

Title of Session: Teaching Teachers
Moderator: Dianne Allen
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Room: Teaching Teachers Group

DianneA: So let's elaborate a bit on our interests in 'education' ...

BJB: Dianne, I have a suggestion for a topic...

DianneA: where are we all from, and what part of education do we practice in?

DavidWe: New showing of Ken Burns' "Civil War" is just beginning on public broadcasting

DianneA listens to Bj's suggestion

BJB: Sue Roseman was telling me about a post to one of the blogs about how cyberspace is becoming restrictive...

BJB: with more and more groups forming and each group becoming more restrictive or specialized

DianneA nods

BJB: which puts us all back where we started...locked up in our classrooms

DianneA: my 'fragmentation' concerns!

BJB nods

BJB: David, did you read Ted Nellen's comments on wwedu?

BJB: I should try and post that on the whiteboard so you can all read it

DavidWe: I've not, yet, BJ

EricGst6: no, I'm actually a second year elementary education student at the University of Regina

DavidWe: A Canadian!

DavidWe: Wow

EricGst6: Proudly

DianneA: the international community meets again

BJB: I just pasted Ted's comment to the whiteboard

In the below message Ted was responding to a post by Andy Carvin:

OPINION | January 3, 2007

Editorial: Protecting Internet Democracy

Net neutrality is vital to preserve the Internet's role in promoting entrepreneurship and free expression.

I believe the former has already happened while the second will. the great hope I had for the internet, pre and post www, was the access and of course the interactive quality of the net as opposed to texts, teachers, radio, tv, print media, which are all one way forms of communication. The net came along and instantly we had interaction. slowly that interactive aspect is being stopped via filters mostly and soon lack of access to material we will need in our classrooms. The net will become one more one way instrument of delivering information without allowing the user to really interact. Heck education was relegated as soon as the .com folks saw what they could do. Remember the net before www, it was all education. we had fabulous access via gopher and ftp to the best material in college libraries. It was a utopia. Then the web came along and we had a few good years until the corporate world took over and now we have to have web 2.0, then 3.0 then 4.0. Education keeps getting pushed out of the room. Heck educators were not present during the 3 governor's conferences. Our texts aren't neutral, our speech in schools is controlled as we have seen with the arrests and threats to those of us who wish to speak about 2 sides of a war. the net was a wonderful frontier and to make the analogy to our own west, the pioneers just kept going further west and then up into the mountains until pioneers disappeared and were replaced by the status quo. I never thought I'd have to still be doing the things in need to do in a classroom to get info to my scholars. It's criminal, haha.

Posted to wwweu by Ted Nellen -

BJB: Sue, I mentioned your comment about the blog post yesterday as a topic for today's discussion...and Ted's post seemed to fit right in

DianneA: OK, do we want to talk changes in the net, or sport?

DianneA: I am easy

DavidWe . o O (changes in net sports?)

DianneA: cheeky David taking my cues and Pees

SusanR: ok

DavidWe smiles

BJB: Since Eric wants to be a PE teacher, maybe he's more interested in sports?

DavidWe stops being cheeky for a few minutes

DianneA: and world wide nets?

DianneA: obviously it is the season to be jolly

DianneA: I don't quite know all that Nellen is speaking about

DianneA: especially the early history, and the projections about web 4.0

SusanR: Parents are being given a tax credit if their kids are active in a recognized sport here in Canada

DianneA: I wasn't involved in internetting early enough

DavidWe: is that true, Susan?

SusanR: yes, it was just announced...

DavidWe: wow

DavidWe: for health reasons?

BJB: Andy Carvin had posted a question about net neutrality

DianneA: I can imagine Oz not being far behind Susan

EricGst6: I heard on a radio show that some parents are trying to get the same thing for music lessons, drama, and other non-exercise activities

DianneA: the obesity question and a government buying votes here

DavidWe: interesting

BJB agrees

SusanR: I don't know how they will implement it

SusanR: <http://www.cbc.ca/health/story/2006/10/26/fitness-credit.html>

DianneA: The Faculty of Ed where I teach majors in Physical Ed, and some of our folk are involved in obesity research

SusanR: of course, parents who have kids in music programs also wish to receive the tax credit

EricGst6 nods. However, I think it's basically a separate issue. The tax is for getting kids active. Although music is also extra curricular, it isn't related to fitness

BJB: seems like it would be more beneficial to integrate the physical activity into the curriculum

DianneA: is physical ed extra curricular in Canada Eric?

EricGst6: no

EricGst6: it's a class

DianneA nods

SusanR: Where are you located in Real Life. Eric?

DianneA: Some of the strategies being mounted in Oz include using physical activity to break up the day, to help manage behavioural difficulties - ie tire some of the over-energetic out

EricGst6: real life?

SusanR: sorry I have been spending time in Second Life

SusanR: where do you live?

DavidWe: University of Regina

EricGst6: yes, on campus

SusanR: you teach I gather

DavidWe smiles

DavidWe: try again, Susan

EricGst6: second year education elementary

SusanR: preservice teacher?

EricGst6: not until my fourth year

DianneA: when do you start getting practice experience in Canadian teacher preparation education?

EricGst6: next year I get to be in a classroom three days a week for a semester

EricGst6: or something to that effect

DianneA: that sounds interesting

DianneA: it is much more extensive than ours

DianneA: though ours is beginning to shift a little I believe

EricGst6: you're from Australia?

DianneA: What do David, Susan and BJ think should be happening about practice experience in pre-service teacher education?

DianneA: yes Eric, in NSW

DavidWe: about "practice experience"?

DianneA: yes David

DavidWe: I'm not sure what you mean by that phrase, Dianne

DianneA: beginning to work with children in classes, teaching, while continuing 'studying' for a qualification

DavidWe: . o O ("student teaching")

DavidWe: Well, it's traumatic at first

DavidWe: smiles

EricGst6: laughs a little

DavidWe: or can be for some

DianneA: when I trained I had a total of four weeks practice work before I was full time in charge of a class as a newly qualified teacher!

DavidWe: Sorry, Eric, don't mean to scare you off

EricGst6: smiles

DianneA: and two of those four weeks was spent learning how to play 500 (cards like Bridge)!

EricGst6: . o O (sounds very tough)

DianneA: because it was the end of the year, the students weren't interested or there

DianneA: and the regular teachers didn't want us mucking up what they were trying to do

EricGst6: most of the U of R student teachers do their internship in the first semester, at the start of the grade school year

EricGst6: so they are there for the whole process

DianneA nods to Eric

DianneA: the issue of doing practice while learning about practice is wider than teaching, and is an interest of mine

DianneA: so I was wondering about BJ, David's and Susan's thoughts about that

BJB: I know our local schools of ed are taking more time to acclimate the students to being teachers

DianneA: and is this where 'mentoring' comes in, in part?

BJB: I think the students are placed in more classrooms earlier

DianneA: what was your experience BJ?

BJB: mentoring is still weak, from what I've seen

DavidWe . o O ("See One, Do One, Teach One")

DavidWe: something that is often done in medical education

BJB: mentors aren't assigned until the new teacher is hired

BJB: some mentors are good and some just do the drill

BJB: I think mentoring needs to last longer than the first year

DianneA nods to David

DianneA: that sounds like something I would want to follow through on

DianneA: the value of observation first, then doing, then teaching ...

DianneA: it would make you think some more about the process, ...

DianneA: it would put you on the spot for making the most of observation

EricGst6: what is the difference between doing and teaching, in the way you're using it

DianneA: and when doing is followed by teaching it would make you think some more about process

DianneA: showing someone else how to do it Eric

EricGst6: oh ok

EricGst6: thanks

DianneA: in K-2, it is sometimes called 'show and tell'

DianneA: it is one thing to do, another to show, and yet another to be able to tell ...

DavidWe: yes

DianneA: lots of our activity in teaching is embedded ad almost invisible communication skills

DianneA: learned when we were young children

DavidWe . o O (invisible?)

DianneA: we don't know how to describe them

DavidWe isn't sure he agrees with that

DianneA: we don't know how to tell someone who isn't doing it well how to fix their poor practice

DavidWe believes that teaching is an ART

DianneA listens to David to elaborate ...

DavidWe: I think anyone can become better at what they do with practice

SusanR agrees with David

DavidWe: But I believe teachers have a talent that is not-teachable

DavidWe: techniques are teachable

DavidWe: methodologies are teachable

DavidWe: talent is not

DianneA: is it talent or is it part of the person ... or person/ality

DavidWe smiles

SusanR: the more you teach the more you refine the art

DavidWe agrees with Susan

DianneA: but how do you refine the art?

DavidWe: practice

DavidWe: creativity

SusanR: practice ..experience

DianneA: can you tell how, can you explain what it is that you are doing when you are improving?

DavidWe: making a lot of mistakes

DianneA: Have any of you been aware of having been mentored .. and in a way that helped your teaching practice?

DianneA: I have to confess that I am not aware of having been mentored

DavidWe: I think I have people who mentored me although not directly while I was teaching

DianneA: I am aware of observing other teachers to try and find out what they are doing and how

DavidWe: I've watched good teachers; I've been taught by good teachers

EricGst6: I have to go. thank you for the discussion

DianneA nods to David

EricGst6: I'm sure I will be back on another day

DianneA: thanks for the company Eric

EricGst6: it was nice meeting all of you

BJB: I think that informal mentoring also takes place when teachers are able to have time to talk

BJB waves bye to Eric

EricGst6 left the room (signed off).

BJB: some of my best mentoring came when I first started teaching and was in a carpool

DavidWe smiles

DavidWe: driving?

BJB: no...we paid for someone to drive

DavidWe smiles

BJB: and we all taught at the same school

DianneA: and you were prepared to ask questions about how to ???

BJB: mostly I cried on their shoulders after a long and stressful day...

DianneA: how big was the pool BJ - what numbers?

BJB: and they offered advice and alternative

BJB: just 4 people including me

DavidWe . o O (and tissues)

DianneA nods

DianneA: how long in time was the drive?

BJB: about 20 minutes.

BJB . o O (two times a day)

DianneA: that short! interesting

DianneA: yes it is the daily bit, and the before and after bit

BJB nods

DianneA: and the practice in between!

BJB: we have daily after school meetings, but they don't serve the same function

DianneA: perhaps we go about pre-service education quite the wrong way!

DavidWe: I wouldn't think so, Bj

BJB: too many people and everyone is in a hurry to go home

DianneA: too big a group BJ?

DianneA: too much administration?

SusanR: our most successful meetings were divisional meetings or circle meetings with students

BJB: not so much the admin...just not an intimate setting

BJB nods to Sue

DianneA: can you elaborate on the circle meetings with students Susan?

DavidWe guesses that people sit in the round, approximating a circle

BJB smacks David with a pillow

DavidWe: hey!

DavidWe knocks his coffee all over the keyboard

SusanR: the grade 1 to 3 division would meet in the gym each Friday.. sit in a large circle and show case our learning

DavidWe: see!

DavidWe smiles

BJB: showcase the successes or the failures?

DavidWe wonders why Jeff isn't here to protect him

DianneA: again, what do you mean by 'show case our learning'?

SusanR: either thro' simple dramatizations, reporting, math fairs, science fairs

DianneA: to one another as peers, or did you also have pre-service teachers (students) in the group/circle?

SusanR: informal reflective meetings

SusanR: sometimes preservice as well

SusanR: we called them circle meetings

DianneA: and was part of the idea to share ideas?

SusanR: some of us had preservice teachers

SusanR: yes

SusanR: informal sharing

DianneA: for K-3 is there enough common ground for sharing around teaching ideas ...?

SusanR: reciting a simple poem or sharing what they had learned that week

BJB: I don't think it's just teaching ideas that need to be shared, Dianne

SusanR: it was student centred

DianneA: so what else do you think it is important to share BJ?

BJB: it's learning to relate to the students, learn how to focus interests, classroom management, etc.

DianneA: what do you mean by student centred Susan, how did that express itself?

SusanR: the sharing came from the student..with a little prompting and guidance

SusanR: student/students

DianneA: these were the pre-service teachers?

SusanR: both

DianneA: so how many made the large circle, and what proportion were pre-service to in-service

SusanR: preservice were in a minority

SusanR: 90 students in a circle ..sometimes we formed a double circle

DianneA: Wow, Susan!

SusanR: we had a strong lead teacher for these circle meetings

DianneA: so was that across a variety of schools?

SusanR: no just in our school I believe..we were a close group of teachers

DianneA: but 90 teachers? or am I still misunderstanding teacher, student, and preservice teacher?

SusanR: 90 students ..3 or 4 teachers

SusanR: with maybe one or two preservice

DianneA: interesting ...

SusanR: meeting once a week..every Friday

SusanR: "Circle Meetings"

DianneA: so teachers and learners shared what they had learned during that week?

SusanR: exactly

DianneA: was there that level of equity in being a learner?

SusanR: well no

DianneA: can you elaborate, please, this is very interesting to me

DianneA: because it takes/ brings me back to the idea of learning to be a 'person'

DianneA: that links with something David said earlier

DavidWe listens

DianneA: the art and talent of being a teacher - is it about being a person, more fully

SusanR: basically we met once a week and shared our learning..which made the learning more meaningful

DianneA: and if so do we start helping k-3 do it by being with them in such a circle doing such things

SusanR: we also made connections between the grade levels in terms of what we learned

DianneA: you identified that learning had happened as well as identifying and affirming what it was

DavidWe: I think teaching is a human endeavor

DavidWe: Parents teaching their children

SusanR: it was all very casual..but there was a sense of community between K to 3 ; we also did reading buddies; computer buddies

DianneA: so younger students got an idea of what the future held for them

DianneA: and older students were helped integrate their younger work with their present work?

SusanR: older students putting on performances for the younger ones and vice versa etc

DianneA: and what would you say, Susan, was the most important learning that you extracted from those events?

SusanR: we were a sense of community

SusanR: It was initiated by one of our teachers who taught in Australia and Britain

DianneA: some of the 'relationship' aspect that Bj was pointing to earlier ... interesting!

DianneA: thank you for sharing that

DianneA: I should perhaps let you folk go ... to bed, etc

SusanR: each teacher on the staff was handpicked for their strengths

SusanR: me of course..it was technology

DavidWe smiles

SusanR: math; music; literacy etc

DavidWe: Good job, Dianne. Good discussion

SusanR: physical education. sports..it was a diverse staff

DavidWe smiles

SusanR: but a strong staff

BJB: I agree with David.

BJB . o O (and Sue)

BJB hugs everyone...thanks for your support!