Title of Session: Teaching Teachers - PD Workshops
Moderator: Dianne Allen
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Room: Teaching Teachers Group

DianneA: Welcome to Teaching Teachers

BJB2 waves hi to Edith

DianneA: Edith, what has brought you to Teaching Teachers today?

DianneA notes that Teaching Teachers sessions are open for teachers to help frame the agenda for the session

EdithLo: I came to learn more about teaching

DianneA: can you elaborate on that a bit more?

EdithLo: well, I am an foreign language teacher and I would love to learn more about strategies and new methods for teaching

DianneA: tell me a bit more about your present level of experience with teaching and with foreign language teaching Edith

EdithLo: I have been teaching Spanish for 5 years here in USA and 9 years experience in ESLin Peru

DianneA nods

DianneA: and is there a particular area of that teaching where you identify a need to knwo more about different strategies?

EdithLo: classroom management

DianneA: OK, tell me some more about what strategies of classroom management you are using at present ...

EdithLo: I use power point presentations to teach grammar, also I use handouts and direct instruction

DianneA notes that to work on this area, in Teaching Teachers, as a mentoring approach, I am trying to apply adult education principles like identifying learning needs for you in particular

DianneA: What age group are you teaching Spanish to, Edith?

EdithLo: I teach K-5

DianneA: and what aspect of classroom management is at issue for K-5 sessions when you are using powerpoint, handouts and direct instruction?

GordonP joined the room.

EdithLo: when I deliver the handouts kids start write right away and don't pay attention

DianneA waves to Gordon

GordonP: HI everyone

EdithLo: Hi Gordon

BJB2 waves hi to Gordon!

DianneA: and what is the problem with that Edith?

EdithLo: using power point brings a little their attention

EdithLo: they don't read the instructions

DianneA: are they then getting the answers wrong, or correct on their worksheets?

EdithLo: they get wrong answers

DianneA: Ok Edith, let me see if I can fill Gordon in on what you are trying to do ....

EdithLo: ok Dianne

DianneA: Gordon, Edith is currently teaching Spanish to K-5, has a fair bit of experience in foreign and ESl teaching and is looking for ideas for different teaching strategies

GordonP: OK

DianneA: At the moment she is using powerpoint and handouts and direct instruction ...

DianneA: and the children are ignoring her inputs as they rush to do the handouts, but get the handouts exercises wrong ...

GordonP: total immersion?

DianneA: does that sound like how you are finding the situation, Edith ?

DianneA: and the focus at the moment is on grammar

EdithLo: yes, and vocabulary too

EdithLo: I teach 3 times a week each grade

DianneA: thanks, Edith, and I am wondering what might be going on with these children that they want to 'rush into' doing the handouts, whether they do them right or wrong?

EdithLo: some of my classes are before recess time

StephanieO joined the room.

BJB2: good job, Stephanie!

DianneA: Hello Stephanie

StephanieO: Hello

DianneA notices our group has grown a bit recently

StephanieO: yes I am new to education and wanted to check this group out

DianneA considers it might be time for something like introductions

DianneA: so, everyone, can you say where you are from and what areas of teaching you are currently operating in, please?

GordonP: I work in Adult Education in Texas

DianneA: thanks Gordon

BJB2: I'm in Pennsylvania and am a retired teacher

DianneA: I am working in professional development, here, and based in NSW, Australia

EdithLo: I am in Idaho, teaching Spanish

StephanieO: I am in San Antonio obtaining my masters of science in reading and acp 4-8 generalist certification

DianneA: Thanks, Bj, Edith, and Stephanie

DianneA: Stephanie, Edith has brought a problem to our session today ...

DianneA: and Gordon I suspect is bringing us some feedback about how he is going with some of his PD classes

StephanieO: what was the problem???/

DianneA: and if there is a 'common theme' it might be how to get learners engaged in what they really need to learn to know how to do

DianneA: ie reaching learners where they are at ...

DianneA: and then working creatively and relevantly with them to help them learn what they need to know

DianneA: In Edith's case the class is Spanish for K-5 in Idaho

EdithLo: yes, you are correct

DianneA: I don't know much about the US or Idaho, but I suspect that 'immersion' for the language learning for Spanish in Idaho is a bit unrealistic?

DianneA looks to the US folk for some feedback on her guess

GordonP: but research has shown immersion in learning languages is the best route

DianneA nods to Gordon

DianneA: but when the children move out of the classroom in Idaho what language will they be 'immersed' in?

EdithLo: I agree

GordonP: we have used immersion in many ESL classes

EdithLo: they have Spanish all K-12

GordonP: and many of these Adult ESL students go back to homes where only the native language is spoken

DianneA: Can I ask, Edith and Gordon, ...

EdithLo: yes

EdithLo: most of these kids travel around the world

DianneA: when these students leave the class, what language do they then find

themselves immersed in for everyday activities?

EdithLo: and most of them choose Spanish speaking countries

DianneA: and Gordon is that different to your adult ESL-ers?

DianneA: Ok, that is a bit more useful contextual knowledge Edith

GordonP: most speak their native language while others have an English speaking spouse

DianneA: Stephanie, do you have any background or interest in this area, or the area of appropriate strategies for teaching in the language area

StephanieO: yes

DianneA wonders about language learning ... since it is not my area ....

DianneA wonders about teaching grammar ... and immersion ...

BJB2 thinks language learning effects all disciplines

DianneA: frequently native speakers have poor grammar

StephanieO: Though I am a generalist my background in media and pr helps me in this area

StephanieO: I write a lot

DianneA: so, for my money, 'immersion' while vital for relevance and immediacy in competence, doesn't cover the issue of learning grammar ...

DianneA: am I wrong in this thinking?

DianneA: that is to say, we can communicate with another in their language, frequently, even when the grammar is faulty, and often, in the written form, if spelling is poor

StephanieO: yes this is true espec with texting and social media

StephanieO: people can comm without having perfect grammar and with technology we often have the computer correct us rather than learn the rules

DianneA: So my question about designing a strategy for teaching grammar at the level of k-5 is about how do you make that 'important' (as well as interesting) to the child learner who is about to visit a Spanish speaking country?

DianneA: Edith, do you have the children share about their travels?

EdithLo: yes, they love to talk about that

GordonP: in Spanish?

EdithLo: but some little ones didn't experience that yet

EdithLo: they try

EdithLo: but most of the time they love to talk in English

GordonP: but this is Spanish class, keep them immersed as much as is possible

EdithLo: yes, you are right

EdithLo: I know I need to work in these issues

DianneA: Have you tried asking them what they find hardest with talking in Spanish when they are on holidays ... helping them identify that speaking the language correctly is important for some reason or other (if it is important to speak it correctly?)

EdithLo: I think they feel scare to make mistakes

DianneA nods that being fearful and about making mistakes usually means more mistakes are made

EdithLo: yes

EdithLo: I model conversations to them

EdithLo: but it is not enough

GordonP: try to make the conversation mistakes less important and thus the learning more fun

BJB2: lots of resources available this month, Edith...it's Hispanic Heritage month

BJB2 . o O (Hispanic Heritage Month begins on September 15, the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico declared its independence on September 16, and Chile on September 18.)

EdithLo: yes, I show them a little movie (5Min)

EdithLo: about the Hispanic heritage month

EdithLo: You are right more fun

BJB2: what about writing letters to famous Spanish Americans

BJB2: or mock interviews?

GordonP: mock interviews are great

EdithLo: well, I contact a school in Mexico and my kids write letters to them

DianneA: Edith, what I am trying to get at, in asking these questions, is trying to turn that magical key that means the children themselves want to know and learn and to become very competent in Spanish, and then being sure that the teaching strategy is related to what you are trying to teach ... modeling Spanish speaking, and in correct grammar, and correcting spoken language for grammatical accuracy is how I learned to be the English speaker and writer that I am ... and it wasn't just something that happened three times a week ...

EdithLo: mock interviews are interesting

BJB2: oh, cool, Edith. Have you thought about creating a K-12 Student Classroom in Tapped In and have your class meet the class in Mexico?

StephanieO: yes, also setting up penpals in the other lang is a good idea it will help both classes

DianneA nods to Bj for that kind of idea

BJB2 . o O (there is a k-12 group now that compares movies and books with a class in Brazil)

DianneA notes that learning grammar for written work becomes more 'relevant' ...

BJB2 nods...esp. for an authentic audience

DianneA nods to BJ

DianneA: that authenticity is vital in any learning context

EdithLo: I agree

BJB2: since your students are little ones, Edith, they could communicate using the threaded discussion boards which are asynch.

EdithLo: I don't know how to create a classroom here to meet my kids with other kids

DianneA looks to Gordon about his ongoing task for adult learners

BJB2: Edith, participate in one of Jeff's K-12 Student Campus tours on Saturday

BJB2 wonders if Gordon has any updates?

EdithLo: what time will those classes start?

BJB2: Edith, look on the calendar. Click on the Tapped In tab and then click on calendar in the blue menu bar

GordonP: yes, I have found the trainings have had very different types of teachers as participants

BJB2 smiles...keeps you on your toes!

GordonP: some very new, some very competent and some very negative to professional development

EdithLo: cool

GordonP: I have had to "limit" some of the more negative ones

DianneA: and how do you try to do that 'limiting' Gordon?

BJB2: is their attitude because of technology or just PD in general?

GordonP: PD in general

GordonP: too many PDs and no reason to change

DianneA thinks that we are back at the issue of somehow making the need to learn an authentic issue

GordonP: that is what I do point out to the negative ones

DianneA: it is one thing to say it, as I have been doing in the session just now

DianneA: and another thing to bring a situation into being where the problem becomes real for them

BJB2: if they can come up with a vaccine for major diseases, maybe someone can design a vaccine for teachers reluctant to engage in continuing education!

GordonP: of how they expect their students to learn when learning is no longer a goal of

the teacher; saying it in civil terms

BJB2: good point, Gordon!

DianneA: and that I guess is part of how do we think about design of learning experiences

DianneA: OK, may I check ...

DianneA: for today, how are we going with time?

GordonP: I am good for another hour...

BJB2: if anyone is here to spend one hour in a discussion, your time is up...but if you're here to learn, please continue, Dianne

DianneA: Edith? Stephanie?

EdithLo: Yes, I will stay here

DianneA: Thanks Edith ...

EdithLo: I always learn something

DianneA: have we quizzed you enough and given you some new ideas worth following through, Edith?

EdithLo: ohh I got good ideas

EdithLo: and I know that I have to be more immerse with the students

DianneA: good, then if you are agreeable I would like to shift the focus to Gordon

GordonP: Oh Oh

EdithLo: sure

DianneA: and find out how he is going with the group he has ... teachers!

DianneA: Let me fill you in on what Gordon's concerns are ...

GordonP: I had just finished with a group from Midland. They were the most prepared, professional teachers I have been in front of. I do not think I had enough new material for them

DianneA: Gordon has teachers of Adult Basic Education ...

DianneA: and he provides them with professional development inputs ...

GordonP: WE do the GED and ESL

DianneA: and has had difficulties with them becoming engaged in those sessions ...

DianneA: thanks Gordon

GordonP: Too many past sessions did not instill change in the teachers

GordonP: Moving to Adult Ed theory in the PD has helped

DianneA: I have been suggesting, that as a matter of 'learning experience design', Gordon needs to move from using powerpoint presentations ... to something that engages those teachers ...

DianneA: you will find some details of 'my suggestions' in the room view welcome page above your chat space here

GordonP: the PPT is still the basis is discussion, but discussion is the basis of the PD

DianneA: and you can see some of the slides Gordon has developed to try and take his teachers into the area of working on lesson design to ensure that lessons are directed at achieving standards ....

BJB2: http://file2.ws/gordons

DianneA: OK Gordon, so where are you up to, and what is proving to be a 'sticking point' with your groups ...

BJB2 . o O (I think that's the url)

DianneA: thanks BJ

GordonP: I am having to change the attitude that lesson plans take up too much time

DianneA: can you elaborate a bit more for me please?

GordonP: The original Content Standards training made teachers do a 6 hour lesson plan for a 3 hour class.

DianneA nods

GordonP: It was simply too time consuming

DianneA: and if I may hypothesise ...

DianneA: when you are dealing with experienced teachers they think that they are beyond the need for that kind of preparation

DianneA: and that what they have done in the past will do quite well thank you .. ??

GordonP: True

DianneA: OK, back to my kind of diagnostic questioning Gordon ...

DianneA: when, in the past, you have found yourself challenged to think about a different way of delivering learning material ...

DianneA: what has been the 'crunch' that has suggested that actually you do need to do that kind of work ... the 6 hours prep for the 3 hour lesson?

GordonP: change is hard for students as well. If I introduce something new in a classroom, I need to test it well enough to have some kind of assurance it will be accepted

DianneA nods to Gordon, change is hard

GordonP: so with PD sessions, I need to show the benefit of change to allow buy in

DianneA: and when you have done that 6 (and more) hours preparation .. until you are pleased with a good 'lesson' ... what has been the results .. for you, and your students?

GordonP: I take away any thought of compulsory lesson plan

GordonP: I tell them some will prefer to start with a blank piece of paper

GordonP: I also try to get them to buy into shorter Project based learning plans

DianneA: Gordon, on another tack ....

GordonP: I have also been a reluctant fan of Project Based learning

DianneA: this is the third or fourth time you have returned to Teaching Teachers, to engage in this kind of discussion ...

DianneA: can you identify what is drawing you back?

GordonP: In many ways, I feel like a rookie. I want to find growth

BJB2 is mightily impressed that Gordon comes back for more!

DianneA nods

BJB2: a lesser person would give up and take the path of least resistance, Gordon. Kudos to you!

GordonP: I feel I know Adult Ed theory much better than most, but making trainings more benefiical has been slow

DianneA: again, though, what has it been, about these sessions, that has drawn you back? ... can you identify what you see, even if only slightly, as a likely 'answer' to what you are after?

GordonP: your expertise in PD

DianneA: does that mean that what I have been doing has taken you into new territory?

GordonP: yes it has. I still study your paper and PPT

DianneA: thanks ... and that is useful information ...

DianneA: so let us together critique ... is what I have been doing with you, what I have been suggesting that I do with your PD sessions ..?

DianneA: one thing we need to keep in mind Gordon ...

DianneA: is that you took the initiative to turn up to Tapped In and to a Teaching Teachers session ...

DianneA: so you brought a certain level of initial motivation ...

DianneA: Looking at our list on the Welcome page ...

DianneA: 1. Identification of learning needs ... it would appear that my process, especially that first session (and hopefully again and again) is part of doing that for you ... agreed?

GordonP: I had joined the Adult Ed group but it does not seem to be active

GordonP: yes

DianneA: 2. 'Community of practice' icebreaker ... that was a 'given' - that was what you did by coming to Teaching teachers, but also, ...

DianneA: to keep coming somehow Bj and I have offered a safe and constructive sense of community of practice for you

GordonP: yes and that seems to be hard to accomplish as I am one of the few in this group

DianneA: AGREED!

DianneA: Bj tell him

BJB2 hugs Gordon warmly

DianneA: so the fact that you are finding that difficult in your PD sessions is not surprising

GordonP: a safe and constructive sense of community is a great idea to implement in PD

GordonP: thank you very much

BJB2 . o O (it's equally difficult in Tapped In)

DianneA: and that brings me back to comparing the two groups you were talking about last month ...

DianneA: was there anything as a difference between the tow groups that made this aspect easier for one group than the other?

GordonP: The biggest difference I can come up with is the leadership of the groups

DianneA: tell me some more please Gordon

GordonP: The great group has a leader who actually knew Malcom Knowles

DianneA listens

GordonP: The other is trying more to achieve retirement

BJB2: ohhh...have your admin offer incentives for early retirement!

BJB2 . o O (then you can get in a new crop of more eager teachers ;-))

GordonP: I have seen my feed back reports. I make the sessions too hard for those who expect to sit there and not change

GordonP: (my interpretation)

BJB2: do you give reports on your participants?

GordonP: I do have to do reflections on the participants

GordonP: and the session

DianneA: so something to remember about this, is that I and Bj have been here for others, with this same style of interaction, and you are the only one who has come back, so sometimes our 'teaching success' is more 'student perseverance and motivation' than it is our teaching process ...

DianneA: next point in the checklist Gordon ...

DianneA: 3. Contracting with a buddy .... at what point in our interactions, did you feel there was a real contract being developed?

GordonP: when you sent me the paper and PPT

DianneA nods

GordonP: you did not have to do that

GordonP: but you did

DianneA: is there something here for you, and your groups, and about the design of what you are doing and how you can help them form a contract with one another ?

GordonP: I tell them to work as groups in developing their lesson plan for the follow up presentation

DianneA: and at that point the responsibility of contracting to do more lies with them rather than you ...

GordonP: The follow ups begin next month. I will find out how much buy in occurred

DianneA: and the 'exchange' of something valuable, that opens up the reality of a contract, to be partners, again lies with them, and not you

DianneA: but you can share with them what has happened for you when someone else has done this with you

DianneA: that is to say that this kind of support does rally help one another ...

GordonP: that is a great idea

DianneA: my next point was 4. Committing to focus on one problem, on the day, to apply Benchmark, Classroom Activities, setting priorities, developing coherent units of instruction

DianneA: I think I have tried to commit to focusing with you ....

DianneA: I haven't quite taken the next step though Gordon ...

DianneA: which would be to work some more with you on the session to see if we can look at the PD design and see if it actually complies itself with those standards ...

DianneA: and that fabulous diagram of principles ...

DianneA: the 16 EFF standards

DianneA: so we are, after 4-5 sessions only up to that stage!

DianneA: we have probably been a bit diverted ...

GordonP: changing me goes slow...

DianneA: by checking in with how trying to implement change has been working for you

DianneA: ie keeping our eye on where you are in practice

DianneA: and checking that if there are things going not so well, then that you have appropriate support

GordonP: I am looking at a total redesign for the presentation, to roll out the new improved model

DianneA: so what I am saying Gordon is not only is change difficult and takes time

DianneA: it is also quite complex ...

DianneA: and in need of lots of support ..

DianneA: at key points ...

DianneA: and especially about having realistic expectations, of yourself and of others, and about how difficult real change is

GordonP: I do understand but I am still impatient...

DianneA: so at the end of our hour .. what next? ....

DianneA: is there some preparation I need to do before my next session with you, to support you?

GordonP: I have had to remake the transition from the standards part of the presentation

to the demands of the follow up, the part where the teachers will report back on how the lesson plan went

GordonP: the teachers have a tough time buying into the fact that work must be shown

DianneA: once one group does it, however, you will then have peer pressure clicking in ...

GordonP: I am looking forward to that result

DianneA: and once you have one group of teachers that has done it you can perhaps bring them along to the next PD group to share that experience

GordonP: great idea!

DianneA: then some creative competition can arise ...

GordonP: exactly

DianneA: but there does need to be someone able to share that 'this approach really worked for them!'

DianneA: if you can take some of what has been happening here back, and share in that way, that might be helpful

GordonP: I will try to bring that across to the teachers

GordonP: Saturday I will have about 60 teachers in the PD

DianneA: Do you think you can perhaps look at our sessions again and see to what extent they have 'modeled' the 16EFF standards?

DianneA: is that a new group on Saturday Gordon?

GordonP: yes, a new group

GordonP: our sessions and the 16EFF standards?

DianneA: yes, Gordon, our sessions and the 16EFF standards

GordonP: I will do that

DianneA: because if I have been doing the job I think I am trying to do ...

DianneA: it is adult education ... and within these key areas ...

DianneA: so I have been trying to model ...

DianneA: and if you as an adult have been 'stimulated' by these processes, then it might give you more examples of real engagement and motivation to share and draw on when trying to help others get over that hump

GordonP: I will do that

DianneA: Ok anything more for now? or do I wait on next month to hear how things are going for you?

GordonP: I will put together a report for next month

DianneA nods

DianneA: thanks

GordonP: thank you

DianneA: all the best for now

GordonP: thank you for everything

DianneA: bye for now, then

GordonP: bye bye