**Title of Session:** Teaching Teachers

**Moderator:** Dianne Allen

**Title of File:** 20081204teachteach

**Date:** December 4, 2008

Room: Teaching Teachers Group

**BjB**: hi, Gordon.

**BjB**: Here for Teaching Teachers?

GordonP: Hi

**DianneA**: Hello Gordon

GordonP: Yes

**GordonP**: Hi Diane and BJB

**DianneA**: welcome then ...

**DianneA**: and what brings you to Teaching Teachers today?

**GordonP**: I used to attend but got too busy, but I remembered tonight

**BjB** cheers for Gordon!

**DianneA**: is there anything on your mind that you would like to discuss, then

**GordonP**: Instructional design for difficult teachers

**DianneA**: I usually offer this session open to participants' issues, and you are our only participant tonight

DianneA: OK, let's unpack that a bit ...

**DianneA**: what do you mean by 'difficult teachers'

**GordonP**: I run a 15 county adult ed coop, and some of the teachers do not benefit from pd

**DianneA** listens to Gordon

**DianneA**: you say you are involved in a coop ... does that mean the participants are there in a voluntary capacity?

**BjB**: do you find that it is only the older teachers who are resistant?

**GordonP**: the participants yes, the teachers are paid

**DianneA**: hmmm, different words, different expectations for me ...

**GordonP**: it depends not on age but something else, I haven't identified

**Dianne**A: tell me some more [about] the program and the context Gordon

**BjB** . o O (fear of the unknown? Fear of being made to look stupid in front of peers?)

**DianneA**: do you mean presenters = 'participants'?

**GordonP**: it is a GED program

**BjB** shuts up and listens

**DianneA**: and teachers are paid to attend coop sessions?

GordonP: as well as ESL

**GordonP**: yes, teachers receive a stipend

**DianneA**: I don't know GED Gordon, sorry, I am Australian based

**GordonP**: it is a high school equivalent for those who have dropped out of high school

**GordonP**: we have students from 17 to much older

**BjB**: are you teaching teachers who teach GED?

**DianneA**: Ok more for my benefit and clarity again .. what do you mean by 'some of the teachers do not benefit from pd'?

GordonP: yes

 $\mathbf{BjB}$ : pd = professional development

**GordonP**: it seems they sit there, but when the next class time comes, the teaching does not improve

**DianneA**: Ok, that is a bit clearer for me, and thanks Bj for your questions that have helped that ...

**BjB** . o O (sounds like an ESL discussion ;-) How tricky words can be!)

**DianneA**: Gordon, are your teachers of GED there to find out how to improve their teaching, and have they come voluntarily?

**DianneA**: sorry for the double barreled question

**GordonP**: that is a good question. I think too many show up for the stipend

**DianneA** nods for coercion via incentives ...

**GordonP**: all teachers need 12 hours of pd every year

**DianneA**: our news media is blaming the economic situation on bad short term incentives

**BjB**: is technology involved in the pd lessons, Gordon?

**GordonP**: limited, usually ppt

**DianneA**: Ok, another question ... have these teachers of GED been invited to identify the part of their teaching that they would like to improve?

**GordonP**: to an extent.

**DianneA**: can you elaborate please

**GordonP**: I have 25 teachers in a radius of 100 miles. I can only bring them together a few times

**GordonP**: I tried using WebCT for online pd, but only one attended

**DianneA**: good adult education is premised on (1) the adults drawing on their experience; (2) reflecting on that (3) identifying what they need (4) committing to learning what they really want to know

**BjB**: maybe try Tapped In?

**GordonP**: I can try to get them to do Tapped In, but the stipends...

**BjB** . o O ( they would have their transcripts to submit for stipends )

**DianneA**: How long do you have them together when they get together Gordon?

**GordonP**: Diane, I have a M.Ed. in adult ed. I know what to do for the GED students, but it seems much harder for teachers

**GordonP**: they are together 6 hours

**DianneA**: Gordon, it may be a question of design ...

GordonP: yes, agreed

**DianneA**: and really considering what it is that these teachers are about ...

**GordonP**: smaller groups?

**DianneA**: and if there are 25 different needs then you need a process that accommodates these differences

**GordonP**: one on one?

**DianneA**: Gordon I asked if these teachers have been invited to identify what they would like to improve, and you said 'to some extent'

**DianneA**: can you elaborate the nature of that extent?

**GordonP**: we poll our teachers and provide pd to the greatest need

**GordonP**: not all needs

**DianneA**: I come from a background that suggests that individual teachers are individual, and have individual needs

GordonP: yes

**DianneA**: OK so you do what most pd people do: deliver the standard content to the most stated area of need

GordonP: yes...

**DianneA**: when I say 'standard' it is you or someone else as the expert telling what to do to improve ...

**GordonP**: usually someone else is the expert

**GordonP**: I am the content standards expert

**DianneA**: without recognizing that what might be at issue is more about what a person can comfortably do to travel on the change journey ...

**DianneA**: let me ask you ....

**DianneA**: when did you last engage in doing something different so that you could improve ... in any field?

**GordonP**: I went back to school for my Masters

**DianneA**: tell me some more ...

**DianneA**: what was the stimulus?

**GordonP**: I had topped out in my position so I needed more letters after my name. I did learn a lot.

**DianneA**: and why did you choose the masters?

GordonP: I was already in adult ed and I found a masters program in adult ed

**DianneA**: any other reason?

**GordonP**: not really, I was not that good a student in undergraduate.

**DianneA**: when you started out did you have any clear goals ...

**GordonP**: yes, advancement in my career

**DianneA**: or was it just the stimulus of the course and the accreditation that meant you changed and learned a lot?

**GordonP**: no, it was a great education

**DianneA**: no specific objective in learning to improve?

**GordonP**: I started to say not at the start, but yes I did want to improve

**DianneA**: as the course unfolded did you find that a specific goal formed?

**GordonP**: yes, to put some of the great new ideas into action

**DianneA**: and what did you do next .. to try and put one of the great new ideas into action?

**GordonP**: yes, distance learning only to find the rules of state bureaucracy swallowed it up

**DianneA**: OK, so here is a try at change, and here is a negative result ...

**DianneA**: what happened next for you on that objective?

**GordonP**: that was the attempt at WebCT...

**DianneA**: another non-success ...

**DianneA**: and so where are you at present on that objective?

**GordonP**: now I am looking at a Moodle site

**DianneA**: and why are you persisting?

**GordonP**: for both teachers and GED students

**GordonP**: I am just hard headed I guess

**BjB** chuckles

**DianneA**: so you have a goal outside of yourself .. for someone else's good?

**DianneA**: altruism?

**GordonP**: this life is not for me, but to help others

**DianneA**: OK ... let me share some of myself .. otherwise this can feel like an interrogation ...

**GordonP**: good I need a break

**DianneA**: what I have been trying to do Gordon, is to apply the adult ed principles ...

**DianneA**: and ask you have you tried to improve, and what has been your experience ...

**DianneA**: I was working in management and had topped out/ was not getting enough challenge ...

**DianneA**: I wasn't interested in MBA and financial side of management ...

**DianneA**: I new that the three day seminar didn't generate change for me ...

**DianneA**: then a flier for a Masters of Dispute Resolution crossed my desk ...

**DianneA**: and in it the course used adult ed principles .. what are you here for ... identify your goal for this session.

**DianneA**: I didn't have anything clearer than I wanted to find out if others had better

ideas about how to handle disputes ...

**DianneA**: sometimes we don't know what we don't know and so cannot generate clear and specific learning objectives

**DianneA**: and sometimes it helps to be open to anything that comes ...

**DianneA**: is what I am sharing making sense to you?

**GordonP**: yes it is. The buy in

**DianneA**: OK I was in ... and then I did find a specific goal .... a number actually

**DianneA**: we had the workshop content delivery ...

**DianneA**: and we had simulations to try and that was where I came unstuck ...

**DianneA**: now I had another clearer objective .. how to learn from simulations, from 'experience'

**DianneA**: as well as workshops we had to write a 6000 word essay and prepare a 20 minute presentation to peers

**GordonP**: is learning from simulations transferable to my teachers?

**DianneA**: for that assignment we were at liberty to design our own study .. ie do some research for ourselves

**DianneA**: at the presentations, we were involved in sharing what was important and what we had found ... and any thing else we wanted to try ...

**DianneA**: Gordon, any one who is trying to improve has to learn how to learn from experience, and it is not easy

**DianneA**: we have to learn how to observe ourselves

**BjB** . o O ( and it takes TIME )

**DianneA**: we have to learn how to identify what the problem is

**DianneA**: we have to learn from others what other strategies might work better than our current strategies

**DianneA**: we have to then commit to trying what others suggest

**DianneA**: or to know why we reject trying that

**Dianne**A: sometimes what we reject is sensible .. it will not work for us

**DianneA**: and because we know ourselves and our values better than anyone else we have good reasons for not going down that track

**DianneA**: you are still persisting with distance ed for pd for GED people because you know they need help ...

**DianneA**: but you haven't yet thought about how to design something for them so that they can explore what they identify as they own particular need

**DianneA**: and now I have done what you have been doing ... telling you what ...

**DianneA**: does it make sense?

**DianneA**: does is sound like something you could try to do?

**GordonP**: yes, but can you get teachers to identify their need?

**DianneA**: why not?

**GordonP**: I will try

**DianneA**: one way is to ask them to tell a practice story ...

**DianneA**: and to identify what problem is there that they would like to explore ...

**DianneA**: once they have identified their problem, set them on the way to finding the answer that makes most sense to them that they could try next time in class

**DianneA**: then have them report back to you or to the class / group .. and see what other responses develop

 ${\bf BjB}$  . o O ( there's the time factor...that most pd opportunities do not offer. How to try new methods and ideas and get feedback when the pd only occurs once or twice a year )

**BjB**: That's one of the reasons Tapped in was created

**GordonP**: OK, from my "office" I can do all this?

**DianneA**: and what I have been describing is called 'action research' in some quarters

**BjB**: yes. Or you can create a group room for your pd

**DianneA**: and there is a new group here looking at 'action research' ...

**BjB**: cool, Dianne. We had our first Action Research discussion last week.

**BjB** . o O ( December 1 )

**DianneA**: Gordon, if you'd like, I can send some more gory details of what we were doing with masters ed students at UoW that developed from a narrative (story) into a practice relevant research ...

**GordonP**: I would like that

**DianneA**: Ok I will send that to your email address, and please feel free to come back to me with any questions

**DianneA**: do you have any questions now, before we wrap?

**GordonP**: no, but this is exciting. A new direction...

**GordonP**: to the same end

**DianneA** nods

**DianneA**: BJ any final questions or comments?

GordonP: thank you Dianne

GordonP: and Bi

**BjB**: my brain hurts, Dianne!

**DianneA**: and it is late at night... off you go to bed!

**BjB**: Gordon, if you would like any help in starting a group or in bringing your pd folks to your office, let me know

**GordonP**: how late is it in Australia

**DianneA**: Ok good night all, I'll be in touch

GordonP: thank you

**DianneA**: it is 1pm Friday afternoon Gordon

**BjB** hugs Dianne. Thanks for the mental exercise!

**GordonP**: adios all

**DianneA**: adios

**BjB** waves goodnight to Gordon