogy

DianneA: yes BJ those sorts of PD exercises can leave you cold

GordonP: Yes, but I see great resistance to adult ed theory in pd

DianneA: and for any change even for children there is a process of exposure, experiment, repetition of exposure, practice at experimenting

BjB . o O (Knowles' theory of andragogy is an attempt to develop a theory specifically for adult learning. Knowles emphasizes that adults are self-directed and expect to take responsibility for decisions. Adult learning programs must accommodate this fundamental aspect.)

DianneA: ah, Gordon, I see where you are coming from, I think, yes I am talking andragogy for professional development

BjB: o O (Andragogy makes the following assumptions about the design of learning: (1) Adults need to know why they need to learn something (2) Adults need to learn experientially, (3) Adults approach learning as problem-solving, and (4) Adults learn best when the topic is of immediate value.)

GordonP: exactly

DianneA: Sometimes I ask myself whether pedagogy fails because it doesn't recognise that that is how every one learns

GordonP: Too often we fail to see pedagogy at one end of the spectrum and andragogy at the other end

GordonP: Adults must build on what they already know

BjB: they appear to be very similar in the next quote from Knowles: In practical terms, andragogy means that instruction for adults needs to focus more on the process and less on the content being taught. Strategies such as case studies, role playing, simulations, and self-evaluation are most useful. Instructors adopt a role of facilitator or resource rather than lecturer or grader.

DianneA: and to change, we are often facing changing something we have already learned

DianneA: and that involves unlearning, as well as sufficient conviction that the change is warranted

GordonP: again the feared "change"

DianneA: and that conviction is often developed only by serious investigation

GordonP: pd sessions too often do not offer the opportunity for serious investigation.

DianneA: and one of those changes might be in recognising how we go about investigation is itself flawed

DianneA: serious investigation takes more time than is usually provided for

GordonP: so, follow-up?

DianneA: indeed: follow up

BjB: Dianne leads this discussion on the first Thursday of the month, Gordon

DianneA: less one-of events and more mentoring would be what Mary FT would say I guess

DianneA: thanks BJ

GordonP: great. Is there an email notification so I do not miss that session?

BjB: join the group, Gordon!

DianneA: I was going to mention to Gordon that if he wants to join this group he might check out the group information from the welcome screen and click on the green I link for Teaching Teachers and click then on the join this group option

BjB: Dianne posts reminders to the discussion board

DianneA: and she will have to now!!!

DianneA: and learn to make that change

DianneA: thanks for the conversation Gordon

DianneA: and thanks Jeff for joining us in that way

BjB chuckles. I'll work on a cheeky title for the next discussion

DianneA: you do just that!

GordonP: thank you Dianne, you stimulated my mind!

BjB hugs Dianne.

BjB waves goodnight to Gordon