Title of Session: Teaching Teachers - PD Workshops

Moderator: Dianne Allen

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Room: Teaching Teachers Group

DianneA: Hi Shana

ShanaC: Hi

DianneA: forgive me, but are you here on spec? or has something in particular brought you here today?

ShanaC: I'm a graduate student at UMW in Virginia

ShanaC: My professor asked us to pick a Tapped In session that we thought would be interesting and I chose this :-)

DianneA nods

DianneA: fair enough

ShanaC: Hope you don't mind....

DianneA: have you had a chance to look at the featured files of say June's session?

DianneA: no I don't mind I am not sure if we will have a discussion today

ShanaC: No, I haven't....

DianneA: you are most welcome

ShanaC: I'll stick around for a bit to see if any others login...

DianneA: we anticipate 'following on' a discussion about making PD more relevant and compelling and therefore more work for teachers

DianneA: What kinds of grad studies are you doing at UMW

ShanaC: LOL....from a teacher's perspective I'd love to "hear" the discussion...

ShanaC: Special Education

DianneA: have you any spec ed experience?

ShanaC: Yes, I've been teaching since 2007. I started at the middle school level and am now teaching on the secondary level

DianneA nods

DianneA: what, for you, is the 'special' of spec ed?

ShanaC: I think that special education is simply learning how to differentiate the learning for students....really getting to know their learning styles...

DianneA nods

DianneA: I recollect bombing out of spec ed .. it was too hard for me to manage the stepping down ...

ShanaC: stepping down?

DianneA: I still find it very difficult and have run into the issue of helping someone with an 18 year old Down Syndrome

DianneA: I taught high school science

DianneA: and I couldn't break what I knew down into small enough and relevant enough steps for the spec ed class I had

ShanaC: you felt you had to water down the material for special ed students

DianneA: not water down, but really move to far more concrete material

DianneA: this was when I was still in my first few years of teaching

DianneA: I was also teaching year 12 Chemistry ... and years 8-11 in between

ShanaC: yes, it can be difficult, but sometimes it's the specifics that cause the most frustration for spec ed students

DianneA: can you elaborate please about 'specifics that cause frustration..'

GordonP joined the room.

DianneA: Hi Gordon

DianneA: good to see you

GordonP: Hi Dianne

GordonP: I just got back from a state meeting

DianneA nods, how did it go?

GordonP: very busy

ShanaC: specifics meaning when the course material encompasses so much information that the students cannot grasp it all...they really need chunking of material to be successful.

DianneA: what meeting is NOT busy!

DianneA lets Gordon catch his breath

GordonP: tru

DianneA nods to Shana, thanks

DianneA: Gordon, Shana is here to engage with a typical TI session, as part of grad school studies

ShanaC: hi Gordon

DianneA: I shared with her that today's session was a follow on one from where we got to last month ..

GordonP: HI Shana

DianneA: so I guess it might help if I scope things a bit ...

DianneA: correct me when I get it wrong ...

DianneA: Shana, Gordon conducts PD sessions for teachers of Adult Basic Education ...

ShanaC: nods

DianneA: and was wondering how to work at engaging them more in the PD sessions he conducts

DianneA: Gordon kindly shared a series of powerpoints he uses to introduce teachers to the issue of building standards of attainment into the curriculum, naturally ...

DianneA: and over the last two sessions we have looked at taking that material and restructuring it so that the activity becomes more learner-centered

DianneA: My suggestion of what and how is up there on the whiteboard here in this room ...

DianneA: do you see it?

ShanaC: yes

RachaelC joined the room.

DianneA: and in a note called Di's suggestion

ShanaC: see it

DianneA: Hi Rachael

DianneA: welcome

RachaelC: Hello

DianneA: are you here for this session Rachael?

RachaelC: Yes.

DianneA: OK time we did some real introductions

DianneA: can each one tell us where they are from and what area of teaching is their forte

DianneA: I am based in Australia, near Wollongong, and my area is professional development

RachaelC: I'm a Principal in Virginia--private school.

DianneA: Shana, and Gordon?

ShanaC: I'm a teacher at a public high school in Virginia, but am also a graduate students working on my Masters

GordonP: I am a director of Adult Basic Education in Texas

DianneA: thanks

DianneA: we haven't got very far yet Rachael into today's session

DianneA: and as I was explaining to Shana

DianneA: today's session was a follow on one from where Gordon and I got to last month ..

DianneA: so excuse me while I scope things a bit ...

DianneA: Gordon conducts PD sessions for teachers of Adult Basic Education...

DianneA: and was wondering how to work at engaging them more in the PD sessions he conducts

DianneA: and over the last two sessions we have looked at taking that material and restructuring it so that the activity becomes more learner-centered

DianneA: is this something you would like to engage with, with us today, or do we try and find some common ground amongst today's group?

RachaelC: I'd be interested in learner centered Professional Development for my teachers.

DianneA: I usually run the Teaching Teachers session as a 'responsive' time ...

ShanaC: I'd be willing to give inputs from the perspective of a teacher who has plenty of PD to do all the time :-)

DianneA: Ok, it looks, Gordon, like putting you under the pump again!

DianneA grins to Gordon

GordonP: sounds good

DianneA: is that OK with you?

GordonP: that's OK with me

DianneA: then to cut a long story short Rachael, Gordon has conducted a session to help teachers build standards into their teaching ...

DianneA: and has used a powerpoint presentation as the core, and start of that ...

DianneA: but has found that it wasn't engaging enough ...

DianneA: So I have proposed using the powerpoints as a resource and starting the session elsewhere ...

DianneA: you will find the guts of my proposal as a note here in the room under Di's suggestion ...

DianneA: can you see that?

ShanaC: yes....

RachaelC: Yes

DianneA: OK, Gordon

DianneA: do you have anything else you would like to add at this stage?

GordonP: no, you have explained it well

DianneA: Ok have you, by any chance tried to do what was suggested at out last session?

GordonP: I did one PD since, but it was a very small group

DianneA: and what happened for you?

GordonP: and most were not teachers.

DianneA . o O (small groups make a difference)

GordonP: it broke down into those who participated and those who wouldn't

DianneA: wouldn't?

GordonP: indeed, only one really was a teacher

RachaelC: Why were they there?

GordonP: others had other jobs, not teaching

GordonP: in total, 6 were there

DianneA: what was the PD intended to do, Gordon?

GordonP: all needed pd before the end of June

RachaelC: Not following...needed PD or forced to go to PD? What was the topic or area

of learning?

GordonP: it was more for bureaucracy

GordonP: forced

DianneA: Ok, 'forcing' is a real issue

DianneA: let's back up a bit ...

GordonP: I was under the impression it was only for teachers until I got there

DianneA: Rachael can you tell us more about your interest in PD for teachers ... and how you might be going about it at the moment

DianneA commiserates with Gordon

DianneA: and Shana can you prepare to share with us the last good PD you experienced

ShanaC: I'm thinking now....

RachaelC: Professional Development should be a priority for principals and hopefully teachers. So much in Education changes and our children's needs change, but I find we need to make the PD engaging and worth the teachers time...something they can actually bring back to the classroom and use.

SusanR joined the room.

ShanaC: I think the most engaging PD I've participated in was a talk by Dan Mulligan

DianneA . o O (my process is to ask people to reflect on experience and to draw from that what we learn from experience and how we learn better from experience)

DianneA: Hi Susan

DianneA: welcome

SusanR: Hi Dianne

DianneA: we are just tracking over good PD experiences

DianneA: Shana can you share some more detail

DianneA: what happened .. why did you find that 'good'?

SusanR listens

ShanaC: Dan Mulligan is an awesome speaker who focuses on teaching teachers how to put Marzano's Essential Nine to use in the classroom. It was very engaging...with lots of hands on activities and humor...

DianneA: ok spell out some more about the 'hands on activity'

ShanaC: in addition, he gave us immediate activities we could implement in our classrooms the next day

DianneA. o O (some speakers are engaging .. but that only goes so far .. I am not an engaging speaker so I have to work at other devices to engage others)

DianneA: did you implement those activities with the teachers in Dan's session?

ShanaC: yes...

DianneA: OK tell me some more

DianneA: how did that help you become engaged?

ShanaC: it wasn't like I was just sitting there and listening to someone speak for 2 hours

RachaelC: Did you work in groups...and did you learn from others in the group? Meaning...do you think most teachers want to interact with one another at a workshop?

ShanaC: we worked with partners, worked with groups....

RachaelC: I find that most rather that...but what about the few who really do not like to interact?

ShanaC: Yes....teachers definitely want to interact with other teachers at PD...that's where we get some of our best ideas...it's like a human suggestion box :-)

DianneA: so it looked a bit like my suggestion there in the note, Shana, (but without the awesome speaker bit)?

GordonP: interact with someone of their own choosing or assigned by random?

ShanaC: teaching is about collaboration so although some won't want to interact it's a necessary part of what we do....

ShanaC: so, they have to....

ShanaC: assigned by random or perhaps group by discipline or teaching level (i.e. elementary, middle, secondary)....

GordonP: OK

RachaelC: We're working on a project with a few local schools to get all the third grade teachers together, the science teachers, math, PE etc to interact and share best

practices. It seems they really want to see what others who are teaching the same things are doing?

DianneA: Rachael, I am a slow engager ...

DianneA: so I like to provide space at the beginning for individuals to think about and identify what they want to get out of this PD session

ShanaC: Yes...we, teachers get drained trying to come up with new innovative things to do in the classroom, so instead of reinventing the wheel each time we write lessons we need to collaborate with other teachers....that's what make PD most beneficial

DianneA: then I start the 'icebreaker' step ... share with one other, and then have pairs share in quartets, ..

DianneA: focused on what they want to get from this PD time ...

DianneA: what happens next is perhaps more about how they work at making the most of their time ...

DianneA: for instance with your 3rd grade teachers ...

DianneA: you could ask them to put on an A4 sheet the title of their last best lesson and stick them up around the walls

DianneA: and then do a round of circulating to see if another teacher has a best lesson about something you are struggling with

DianneA: and then get them talking with one another

DianneA: this is a slightly different approach than what Gordon has been faced with ...

DianneA: am I making sense to you?

ShanaC: yes....

DianneA: the sharing that I have in mind comes a bit later for Gordon's group, but comes nevertheless ...

DianneA: and it is the sharing that 'makes' the engagement

DianneA: sharing makes the engagement is my point

DianneA: does that make sense to you Gordon?

RachaelC: How do you keep them engaged after the PD face to face?

GordonP: yes, but how does the sharing continue into the classroom

DianneA: Rachael, how would you want to keep them engaged after the PD face to face?

DianneA: good question Gordon ... and for you we are back remembering that your teachers who are adults are teaching adults .. and they need to learn what makes good adult learning ...

RachaelC: Once they leave the PD ...how can you keep them excited about what they have learned and have them continue to collaborate or share best practices?

DianneA: and to learn to try and stop 'teaching'! (content, not process)

DianneA: Rachael, have you seen them excited at PD?

RachaelC: yes

DianneA: OK Shana you were excited at PD .. how long did it last? was there any useful follow up?

DianneA: who initiated it?

ShanaC: It lasted about a month...

DianneA . o O (we are asking about sustaining a community of practice here ... that is an important question)

GordonP: very important

DianneA: was there any useful follow up Shana?

ShanaC: They were tons of follow up through my school on-site PD...

RachaelC: How do we help the teachers to keep the connections?

ShanaC: so every month...we meet as faculty to focus on the things the Mulligan had suggested

DianneA: Rachael, have you tried to do anything to help teachers keep the connections?

DianneA: Shana so your PD was single school based?

ShanaC: the initial PD was district wide, but the sessions afterward were school-based

RachaelC: WoW! School on-site PD? Tell me a little more about this position.

DianneA: and who convened the first monthly faculty session?

ShanaC: our school's instructional coordinator heads up the school-based PD

DianneA: and what happened in that first monthly faculty session?

ShanaC: we also had Spanish for educators as a PD option this year....very useful...

DianneA: Shana is in secondary education context, Rachael that might make a difference

ShanaC: we were given a tool box full of "things" we could use to implement Mulligan's ideas in our classes (i.e. grouping circles, metal pans, etc.

SusanR: we are using onsite school based PD in Ottawa, Ontario

GordonP: because of the number of students whose first language is Spanish or???

DianneA: Susan can you elaborate a bit more please?

ShanaC: yes...because our community is changing and we need to be able to communicate with our ELL students and their families...

DianneA: sorry ... I seem to be going all over the place .. and may be distracting the conversation ...

SusanR: ie literacy coaches are brought in or teachers plan in teams and substitute teachers are brought in

SusanR . o O (I am a substitute teacher)

DianneA: can I mention that this session is designed to go for another hour, but that is negotiable

GordonP: lets go as long as there is conversation

ShanaC: I may need to leave early...

RachaelC: I love the idea of one main speaker (focus) at beginning and then continuous trainings on site as reinforcement.

GordonP: what about cost?

RachaelC: I'm with Gordan..as long as there is conversation.

RachaelC: Good question...for me...private school. I do not have the resources you have.

DianneA: OK let me ask again, Rachael, how would you want to keep them engaged after the PD face to face?

DianneA: and, Rachael, have you tried to do anything to help teachers keep the connections?

RachaelC: That's what I'd like to ask everyone....I am thinking Technology would have to come into play here.

DianneA: Technology can have a part to play

ShanaC: you could do discussion forums online

DianneA: but is not, in my opinion the whole answer

RachaelC: Do you have any suggested sites.

SusanR: we have had success with after school online PD ie breeze http://breeze.ocdsb.ca/p32488405/

GordonP: At the state meeting I just came from, blogs were suggested

DianneA: that was why I was asking Shana about exactly what happened and who, to help her group keep things going

SusanR: Couldn't they use a wiki to keep the group gong

DianneA: so far as I can see people need some one who can/will do the social cohesion work

DianneA: even in tech sites!

GordonP: agreed

DianneA: from time to time I hear of people organising to do it for themselves, but that seems to be an anomaly rather than the rule

DianneA: you can do some things with obligation and accreditation, but it does not last

DianneA: here at TI we are trying to do something more about that over this next August to April period ...

DianneA: it will be a great test of good will, and goodness knows what else

RachaelC: I heard wiki is the way...For our tech savvy teachers this is easy, but those

who aren't I'm afraid would lose the connection.

DianneA: Having a real task to start, and seeing real outcomes, and sharing those and benefiting from sharing is, for me, the starter

GordonP: a real mandated task?

ShanaC: perhaps blogs would be a bit easier for most to adapt to

DianneA: any tool is 'the way' Rachael, if there is the will and the expectation of good outcomes ...

DianneA: but no tool is of itself the 'social' of this so-called social media ...

DianneA: its the we's that are the social beings

RachaelC: I like that...

DianneA: and so the task is about knowing what it is to make a number of people able to coalesce to collaborate

SusanR: they may want to try posterous for collaborating http://posterous.com/

DianneA: Gordon, what were you wanting to say about 'mandated'?

GordonP: I fear too many will feel mandated and not participate without

DianneA: we are back to the compulsion bit again, are we? or the 'reward' bit?

GordonP: or can the task be something they cannot put down?

ShanaC: it needs to be something we can't put down...it has to be time-conscious too....

DianneA: remember the old teaching/ classroom management stuff about working towards making rewards 'intrinsic'

DianneA: so for adults, what do adults value?

DianneA: that they won't want to put down?

GordonP: return on investment

ShanaC: their time

GordonP: yes, time

RachaelC: time and most educators..that they made a difference in the life of a child...thus...give them something that will help them reach them.

DianneA: so is it sufficient that you set up a structure where they do something, that takes time, and is good work, then they share it with others who have been working likewise, and in the process of sharing they find they have learned and now can gain a return on investment and from what the others have shared?

GordonP: yes

DianneA: so that appears to validate my suggestion Gordon ... the trick is to find out if it works in practice

RachaelC: Yes...we need to value teachers time and give them something they can't deny is just good practice.

DianneA: so Rachael, what I am suggesting includes what others are calling 'project based learning' and can be applied at the earlier education level too ...

DianneA: and it is essentially to move from 'teaching content' to providing a process that helps learners learn

DianneA: and helping them find the intrinsic value of demonstrable competence

DianneA: in an audience of peers

ShanaC: I need to log off...it's been a pleasure discussing with you all....

GordonP: to have teachers work collaboratively to add value to others teaching?

DianneA: and all that sounds like I might be a montessorian teacher in the making, but too old to test it on the ground

DianneA: thanks Shana for your inputs they have been most helpful

GordonP: the models I have seen for project based learning have been massive time consumers

GordonP: thanks Shana

DianneA: explain some more Gordon

ShanaC left the room.

GordonP: a project based model can take at least a few weeks to months

DianneA: soo???

RachaelC: You are right....they learn best from each other. How do we keep them sharing in the school after the PD is over? How do you incorporate team planning/sharing on a weekly basis? Or do you?

GordonP: it seems to be too concentrated on single items and not broad enough

GordonP: and that is here the Content Standards comes in, to keep learning broad enough

DianneA: see, one of the things I wonder about these days, is just if any learning happens in just listening .. and if not, aren't we kidding ourselves, and only offering 'child minding'

DianneA: if a project takes time it may well be because it involves learning and real learning takes time

GordonP: we need to teach how to learn

GordonP: and project based does that

RachaelC: Time does that....meaning just listening won't do for most. Time to learn in different ways helps it to sink in.

DianneA: Rachael, is it a matter, then of thinking how to design something where the teachers do need to do ongoing team planning/ sharing?

RachaelC: Yes

GordonP: so we need to keep the project limited to a portion of the class time, learning time

DianneA: looking at your teachers and your school, and its community and asking can we all engage in a project that provides the space and reason for learning, and having done that then identify how and where that activity, all round, helps meet the 'standards'?

DianneA: Rachael has a whole school Gordon

GordonP: Oh to find that project...

DianneA: OK you three, perhaps Gordon now is the time to talk to us about one of your powerpoint slides ...

DianneA: Rachel and Susan ...

DianneA: can you try something for me?

RachaelC: sure

DianneA: do you see the link to another website there on the whiteboard above the chat space (you may need to scroll down)

DianneA: you need to click on the second link the /Gordon's one

RachaelC: okay

DianneA: when you do that Gordon's powerpoint item opens and the second slide is of ...

DianneA: 16 eff standards

DianneA: now EFF means what Gordon?

GordonP: Equipped for the Future

RachaelC: nice

DianneA: and does that stuff look like it suits for primary ed as well as basic ed for adults?

RachaelC: definitely

GordonP: the communication portion is also for ESL adult students

GordonP: not just GED

DianneA: OK, so Rachael's design task is what Gordon is trying to introduce his basic ed teachers to ...

RachaelC: I like how you broke it into four dimensions or sections

DianneA: is it not?

DianneA: Gordon has ESL for adults teachers ...

DianneA: they are used to 'teaching' ESL ... by, if I might say it, old chalk and talk ...

DianneA: Gordon's task is to help them think about how what they teach does or does not deliver on those standards, ...

RachaelC: I think this would be good for teachers ..any teachers. Before collaboration and team planning can begin.....the teachers need these skills

DianneA: and if it doesn't deliver then they need to redesign so that it does deliver

DianneA: so they need to know how to make those standards a nature part of their lessons

DianneA: have I got it right Gordon?

GordonP: yes

DianneA: Rachael do you feel brave?

RachaelC: okay

DianneA: would you be prepared to risk your professional reputation with a trial program at your school?

RachaelC: what type of trial program

DianneA . o O (this is what I asked Gordon a couple of months ago)

DianneA: what would you say is your school's strength and major interest, as a school community?

RachaelC: I'd have to first research it and then it would have to be beneficial ...first to my students.

DianneA: do you have to research it, or is that something you can start to do with your staff, as a collaborative venture?

RachaelC: Our strength is our commitment to the students and our family atmosphere. We aren't afraid to challenge our kids to be 21st century learners..thus we need to be 21st century educators

DianneA: I would understand that every good professional teacher will always be checking any mad ideas for 'is it beneficial and first of all to my students?'

DianneA: OK is there one part of your curriculum which is strong in the school where experimentation would be permissible?

DianneA: ie there is not too much risk?

DianneA: alternately a part of curriculum that is so weak that you couldn't do any worse?

RachaelC: Our technology is strong and reading in the lower grades is very strong...

RachaelC: I'd like to work with math...we need to accelerate learning in that area.

DianneA: So the question you might pose with your teachers at their next staff meeting might be something like this ...

DianneA: can we use this EFF model to think about a term long, school wide program ... for a segment of math learning ...

DianneA: what would be involved?

RachaelC: I like it....

DianneA: would it be worth it?

DianneA: and think about whether you would like to report back to the profession, here at Tapped In ...

DianneA: and if you were interested in that last bit we have something here where we think we can help you ...

DianneA: it will be our Learning Hub program for August 2009 to April 2010

RachaelC: I think it would because to open the door for change in our math....the EFF could make the door easier to open.

DianneA: and for you, you have "Teaching Teachers" to come back and report in, and complain to me when it is not working

RachaelC: It's basic understanding of what is needed to be successful and who would deny that?

DianneA: as well as complain about me and my 'bright ideas' ...

DianneA: you know Edison's bit on light globes ...

DianneA: 99% perspiration

DianneA: wow ... I didn't intend getting to here when I started out here today ...

DianneA: Gordon, has what I been saying been making sense to you ...

DianneA: and helping you see some more about what you might do with your teachers?

GordonP: I think so

DianneA: and how you might help them think about doing what they need to do with

their students?

DianneA: and that part of what I have been saying is about handing over the problem to let another work at trying to solve it?

DianneA: and being sure enough as a teacher, because you have done it yourself once, that you can help another person do it

DianneA: and by letting them make their mistakes too!

GordonP: a great learning opportunity

RachaelC: I still enjoy great learning opportunities

DianneA: OK what do we put on the agenda for our next Teaching teachers session?

DianneA: and do you want to set it back to the first week of August or the third week of August (a month from now)?

SusanR: Thanks Dianne, Rachel and Gordon! I plan to apply some of the ideas/techniques mentioned here to my After School Online sessions here at TI

DianneA: thanks Susan

RachaelC: Sharing what we are doing. What worked and what didn't and giving suggestions to one another.

GordonP: maybe the third week of August???

RachaelC: okay

DianneA: third week of August it is

DianneA: thanks everyone ...

DianneA: very energising ...

RachaelC: Thank you.

DianneA: are you a member of this group Rachel

SusanR: Check out Alan November's spotlight sessions from NECC on what's needed for powerful learning and teaching for the 21st century

DianneA: I will post some more here between now and August

RachaelC: Susan and Gordan thanks for sharing your ideas as well.

RachaelC: Thanks Susan...I'll do that.

DianneA: to become a member you click on the group name link in the welcome text box and then when the group profile comes up it asks if you want to join just click on that link

SusanR: he has a great learning Community blog as well

DianneA: Thanks all, sorry but I need to wrap about now

GordonP: Thank you everyone. I always gain ideas here

DianneA: see you in a month's time

GordonP: adios all

RachaelC: Good night all....

SusanR: Thanks again!!